

Wagener Terrace Neighborhood Association

February 19, 2024

Minutes

[Hybrid Meeting at Mark Clark Hall and via Google Meet]

WTNA website address: www.wagenerterrace.org

The February meeting was called to order at 7pm by President Petar Lemajic. There were a couple new attendees who introduced themselves. Claire Theobald has lived on Pendleton St. since 2019. Nathan Durfee has lived on Grove St. for 5 years. Hayes Saer has lived on Gordon St. since 2021 with his wife Emily and now their 6-month old daughter.

MINUTES: The previous month's minutes are posted on the WTNA website. Liz Bronneberg moved to approve the minutes from the January meeting as posted on the website. James Bishop seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, and the minutes were approved.

FINANCIALS: DonnaMarie Patten did not have the exact numbers available, but they are roughly the same as the \$6,080.58 in Checking and \$22,511.32 in Savings that we had last month. We are still expecting a \$5,000 donation from Lowndes Grove, and VP Jarett Nicholson said we should receive it soon.

CITY COUNCIL/CITADEL/POLICE: No representatives were present.

No Presentations.

NEW BUSINESS/LOCAL ISSUES: MARSH Project is hosting a Backyard Habitat Gardening event at Silver Hill Studio on February 22 at 7pm. There will be 2 native plant experts who will talk about garden design and pollinators. They want people to think about plants that form ecological corridors for local habitats and be conscious of what we put in our yards so that we keep our waterway healthy. They conduct water quality testing in Halsey Creek, and they report whether there are any salinity or dissolved oxygen issues. More information can be found at themarshproject.com and [marsh_project](#) on Instagram.

ONGOING BUSINESS:

1. Blake Scott spoke about the marsh letter that we wrote about the 7 locations in the neighborhood to which we are requesting improved marsh access. He gave the update that the area at 3rd and Wagener Avenues now has a sign that identifies the area as wetlands, which helps warn people off from trying to drive there. There is a similar area of concern at 9th Avenue and Gordon St. which has a 60-ft right of way. It is next to a duplex which currently has renters who are treating it like a parking lot, but the area is sinking, so Mr. Scott thinks there should be another wetlands sign at that site. Most people do not realize that it is public. President Lemajic said Councilman Gregorie is aware and understands it is a priority for us. He has not pushed it yet with the new City administration, but we will soon move forward with efforts to get this issue addressed. He thinks it will help that we as a neighborhood would

be willing to chip in and beautify it. He also thinks we need to push forward to get resolution of the Longborough access issue so that it does not get buried or forgotten about by the new Administration.

2. Cheryl O'Donnell, Executive Director at Florence Crittenton, was present to discuss the next steps for their building. It is not sustainable for them to maintain the building as a nonprofit, and it does not meet the needs of current young women. There are now women living with them for up to 3 years, so the dorm-style rooms are not suitable for growing teens with their children. They are relocating, not closing. They are looking to potentially purchase single family homes and then housing the women in little pods. She said they have a mortgage on the property, so the hope is that they can break even, pay off debts, and have a little money left to buy new housing. She said there has been \$170,000 in maintenance just this year, and they cannot sufficiently take care of both the building and the young women.

Lindsay Nevin with The Flyway Companies was present to discuss his plans for the building. He said he has worked a lot with the Historic Charleston Foundation and the Preservation Society, and he is approaching this project through the lens of preservation. The building is currently zoned as a single family residence, operating under a non-conforming use. They think the best use is multi-family housing, which would require them to receive permission to continue a non-conforming use. The building is about 16,000 square feet, and they are looking to create 10 residential units, with 1300-sf per unit. They do not plan to make modifications to the original footprint, but there will have to be allowance made for internal and external egress.

The parking requirement is 1.5 spaces per unit, which would be 15 spaces. They could only achieve that if the Chapel were to be removed and an additional curb cut was made on St. Margaret St. so that drivers could go around the building. They still have not heard back from the BAR about whether demolition would be allowed, but the Chapel was built in the 1960s and rebuilt in the 1990s after a hurricane, and preliminary research does not show anything special about it. It is currently being used for storage. The Chapel is not in good enough condition for it to be possible to relocate it. If they cannot demolish the chapel, then they would need a parking variance to allow only 6-7 parking spots, and they would then make the Chapel an additional residential unit. The units will all be market rate for purchase. The previous developer tried to get an affordable housing plan through, but it could not work financially unless they had over 30 units.

President Lemajic said high density housing is something our neighborhood needs to support. Gail Thomas moved to write a letter of support for demolition of the chapel. Nancy Wilson seconded. All were in favor. Ms. Bronneberg moved to write a letter in support to the BZA for continuing a nonconforming use since it is zoned as a single family home, and Mr. Scott seconded. All were in favor. President Lemajic will write both letters of support.

3. Rebecca Bishop did a survey on the I Live in Wagener Terrace facebook page about potential social events, and she received a lot of positive feedback. She has since found that to do a social function in a park, this would fall between a recreation approval and a special event approval. The Recreation Department thinks we are too big for a recreation permit, but the Special Events coordinator thinks we should avoid going through that process because it is a lot more involved than a recreation permit. Mrs. Bishop thinks they are going to give pushback about food trucks and alcohol, so she thinks we should start small with a bounce castle and food stands and see how it goes. Mrs. Bishop will come back to us once she has figured out how the City will view the event. President Lemajic asked that he be copied on any emails. VP Nicholson offered to help coordinate.

COMMITTEES:

1. Yard of the Month – Congratulations to February’s Yard of the Month, Claire Theobold at 41 Pendleton Street!

2. Sunshine – Gail Thomas mentioned that Martha at 220 Grove St. passed away. Lyn Smith said that Katie and Eddie O’Brien on Grove St. had a new baby 2 days ago.

4. Publicity/Membership – Ms. Bronneberg reminded everyone that membership is \$10/person per year.

5. Zoning - Mr. Saers has an upcoming BZA request at 237 Gordon. They are proposing a screened rear porch addition, which would extend a nonconforming setback. It is one story, and the addition stays within the roof line. The house is within 5 feet of the property line. They have support from the two adjacent neighbors who are owners but have not yet received any feedback from the remaining adjacent neighbor, who is a renter. Mr. Bishop thinks what they are doing is appropriate. Ms. Thomas moved that we write a letter of support, and Ms. Bronneberg seconded. All were in favor. President Lemajic will write a letter of support to send to the March 5 BZA meeting. He mentioned that going forward we are going to try to maintain a time limit for BZA/BAR presentations so that we can keep the review process efficient.

No New Concerns.

Ms. Thomas moved to close the meeting, and Mr. Bishop seconded. Meeting closed at 8:11 pm.

The next WTNA meeting will be March 18, 2024 at 7:00pm.

Handy Contacts:

Wagenerterrace@wagenerterrace.org

Police Dispatch (non-emergency) 843-743-7200

Lowndes Grove MOD 843-708-4314

Code/Livability 843-805-3226

Councilman Gregorie: 843-327-7900 (Mona Lisa), personal #: 843-819-6619

City of Charleston Citizen Services Desk 843-724-7311

BOD: Petar Lemajic, Jarrett Nicholson, DonnaMarie Patten, Jeanie Knowlton, Tyler Hueter, Susan Cale, Nancy Wilson, and Anna Turner