

Cool Spring/Tilton Neighborhood Association

Meeting Minutes

February 7, 2012

Attendees: See attached list.

1. Welcome

Meeting chair Clara Zahradnik (President – CS/TNA) welcomed CS/TNA meeting attendees and asked attendees to sign the attendance sheet which has a new format.

On behalf of the CS/TNA, she expressed sincere sympathy to the family of Bill Dunn, an active member of CS/TNA, who passed away on January 21, and asked for a moment of silence in respect.

2. Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the January 10, 2012 CS/TNA meeting were posted on the CS/TNA website and at the Regency Healthcare meeting room entry for all residents to read prior to the February 7th meeting. President Zahradnik asked if any modifications/additions/deletions to the minutes were recommended. No changes were suggested. Zahradnik asked for a motion to accept the minutes. Ed Weirauch made a motion to accept the January 10, 2012 CS/TNA meeting minutes and Vice President Heather Hook seconded the motion.

Motion passed by majority of attendees.

3. Announcements

- Foreclosure Outreach- February 8

An information session regarding foreclosures will be held Wednesday, February 8 at 12:00-1:00 p.m. in the Wilmington City Council Chambers.

- Red Clay School District Information Meeting – February 16

A public information session for residents in the Red Clay School District regarding the proposed new suburban school will be held Thursday, February 16 at 6:30 p.m. in the Highlands School.

- West Side Plan Community Meeting – February 27

A community meeting to update residents on progress of the West side Revitalization Plan will be held Monday, February 27 at 6:30 p.m. in the cafeteria of St. Paul's School.

4. Reports of Standing Committees

Public Safety Committee

Ted Jacoby (email: tedjacoby@gmail.com, cell: 713-834-4000), who has resided in the Cool Spring neighborhood for going on three years, updated attendees on initiatives of the Public Safety Committee:

- Street Lamps

A meeting to discuss street lamps proposed for West 8th and 9th Streets will be held Saturday, February 18th at 8:00 a.m. at Eeffoc's Café in Trolley Square. Items to be considered include street lamp location, installation, and effect of the new street lamps on sidewalks.

- Strengthening Contacts with Police

The following contacts were noted:

- ✓ Captain Brown (302-576-3913) for police deployment issues.
- ✓ Radio room (302-654-5151) for dispatch response issues.

- Home Firearms

If a home is armed, please know how and when to use firearms. If there are any questions, please contact Jacoby, and he can refer you to an instructor.

- Registration for House Alarms in Wilmington

Registration for house alarms in Wilmington will be looked into.

- Efforts to Pool Public Safety Information from Padua Academy and Ursuline Academy

The Public Safety Committee will contact Padua Academy and Ursuline Academy in an effort to pool their public safety information with the information available from the Police Department for Cool Spring/Tilton neighborhoods.

- Crime Reports

Attendees were updated on crime reports since December, 2011 which included drug transactions, break-ins of vehicles, stolen copper gutters/downspouts, harassment by teens, and sexual assault.

No further information from Captain Brown was available on the double homicide or sexual assault which occurred in Cool Spring neighborhood within the last several months.

Hook reported that she recently found over 100 heroin baggies and wrapping materials, which resemble tiny Ziplock® bags and Listerine® strips, along the sidewalk near 10th and Van Buren Streets.

The Public Safety Committee urged residents to report crime since then police will be aware of the crimes committed.

Housing Committee (See attached Housing Committee Report)

Krista Holob updated attendees on initiatives of the Housing Committee.

- The Housing Committee has connected with the Housing Focus Group of the West Side Grows Together Revitalization Plan which is a project of the West End Neighborhood House. The two groups hope to share information and resources.
- The Housing Committee met with Dan Logan, Deputy Attorney General, to gain information on the new Landlord Training Program. This will be discussed at a future CS/TNA meeting.
- The Housing Committee is working with Inspector Jessica Ramos-Velazques to develop a procedure in reporting violations to Licensing & Inspections Department in the City of Wilmington.

Communication and Events Committee

Alfred Lance reported that the Communications and Events Committee has held two meetings and has developed a mission statement with the following goals:

- Be a cheerleader in encouraging residents to become involved and participate in neighborhood events, activities, and organizations.
- Bring neighbors together.
- Improve communication in the Cool Spring/Tilton neighborhood.
- Mobilize the community organization.

Communication and Events Committee meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month at rotating households.

Zahradnik noted that May 5th is the Community Events Day and suggested the Communication and Events Committee develop a general calendar, including dates of yard sales, porch parties, etc.

Chuck Dorman, a member of the Communications and Events Committee, indicated work was needed to flesh out the ideas of the committee.

Weirauch suggested that a survey would be useful to determine if residents are interested in the community yard sale since he felt the yard sale be not be generating sufficient interest to continue having them.

