

**West End Civic Association
Board Meeting Minutes
Connecticut Conference United Church of Christ
March 3, 2015**

PRESENT: Amy Bergquist, Gail Billet, Val Bryan, Dorothy Lovett Buckley, Otis Cox, Rick DuVerger, Abigail Dym, Ruth Fortune, John Gale, Lucas Karmazinas, David Klein, Jan Klein, Kelly Loveday, Bongsi Magubane, Kurt Malec, Phillip Stampull, Fred Thornley, Florence Wolff-Nicholas.

Also in attendance: Mark Fisher, Francisco Gomez, Mark Tamaccio.

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

1. FEBRUARY MEETING MINUTES

David Klein moved to approve the minutes from the February 3, 2015 meeting, with a second by Rick DuVerger. The motion passed unanimously.

2. FINANCIAL UPDATE

David Klein presented the financial update. The 2015 membership campaign collected another \$1,100 last month bringing the total to \$19,000. The DineAround raised a total of \$22,612. This is the strongest financial state WECA has been in throughout David's 12 years as the Treasurer.

The March newsletter was mailed. Multiple board members said they had received it, so this seemed like a successful venture.

3. EAST LAWN UPDATE

Mark Tomaccio announced that Matt Ritter helped secure a \$100,000 grant for the East Lawn. The time table for this project is 2015.

Mark Fisher and Francisco Gomez presented the design for the project. Its goal is to enhance and improve gateways into the Park. A task force was created in 2012 to develop a plan and address the concerns for Elizabeth Park. They listed the unidentifiable entrances and issues related to the basketball court as areas in need of improvement. First, the stairs on N Beacon will be restored. Second, the neighborhood entrance, across from Oxford Street, will be revamped to a casual, family oriented entrance. Third, the Whitney/Elizabeth Street and Whitney/Asylum entrances will be improved. Given the proposed changes and the fact that the ruts and mud are a result of trucks entering to do work, a maintenance entrance off of Asylum might work better.

Mark showed some neighborhood entrances at Oxford Street. The design will replicate other designs throughout the Park. Few, if any, trees will be removed.

Mark presented three options for the East Lawn, requested and received some feedback. Amy Bergquist thought the engraved entrance option is more practical.

Although outside the scope and budget of this project, Francisco shared that ultimately the changes will be enhanced by moving all parking to one side of the street to improve mobility and make it safer for the kids. The City will fund the parking project. Also, additional changes to the basketball court will not be addressed in this project since the city plans to service all courts.

In order for the East Lawn project to move forward, WECA's approval as an NRZ is needed.

Motion

David Klein moves that WECA acting as an NRZ endorses the direction of the design for the project of the East Lawn from the City and its consultants. John Gale seconded the motion. All were in favor.

4. FINALIZE MARCH 10 GENERAL MEETING

In light of the fact that the Hartford Superintendent can no longer make the March meeting, WECA agreed to the following: Kelly Loveday to pitch the Farmers' Market, Lucas Karmazinas to discuss the Historic Tax Credit, JoAnne Bauer to talk about the Vest Pocket grants to get more gardens in the SE sector, Val Bryan to make a community building announcement and the i-84 team to present changes for the highway.

5. OUTREACH CALLS TO MEMBERS

The outreach calls were made by the volunteers. Gail spoke with some members who are interested in getting more involved with the Beautification Committee in the fall. David Klein forwarded names of interested people to their respective committees. Jan Klein said she gained two new volunteers through the calls for the DineAround Committee. Upon receiving a call, some of the members on the calling list explained they checked off activities and projects they thought WECA ought to continue doing, not activities they want to get more involved in personally.

6. UCONN HOUSING UPDATE

Gail announced that Dwight Merriman submitted a plan for the UConn housing. He's still working on the funding and is hoping there will be a public meeting with P&Z in March or April. The plans are still not concrete and there is no funding. Perhaps they should have another meeting with WECA for NRZ approval.

7. FOODSHARE HUNGER ACTION TEAM

Gail announced Foodshare is going out to the neighborhood and asking folks to form teams to do away with hunger in the community. Does anyone want to participate? The e-news provided contact information for those interested.

8. PARK WATERSHED

Gail announced Mary Pelletier wants to come to the Board to speak about the watershed. All are in agreement with her coming to address the board for 10 minutes contingent upon prior submission of her presentation to Gail.

9. NOAH WEBSTER UPDATE, PARKING AND FESTIVAL

The Best and Brightest Festival is on May 9. Noah Webster asked WECA to be more involved. WECA will provide food trucks and an article in the WECA newsletter and e-news.

The board discussed the process for finding a new WECA President. Gretchen Unfried is interested in joining the Nominating Committee. Cindy Courtney from the north sector and Alan Paluck from the South Sector will also be on the committee. No one has expressed interest in being President. Rick DuVerger is stepping down when his term ends and has found someone to replace him.

Elizabeth Park offered its tents for use by WECA on June 20 following the Hartford Blooms/Rose Festival. While appreciative of the offer, WECA does not need to use the tents.

Mike McGerry is asking WECA for \$500 for Hartford Blooms for advertising. All agreed to use \$1,700 for Charlie's East Lawn projects and earmark \$1,000 to Lelaneia Dubay. Lelaneia will then decide how to use the money, half of which she can donate to Mike McGarry.

10. MARTHA SHAW TRIBUTE

WECA agreed to make a \$100 donation to Knox Park on behalf of Martha Shaw.

11. SECTOR UPDATES

Southwest: Fred Thornley is disappointed the Superintendent is not coming to the March 10 general meeting but understands she has another commitment.

Central: Dorothy Lovett Buckley and Jory Johnson will hold a sector meeting on March 11. Dorothy also announced that ordinances for boarding houses are being discussed and are up for change.

North: Kurt held a sector meeting. The sector wants a letter from WECA expressing its support of zoning laws. Kurt advised they reference the Strategic Plan which states in writing that WECA supports R8 zoning and the upholding of zoning laws.

Some in sector heard of rumors that the definition of family is being updated and fear that R8 zoning will be obliterated. The sector wants to circulate a petition to support not changing the zoning law.

Southeast: Nothing new from Otis Cox.

12. COMMITTEE UPDATES

DineAround: Jan Klein said the DineAround Committee is officially in hibernation.

Farmers' Market: Kelly Loveday and Caroline are hard at work planning the next Farmers' Market.

Architectural History and Resources: Lucas Karmazinas announced he and Jan Klein will hold a tax credit workshop on April 29th.

Social Committee: Florence Wolff-Nicholas said she would like to move the garage sale from June to the fall due to scheduling conflicts.

13. OTHER BUSINESS

Gail relayed Lindsey Karl's request for more support from WECA in order to have more community based gardens. Lindsey is looking for people to plant and maintain the gardens. Kurt Malec is concerned the gardens could get messy and visually unattractive if not well cared for due to lack of manpower. There was a general sense among those present that at this time WECA doesn't have the resources to provide the manpower.

David Klein entered into a contract for the WECA website based a referral from David Jorgensen. He's in the process of getting a WECA domain name. Kurt Malec agreed to help with the revamping of the website.

Gail, John Gale and Bongi Magubane met with Noah Webster and the City Parking Authority. The school is having issues with parking and congestion. The school proposes making Tremont and Cone one way streets at all times. Bongi suggested that the school considers meeting the kids at their parents' cars and taking them into the school to reduce congestion and speed along the drop off.

The school also needs to have a PTA meeting to discuss with parents. More to come on this situation.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.