

**West End Civic Association
Board Meeting Minutes
Connecticut Conference United Church of Christ
May 3, 2016**

PRESENT: Jim Barry, Amy Bergquist, Fi Bookwalter, Dorothy Lovett Buckley, Cristina Chillogalli, Max Condren, Ruth Fortune, Lakisher Hurst, Lucas Karmazinas, David Klein, Jan Klein, Bongsi Magubane, Kurt Malec, Ed McEachin, Guy Neumann, Angela Pomfret, Anne Thompson.

Also present: Jamie McPike.

Ms. Magubane called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

1. WELCOME & UPDATE ON NRZ HAPPENINGS

Ms. Magubane welcomed everyone. Some of the budget cuts being discussed with the Mayor will affect the West End. The City will no longer fund parades and will cut back on services for seniors, though they aim to do so with minimal impact. Generally, people are not happy about the public school system and the proposed budget plan.

Ms. Buckley said five principals were being paid as assistant superintendents. There's a lot of frustration with the superintendent of schools.

Mr. Condren announced Hartford 2000 is currently in the process of reviewing which NRZs are working or need improvement.

2. APRIL MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Klein moved to approve the minutes from the April 5, 2016 meeting with a second from Ms. Bergquist. The motion passed unanimously.

3. FINANCIAL UPDATE

Mr. Klein sent a finance report with membership now exceeding \$20,000. The Farmers' Market had a net positive month since they received \$2,400 and spent less.

Mr. Klein announced that as part of the May 1 email Ms. Hurst sent out about updating the database, James Mercik, a West End resident, volunteered to help restructure the database and is well qualified. Mr. Klein will contact all Committee Chairs and Sector Reps to ensure they are involved with the updates. Mr. Klein will introduce Mr. Mercik to Ms. Hurst and bring in other data from the DineAround and Membership through a task force.

4. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Mr. Klein reviewed the list of coming and going board members. They have another candidate for VP of North of Farmington – Roger Minor. Mr. Klein will bring the list of candidates to the Nominating Committee. No one has yet to volunteer as a candidate for VP of South of Farmington.

Mr. Klein added that the election general meeting is open and people can be nominated and run from the floor. Mr. Klein will ask the Nominating Committee to interview the current Committee Chairs and will continue to seek more volunteers to serve in various capacities.

Committee Chairs do not have to live in the West End, but Sector Reps must live in the sector they seek to represent.

Ms. Magubane is working on coming up with roles for committees without description.

5. INTRODUCE JAMIE MCPIKE

Ms. Magubane introduced Ms. McPike to the Board and all present briefly stated their names and role(s) in WECA. Ms. McPike re-introduced herself and emphasized some of the information in her biography, which she sent to the Board prior to the meeting through Ms. Magubane. Ms. McPike moved to Hartford a year ago and is nearing the end of her dissertation as a PhD candidate in sociology. She does research on affordable housing in India. Her husband is high school teacher in Southington, CT. She lives on Whitney St and is originally from California. She currently teaches at Brown University and commutes to Providence once a week. Interested in figuring out how to enhance what is already in the city.

Ms. Magubane said Ms. McPike has a broad experience around housing and recommends her as Chair of the Housing Committee.

Mr. Klein moved to approve Ms. McPike as Housing Committee Chair, with a second from Ms. Pomfret. All voted in favor.

6. WECA 2016 GRANT UPDATE

Mr. Klein said WECA received thirteen diverse grant requests. The six members of the Grants Committee will go through the applications and select the ones that meet WECA's criteria. The Committee plans make recommendations to the Board in the next few days. The Board will vote on grants during the June meeting.

In response to Ms. Magubane's question about how WECA determines how much funds to allocate to grants, Mr. Klein explained the amount for grants is proposed by the Treasurer and approved by the Board. Operating expenses, committee/sector requests and other expenses such as the summer movies are taken into account before allocating funds to grants.

7. WECA P&Z/ZBA UPDATE

Ms. Malec said the city is having a zoning workshop on May 10 at 6pm to address outstanding issues. The topics are: short-term room rental (AirBnB); long-term room rental; household size/definition of household; bed & breakfasts; accessory dwellings. WECA plans to meet before the end of the month to go over the plans.

