Wagener Terrace Neighborhood Association

August 16, 2021

Minutes

[Virtual Meeting via Google Meet]

WTNA website address: www.wagenerterrace.org

The August meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by President Petar Lemajic. He asked for any new meeting attendees to feel free to introduce themselves. DonnaMarie Patten introduced herself as a WTNA member who has not attended meetings recently. Stacey Bailey, of 39 Alberta Ave, also introduced herself to the neighborhood. She is not yet a member but said that having a virtual meeting helped her be able to attend since the time of the meeting otherwise conflicts with her child's bedtime.

MINUTES: President Lemajic shared his screen so that he could walk everyone through how to access the meeting minutes online. To read the posted minutes, you go to www.wagenerterrace.org, click on the Resources heading, and click on Minutes option. The minutes that have not yet been approved are labeled as "Draft." Minutes from the previous years' meetings can be found in the Archive. President Lemajic asked for a motion to accept the June and July minutes as posted on the website. VP Jarrett Nicholson moved to approve, and Jeanie Knowlton seconded. The motion passed, and the minutes were approved.

FINANCIALS: Treasurer Gail Thomas was not present at the meeting because she is traveling. President Lemajic noted that we have roughly the same amount in Checking and Savings as last month. No one had any questions about the Financials.

CITY COUNCIL/POLICE/CITADEL

President Lemajic noted that we have no presentations tonight. He asked if Councilman Sakran, Councilman Gregorie, Lt. Dasher, or anyone representing the Citadel was present and wanted to speak, but none were present.

NEW BUSINESS / LOCAL ISSUES

1. VP Nicholson gave a report on the peninsula neighborhood consortium meeting he attended. Becca Hopkins, the City of Charleston Neighborhood Services Manager, spoke at the meeting about the City's efforts in trying to find ways to better manage issues related to the large number of students living off-campus in residential neighborhoods. They are looking at other college towns to see what kind of combination of policing/code enforcement, continual student

education, and LTR property owner tracking has proven to be most effective. Ms. Hopkins was unable to attend today's meeting, but she hopefully will be able to attend a future meeting to discuss this further. The City currently uses policing/code enforcement as their primary tactic in dealing with off-campus student issues, and they are working with the colleges to improve education, but the weak spot is that they do not have a current method of tracking LTR landlords. The City is required by state law to update their business license ordinance every few years, so they are now considering changing the business license ordinance to require more contact information for landlords within specific neighborhoods so that they can contact landlords when there are issues with the tenants. This idea is still being developed, and Ms. Hopkins feels she will be able to better update us after an internal City meeting of department heads on August 19. Mr. Tyler Hueter asked if this change would involve paying a fee, but VP Nicholson does not think so. This change would be made to improve the City's ability to get in touch with property owners, not to increase hassle for landlords, but the planning is still in initial phases so it is unclear at this time what the official ordinance may look like.

2. Edmund Most from Ashley Avenue spoke about his request for a stop sign in the north-south direction of Ashley Avenue at the intersection with Maple Street. He has already talked to Traffic and Transportation about it, and they said they could move forward if the neighborhood supports it. He said that the speed limit is 25 mph, but it is not posted, and no one adheres to it. Ashley Avenue is mostly free of stop signs, and people speed down the street in an effort to bypass the morning and evening traffic on Rutledge Avenue. President Lemajic asked for comments. Mr. Hueter wished him good luck and said that it is a slow process, and he has been working on similar speeding issues on Mt. Pleasant Street for over a year. Mr. Most said he works for the City and is hopeful that he will be able to make good headway on this issue. President Lemajic said he fully supports a stop sign. People fly down Ashley to the T intersection of Ashley Ave. and Simons St., and it is unsafe for the neighbors who live along there. Mr. Most moved that the WTNA write a letter of support for a 2-way stop sign in the north-south direction of the intersection of Ashley Ave. at Maple St. Mrs. Patten seconded the motion. President Lemajic took a vote from all present voting members, and there were 9 yeas and no nays. The motion passed.

