

**West End Civic Association
Board Meeting Minutes
Connecticut Conference United Church of Christ
February 2, 2016**

PRESENT: Jim Barry, Joan Bauer, Amy Bergquist, Fi Bookwalter, Dorothy L. Buckley, Cristina Chillogalli, Max Condren, Ruth Fortune, Lakisher Hurst, David Jorgensen, Lucas Karmazinas, David Klein, Jan Klein, Kurt Malec, Guy Neumann, Angela Pomfret, Anne Thompson.

Mr. Malec called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

1. WELCOME

Mr. Malec welcomed everyone.

2. JANUARY MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Klein moved to approve the minutes from the January 12, 2016 meeting with a second from Ms. Chillogalli. The motion passed unanimously.

3. FINANCIAL UPDATE

Mr. Klein said WECA has not yet adopted a budget since he was not present at the January Board meeting. He sought approval from the Board for the tentative budget.

DineAround brought in \$21,000; \$2,600 in membership money came in January on par with previous years. Expenses on the budget are in line with spending from last year with the newsletter mailing as a big expense, assuming 2-3 post office deliveries. Some other key budget items are committee allocations, plaques for AH&R, Farmers' Market, community grants and administrative staff. This leaves WECA with an operating loss of \$9,000 compared to last year's loss of \$6,000.

Mr. Klein moved to approve the budget as proposed with a second from Mr. Jorgensen. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Klein added that WECA carries funds for ArtAround and West End poetry to give them non-profit status.

Mr. Klein currently checks the WECA mailbox weekly.

4. SAFETY MEETING

Mr. Jorgensen provided the safety update and explained his primary function at the board meeting is to provide a safety update. Thus, having Officer Sherbo attend the Board meeting to deliver the same report is redundant.

A couple of officers will attend the March General Meeting which will focus on public safety. One will speak more generally about the state of affairs, while the other will focus more on matters pertinent to the West End.

Mr. Jorgensen informed the group about recent robberies – one included a stabbing. The victim said he recognized his attacker as a kid from the neighborhood. Mr. Jorgensen believes some small gangs are marking their territory.

Mr. Jorgensen reminded the board, as he has done in the past, that Hartford is short about 100 officers. The Department is spending a lot on overtime. The Police Department was considering cutting the Conditions Unit which consists of three officers and is the only proactive arm of the force. Mr. Jorgensen and others spoke against the idea. The Department decided to keep the Conditions Unit. Mayor Bronin vocally committed to hiring about 100 officers. However, it will likely take the next 3 years to fill the positions. There is class that will provide about 50 officers. It takes 12 months for a freshly minted officer to go on duty on their own. It will take 12-24 months to see more cops on the street.

Mr. Klein expressed his concern that there seems to be a lot of officers doing traffic control. Mr. Jorgensen explained that while the officers' wages are covered by the contractors when doing traffic control, it causes some concern about the volume of hours worked. Traffic control is a private job (PJ) which results in much welcome kickbacks for the City. New hires do not get PJs counted towards pensions.

Packages are being stolen off porches and car break-ins continue.

Mr. Neumann inquired about installing cameras in the West End. Mr. Jorgensen said neighbors do not want cameras in the West End. Mr. Neumann said he installed an app called Ring at his house. It's motion activated and the installed camera is controlled through the app. For instance, when the doorbell rings, it records 30-second clips and allows Mr. Neumann to talk through the app as if he was home. It costs \$30 per year and \$200 up front to install. Mr. Neumann strongly recommends it as a way to better secure one's home.

Ms. Hurst will send another email blast reminder the day before to remind everyone about the next public safety meeting.

5. NEWSLETTER

Mr. Malec reminded everyone to send a 100-200 word paragraph for the newsletter about their sector/committee with upcoming events by February 22. Ms. Fortune will send an email reminder to the Board.

6. DINEAROUND FOLLOW UP

Ms. Bookwalter announced DineAround 2016 went well. She received no negative comment about the event. Blue Cherry played at the dessert house and people danced until 1am. Three people cancelled and were promptly replaced; two couples did not show.

7. HARTFORD DECIDES

Mr. Condren provided a status update on the participatory budget, Hartford Decide\$, the very first Participatory Budgeting Program here in Hartford and also the first in the state of CT. Participatory Budgeting is a democratic process in which community members decide how to spend a portion of a municipal budget. This is a process that gives Hartford residents real power over real money. Members of the community come up with ideas for projects that will improve

their neighborhood/community. Those ideas are developed into project proposals. The proposals are put to a citywide vote. The top vote-getters get funding from the \$1,250,000 set aside by the City for capital improvement projects! Hartford residents 13 years of age and older may vote during the voting period March 19 through March 24, 2016.

All are invited to the Community Rally on Saturday, February 13th from 12:30 to 2:30 pm at the Parker Memorial Community Center's gym at 2621 Main St, Hartford, CT. Lunch will be available at 12:30; rally will begin at 1:00 pm. This is a chance to view the proposed projects and ask each action team questions, make suggestions about the project, and get more information about the projects and Hartford Decide\$. There will be giveaways and a performance by Hartford's Proud Drill, Drum & Dance Team.

