



Minutes of the Garden District Neighborhood Association

September 26, 2023

The meeting was called to order by the President Adam Witty at 6:05. 48 members were in attendance.

- Witty shared his background (in the neighborhood since 2012) and encouraged members to be more involved by volunteering for the board or committees.
- Witty then introduced Chris Campbell, Director of Communications and Strategic Planning with Explore Charleston. Campbell explained that the multicounty organization is a composite of 10 different groups that work to unify the travel industry. They support responsible development but also preservation and protection. The group is also involved in destination marketing and management.
- Campbell explained that the visitors Center is a major part of the work of Explore Charleston. It is a resource for visitors who wish to explore the region but it is also a community asset for local residents.
- Witty then introduced the officers of the association and the committee chairs briefly touching upon their work and encouraging engagement. A full update will be available at the November meeting.
- Witty then introduced David Pastre, Director, Clemson Design Center Charleston, which has been resident in Charleston since 2001 and is currently located at the Cigar Factory, with between 80-90 students. The purpose of this highly selective undergraduate and graduate program is “to teach students to design and preserve communities through partnerships.” He went on to outline the degrees in the program and the type of activities involved.
- The program is contemplating a move to the Garden District, via the purchase of 16 Charlotte St. and adjacent areas/buildings. Pastre said that the purchase is currently in the due diligence phase but they the buildings become a permanent home. He stated that the program and its staff want to be good neighbors in the Garden District and hope that residents will use/visit the buildings once they have been renovated.
- Pastre then took questions from the members who asked about housing for students, types of spaces in the buildings, hours of access, staffing for program, configuration and lighting of the parking lot and traffic issues. They do not intend to house students in the



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building, which will be open 24/7 with a key fob, and consist of work/study spaces, labs, a kitchen and offices, but do plan to maintain the current parking lot for their use. It was pointed out that neighbors had hoped the lot could be converted to residential use. He said that is not in their plan.

- Witty then introduced Vangie Rainsford, Chair, Parks and Gardens Committee who said that a memorial gift of \$250,000 has been received from the McGee family. The gift is to be applied to the refurbishment of Wragg Square along with a city grant of \$140,000. Rainsford explained that some trees will be removed but other areas such as beds, paths etc. will be refreshed and LED lighting will be installed. Her hope is that it will eventually achieve wider use, such as a venue for concerts.
- Witty then provided an update on the Union Pier project progress. He said that a member of Ansonborough's neighborhood association is on the committee and their interests align with the Garden District.
- Litter cleanup activities will resume and an email with sign-ups will be sent soon. Members also were advised of the calendar of meetings for 2023-2024 which includes 3 parties and a social after every meeting. Witty encouraged everyone to get to know their neighbors because a "friendly neighborhood is a beautiful neighborhood." The next meeting is Monday, Nov. 27.
- The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm.