

**West End Civic Association  
Board Meeting Minutes  
Connecticut Conference United Church of Christ  
September 6, 2016**

**PRESENT:** Jim Barry, JoAnne Bauer, Kyle Bergquist, Dorothy Lovett Buckley, Cristina Chillogalli, Max Condren, Rick DuVerger, Caroline Finnegan, Ruth Fortune, Lakisher Hurst, David Klein, Jan Klein, Bongsi Magubane, Kurt Malec, Kathy McCormock, Ed McEachin, Guy Newmann, Jamie McPike, Angela Pomfret, Anne Thompson.

**1. WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Magubane announced there are two new candidates for the Board – Rick DuVerger as the Chair of the Membership Committee and Kyle Bergquist is the Chair of the P&Z Committee.

**Motion:** Mr. Klein moved to approve the candidates, with a second from Ms. Fortune. Motion passed unanimously.

**2. MINUTES**

Ms. Fortune announced she will send the June minutes at a later time due to inaccessibility of the minutes on her broken laptop.

**3. FINANCIAL UPDATE**

Mr. Klein said summers are usually expense heavy with no income, as usual. WECA helped to resolve a rat issue by paying for traps. The Farmer's Market (FM) is chugging along, but has not brought in much income. They spent about \$11,000 compared to the budgeted \$6,000 and has a deficit of \$5,000. Ms. Thompson will share more about the FM during the committee updates. WECA also incurred expenses for signs and advertising of summer activities for Community Engagement Committee, movies in Elizabeth Park and a grant to Elizabeth Park.

**4. BUSINESS ITEMS**

Ms. Magubane announced that the Mayor is using youth to help maintain neighborhoods through clean-up activities. She sought the Board's permission to have WECA partner with the City and be responsible for overseeing the participating youth. Mr. Klein supports the idea. Ms. Klein thought the youth under WECA oversight should focus on Farmington Ave. Ms. Bauer said Sisson should be the next priority before Elizabeth Park.

Mr. Malec informed the Board that the medical building on Scarborough St was sold from Jumoke Academy to a church and the residents of Scarborough St. Mr. Bergquist said the City has no say in who sells what, though it was thoughtful of them to notify WECA. He added the new owners could be allowed to use the building as a church but will need permission/special permit. Mr. Bergquist thought WECA should approach the new buyers. Mr. Newmann offered to contact the sellers whom he knows well.

Ms. Magubane and Ms. McPike and a follow-up meeting with Jill Barrett of the Farmington Business Alliance (FAA) about the incremental tax finance (TIF) and the goals of the committee. Upon learning TIF would take about 7 years to come to fruition, Ms. Magubane pushed to have the FAA also explore other options, if any, to help revitalize businesses and yield results sooner.

Ms. McPike explained the 7-year delay is due to the reality of a lag in urban development. Mr. Klein previously volunteered to join the FAA Board and is still interested. Ms. Magubane wants to invite Jill Barrett back for another discussion with the Board. Mr. Klein recommends bringing Francesco Gomes and FAA to address WECA.

In response to Mr. Condren's inquiry about a Business Development Committee within WECA, Mr. Klein answered that in the past, WECA had a representative on the Farmington Avenue Business District to serve that purpose. Ms. Klein added that starting a new committee seems counterproductive. Mr. Newmann suggested getting new people on the FAA.

## **5. WECA STRATEGIC PLAN REFRESH PROPOSAL**

Ms. Magubane said she thinks WECA should bring a consultant to update the strategic plan. Blue Hills and Hartford 2000 are also doing it. Ms. Bauer said maintaining the NRZ status seems to require an update. Mr. Malec said the current 2012 plan is broader and vaguer than the prior plan and agreed that WECA should review it. Mr. Klein said hiring consultants will depend on how much WECA is looking to spend, but the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving (HFPG) previously gave a \$7,000 to Blue Hills for a similar project. Ms. McPike, Mr. Malec and Ms. Bauer are interested in joining the committee to revamp the strategic plan. Ms. Magubane agreed that hiring a consultant would help.

**Motion:** Mr. Klein made a motion that WECA pursues the HFPG for funding to update the strategic plan. Ms. Bauer seconded that motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Hurst has been working to update the database – a rather challenging task on an old laptop. She is manually generating lists and asked if Board member needs a list specific to their role. Ms. Magubane recommended getting together with Mr. DuVerger and sector representatives to figure out if the new platform supports the current needs or needs to be changed. Mr. DuVerger agreed to take the lead on this project and asked that sector representatives email him at [richardduverger@bhhsne.com](mailto:richardduverger@bhhsne.com) with the names and contact information for block captains. Ms. Klein added that she will join as a Co-Chair of the DineAround Committee.

Mr. DuVerger announced he might have a candidate for VP of South of Farmington.

