

Colonial Village Neighborhood Association Meeting
6-15-11 Attendance 32

Present: Karl Biasi, Mike Morofsky, Jay Knapp and Kathy Miles. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 with introductions and the Pledge of Allegiance. Minutes of 5/16 were reviewed and accepted. Kathy read the Treasurers Report in the absence of Suzanne. Jason Wilks, candidate for 3rd Ward City Council seat, introduced himself. .

We received a request from Carol Wood on May 19th to write letters of support to the Police Department on a grant application for Community Policing which could add or save 10 officers. Karl Biasi wrote a letter on behalf of CVNA.

Karl showed a map of City wards and proposed changes by an apportionment committee. New lines as proposed divide our neighborhood in half using Victor Avenue from MLK to Pleasant Grove. That will put some of us in the 4th Ward.

For the neighborhood garage sale, Karl did a survey of participation. There were 65 sales that day on 42 of approximately 130 blocks.

Karl said he also wrote a personal note to Murdoch Jameson thanking him for his work with Parks and Recreation for the City and congratulating him on his new position. Mr. Jameson responded noting the Elmhurst tennis courts are almost complete. Willie Vinson reported that the resurfacing of the tennis courts at Elmhurst have a few more steps before completing. She is planning a program to celebrate their opening. Julie Powers wrote that training volunteers to conduct the Walk ability survey could be scheduled for late June.

Mike Morofsky questioned whether letter on Code Enforcement had been written. Karl said that due to other activities he did not get it done. In response to Mike's question about sending a letter expressing our concern about the loss of officers, Carol Wood said the budget is finalized, labor groups are negotiating and it would have no effect.

Area 1 - Mike has been in touch with the owner of the vacant house at 1630 Gordon after an incident with a dog falling into the pool and having to be rescued. The pool has since been pumped out. It appears that there are no new plans for that house in the near future. The moldy odor in the air is gone for the time being since the GM Grand River Plant is on shutdown. The curb on Cooper was completed. Dead tree will be looked at by City if it is a danger to the property. Mike noted police data was not current and he would look into that.

Area 2- Jay contacted the realtor handling the property at 1822 Loraine about the high grass. It has since been mowed. He survived his participation in the Hawk Island Triathlon.

Area 3 - Bill had conflict. A question was asked about the expiration date nearing for the property off Pleasant Grove road containing the wetlands. Carol apprised us that a wetland designation never expires and according to the DEQ, if an owner is allowed to fill in a wetland, another has to be created on the same property.

Police Report - Karl spoke to Captain Yankowski about having police crime report and map e-mailed to him prior to the meeting so they could be printed and ready before meeting to allow time to review information. The Captain also said the report would be adjusted to show data closer to meeting dates and he would still have an officer available unless the calls were too heavy.

Code Compliance- Kevin Goforth reported that he has only 5 days left before his layoff. As of June 30th there will be 3 less officers due to budget constraints. Walter Allen will still be working and can be contacted at 483-4335. Scott Sanford will be the new supervisor and he can be reached at 483-6946. The dead tree at 2038 Peggy Place is a Forestry issue and they will have to be contacted about it.

A neighbor reported that in the Lewton area 3 to 5 teens on bikes are canvassing houses and conversing by cell phones with several other teens that are on foot. It is suspected that they might be involved with the recent rash of break-ins and residents should be alert. There are also several reports of gas being siphoned out of cars.

Speakers – Staci Johnson spoke about Cole Academy on Mt. Hope. They are a charter school serving grades K – 6. She mentioned their good MEAP scores and the family environment. Last year their enrollment grew by 40%. They are state and federally funded so there is no additional cost to families who enroll there.

Susan Saltzman, principal of Elmhurst school for the last 5 years, mentioned that they have 300 students currently enrolled in grades K-5 as well as 80 preschool students. Head Start classes as well as 2 classrooms for Autistic children are offered. For 4 out of the last 7 years Elmhurst has received an A grade from the State assessments. Class sizes are from 20 to 25 and they have a literacy teacher as well as before and after school programs, Boy Scouts and a chess club. They have an active PTA and banking. All students get free breakfast and some students get subsidized

lunches. She mentioned that CVNA member Evie Bush is PTA Treasurer and she comes in every Friday to make popcorn for the students.