AirBnB can provide a list of rented homes to the city, if requested. There are proposals as to where AirBnB can be used. Some cities are imposing the hotel tax on AirBnB hosts. Perhaps Hartford might be interested in doing so. Ms. Bergquist said a lot of people in the West End do AirBnB. Ms. Magubane said the Board needs to educate itself on the subject to be able to offer an informed opinion to P&Z commission. Mr. Condren said some aspects of owner occupancy will make people comfortable with AirBnB – an owner needs to be on the premises while guests are present or must live within a 5-10 mile radius. Ms. Pomfret said some neighbors travel but are open to renting while they are away. The main concern, as per Mr. Malec, is security due to transient people.

Where to allow long-term rentals or whether to ban them altogether will also be discussed. The current plan does not allow accessory housing anywhere.

Ms. Magubane said Toni Gold will support the plan.

Currently, no zones allow bed & breakfasts. Sara Bronin, Chair of the P&Z Commission, is thinking of allowing bed & breakfasts only on main street zones.

Also in play is the definition of a household and household unit, which is currently vaguely defined. Mr. Malec showed a chart of permitted usage in various zones. He has met with Scarborough 11 and those opposed to it. He anticipates definition of a household and household unit will be the most contentious point for the phase 2 zoning changes. For instance, in 2014, West Hartford enacted a functional family requirement when 3 or more unrelated people want to live together and requirements for a permit.

8. FARMERS' MARKET

Ms. Thompson said they have not been holding the Tuesday morning meetings as anticipated, due to space concerns. She's anticipating another \$1,000 in funding for the market managers and changing the rules to require vendors to pay upfront to not have to chase them for payment later. They are looking for musicians to perform at the Farmers' Market.

Ms. Buckley suggested getting shuttles for shoppers like Billings Forge.

They sent sponsorship letters to businesses and offered the opportunity to have their business logo on the Farmers' Market marketing banners. They will send sponsorship forms to the Board. Lastly, Ms. Thompson added the Farmers' Market will open Tuesday, June 7.

9. PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATE

Ms. Magubane said the Police Chief has been engaging the community. They share statistics with NRZs once a week on Thursdays. Last week, they invited NRZs to come and talk to the new recruits and set their expectations. They launched a class and have another one coming up in March. They are still looking to find more Hartford residents for the open positions.

The Conditions Unit people are not patrolling and are not doing proactive work.

10. JUNE GENERAL MEETING AGENDA

Ms. Magubane asked for a volunteer to start the June general meeting and Mr. Malec volunteered. Prior to the election, Ms. Bergquist said the Nominating Committee will announce the winners of the WECA grants.

Mr. Malec requested all information for the print newsletter by May 13 to give him enough to review and send to the printer by May 18. Sector Reps should have the hard copies for delivery by May 23.

Mr. Klein confirmed the newsletters will be delivered through the same distribution method as last time.

11. SECTOR UPDATES

Southwest: Mr. Condren said they had a crawl at Spigot and a sector meeting with Officer Sherbo. Criminal activities have slowed down. Malou Dussen owns a mindfulness center on Farmington Ave and wants to offer the space for youth programming.

Central East: Ms. Buckley invited all to join her walking group on May 4.

Central West: Mr. McEachin announced they had a sector meeting that was poorly attended and focused on the law school project.

North: Mr. Malec has not met with his sector but plans to meet towards the end of the month.

12. COMMITTEE UPDATES

AH&R: Mr. Karmazinas said they decided not to have a historical tax credit info session this spring. They plan to have their next meeting in October, along with Alice Sweeney, and open it up to surrounding towns since they've saturated the West End community. The CT Historical Society (CHS) would cosponsor the meeting.

Engagement: Ms. Chillogalli announced the West End Wednesday group will meet at the community garden around Evergreen on May 18 at 6pm, followed by their Committee meeting. They are considering a mural and beautification project. Ms. Magubane said Hartford Decides will give each neighborhood a mural.

They continue to work on traffic calming for Evergreen and other concerns voiced by neighbors.

The United Way community representative wants to move forward.

The next West End poetry series will be on May 21.

13. OTHER TOPIC

Ms. Magubane wants a high level overview from every Committee Chair.

Mr. Klein announced Minions as the first movie of the summer on July 14 at Evergreen starting at dusk. Three others movies will be shown over the course of the summer.

Adjourned at 8:24 PM.