## **6. 2016-2017 WECA PRIORITIES**

Mr. Malec will plan the October general meeting. After some discussion, all present agreed that general meeting dates can be changed to accommodate speakers, neighbors and ultimately draw a larger crowd. The Board settled on inviting Mayor Bronin and possibly other local representatives to the next meeting at a date to be determined. Ms. Bauer said perhaps each committee chair can think about their committee concerns and submit a question to the Mayor. Mr. Klein added that WECA should adjust the print newsletter mailing to precede the general meetings so people can be notified. Mr. Malec will finalize a date with the Mayor.

## **7. SECTOR UPDATES**

**Central East:** Mr. Newmann said 5 people showed up to the last meeting. There are some dying trees on Kenyon that need attention.

Mr. Newmann also said there is a need to connect residents with helpers, i.e. a widow in need of help to move furniture or pantries on lawn for the needy. Ms. Bauer said she created the

Committee of Caring. Ms. Buckley is helping but those in need to be willing to have their needs published to request help.

**Southwest:** Mr. Condren said someone in his sector is interested in buying a lot on Beacon to donate to neighborhood as a community garden. Ms. Chillogalli said the potential buyers would prefer to have Knox manage the garden.

## **8. COMMITTEE UPDATES**

**Farmers' Market:** Ms. Thompson said the FM has been consistent all summer long. Since the FM is a business, a paid organizer is a requirement for some of the grants. Part of the budget gap is due to less grant money being available this year.

Ms. Finnegan said the market is doing well. She has not received any complaints in the past 2 months about moving the FM which shows they're settled in their new location. Vendors and customers are happy. There are checks on the way from Wholesome Waves – committed to match up to \$4,500 – but they will be delayed. Last year, they were received in December. The FM received \$1,500 from June to present in EBT compared to \$2,100 for Billings Forge which has been going since January.

However, fundraising remains a challenging area in need of improvement. Ms. Klein asked if the Watkinson School gave a grant. Ms. Finnegan said she was told the Watkinson grant went to Billings Forge which was supposed to share the proceeds, but said the grant was never given.

Ms. Klein added that representatives at Watkinson said they want to be more visible in the West End, plan to support the DineAround and offered space for free to the neighborhood. Ms. Thompson added that some mistake the West End FM for Billings Forge which might cause them to lose out on grants.

Ms. Finnegan also shared some her legacy planning concerns. She wants a strong system in place for the next FM manager when she is no longer able to run it. Administrative tasks are incredibly time consuming. Market managers tend to be seasonal workers who only run the market, whereas she runs the market and does all the administrative work to get the grants, secure vendors, etc.

In response to Mr. Klein question about whether or not the market differentiates fees between vendors, Ms. Finnegan said currently the West End FM has the lowest vendor fees in the area.

**AH&R:** Ms. Klein said Lucas Karmazinas is stepping as Co-Chair for personal reasons. He has been a fabulous partner. Unfortunately, Ms. Klein can't handle this role alone, so the committee will have to go into a hiatus for the foreseeable future, though she will still plan another tax credit information session this fall and possibly partner with CHS. There hasn't been a tax credit event since last fall because it was poorly attended. Ms. Magubane suggested that some of those responsibilities of AH&R be assumed by the Housing Committee. Ms. McPike was open to the idea. Ms. Klein will also seek more volunteers at the next AH&R meeting.

**Membership:** Mr. DuVerger has been working on a WECA intro letter to neighbors and wants it in the newsletter. (Mr. Malec requested all newsletter submissions by September 23.) Mr. DuVerger asked Mr. Klein to consider mailing all the print newsletter in October, instead of having some be hand-delivered, to give him time to work out the database kinks.

**Public Safety:** Ms. Chillogalli said the West End is doing better relative to other areas of Hartford. Folks are stealing newer cars with electric/magnetic keys, so lock your cars. Always report crimes to the Hartford Police Department (HPD) even if it's just for staffing purposes. Neighbors can also email Officer Sherbo.

Mr. Condren asked about the camp WECA funded at Noah Webster. Ms. Magubane said David Jorgensen worked on it but is not here to report on it.

Ms. Magubane attended 2 public safety meetings and the West End was barely mentioned because crimes in the area are low. She also attended the graduation for the new cadets in late August.

Mr. DuVerger said they had a drug bust on his block.

**Housing:** Ms. McPike met with a Councilwoman and folks on city and state level. It seems there are macro issues and Hartford economic issues impacting housing. Ms. McPike thought her role can be about collecting information on the ground to inform elected officials of the needs/concerns of residents. Elected officials are keen on having someone as a lead on housing in Hartford since the issues in Hartford are different than other towns.

**Social Activities:** Mr. DuVerger will provide an update on whether or not Florence Wolff-Nicholas is still active as the Chair.

**P&Z:** Mr. Bergquist said the City is working on a draft of the phase 2 zoning.

**Community Engagement:** Ms. Bauer passed a list of events and items WECA funded over the summer, along with upcoming events and contact information for various resources in the area.

**DineAround:** Ms., Klein said Roger Minor will become her next Co-Chair as of 2017.

## **9. OTHER BUSINESS**

Ms. Magubane said the rooming house owner is suing the City and mentioned WECA extensively in his complaint.

Meeting adjourned at 8:56pm.