5. Cool Spring Farmers' Market

The individual who requested time to speak on the Cool Spring Farmers' Market was not in attendance.

6. Public Safety and Police Reports

Cpl. Rinehart, who is returning to street duty after an illness, reported:

- Vagrants/homeless are now being prosecuted with harsher penalties. Councilman Sammy Prado explained that their prosecution in the Court of Common Pleas through Judge Lopez will result in stiffer sentences than through the Justice of the Peace. A problem occurred with prosecution by the Justice of the Peace since convicted individuals were released onto the street very soon after being charged.
- Policing in the Cool Spring/Tilton neighborhood occurs 24 hours/day. When police are on the streets, the number of homicides is drastically reduced.
- Heroin/cocaine bags are being found on 10th Street (Hook reported) and Kirk Avenue (Councilman Prado reported).

7. Proposal to Amend CS/TNA By-laws for Term Limits of Officers

Regina Lafferty submitted a proposal to amend the CS/TNA by-laws to institute term limits for officers. Regarding terms of office, the current CS/TNA by-laws state that :

Section 1. Number and Qualifications. The officers of the Association shall be the President, the Vice President, the Treasurer, and the Secretary. Each officer shall hold office for a period of one (1) year, or until his/her successor shall have been duly elected and shall have qualified, or until his/her death, or until s/he have resigned, or have been removed, as hereinafter provided in these By-Laws. Officers may be elected to more than one (1) consecutive term. Only dues-paying Members of the Association shall be entitled to hold office.

The proposed by-laws' amendment for term limits states that:

Each officer term is 1 year unless she or he resigns, is removed, or is otherwise disqualified to serve. No board member shall hold office for more than three (3) consecutive terms, or three (3) consecutive years. After a period of one year or more absence from the Board, a director may be reelected to the Board for an additional three (3) one (1) year terms.

Kevin Melloy stated that he had made this motion at the January, 2012 CS/TNA meeting.

Extensive discussion followed the proposal and included the following points:

- Term limits present a good approach since it appeals to the sense of duty of all residents to come forward and serve the community organization (Lafferty).
- An important advantage of term limits is that this process can serve to grow new leaders. Currently, this expansion in leadership has been started with the organization of committees with the chairpersons gaining experience in the organization. Thus, term limits is a positive move for the organization (Jeff Kusumi).
- Term limits are not needed since nominations and elections occur every year. Officers do not participate in the nomination process. Term limits might prompt an incumbent to arm-twist another individual to run for office and thus, term limits would be counter-productive. The tenor of the CS/TNA meetings doesn't always encourage people to volunteer so there may be few to no volunteers for offices (Zahradnik).

- This proposal on term limits is for the good of the community (Lance).
- This is currently the fourth term for the current President (Zahradnik).
- Due to the regulations in the current CS/TNA by-laws for instituting changes to the by-laws, the proposal on the term limits cannot be voted on at this meeting. According to the CS/TNA by-laws, any amendments to the by-laws must first be proposed and seconded at a meeting and then in the succeeding meeting, the change is voted on (Joe Grey).

Lafferty made a motion to propose an amendment to the CS/TNA by-laws to include term limits for officers. This motion was seconded by Melloy.

In ensuing discussion, points raised included a request for clarification on the proposed amendment and suggestion that a task force be formed to study making a proposal to amend the CS/TNA by-laws to include a provision for term limits for officers.

Zahradnik suggested making a motion to form a task force to study a possible amendment to the CS/TNA by-laws involving term limits for officers.

O'Byrne made a motion to form a task force to study a possible amendment to the CS/TNA by-laws involving term limits for officers. Lance seconded the motion.

Zahradnik appointed Joe Grey and Julie Vernot to head the task force to write a term limits amendment. Anyone interested in joining the task force was asked to speak to Joe Grey.

8. Proposed Ingleside Plan for the Brown Mansion and Gardens

Representatives for Ingleside Homes (Glenn Brooks of Leon N. Weiner & Associates, Inc. as developers of the plans for Ingleside Homes; Larry Cessna, CEO of Ingleside Homes, Inc.; John Tracy, attorney for Ingleside Homes from Young, Conaway, Stargatt, and Taylor LLP; and George Ludwig) spoke to meeting attendees on Ingleside's proposed plan for the Brown Mansion and Gardens.

Brooks indicated that:

- The City of Wilmington Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) will hear Ingleside's appeal for a variance to the current R-1 zoning and variance for a setback to 13 feet. Ingleside plans involve building a four-story, 35 unit senior living facility (for seniors 62 years and older) addition to 1010 North Broom Street (Brown Mansion) with HUD financing. This addition will be built through demolition of a portion of the Brown Mansion and will cover part of the gardens. The appeal is scheduled for February 22 at 6:30 p.m. in the Wilmington City Council Chambers.
- Ingleside's plans have not changed from 2009.
- If the ZBA grants Ingleside the variances, Ingleside will begin the architectural drawings, etc. with closing before the end of 2012.

