

**West End Civic Association  
Board Meeting Minutes  
Connecticut Conference United Church of Christ  
May 5, 2015**

**PRESENT:** Amy Bergquist, Gail Billet, Fi Bookwalter, Val Bryan, Dorothy Lovett Buckley, Otis Cox, Rick DuVerger, Ruth Fortune, David Jorgensen, Lakisher Hurst, David Klein, Jan Klein, Kelly Loveday, Bongsi Magubane, Kurt Malec, Charlie Ortiz, Alan Paluck, Arnold Skretta, Fred Thornley.

Gail Billet called the meeting to order at 7:05p.m.

**1. APRIL MEETING MINUTES**

David Klein moved to approve the minutes from the April 7, 2015 meeting, with a second by Val Bryan. The motion passed unanimously.

**2. FINANCIAL UPDATE**

David Klein presented the financial update. Membership continues its steady growth and brought in \$450 last month. AH&R continues to sell plaques at a brisk pace and brought in \$340. The first paid ad was featured in the e-news.

WECA reached an agreement with the United Methodist Church for the use of their meeting space as follows: \$1,000 for the 8 regular meetings (4 General and 4 others) and \$500 for the 10 Public Safety Committee meetings. WECA also paid the balance of \$500 from 2014 and half of 2015 anticipated costs. Set up costs are additional and billed at \$25 per hour.

WECA paid Jeff Hill \$200 for parts and labor to repair the kiosk at the Evergreen Community Garden. The Farmers' Market had expenses of \$1,620 and income of \$2,133, thus had a positive contribution. Additional income is expected shortly.

WECA also paid the \$1,000 grant to Hartford Blooms.

**3. MAY 19 CANDIDATES MEETING UPDATE**

Gail said all 6 mayoral candidates have agreed to come. Perhaps each candidate should have 3 minutes. We agreed to have prepared questions to share with the candidates, as well as impromptu questions from the audience. The event will last about 2 hours.

**4. BRIGHTEST AND BEST FESTIVAL UPDATE**

Gail reminded everyone that the Brightest and Best Festival is Saturday May 9. Bear's BBQ will come to serve food. Gail agreed with Otis Cox to put some flyers in the kiosk to better advertise the event to the community. Food will be served from 2PM-4PM.

**5. ROOMING HOUSE ZONING LANGUAGE**

Gail announced that John Gale, Toni Gold and others have put together a list of 13 language changes they would like WECA to be supportive of concerning rooming houses in the West End.

Gail passed around a copy of the rules and emailed them prior to the meeting. John had a meeting with P&Z and they unanimously supported these changes.

### **Motion**

David Klein would like to move that WECA adopts the recommendations of the P&Z Committee, with a second by David Jorgenson. The motion passed unanimously.

### **6. WEST END BANNERS**

Gail said the Mohegan Sun would like to place new banners in the neighborhood. More details must be provided in order for WECA to accept or reject the request.

### **7. DISCUSSION ON COMMITTEE CHANGES, KEEP CURRENT/ADD NEW?**

Gail said Toni Gold asks the Board to consider a transportation committee. Ms. Gold currently represents WECA on the i-84 plans and would like to actively participate in the traffic calming endeavors. David Klein said WECA uses the Public Safety Committee for traffic related issues, but the i-84 and traffic calming issues should be kept separate. David Jorgensen added that his committee identified three priorities and has focused on them. The next priority is the Noah Webster traffic issue. Mr. Jorgensen is willing to work with Ms. Gold through the Public Safety Committee. Mr. Jorgensen said things are getting done, although not as quickly as they would like.

In response to a question, Mr. Jorgensen said he can help with targeted enforcement, if needed, by requesting it from the Police Department. He also informed WECA that the residents on N Beacon sent him a letter requesting speed bumps on their street.

Gail brought up that WECA should not publicize the Seniors Committee and Housing Committee. Both are currently inactive. Should WECA keep those committees in place? Some suggested that we mark the vacancy for those committees on the website and remove the comments section since there is no committee chair to monitor the comments. Furthermore, the website should redirect folks with seniors and housing questions to other channels more equipped to assist them.

### **8. GRANTS DISCUSSION AND VOTING**

Gail passed around a list of all the grant applicants and amount requested. She proceeded to go over each applicant and provided a summary of the Grant Committee's rationale for its decision to grant or not to grant. Generally, applicants who requested funds that directly benefit West End residents were approved, while those who requested funds for projects indirectly related to the West End and for compensation were denied. Grant recipients will report to WECA to ensure funds are spent for the purpose allocated.

**Camp Courant:** Yes to this applicant without discussion. The grant will allow several children from the West End to enroll and participate in their summer camp program. This was also granted in 2014.

**Hartford Stage:** Yes to this applicant. This award will allow 48 West Enders to attend the presentation of “A Christmas Carol” this coming winter. Hartford Stage will provide transportation to and from the event. They will work with the local schools to identify candidates to participate.

**Hope Child Care:** No to this applicant. The funds requested would primarily help the daycare stay afloat during a time of hardship. This does not directly benefit the West End or its residents.

**Venom Vintage:** Yes to this applicant. This grant will promote cross generational arts activities, later this summer, in the space at Venom Vintage 3 days a week. Seniors, adults, teens and children will have an opportunity to participate in classes that include music and visual arts.