3. President Lemajic provided an update on the Section 1 neighborhood meeting he attended virtually on July 22. All City neighborhood presidents, including those on Daniel Island, James Island, and West Ashley, met and talked about neighborhood issues. He collected concerns from us and submitted all of the feedback in writing but presented our top concerns during the meeting. A very popular theme was the pace of development - that there is too much development, and it does not represent what we as City residents want. Mayor Tecklenburg sympathized with the concern about the pace of development but said it is never going to slow down. He committed to and provided resources for affordable housing for people being priced out of their homes. Our other main concern was about traffic safety, and he said we had a lot of backing about safety issues. Getting across Rutledge Ave to Sundrops Montessori is very dangerous for kids in our neighborhood. President Lemajic said he got a lot of good feedback from us, and he displayed for us a spreadsheet of our responses. He offered everyone the opportunity to receive a copy of the verbatim responses should they wish to review it more

closely. He said that ultimately he would like more feedback from the Mayor and would like to talk to neighbors about who needs assistance and how we can provide help as a neighborhood resource.

4. Mr. Hueter gave a status report on the traffic calming efforts on Mt. Pleasant St. WTNA has submitted a letter of support to the City, and the process has been going on for a year. Thomas Tisdale, the City's Assistant Traffic Operations Manager, told Mr. Hueter that he had approval from the Charleston Police Department, but then in a secondary email he said he was going to meet with the CPD, so Mr. Hueter was unsure what that meant. Mr. Tisdale also said they formally entered a request to lower the speed limit from 30 to 25, which Mr. Hueter thinks is great, but he said that no one knows what the speed limit is now because one is not posted, and people speed anyways, so he is skeptical that this decrease will meaningfully change anything. He also notes that the speed reduction just brings Mt. Pleasant St. in line with King St. because right now King St. has a lower speed limit than Mt. Pleasant St. Mr. Hueter also noted that Councilman Sakran wrote supportive remarks to the City about this effort. President Lemajic said that the WTNA can also send an email of support if it would help. Mr. Hueter said he is trying to get contact information for CPD and the Charleston Fire Department so that he can help facilitate this process, but he has not heard back from Mr. Tisdale.

Mr. Most offered an explanation of the process, as he works for the City and is unsure whether the process has been properly explained to Mr. Hueter and other WTNA members. He said that once a project meets the City's criteria and gets approved, it goes onto a list. There is a very small funding source for these speed humps, and when the funding is there, they go through the first 5 locations on the list that can be funded. He said that he was originally looking at speed humps as an option for Ashley Ave., but there is so little funding. He said that if it meets criteria, it is faster to pay out of pocket. Mr. Hueter said that he was told he could not pay out of pocket for it. Mr. Most suggested finding out if the City will allow WTNA to go 50/50 on it. Mr. Hueter said that he is happy to go back and ask, and he noted that he is willing to get anything, whether that is a speed hump or a stop sign, as he does not think lowering the speed limit will affect change. Mr. Most said that finding out where Mt. Pleasant St. is on the list will help control expectations. Mr. Hueter thanked him for the insight. President Lemajic requested that Mr. Hueter keep us informed on what we can do to help.

5. President Lemajic noted that street blocking is ongoing, and we try to send out notices when we get them. There was blocking by Dominion Energy on Mt. Pleasant St. between Clemson St. and Hester St. that started on August 2 and ended today.

COMMITTEES

1. Yard of the Month - Amanda Gurski was not in attendance today, so we did not get an update on August's Yard of the Month. [Post-Meeting Update: Mrs. Gurski and fellow YOM leader Bradley Thompson opted not to select a YOM for August.]

2. Sunshine - This is a committee defined in our bylaws. Hal and Sis Marshall were Chairs of the committee, but Hal died last year and Sis moved to Florida. The intent of the committee is to check on neighbors who are sick or going through hard times and provide support to them. He said that it is a neat thing to help maintain the fiber of the neighborhood. He asked that someone step forward to chair the committee. It is a feel-good committee, and he expressed that he hopes someone who has time will be willing to take it over. No one volunteered.

3. Environment, Zoning, Membership/Publicity - No updates from any of these committees. Anyone interested in participating in these committees should reach out to get involved.

4. Oyster Roast - VP Nicholson is heading this special committee. January 9 is the oyster roast date provided by Lowndes Grove. He continues to put out feelers about who would like to join. He said that Julia Martin, Mike Hilfer, and Susan Cale all volunteered to help after the last meeting. Treasurer Thomas and President Lemajic have a lot of experience from past Oyster Roasts and will also be assisting. VP Nicholson hopes to have the first meeting of the oyster roast committee next week and intends to lock down the band and the food vendor soon. He noted that WTNA will try to ensure a reasonable cancellation policy. With the current unexpected increase in covid cases, it is hard to predict what the next few months will look like, and we will need flexibility in our plan. He encouraged people to get involved, whether it is the planning before the oyster roast or providing day-of assistance. His philosophy is the more, the merrier. Mrs. Patten said that she would like to be involved, so VP Nicholson added his email to the meeting chat so that interested persons could contact him to receive emails about the oyster roast committee planning meetings.

