
OLYMPIA RESIDENTS COUNCIL
ACTION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: 06/19/2013
Meeting Location: 701 Whaley
Recorded By: Rebecca Keller
Approval: 07/17/13

1 ATTENDANCE

Name	Role
Vi Hendley	President
Beth Nichols	Vice-President
Cat Bennett	Treasurer
Rebecca Keller	Secretary
Mike Keller	Member
Joanna Davis	Member
James Hager	Member
Joanie Hager	Member
Jane Lindsey	Member
Rob Lindsey	Member
Louise Oxner	Member
Marvin Trimnal	Member

2 DISCUSSION

Vi opened the meeting with thanks to the attendees for their continued support. From the committee signups held during the last meeting, the greatest area of interest appeared to be that of safety. The question to the group this month was whether continue with the separate sub-committees or to work together as a single group addressing multiple issues. The majority of those present agreed to work as a single group and to begin with safety issues as it overlapped several other areas of concern. Beth recommended that we look not only at long-term goals but also explore some ideas that might give us “quick wins” to build momentum.

CONCERNS

Homeless in the Park

Rob brought up the issue of the homeless using Olympia Park and the small “Ra” park (the one with the Egyptian painted trestle) as refuges. The group described several similar trouble spots throughout the neighborhood. While “Ra” is owned by the city, Olympia Park is owned by the County Department of Recreation. It was suggested that Rob contact George Martin with the county for assistance and that a video of the issue may be more impactful than just a letter, especially if presented in a county council meeting.

“White noise” to officials

Vi recommended that we utilize focused contacts (one or two people) when dealing with officials like the County Council so that we don’t become “white noise” – too many small voices instead of an organized approach. She did agree that there will also be times

when we want to have everyone actively participate when we want a show of numbers. We were also reminded that everyone is empowered and encouraged to contact the authorities for any safety issues like rowdy parties or the homeless or the like and to be sure to ask that the officer contact you with a report. This will help to support the need for additional law enforcement resources for our area.

North/South Corridor Plan

Vi shared with the group the idea of the proposed North/South corridor which would run through the neighborhood. It involves turning Olympia Avenue into a four-lane road, drastically reducing the size of the medians and increasing the speed at which traffic moves through the area. This is a long-term plan that is in discussion and is tied to the penny tax.

USC Master Plan

Vi also shared USC's long-term master plan which involves taking over Assembly Street. This will contribute to the increase of thru-traffic in our area. Vi will get a copy of the plan to share with us at a future meeting. Both the USC Master Plan and the North/South Corridor plan will likely have impacts on our zoning as well.

Richland County Plan

Richland County is also looking to develop a plan for the Olympia neighborhood, but it is still in the process of getting funded.

Zoning

The members are urged to be aware of construction in the neighborhood and to notify the ombudsman if there appears to be a lack of the necessary permits.

Vi offered to continue as the point of contact regarding zoning issues since she has already developed a relationship with those involved, especially Seth Rose and James Smith. The goal is to rezone the areas defined as high-density (hospital, boarding houses, apartment complexes) back to multi-family (duplexes, etc.) in order to retain the original character of the neighborhood.

Trash

The members are also urged to set a good example regarding trash as well as in all aspects. As a reminder, trash cans are to be on the street by 7 am on Tuesdays for pickup and should be removed by 7 pm that same day. The ombudsman should be contacted for trash can and/or yard trash issues that need to be addressed. Everyone is encouraged to report these on their own until street captains are in place to monitor this.

Vi shared an incident in which she had contacted a rental property owner regarding trash issues that had been going on for months, but she got no help from the property owner. After repeated calls to the ombudsman, an officer did finally come by, and the issue was resolved.

It was noted that the county's standard is that you should receive a call back within 48 hours of reporting an issue; call the ombudsman if you do not.

Safety

Cat agreed to coordinate safety issues and to address with the District Captain the mixed messages several members have received when trying to report safety issues in the neighborhood. When Deputy Hall spoke with the group last month, he stated that we were to call 911 whenever we felt like we had an emergency. A couple of people have tried this, only to be told by whomever they spoke with to call the non-emergency number for their issue. Cat will investigate and report back on this.

