

**West End Civic Association
Board Meeting Minutes
Connecticut Conference United Church of Christ
January 12, 2016**

PRESENT: Jim Barry, Amy Bergquist, Fi Bookwalter, Dorothy L. Buckley, Cristina Chillogalli, Caroline Finnegan, Ruth Fortune, Lakisher Hurst, Bongi Magubane, Ed McEachin, Charlie Ortiz, Zephyr Strassner, Anne Thompson.

Bongi Magubane called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

1. WELCOME

Ms. Magubane welcomed everyone.

2. NOVEMBER MEETING MINUTES

Amy Bergquist moved to approve the minutes from the December 1, 2015 meeting with a second from Charlie Ortiz. The motion passed unanimously.

3. FINANCIAL UPDATE

On behalf of David Klein, Ms. Magubane said \$14,000 has been collected from the membership drive and shared a copy of the financial report.

4. MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Ms. Magubane announced membership forms are still coming in; so far, 179 completed membership forms have been received. Lakisher Hurst is tasked with cleaning up the database, updating addresses and keeping track of members' interests on a spreadsheet. The objective of collecting member interest is to strengthen member engagement by (1) connecting WECA members with information and resources so they can become active members, and (2) providing committee chairs and sector reps with member information for better outreach. JoAnne Bauer will lead the proposed member engagement model. The new model proposes hosting a community meeting, similar to a college fair, for all members who expressed interest in one or multiple committees. At the meeting, each committee chair will provide an overview of the committee's mission, information on past projects, initiatives, accomplishments, 2016 goals and meeting schedules. Members will be given an opportunity to ask questions and sign up for a committee. Ms. Magubane said JoAnne Bauer supports this approach. All present agreed to support the idea. The Engagement Committee is tasked with working with the Membership Committee to work out the detail plans and meeting schedule.

Amy Bergquist suggested having the March general meeting be the volunteer opportunities meeting or host a separate meeting. WECA can engage with members before the June election meeting and prepare them to get involved and hold positions. Ms. Bergquist added that WECA should send an invitation to all members and the community at large through an email blast.

In addition to a meeting, Charlie Ortiz favored having Ms. Hurst inform the appropriate committee chairs right away when a member expresses an interest in getting involved with WECA. Ms. Magubane thought the membership committee should take over the process of informing chairs of members who express an interest.

WECA will keep the post office box all year round. Mr. Ortiz will assume the responsibility of going to the post office to check the mail. He, along with the rest of the membership committee, will decide how to inform the appropriate chairs about members who seek to get involved.

5. MEETING TO INTRODUCE COMMITTEES

The proposed March general meeting or a separate meeting as discussed above will serve to introduce the committees.

6. FARMERS' MARKET MEETING

Anne Thompson said 2015 was a pivotal year with all the grants received to do double couponing.

Caroline Finnegan added that the Farmers' Market raised a total of \$14,000, with nearly \$9,200 in grant money for double couponing from Wholesome Wave and the Hartford Foundation. The balance helped pay for someone to process EBT payments and musicians during the market hours. Ms. Finnegan said it was not hard to ask for money to feed people. However, it was labor intensive to keep all the paperwork required by grantors. She said the goal for next year is to grow the committee and be more structured next year. During this off season, Ms. Finnegan said she needs help connecting the West End community and incorporating the rest of WECA with the Farmers' Market. The current shoppers consist of many West End and non West End residents. Ms. Finnegan said she wants the market used to provide more exposure to WECA by having a table staffed with a WECA board member and/or literature for curious shoppers who want to learn more about the organization. Ms. Bergquist recommended a schedule for which WECA representative will man the table.

This market is being used as a model for other urban markets and will be discussed at a conference.

Mr. Ortiz asked for Farmers' Market flyers to include in mailings to new and current WECA members.

Lastly, Ms. Finnegan would like to host a meeting to do more regular outreach. She already secured food donation for the meeting.

7. P&Z UPDATES

Ms. Magubane said two West End residents expressed an interest in the P&Z chair position. David Barrett decided not to pursue the role. The interested parties will be presented at the March Board meeting.

Many West End residents did not know about the changes to the Hartford zoning regulations. Two of the eight people on the committee were supposedly from WECA but the Board did not get any updates.

8. COMMITTEE UPDATES

Public Safety: Cristina Chillogalli said six independent people were arrested with respect to the car break-ins. The police are asking folks who plan to be away to let Officer Sherbo or a neighbor know so they can keep an eye on their property. There was a drug raid at the corner of Whitney and Warrenton. Much of the criminal activities have quieted down.

Community Engagement: On behalf of JoAnne Bauer, Ms. Chillogalli announced that members of the committee helped last month in promoting and publicizing the Hartford Stage *Christmas Carol* event for children and families.

Members stayed after December's Board meeting to discuss a toy drive in conjunction with the December general meeting and agreed to go forward; however, the last-minute announcement would have competed with other announcements and corrections to WECA lists, and so the drive was not made public. Some toys were donated, and they were funneled into the United Methodist Church's collection.

Per request of WECA's President, the main mission of the Community Engagement committee will change; a draft of discussion notes is available. The committee will assume more of an oversight role to make sure that all committees are working to engage the entire community's needs and to address WECA/NRZ's strategic plan, goals and objectives. The committee might also continue to create events and activities, in conjunction with the Social Activities committee and perhaps as they relate to specific needs of children and families in the SE Sector.

DineAround: Fi Bookwalter said invitations went out on December 12 and the event has not sold out as usual and still has two open seats. Ms. Bookwalter added that the committee held the host reception on Sunday. Of the six hosts who could not attend, one is a first time host. There's some talk of scaling back next year.

9. SECTOR UPDATES

Central East: Dorothy Lovett Buckley and Guy Neumann are hosting a sector meeting on December 3 at Gretchen Unfried's house at 107 Elizabeth Avenue at 7pm.

Central West: Ed McEachin said they had a mini sector meeting sponsored by Tomas. Officer Sherbo and Ms. Magubane attended the meeting. Ms. Bergquist said she lives in the sector but was not aware of the meeting. Moving forward, all residents on the distribution list for the sector should be invited to a sector meeting.

Some residents did not get deliveries of the newsletter while others received multiple newsletters.

South East: Zephyr Strassner said they have not had a sector meeting recently, though she and Cristina Chillogalli are working to schedule one. Ms. Strassner said she is doing some outreach on her block. The mural project was advertised but there was a surprisingly poor turnout. Fi Bookwalter recommended going to the high schools to get more kids involved in the future.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

Charlie Ortiz said the police should come every WECA Board meeting and present a report of recent crimes. WECA can invite community service officer (CSO) to future board meetings.

At Ms. Magubane's request, Ms. Finnegan offered to order WECA t-shirts with the Farmers' Market t-shirt order.

Ms. Magubane said the Hartford Stage event was a success. Only three people cancelled due to sickness. Many families drove separately and not everyone sat together. Most of the attendees were kids who came with their grandparents and elderly couples.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25p.m.