Attorney Tracy reviewed the litigation history of the Ingleside project:

- In 2009, the ZBA approved a variance to the current R-1 zoning and a variance for a set-back to 13 feet. The current request is exactly the same as the 2009 request.
- The variances were appealed in the Delaware Superior Court which affirmed the decision of the ZBA.
- The Delaware Supreme Court reversed the Superior Court judgment based on the composition of the ZBA. This overturned the ZBA's 2009 decision. Therefore, the request for the variances must be heard again by the properly constituted ZBA.

Councilman Bud Freel noted that House Bill #41 was signed by Governor Markel into law today (February 7, 2012). This allows the City Solicitor, Mayor, and City Engineer to designate their representatives on the ZBA.

Ludwig discussed and displayed this 3-dimensional model of Ingleside's plans.

In extensive ensuing discussion, issues/questions raised by meeting attendees included:

- Ingleside's plans will result in a reduction in property values for houses in the neighborhood (Kristen Diferdinando)
- More information on this project and a repeat of Ingleside's presentation was requested (Lance). Brooks asserted that there has been no change in their plans from 2009 so no presentation was planned for the current CS/TNA meeting. Councilman Freel suggested the possibility of an additional meeting before the ZBA hearing.
- The current plan is a compromise (Brooks).
- Parking and traffic concerns/issues were discussed.
- Building plans will increase safety in the neighborhood (Kerry Welsh).
- The façade of the Brown Mansion will be preserved (Ludwig).
- Concerns/issues regarding historic preservation and demolition were discussed (Mitchell Glass and Brooks).
- In answer to a question on assurances for neighbors of preserving the mature trees and shrubs in the Brown Mansion gardens (Constance Smith), Brooks stated that no assurances could be given.
- Ingleside's plans represent increased institutional growth with domino effect on demolition of other historic residences in Cool Spring/Tilton neighborhood (Melloy).

Some meeting attendees called for a vote to be taken to determine the level of support or opposition in Ingleside's plans; however, Councilman Freel asserted that there was no need for a vote. No vote was taken at this CS/TNA meeting regarding the support for or opposition to Ingleside's plans. Zahradnik stated that the previous vote by the CS/TNA would stand. Kusumi noted that this was the November, 2009 vote opposed to Ingleside's project. Zahradnik stated that she could only speak as an individual homeowner, not representing CS/TNA, at the ZBA hearing.

9. The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Submitted by Constance Smith, Secretary.

Attendees

Marge Altergott
Fritz Altergott
Kristen DiFerdinando
Melissa DiVincenzo
Jim Dolan
Sandy Dolan
Chuck Dorman
Linda Dorman
John Fardoulis
Judy Fardoulis
Matthew Frawley
Dennis Gallagher
Mitchell Glass
Anne Glass
Joe Grey
Angela Henry
Krista Holub
Heather Hook
Ted Jacoby
Jeffery Kusumi
Robin Kusumi
Regina Lafferty
Alfred Lance
Greg Luna

Kevin Melloy

Terry O'Byrne

Zoe Perhoples

Trey Pierson

George Ropes

John Shaw

Constance Smith

Dale Southam

Julie Vernot

Ed Weirauch

Kerry Welsh

Clara Zahradnik

Eric Zumsteg

Liza Zumsteg

Ingleside Representatives/Speakers

Glenn Brooks (Leon N. Weiner & Associates, Inc.)

Larry Cessna (Ingleside Homes, Inc.)

George Ludwig

John Tracy (Young, Conaway, Stargatt, and Taylor LLP)

Elected Officials

State Representative Gerald Brady

Councilman Bud Freel

Councilman Steve Martelli

Wilmington Police Department

Cpl. Michael Rinehart

Housing Committee Report

The Housing Committee has three updates this month.

First the committee has been involved in the Housing Focus Group for the West Side Grows Together Revitalization Plan, which is a project of the West End Neighborhood House. Two ideas that came out of the focus group are a land banking policy and a loan pool for housing rehabilitation in the neighborhood. More details and action on these items will hopefully follow the completion of the revitalization plan. Christian Willauer and the West End Neighborhood House are willing to share valuable resources from the planning process (such as GIS data on parcels, condition of housing, etc.) with the Housing Committee.

Second, the Housing Committee met with Dan Logan, Deputy Attorney General, regarding the new Landlord Training Program. Dan Logan will be invited to attend a CS/TNA full meeting this spring or summer to share more details of the program. The Housing Committee will work with the Attorney General's office to help inform the neighborhood and facilitate communication. Work with the Police officers will be important to protecting our neighborhood and fostering communication for follow-up.

Third, the Housing Committee is still working to develop a process to handle issues reported to the City of Wilmington Licensing and Inspections Department with Inspector Jessica Ramos-Velazquez.