The action teams include 100+ people. Mr. Condren and other involved with Hartford Decides met with Mayor Bronin on February 1 and City Council on February 2.

At Mr. Malec's request, Mr. Condren is willing to come to other sector meetings and provide an update.

Ms. Bauer asked if the ballots will be physical or virtual ballots. Mr. Condren explained they are still finalizing the process – a combination of the two is being considered. Voters are not required to be US citizens.

Mr. Condren added that over 1,000 people have been involved.

8. UNITED WAY

Ms. Bauer said she received an email from a United Way intern. She forwarded the email to the Board.

9. NEW ZONING

Mr. Malec attended the zoning meeting that conflicted with the January Board meeting. The other NRZs reviewed the proposed zoning changes whereas WECA missed that opportunity. Mr. Malec found WECA's lack of familiarity with the proposed changes and lack of involvement in the process embarrassing. He advocated that WECA be more involved in the next round of zoning updates.

There is a lot on contention about the new zoning in the North Sector. Mr. Malec observed a widespread misinformation in the North Sector. He asked that everyone contact Ms. Magubane with zoning related questions and concerns until WECA secures a P&Z Chair.

In response to a question about the vacant P&Z Chair, Mr. Klein explained that the process requires the WECA President to find someone acceptable then present the candidate to the Board.

Mr. Condren said he also attended the P&Z meeting. West End residents spoke out about phase 1 of the zoning law changes. One major concern was that the open houses were very poorly scheduled around the holiday and not local to anyone in the West End.

Ms. Bauer said the rewrite was huge and comprehensive, yet so much of it did not come back to the West End. She was particularly curious about why WECA doesn't know what is going on, while the other NRZs seem to be up to speed. Other NRZs were far more informed and had constructive feedback, according to Mr. Malec.

Mr. Jorgensen said he also attended the zoning meeting and stayed until the end at 12:30am. He believed the West End was intentionally excluded from the review process since the most contentious issues would be in the West End. Mr. Jorgensen clarified he was not on the committee involved with reviewing the zoning changes.

Ms. Bergquist said phase 2 will begin with the first public discussion in February, which will include more controversial changes. Next time, there are several West End properties that will be part of the changes according to Mr. Malec. Ms. Bergquist emphasized that WECA really needs to have a P&Z chair. Mr. Malec will send the questions/concerns with answers on upcoming contentious issues to the Board.

10. MAYOR BRONIN

Mayor Bronin would like to attend one of each NRZ meeting for the year.

11. MARCH MEETING

Ms. Bergquist said the March 8 meeting will be focused on Public Safety. Someone from Farmers' Market and AH&R will speak. Ms. Bauer and Mr. Condren will also speak.

12. COMMITTEE UPDATES

Farmers' Market: Ms. Thompson said Caroline Finnegan has been recruiting volunteers and writing for grants for the 2016 season.

Public Safety: The lights in the parking lot behind 17 Sherman St are out. It costs \$44.95 to turn it on plus usage cost. Mr. Jorgensen said the committee might pay. Mr. Neumann and Mr. Jorgensen will work together to get the light back on.

Community Engagement: Ms. Bauer announced that the community will function as a connective web for other committees. They are working on a committee fair and a get together, West End Wednesdays, on February 3 at Metro Café at 7pm. Approximately 10 WECA members who expressed an interest in the committee were contacted.

Ms. Klein and Ms. Bookwalter received an email from Denise Wilbur expressing an interest in making her home a community place to gather. She is hosting a poetry event and wants her home to be available to the community. Malou Dusyn is also willing to open her space on Farmington and Prospect to the community.

AH&R: (IGNORE - WAITING ON WRITE-UP FROM AH&R.) Had concerns about design and appearance of building? Receptive and willing to take them into consideration. Want to have app to planning and zoning by April. Jan K they seem to be pushing now. City NRZ usually wants input from local NRZ before saying yay or nay.

There is no housing overlay currently, but right to create one exists.

Lucas made it clear they need to seek WECA approval before proceeding to the P&Z commission.

Can't get financing until city approval.

Lucas wants Bongi to organize a P&Z meeting in late Feb early March.

13. SECTOR UPDATES

Central East: Ms. Buckley and Mr. Neumann are planning another meeting towards the end of February. Julio Conception will attend.

5 came to the last meeting and are concerned about housing and bus traffic in planting trees and raise sustainable children.

Spoke about how to engage other neighbors

South East: Ms. Chillogalli and Ms. Strassner want to see how to get people involved.

South West: Mr. Condren said his sector will have a meeting in beginning of March. Officer Sherbo wants to come with Officer Brooks.

The Police Department is recruiting heavily, especially Hartford residents.

They had a second pub crawl in December. About 12 people came out.

North: Mr. Malec is looking for a host for the next sector meeting. Ms. Gold and Mr. Condren will attend and address the group.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:43p.m.