

**West End Civic Association and NRZ
Board Meeting Minutes
United Methodist Church
December 13, 2016**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Kyle Bergquist, Fi Bookwalter, Dorothy Lovett Buckley, Cristina Chillogalli, Max Condren, Ruth Fortune, Lakisher Hurst, Bongsi Magubane, Kurt Malec, Jamie McPike, Guy Newmann, Angela Pomfret, Anne Thompson.

ALSO PRESENT: Ricardo Ball (WECA Intern), Hartford Police Department (HPD) – Lieutenant Michael Cacioli, Deputy Chief Brian Foley, Sergeant David Marinelli, Chief James Rovella, Officer Joseph Sherbo, Members of the Community – David Barrett, John Gale, Kevin Henry and more.

Meeting opens at 7:10pm.

1. WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Magubane welcomed everyone and said this is the first attempt to integrate the Board meeting with other WECA meetings. The members of the HPD and Laura Settlemyer, Hartford's new Blight Director, will join the meeting at 7:30pm.

2. MINUTES

Ms. Fortune moved to approve the November minutes with a second from Mr. Malec. The motion passed unanimously.

Moving forward action items from the meetings ought to go out immediately. The minutes should be mailed at least a week before the next meeting.

3. FINANCIAL UPDATE

Mr. Malec said membership is off to a good start. About 15 people joined online and PayPal takes their donations immediately but keeps a small cut.

4. DINEAROUND

Ms. Bookwalter said the first wave of invitations went out last Saturday. The second wave will go out on December 14. This year's DineAround is intentionally smaller. It will have 28 hosts and 246 seats compared to last year's 32 hosts and 270+ seats. The Watkinson School will host and cover the cost of the DineAround host reception.

5. NEWSLETTER

Mr. Malec said WECA needs to figure out what to do with the print newsletter. It's difficult to get quality content. Mr. Ball volunteered to help compile/generate content and Mr. Malec will continue the design/layout. Perhaps the money spent on the newsletter could go towards the Membership Committee's budget.

Ms. Magubane said she finds the Asylum Hill newsletter very informative. Perhaps WECA should reconsider the scope of content to include in the newsletter.

Mr. Barrett, a past WECA President, said it was always a struggle to find content for the newsletter.

The newsletter will be discussed in further details at the January 3 meeting.

6. HARTFORD DECIDES

Mr. Condren said \$250,000 was approved for capital expenditures and the process for year 2 is off to a good start. Action teams will meet on December 17 at 10am at Hartford Public Library. The projects with the top votes from year 1 will be implemented this year.

Ms. Magubane said people want to hear how the projects are progressing because there were many good ideas and suggested having a 2-year cycle so the new project is launched at the completion of the previous successful project.

7. CHIEF OF POLICE UPDATE

During a question and answer style format, Chief Rovella shared some information with all present. The HPD was late in learning about the package theft situation in the West End. As soon as they found out there was a pattern, they put detectives on the case and one key thief was captured right away. The thief subsequently confessed to other crimes and gave up two partners in crime. Deputy Chief Brian Foley said the HPD will continue an in-depth operation and wants to incorporate new technology in the process.

Car break-ins slowed down significantly with one arrest, but things can change. The HPD strongly advises residents not to leave valuables in plain view in the car.

Neighbors are encouraged to post about crimes on social media and to alert the HPD. Only 22% of people call about shots fired. Deputy Chief Foley receives about 500 anonymous tips a year and welcomes more tips.

Chief Rovella said Phase 1 of the Crime Center, a high-tech data collection hub, is done completed. Phase 2 began and is funded. Phase 3 is designed and funded. There will be lots of cameras going up at major intersections and near schools/libraries. There may be a Phase 4 on quality of life issues. The HPD received a technology grant (TIPS) of \$246,000. Chief Rovella welcomes visits and tours of the Crime Center at 50 Jennings Rd.

There's a way to give the HPD access to what is captured on personal cameras in private premises. One such video led to an arrest in the case of a 10-year old shot in Hartford.

The HPD currently has 326 officers and had over 500 officers at times. Based on staffing studies by population, square mileage and crime levels, 482 officers is a good number for Hartford. The Hartford City Council voted to allow the HPD to now consider the entire pool of applicants during the hiring process, instead of the top 15%.

Shot Spotter, a technology that detects gun shots with 82% accuracy, has been in Hartford for about 3 years in high crime areas. Since April 2016, virtually every resident is covered by Shot Spotter. It comes with special capabilities like the predictive feature to anticipate where future shots will be fired. Chief Rovella said the use of Shot Spotter currently complies with ACLU requirement and the public has not expressed any privacy concerns.

Chief Rovella said the HPD is blessed to not have the officer/civilian shootings that have occurred around the country. But it is a difficult time for police officers, especially with traffic stops and domestic call dispatching.

8. BLIGHT DIRECTOR

Ms. Settlemyer is new to Hartford but has held similar positions in Detroit and New Orleans. She's working on getting input from residents about what they want to see happen and identifying gateway blighted properties. She received a state grant to set up a landbank to hold titles for blighted properties. This will allow her team to physically clean up such properties or clear the titles to make them marketable. Receivership is another process to allow individuals/entities to go on the land, clean it up or improve slightly and be reimbursed once it's sold. Springfield and Baltimore have such a program.

Ms. McPicke will send the WECA blight list to Ms. Settlemyer.

Ms. Settlemyer's team currently consists of 4 people, including Gus Espenosa and 2 inspectors. The goal is to have a team of 7 by bringing in 2 more inspectors and 1 enforcer. She is also looking for interns to help with data gathering.

The City is bringing a zoning enforcer to enforce zoning laws which can prevent future blight.

Mr. Gale said Hartford has a blighted property hotline.

Meeting adjourned at 8:32pm.