Palmetto Capital City Classic Game

It was brought up that the Benedict / SC State game will once again be held at Williams-Bryce Stadium this year on September 21. It has not been held for the last half-dozen years because of some of the issues experienced during and particularly after the last game, including the disappearance of a young woman. The expectation is to have over 50,000 people in attendance, with the emphasis more so on the tailgating and after-party rather than the game itself. Those residents present during the last game reported extended cruising up and down Olympia Avenue well into the night as well as loud music from the stadium area and considerable trash left throughout the neighborhood.

It was suggested that we arrange a joint meeting with the sheriff's department, the city, the county, and representatives of both schools to look at ways of reducing the negative impact on the neighborhood of the game. During the discussion, it was acknowledged that these same problems exist during USC games, although to a lesser extent since this is a special event, so it was decided to meet first with law enforcement to look at possibly blocking off Olympia for every football game. Cat agreed to take the lead on this issue.

Street Lighting

Concern was expressed about the distance between street lights, particularly on Olympia Avenue, and the safety issues related to this. As the lead on safety issues, Cat agreed to follow up on this and report back to the group.

GOALS**Contact Sheet**

Rob suggested that a handout of useful contact information for local agencies be developed, maintained, and made available to the membership.

Beautification

Rob agreed to spearhead the beautification concerns.

Treasured Tree program

Mike mentioned a local program to recognize and preserve great trees of the Columbia area. There are a number of lovely trees in the neighborhood, and this would provide an opportunity for good publicity.

For information about the program and how to nominate a tree, please visit <http://www.columbiasc.net/forestry#TreasuredTreesProgram>.

Yard of the Month

Mike also suggested we look into doing a Yard of the Month with a small prize being sponsored from one of the local businesses like Mendoza's landscaping, Yandle's produce, or Hay Hill garden center. Mike agreed to work on this idea.

Sidewalks

The suggestion was made to contact USC for support in developing sidewalks in the neighborhood since so many students bike, walk, and jog along our streets. Vi cautioned that there are several obstacles to getting full sidewalks – the cost, coordinating with the SC Dept of Transportation, the impact to property owners, as well as the proposed development of the North/South corridor through Olympia (see above under Concerns).

Resident Info Flyer

Vi has begun working on a flyer for new residents (particularly students) in the neighborhood, outlining what constitutes being a good neighbor and who to contact about issues with others who are not being good neighbors (late-night loudness, trash, blocking driveways, etc.).

Parking Permits

There was no update on the parking permit effort.

Community Garden

It was announced that we have the county's permission to create a community garden on the triangle lot down Granby Lane. There is currently nothing there and no source of water, but the hope is that we can perhaps get the quarry to use their water trucks to help. We will also look at other local businesses to help us get the garden up & going.

ORGANIZATIONAL**Meetings**

Beth recommended holding working meetings like this one every two weeks while we are starting up and keeping the monthly general meeting for committee reporting & guest speakers. The group agreed that this was agreeable. The next general meeting will be July 31st with a working committee meeting on July 17th.

It was noted that we may need to change the room or the setup for the general meetings because of issues with the acoustics during the last meeting. Any room change will be communicated to the membership prior to the next general meeting.

Speakers

Upcoming speakers in the works will be representatives of Lindau Chemicals, Vulcan (the quarry), and possibly PMC Property Group (the mills). Beth offered to contact Vulcan since they have been reluctant to participate so far, as has PMC.

Bylaws / Constitution

The executive committee will work on updating and improving the by-laws and constitution for the group. In the months to come, they will also look at obtaining tax-exempt status, work on fundraising, and investigate any insurance needs the group may have for their activities.

3 POST MEETING ACTION ITEMS

Action	Assigned To	Deadline
Contact George Martin re: homeless in park.	Rob	TBD
Get a copy of USC's master plan.	Vi	TBD
Investigate mixed messages on use of 911 vs. non-emergency number.	Cat	TBD
Arrange meeting with law enforcement to look at possibly blocking off Olympia for every football game.	Cat	TBD
Look into who to contact re: street light concerns.	Cat	TBD
Look into starting a Yard of the Month with local business support.	Mike	TBD
Work on a flyer for new residents/students.	Vi	TBD
Contact Vulcan to speak at upcoming general meeting.	Beth	TBD
Work on by-laws and constitution for ORC.	Executive Committee	TBD

4 DECISIONS MADE

- Continue with monthly general meetings
- Add working committee meetings in the interim

5 NEXT MEETING

Next Committee Meeting: 701 Whaley at 7:00 pm on July 17th.

Next General Meeting: 701 Whaley at 7:00 pm on July 31st.