**Our Piece of the Pie (OPP):** No to this applicant. The request is for a sponsorship.

**Elizabeth Park:** Yes to this applicant for \$2,000, not the full \$4,000 requested. The funds will go towards the music for the Wednesday night concerts at Elizabeth Park. WECA can put up a marketing tent at Hartford Bloom and the Wednesday night concerts. Along with our movies in the park, WECA is a strong supporter of the programs offered in Elizabeth Park, which are enjoyed by so many in the West End.

**Community Resilience:** No this applicant. The funds pay for the space and snacks to allow people to gather and share their thoughts on how to improve things in the West End.

**From Air to Air:** No to this applicant. Classical Magnet requested this grant primarily for compensation in exchange for the time spent with students. If approved, they would target West End students.

**Knox Park – Evergreen Community Garden:** Yes to this applicant for \$2,000, not the full \$2,500 requested. The funds will go towards rejuvenating the community garden and purchasing needed materials for the job. The community garden on Evergreen is an important part of the southeast sector. Knox Park and community members will work to refurbish the park, its gardens and the plantings around this space.

**West End Birding:** No to this applicant. The funds would primarily compensate the applicant for her time and pay for snacks during 8 bird watching excursions for West End residents, followed by a brief survey.

**Sherril’s Tap Dancing:** No to this applicant. The funds would primarily cover the renting of the space and other expenses. Kids who wish to tap dance would still need to pay for the lessons.

**Playhouse Theater:** No to this applicant. The funds would primarily help with the theater’s operating budget.

Kurt Malec, a member of the Grant Committee, proposed that WECA creates a standard grant application to help streamline the process of reviewing the applications. The rest of the Committee supported the recommendation.

### **Motion**

David Klein moved that WECA adopts the recommendation of creating a standard grant application. Amy Bergquist seconded. The motion passed unanimous.

## **9. SECTOR UPDATES**

**Southwest Sector:** There will be a sector meeting on May 13 at Arnold Skretta's house.

**Central East:** Dorothy Lovett Buckley and Jory Johnson are hosting a sector meeting.

**Southeast Sector:** Otis Cox said they passed out flyers about the vest packets and has not received any feedback from the renters and owners.

**North Sector:** Kurt Malec said his constituents are concerned about the car tax. Some people are considering innovative ways to minimize their car taxes.

The sector is planning a block party, possibly on June 20. One neighbor volunteered her electricity. There will be an ice cream truck and possibly a pizza truck. The entire community is invited and Mr. Malec hopes to raise awareness and money for WECA.

## **10. COMMITTEE UPDATES**

**Newsletter:** Kurt Malec requested all newsletter requests for upcoming events from June to September by the 8<sup>th</sup>. Since the delivery process worked out well last time, the same process will be implemented this time.

**Farmers' Market:** Kelly Loveday announced that the Farmers' Market received a \$1,000 grant from Watkinson School to use towards market expenses, namely the doubling of SNAP benefits. They were also placed on the list of possible projects for funding through the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. They will have several new vendors this year, including a rotation of prepared food vendors, such as Bear's Barbeque and Mercado. Both Hartford Baking Company and Rose's Berry Farm will be returning this season.

**Architectural History and Resources:** Jan Klein said they had another successful info session about the tax credit with over 50 people in attendance. They will continue to promote this event and continue to have every 6 months.

**Public Safety:** Jorgensen said there were a few robbery type incidents. Many of the issues originate from Capital Ave then push into the West End. On Warrenton and South Whitney, a few people were robbed likely by the same offenders. The police are aware and are working to arrest the offenders.

53 Beacon is not within the West End and has traffic concerns. Gail relayed the concerns to people who can help.

Jan Klein said there is someone living in his car on Girard and it was reported to the police. The individual was kicked out of his parents' house in West Hartford for drug issues.

There is not update on the package thief.

**Education Committee:** Bongsi Magubane announced she is hosting a meeting on Wednesday, May 13 at 54 Goodwin Circle. All are invited. The West Middle School PTA wants to establish a relationship with WECA and wants WECA to embrace the West End kids in the school. The PTA wants to improve the reputation of schools in Hartford. The school has outperformed its peers. They want WECA to partner with them.

Ms. Magubane is also getting ready for the Noah Webster Honor student party.

David Jorgensen said the school lottery this year has been delayed several times. He is still waiting to hear about whether or not his kids got into the schools of their choice. If they don't get into the schools they want to go to, it could be too late to consider other alternatives. Last year the school lottery results were announced in June.

Jan Klein said the Museum Academy has a lot of West End kids. The West End parents might be interested in connecting with WECA.

**Community Building:** Val Bryan is hosting the plant swap in her driveway. The date is to be announced. She feels discouraged about this committee due to lack of involvement.

## **11. OTHER BUSINESS**

David Klein said the website is at the point where Lakisher Hurst gets involved and updates the content. The designer will provide the tools so WECA can update content and continue the maintenance of the website. Jan Klein disagreed and said the website looks unfinished and the designer ought to spend more time working on it. The AH&R comments and updates to the designer were made implemented.

Gail said WECA sent the designer feedback. The designer's goal now is to get together with Ms. Hurst in order to update the content together.

David Jorgensen said web design and build is very different than content. It's unfair to expect the designer to have the intimate knowledge for the content.

Kurt Malec said he and Ms. Hurst can make the updates easily.

Amy Bergquist said someone reached out to her about poetry on porches. Gail said the same person contacted her and she redirected the request to a more proper channel.

Alan Paluck said the Nomination Committee will announce the Presidential candidates at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 p.m.