President Lemajic said that with the Governor's orders against masking, it is difficult to predict where things will go from here, but he thinks Lowndes Grove is fully prepared. They enforce social distancing and do things differently than they used to, and we would follow their policies with our event. He noted that Lance Boone is the musician to reach out to. He lives on Ashley Avenue. VP Nicholson expressed an interest in familiarizing himself with Lowndes Grove's policies so that we know what their position is on masking and vaccination and can ensure we are taking the necessary steps to protect the neighborhood association. No one had any questions about the oyster roast.

5. Growth Management/Permits - President Lemajic said that he is unaware of any properties going before the BAR or any upcoming issues related to growth or permits. Robert Freeman with Charleston Water System then spoke up to give an update. He last attended a WTNA meeting in April to discuss the water main project at Grove and Wagener. There is also another project on Laurens St.. He said he is happy to report that CWS is now in the public procurement process and will be opening bids for contractors tomorrow. They must procure contracts and then start work. There will be future mailers and PR in the neighborhood before the next phase of work starts. President Lemajic asked him to restate the location of the work. Mr. Freeman said there will be a little peripheral work on other streets but that the primary work is on Grove St. starting at Rutledge Ave. and continuing to the end of Grove by the Ashley River. The work will also be on Wagener Avenue starting at Grove St. and continuing down the street and then

around onto Third Avenue. President Lemajic asked if there will be any water quality issues that we should be concerned about while the work is being done. Mr. Freeman said no. He said they are going to build a new water main next to the old water main, and the old water main will function as normal until the new water main is finished. He said there may be occasional outages due to tie-ins with the new main, but the work will be in block-by-block phases, so there should be no area-wide outages. Mr. Freeman said that there have been a number of operational issues with that main, and that adding a new main should get rid of a lot of those issues and should also be better for fire protection in the neighborhood.

NEW CONCERNS

1. Board Position: We have an empty board seat since Nancy Wilson became Secretary, and we need to elect an interim Board member for this position until the next election in June 2022. President Lemajic asked whether any neighbors on the call have any nominations to fill this position. Susan Cale nominated Tyler Hueter as the board member to replace Secretary Wilson. VP Nicholson seconded. There were no other nominations. Mr. Hueter was elected Board Member by acclamation. His new position will be effective next month. Mr. Hueter says he is happy to be a part of the WTNA Board.

2. Meeting In-Person: At the July meeting, we discussed having our meetings in person soon and talked about different locations. VP Nicholson noted that the WTNA Board has since decided that now is probably not the time to try to meet in person. We need to watch the covid numbers and continue to meet virtually for now. President Lemajic said that we have lost our meeting space and asked for suggestions of where else to meet when the time comes. Mr. Most said that he could probably arrange for us to meet at the City's Parks and Recreation office space at 823 Meeting St. President Lemajic thinks that is a great option, and he will send an official request to Mr. Most.

Mr. Hueter moved to close the meeting, Mrs. Patten seconded, and President Lemajic closed the meeting at 7:52 pm.

The next WTNA Meeting will be September 20, 2021 at 7:00 pm. An email announcement and phone call will be made regarding the format of the meeting.

Handy Contacts:

Wagenerterrace@wagenerterrace.org

Tree Program: Anna McAllister

www.wagenerterrace.org 843-814-5553 or
annamcallister@aol.com

Police Dispatch (non-emergency) 843-743-7200 www.crimeweb.net

Lowndes Grove MOD 843-708-4314 Code/Livability 843-805-3226

Councilman Gregorie 843-327-7900 (Mona Lisa) Councilman Sakran (District 3)
843-819-0507

Councilman Gregorie's personal # 843-819-6619

City of Charleston Citizen Services Desk

843-724-7311

BOD: Petar Lemajic, Jarrett Nicholson, Gail Thomas, Jeanie Knowlton, Susan Cale, Nancy Wilson, and Anna Turner

Completed: August 17, 2021