Lansing Charter Academy was represented by Principal Marcus Puccioni. Their school offers K -6 as well as “young 5’s” and will be adding 7th grade this year and 8th grade next year. They had 380 students this year and will have 580 next year. Their goal is to prepare students for college with a program of 4 pillars. The first pillar is academic excellence: students are tested in January and May to see if they are performing at grade level and given remedial help if they are falling behind. The second pillar is moral focus: they have a school creed with a monthly focus given to practical applications. The third pillar is parental partnership: twice a year parents are given a survey to fill out so they can give the school feedback. Activity schedules are set for 3 months at a time to enable parents to plan their schedule around activities. The fourth pillar is student responsibility: if a student violates the creed, they have a discussion with them about why they made the choices they did.

All three schools said that someone is there in the summer if anyone wants to stop in, ask questions or enroll.

City Council – Carol Wood told us that the budget was passed on May 16th. The Mayor is asking for 3.3 million in concessions from City workers. Carol said that they have not had a raise in 4 years and are now paying substantially more for their health coverage. The city is losing 44 police officers and 37 firefighters. One million dollars will be taken out of the Rainy Day fund again this year.

There will be several public meetings to discuss the marijuana ordinance; one is June 16th, June 23rd in the Gibson’s ramp downtown and another at the City Council meeting Monday. She encouraged us to make our opinions heard. East Lansing has designated shops to be located only in industrial areas which allow 8 to 10 permits in the city. Ann Arbor is allowing only 20 for their city and Grand Rapids is not allowing any dispensaries there. A Lynne Robinson, 3rd Ward representative, said that 50% of those she represents want no restrictions.

Mike asked Carol if she was taking campaign donations from people who run dispensaries. She emphatically replied no; she does not take money for issues currently being voted on. An excellent question was asked regarding what qualifications a person needs to dispense. As far as is known, there is no medical expertise required. Some people are asking for curbside service and deliveries at these facilities. It was also mentioned that some shops are selling baked goods, lollipops and sausage with marijuana in them and is this not regulated by food standards.

Derrick Quinney was asked by Mike if he has taken campaign donations from those operating dispensaries and he replied that yes he has and that he takes donations from many interests.

County Commissioner- Vic Celentino and Dale Copedge reported they have a 5 million deficit and are losing 1.4 million in funds from the State. The sinking of the railroad tracks by the Flapjack on Waverly Road was brought up. Vic has spoken to CSX and after they fix the tracks then the road commission can do resurfacing. Dale passed out a brochure detailing legal services available for those who were illegally foreclosed on. The commission passed a resolution last night allowing funds for assisted victims based on need. The new 911 center on Jolly road will be open in March of 2012. They are currently in the bidding process. Dale was congratulated on receiving the Boy Scouts annual award for service. He is a unit commissioner for the Scouts and has been a pack leader for 11 years.

SLDA – Chris Herrmann said that soon he will be sending out a survey to residents asking what direction they would like to see our area take, especially Colonial Village shopping center. Many of the questions are based on information gleaned from the previous meetings on this topic. He mentioned that the Triathlon went well and congratulated Jay for his participation. He is interested in volunteers to participate in the “First Impressions” swap. This involves going to another area and giving feedback on how you perceive businesses and community atmosphere. The new Market Fresh store at MLK and Jolly is struggling but improving.

Mike mentioned that the repair to the broken water main behind the closed L&L in Colonial Village is now sinking. Carol will notify the proper department.

Announcements - Lewton association is holding their annual garage sale on June 18th.; Colonial Village Baptist church will be having a car show on August 16th; CATA is offering free bus rides to Hawk Island Park this summer and kids are admitted free if they come on the bus; Anita asked for volunteers to help with the picnic and said this year we will be promoting small businesses run by neighborhood residents.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45.
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