

COLONIAL VILLAGE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

February 18, 2010 meeting

Attendance: 32.

Present: Anita Beavers, Mike Morofsky, June Kenfield, Bill Matt, Mary Bechtol and Kathy Miles. Anita brought the meeting to order at 7:00p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. Bill Matt was introduced as the new Area 3 representative. He has three sons and his wife has a day care facility in their home. He is employed at MSU campus housing and is serving on the Ingham County Parks Commission. He has served on City Council in the past.

Police Report

Officers Stephanie Bokovoy and Kasha Lowe passed out crime maps and discussed the increase in crime in the area. There have been burglaries and copper thefts on Lorraine, Holly Way, Peggy Place, Pattengil, Cooper and Marion. An older model gray 4-door sedan was observed at one of the burglaries and they ask that if anyone sees it in the area to please call police.

They assured us that our area is still safe and that this increase in crime is city-wide. Residents were encouraged to keep an eye out for their neighbors and especially on vacant houses.

Treasurer

June Kenfield is our new treasurer. She informed us that our current balance is \$209.44, which is the lowest it has been in a long time. Due to the current economic conditions, businesses that have given generously in the past have had to cut back on donations. She is exploring ways to increase donations and involve more residents. An envelope will be included in the next newsletter to give those who may not attend meetings an opportunity to help support CVNA. Our organization cannot support itself on the small donations received at the meetings. Anita mentioned that the cost of renting the obstacle course for the annual picnic is \$250.00 alone.

Carol Wood informed us that there are Community Use funds available for up to \$500.00 and she will be sending Anita a form to apply for a grant.

Guest Speaker

Deb Stanley gave a very informative talk on the Census. Lansing has hired 1,500 people to help. She said that taking of a census every 10 years has been in the Constitution since 1790. There will be several ways to participate; "be counted sites" will be set up at retirement centers and some churches, there will be drop-off sites and the completed forms can also be mailed in. The forms will be mailed out in March and are due back by April 1st. The census has only 10 questions. Deb said that census information is used to determine allocations for WIC, Head Start, grants and other funding.

Students will be featured in multilingual public service announcements to reach the diverse groups in the area.

All census workers have to take a confidentiality oath. Violating the oath carries a 10 year prison sentence and a \$250,000.00 fine. All workers will carry identification and present it on request. A valid badge should have a signature and an expiration date.

A separate survey is being carried out by American Community Survey. This is a long form and is separate from the census. They may ask questions such as income. Kathy mentioned that legally all you are required to answer is the number of people living at your residence. Do not open any e-mails that say they are from the Census Bureau. They are scams.

Christmas Lighting Contest Winners

The winning homes this year were: 1st place, 1419 Cooper; 2nd place, 1710 Peggy Place who received \$25 gift certificates. Honorable Mention was 2008 Pattengill which received a \$15 certificate.

A new category was added this year called People's Choice and we were able to view a video of all the entrants and vote. That winner will be announced at the next meeting.

A card was circulated thanking Mr. Norris for his contribution to the neighborhood. For over 40 years he has dressed up as Santa and welcomed children in the sleigh in his front yard on Mt. Hope at Christmas time.

Area Representative Reports:

Area 1

Mike said that the Short Stop party store liquor license is still pending.

A meeting to discuss the problem of water in some basements following CSO work was cancelled by Chad Gamble last fall but there is discussion of scheduling another one.

Several of the recent break-ins have occurred in the morning and he encouraged those who are at home during the day to keep an eye out for suspicious activity.

Area 2

Mary Bechtol had 2 calls about residences where there are problems. They are in area 3 and she referred them to Bill Matt. Police are keeping an eye on a property near Chatham and Victor.

Area 3

Bill Matt had no report but did give his cell phone number, 410-1826. He can also be reached at mattw@msu.edu.

President's Report:

Anita spoke about the death of Vi Bass, a longtime resident of the area. She will be missed. A collection was taken up for a donation to South Church Youth Ministry in her memory.

There is still a need for 2 volunteers for refreshments and workers for the Picnic. A possible welcome committee is being considered. Anita also mentioned the importance of participating in the 25 year Master Plan for the city. Our area has some wetlands and green space that we want to have voice in preserving.

Willie spoke unofficially to Murdoch Jimmerson of the Parks and Recreation department and had the impression that he is favorable to resurfacing the tennis courts at Elmhurst school. Nothing official will be known until the 2010 budget for the city is announced.

Miss Patterson from Family Guidance Service at Community Mental Health passed out brochures detailing the need for therapeutic Foster care homes in the area. The program is called Impact and the number is 517-346-8034; ask for Kelly.

Code Compliance

Greg Scrimger discussed the increase in burglaries and copper thefts in the area. In response to Dr. Graesser's question, Greg said that in most cases loppers are used to take out copper quickly.

Numerous problem houses were discussed, many of them vacant. Mary asked if the stickers on the houses were an invitation to thieves. He said banks and mortgage companies put stickers on houses, not just the City. A house at 1321 Mt. Hope has been purchased and is being remodeled which is good news.

Under the NEAT ordinance, after 3 months Public Safety can inspect vacant and abandoned homes and cite the responsible party \$150.00 a month for cleanup and other code violations.

Greg's phone number is 483-7620. His partner Walter can be reached at 483-4335.

City Council

Carol Wood welcomed Connie Doyle to the neighborhood and mentioned what an asset she has been to the Neighborhood Council. Carol is currently the chair of Public Safety and Ways and Means. She said that one of the ways being tried to cut down on copper thefts in houses is to monitor the companies that buy copper.

Mike expressed concern over the flood of liquor licenses being issued for the South side by the Liquor Commission. Carol is looking into an ordinance used in other areas of the state that would give the City Council a say on the proliferation of liquor stores in given area. Adoption of this ordinance would have to be passed by the City Attorney and the City Council.

Carol said that if the resurfacing of the tennis courts is not in the Mayor's budget, City Council may be able to add funding themselves.

The Committee of the Whole meetings on Thursday afternoon have been moved to Monday evenings and will alternate weeks with City Council sessions. There will be no public comment allowed at the Committee of the Whole meetings, which is a change of policy. Concerns were raised that this means members will be voting on

some issues with no citizen comment. This change made by Council president A'Lynne Robinson and the City Attorney without consulting the rest of Council and without public input.

Announcements:

Willie Vinson discussed the Community Gardening Project which is in association with the Ingham County Land Bank and the South Lansing Association. There will be plots available by the fire station on Pleasant Grove. Volunteers are needed to participate. If you want more information, call Rita at 374-5700. There will be a meeting on March 6th from 1:00 to 2:30 pm at the fire station on Pleasant Grove for those interested. Mary also mentioned that there may be other spots available by St. Casimir church on Barnes.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m.