



10-19-11
Count 30

Colonial Village Neighborhood Association

Present: Karl Biasi, Mike Morofsky, Jay Knapp, Shawn Cox and Kathy Miles.
Karl called the meeting to order at 7:00 with introductions and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Treasurers Report- The beginning balance as of 6-1-11 was \$1, 4242.42. Income was \$219.37 and expenses for the picnic were \$683.49. Our balance as of 9-30-11 is \$960.30

President- Karl spoke about the dedication of the resurfaced tennis courts at Elmhurst. He also asked that if anyone had ideas for speakers at our meetings that they get in touch with him. The results of the survey regarding ideas for Colonial Village shopping center have been tabulated. Economic Development has given a \$25,000.00 grant to help spur interest in acquiring new tenants. Karl has been asked by the City Council to represent the third Ward on the Park Naturalization committee.

Area 1- Mike reported that a yard on Chatham has not been mowed since June. He has reported in to Code compliance with no results. There is also a problem with neighbors near the Colonial Village sign on Mt. Hope having trash and multiple sales on the corner to the point of obscuring the sign. A'Lynne mentioned the offenders are in the second house from the corner. It is being looked into. Carol Wood said part of the difficulty in getting results from Code officers is that they are not currently specifically assigned to one area of the city as in the past but are being sent all over to inspect rentals. Layoffs have made it very difficult for them to keep up with demand for services. Mike also had new copies of lists with telephone numbers and contact information for services. We now come under Team 8 with the police department and have a new sergeant assigned to us. Her name is Ruiz.

Area 2- No report.

Area 3- No report.

City Clerk- Chris Swope spoke about the boundary changes which will divide the association into 2 Wards along Victor Street. These changes are mandated by the Census results based on population reports. Elmhurst school will still be our voting precinct. Residents north of Victor will now be in the 4th Ward and will be represented by Jessica Yoroko. These changes will go into effect after the November elections. Mike mentioned that since the census many more people have moved out of the neighborhood and asked if there was any possibility of appealing this change. Mr. Swope said it has already been voted in and will be that way until the next census.

Ballot Proposals- Charter- Chris Swope said that it is part of State law that every 12 years we vote on whether to revise the City Charter. If passed, a 9-member committee would be chosen in February by special election. That panel would propose changes which would have to be approved by the voters. If their changes are not passed on the first ballot, they could still hold 2 more elections to try and get them passed. The cost of a citywide election is approximately \$60,000.00. Pay for the panel would be determined by the City Council and staffing would be provided by the City Clerk's office. Legal advice would also have to be provided and paid for.

Millage- Jerry Ambrose from the Mayor's office informed us that the Millage request would reverse the Headley amendment and raise the amount from 15.44 to 19.44 with a ceiling of 20 mills. Four Mills is equivalent to approximately \$200.00. He said that a combination of less income and property taxes as well as

less revenue sharing from the State has caused the budget deficit. He did acknowledge that residents who have lived in their houses a long time will probably see a raise in their taxes and that assessed values will fall by another 10% this year. While City staffing has been cut by 28% the City's Bond rating has recently been down rated because we are not cutting expenses fast enough. According to Mr. Ambrose the money raised would only go to Police, Fire and roads for the entire 5 years of the Millage. He acknowledged that even if the measure passes police and fire department staffing levels will still be reduced. He described current staff as adequate for priority one calls with a response time of 4 to 6 minutes and 8 minutes for a second call in that time frame. Three fire stations have been closed this year and 5 rigs taken out of service. The phrase "essential services" describes road maintenance according to Mr. Ambrose. Karl mentioned that at one time a 'road use tax' was proposed for road maintenance but never passed. Carol said that actually 7 million dollars was allocated for that purpose. Mr. Ambrose said the police and fire costs comprise half of the City budget.

Red Cedar sale- Karl Dorschimer from Economic Development said that Approval of this measure would authorize the sale of 12 acres along Michigan Avenue for development of retail and commercial uses. The remainder of the land would be used as a park. The cleanup of runoff pollution from Frandor into the river is expected go forward whether the ballot proposal passes or not. The department of Public Service normally pays for this type of improvements but could pass the cost on to property owners. A question was asked why the words "dispose of" are included in the ballot language but he was vague on that point and said the City Council has the final say.

Mr. Ambrose passed out a list of sites that may be of help to residents:

City of Lansing Performance Dashboard – http://lansingmi.gov/Lansing/finance/Lansing_Dashboard.pdf

Citizen's Guide to City Finances – <http://www.lansingmi.gov/Lansing/UserGuideFinalSep2011.pdf>

Frequently Asked Questions on Ballot Proposal –

http://www.lansingmi.gov/Lansing/Nov8Millage/Ballot_question_faq_10_3_2011

Estimate Your Property Tax Millage – <http://www.lansingmi.gov/finance/incometax/millagecalc.jsp>

A comment was raised about how confusing boundaries are between Lansing, East Lansing and Lansing Township. Currently the boundary between Lansing and East Lansing is by Friendship Manor and across the street by the old Sawyers dealership. Karl Dorschmier said that the separate entities are working on that.

Mike reminded us that newsletters will be going out at the end of the month. He also cautioned residents not to rake leaves in the street as this is a hazard and a Code violation. Dr. Graesser mentioned that the lawn services are the worst violators of this. Carol said if we get the name and number of the business, City Council can send them a letter. Mr. Ambrose suggested we call the Public Service hotline at 483-4161 at the time of violation.

A lady who lives on Lenore came specifically to voice her concern about a rat problem she has been having all summer. She was told by someone from the city that this is a "grey area" and also has had no response from the Mayor's office. She hired a private exterminator who told her that when you see them in daylight hours that means you have a significant infestation. A member on Kelsey said that she had to remove her basement toilet since rats were coming in that way. Kathy said that several of her neighbors on Woodbine are also having trouble with rats. Mike says this is addressed in the Code book and she should call Bob Johnson. Mr. Ambrose also took her name and promised to get back to her.

Karl dismissed us at 8:28.

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