

**West End Civic Association
Board Meeting Minutes
Connecticut Conference of United Church of Christ
January 6, 2014**

Present: Amy Bergquist, Gail Billet, Val Bryan, Dorothy Lovett Buckley, Stephen Cohen, David Jorgensen, Lucas Karmazinas, David Klein, Jan Klein, Sally Lerman, Bongsi Magubane, Alan Paluck, Elvia Strom, Gretchen Unfried-English, Royce Vehslage, Sally Weisman and Florence Wolff-Nicholas. Also in attendance: Fi Bookwalter and Caroline Finnegan

Gail Billet called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

1. Minutes

Motion 1: David Klein moved to approve the minutes of the December 3, 2013 meeting, with a second from Amy Bergquist. Passed – 15 In Favor, 0 Opposed, 2 Abstentions (Gretchen Unfried-English and David Jorgensen).

2. Financial Report

David Klein presented the financial report for year-end 2013 and a draft budget for 2014.

Regarding the year-end 2013 budget, David reported that very strong membership dues in December combined with an earlier overage for DineAround resulted in a \$5,000 surplus income. In addition, WECA experienced lower than planned expenses in a number of areas, resulting in total expenses of \$14,000 less than planned. Operating expenses were \$4,000 less than anticipated dues to no equipment purchases and no Southeast Sector newsletter delivery. Committee expenditures were impacted positively by nearly \$10,000 due to success of the GardenAround of \$5,000, no youth activity (\$2,000) and expenditures by the Education Committee (\$1,500 less than planned). Grants were on budget. The final numbers show a surplus of \$4,270 compared to a planned loss of \$14,898 - about \$19,000 better than planned.

Regarding the 2014 budget, David reported that he included all board member requests that were submitted and, in the case of the Social Activities Committee, \$3,000 was budgeted after a conversation with the chair. A total of \$8,000 has been budgeted for grants which is consistent with prior budgets. The Grants Committee may recommend more if they feel it is appropriate. David stated that Movies in the Park will continue and suggested a movie night at the empty lot on Evergreen if Ken Lerman is willing to coordinate it on the schedule. Although the budget reflects a significant deficit, David explained that we have the funds to justify the spending and historically, we have not spent all budgeted funds and income has been slightly better than planned.

Val suggested that committees come to the board for requests over \$100. David explained that it is important for the committees to have flexibility and that once an amount is budgeted, it is up to the committee to spend within their budget as long as it is within WECA's mission.

It was discussed and agreed that Hartford Blooms should come in as a grant proposal and not as a line item for the Social Activities Committee.

Motion 2: David Jorgensen moved to approve the 2014 WECA Budget, with a second from Sally Lerman. Passed unanimously.

3. Agenda Items

- Thom Deller / Shawn Wooden Meeting Regarding Farmington Avenue

Gail reported that Thom Deller has been going out to other NRZs to see what their issues are and how we can address the issues regarding Farmington Avenue. Members expressed concern regarding several issues including safety, traffic, lighting, garbage, crime and no crosswalks. Gail proposed holding an open community meeting with a board committee reporting back to Thom to then address at a meeting. After discussion, it was the consensus of the board to hold a large community meeting on Thursday, January 23 at 7pm at a location to be determined. Gail stated that she would reach out to the FABD and the FAA to attend and help publicize. The board discussed the meeting format at length and whether Thom and Shawn should be present. It was the consensus of the board that the January 23 meeting be an open community meeting without Thom and Shawn, followed by a discussion by the board at its February 3 board meeting, which will then be shared with Thom and Shawn.

- WECA Mission Statement Discussion

Gail thanked everyone who submitted draft mission statements and distributed copies of all submissions for discussion. The board discussed the proposed statements at length, with consensus that a new mission statement is needed. Members discussed the purpose and goals of a mission statement as well as content. The board discussed whether a list of values should be included in the mission statement or, as an alternative, be included in a separate vision statement. Members questioned whether identified values, such as inclusiveness, mean the same thing to all members of the board and the community. The board discussed whether WECA's mission is one of social services and whether wording in the mission statement might be construed to that effect.

David Jorgensen stated that he served on a nonprofit board that surveyed its board members to identify values, activities and mission. It was agreed that he would share the survey with Gail to distribute to the board to complete before the next meeting.

- 2014 Priorities

Gail reviewed the NRZ priorities plan for the West End and provided updates for listed projects. It was agreed that several projects had been completed and others would rollover for another year, including the project with Knox Parks and issues such as traffic calming and speed tables. Progress has been made regarding location of the Farmer's Market, historic preservation, education and items such as greening.

Gail shared that interest was expressed in a membership application regarding housing. David Klein stated that housing was once a standing committee of the board but ceased to exist due to lack of a chair. The board discussed whether the FABD could become a committee on the board.

Val stated that we need a goal for providing educational and cultural experiences to the neighborhoods.

4. Sector Reports

Central East: Gretchen Unfried-English reported that a sector meeting is scheduled for January 15th at 6pm at the home of Jory Johnson and Nancy Boone. Dorothy shared that there is concern for a proposed MacDonalds on Farmington Avenue. Gail responded that John Gale is involved in the process which involves zoning.

Southwest: Alan and Elvia reported that a sector meeting is planned for February.

5. Committee Reports

- Education

Bongi reported that the December 10 open meeting featuring the Hartford school board representatives was cancelled due to bad weather. A snow date was not originally set and the committee decided not to reschedule.

- Architectural History and Resources

Lucas reported that the webpage is being restructured and welcomes feedback.

- Community Building

Val described a storytelling event that was held at the home of Liz Gruber on Tremont Street and envisions similar events on other blocks. She is exploring the opportunity for a series of storytelling workshops to be led by Liz.

- DineAround the West End

Fi and Jan reported that there are more costs involved this year due to the opening reception venue at the law school, but a positive is that the larger location provides the opportunity for more people to attend. The committee is considering a different RSVP approach for next year due to the overwhelming response numbers and the speed in which the event sold out.

- Public Safety

David Jorgensen reported that activity is down due to the colder weather with the exception of ongoing nuisance issues during late hours on Farmington Avenue.

- Social Activities

Florence provided an update on the Hartford Blooms event and stated that volunteers are needed. She said that Steve Fournier hopes to hold an ice sculpture activity, conditioned on the weather and a perfect snow.

6. Other Business

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.