Wagener Terrace Neighborhood Association

January 18, 2021
Minutes
[Virtual Meeting via Google Meet]
WTNA website address: www.wagenerterrace.org

Meeting was called to order @ 7:02 by Secretary Mike Turner at the request of Vice-President Lemajic. President Amanda Gurski was slightly delayed in joining the meeting. He asked any first time or non-resident guests to identify themselves. Morgan Grimes, Shannon Meder, Sharon Hollis, and Councilman Mike Seekings, Chairman of Low Country Rapid Transit (LCRT), were recognized as representatives of Low Country Rapid Transit. Jodi Crosby, designer, was recognized and was attending in support of Courtney Melvin's zoning exception request that appears on the agenda.

REPORTS

Minutes:
The minutes of the November 16, 2020 meeting, having been posted in draft form on the WTNA website for two months, were approved as posted. The motion was made by Petar Lemajic, seconded by Jarett Nicholson, and passed unanimously.

Financials:
Treasurer Gail Thomas reported a checking account balance of $12,490.05 and a savings account balance of $22,504.94. Treasurer Thomas indicated that there was $750 remaining in the 2020-21 budget to pay Greater St. Luke AME for meeting space that would not be utilized. She requested authorization to expend an additional $500 for the Lowcountry Food Bank and $250 to establish another Little Free Library installation in Wagener Terrace – at the 10th Ave entrance to Hampton Park. The motion was approved.

PRESENTATIONS

1. **Low Country Rapid Transit** Shannon Meder introduced Sharon Hollis of LCRT who made a power point presentation on a proposed new initiative to provide a bus rapid transit system for riders from the Summerville area (Ladson fairgrounds initially), through North Charleston, to downtown Charleston (via US 78 and US 52), shadowing I-26. The route would be 21.5 miles one way; travel at least 50% of the trip on dedicated road lanes; and have stations along the route with car parking areas and bicycle/ pedestrian access. The stations would be ADA compliant. It is anticipated that the buses would be scheduled every 10 minutes to riders and available for 20 hours/ day. The staff is now working on a $360M competitive grant. If successful, the rapid transit initiative would be under construction 2023-2026. More information about the initiative can be accessed at lowcountryrapidtransit.com. This project is a Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG) initiative. Preliminary plans call for the construction of a station near Mt. Pleasant Street in Wagener Terrace. The LCRT is expecting an on-line meeting launch at the end of February 2021.
2. **2232 Sunnyside Ave - Request for Support of Zoning Exception** Courtney Melvin, owner of a home at 2232 Sunnyside Ave wants to add a bedroom and deck to her existing home. Jodi Crosby is her designer/ architect who presented a plat of the proposed addition that illustrated the zoning problems. First, the lot, which is non-conforming, did not meet the lot coverage zoning standard for the proposed structure by 167 sq. feet. Additionally, on one side, the structure would fail to meet the 9-foot setback for a portion of the structure, but it is exacerbated by the non-conforming nature of the lot. Ms. Melvin reported that neighbors on both sides of her home had provided letters approving of her request for a zoning exception. In reply to a question by Petar Lemajic, Ms. Melvin stated that she was not planning to establish a B&B. After additional discussion, a motion to support Ms. Melvin's zoning exception request was made by Mike Turner and seconded by Petar Lemajic. The motion passed unanimously.

3. **Hampton Park Issues -- Vehicle Speeds, the Homeless, and the Park Name** Mr. Hector Qirko, resident of Hester Street, presented two draft letters that would represent separate requests on behalf of the WTNA to the City of Charleston. The first letter asks the City to enforce the 20 mph speed limit around the park more vigorously, including the establishment of "periodic speed traps." He also requested signs that said "Slow - Children Playing" to be installed close to the McMahon Playground. A spirited discussion ensued among the members. Lyn Smith noted speeding vehicles were a serious problem and perhaps speed traps would help. Several members noted that the park was more crowded now because of the pandemic. Mike Turner reminded the members that Lt. Dasher of the Charleston Police Department had just been assigned as a supervisor of the Wagener Terrace area. At the November meeting, he had requested that members contact him if we were having law enforcement problems in the neighborhood. Turner suggested we contact him before asking the City to establish speed traps in the park. Lyn Smith noted that there used to be signs prohibiting commercial trucks on Mary Murray Driveway in the park but they had been removed without consultation. Moreover, the oak canopy on Mary Murray had been trimmed higher to allow commercial trucks to travel in the park without hitting branches on the trees. There was additional discussion about prohibiting all vehicular traffic around the park. Councilman Sakran, who was in attendance, suggested that he thinks the residents in Wagener Terrace are split about 50/50 on the issue. Councilman Mike Seekings, who was still in attendance after the LCRT presentation, said that in his role as transportation committee chair on the council, he will see that the signs regarding trucks are reinstalled on Mary Murray. President Gurski asked Mr. Qirko if contacting Lt. Dasher and the actions by Councilman Seekings would be a good start in addressing the speeding issue. He replied in the affirmative.

President Gurski then noted that the remaining agenda items, including Mr. Qirko's concern about the homeless sleeping the park and the potential renaming of the park, would need to be postponed until the next meeting because of timing out on Google Meet. A motion to adjourn was made and approved by the members in a unanimous vote. Gail Thomas mentioned the number of "non-stops" at Grove and 10th that needs to be addressed.

Councilman **Jason Sakran** was recognized by President Gurski for comments. The Councilman noted that the financial situation of the City was such that a millage increase was being discussed to maintain essential services. A lot of new activity is having to be curtailed, such as traffic studies, etc. If there is no federal help forthcoming (i.e., stimulus funds for cities and states) it is likely that furlough of city workers would result. He will continue to post summaries of city council meetings at the end of each month.

The next WTNA Meeting is **February 15, 2021 at 7:00 pm**. An email announcement and phone call will be made regarding format of the meeting.

Handy Contacts:

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www.wagenerterrace.org
Police Dispatch (non-emergency) 843-743-7200
Lowndes Grove MOD 843-708-4314
Councilman Gregorie 843-327-7900 (Mona Lisa)
Councilman Gregorie's personal # 843-819-6619
City of Charleston Citizen Services Desk
843-724-7311

Tree Program: Anna McAllister
843-814-5553 or annamcallister@aol.com
www.crimeweb.net
Code/Livability 843-805-3226
Councilman Sakran (District 3) 843-819-0507

BOD: Amanda Gurski, Petar Lemajic, Mike Turner, Gail Thomas, Jeanie Knowlton, Susan Cale, Nancy Wilson and Anna Turner

Completed: January 20, 2021