

Wagener Terrace Neighborhood Association

January 15, 2024

Minutes

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

WTNA website address: www.wagenerterrace.org

The January meeting was called to order at 7pm by President Petar Lemajic. Nathan Durfee introduced himself as a resident of Grove Street for the past 4 years.

MINUTES: The previous month's minutes are posted on the WTNA website. Gail Thomas moved to approve the minutes from the November meeting as posted on the website. DonnaMarie Patten seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, and the minutes were approved.

FINANCIALS: Gail Thomas reported that we have \$6,080.58 in Checking. We added \$10 from membership. We also have \$22,511.32 in Savings. \$17,500 is designated for a future Oyster Roast, and we are still expecting a \$5,000 donation from Lowndes Grove. VP Jarett Nicholson will inquire about the status of the donation.

CITY COUNCIL/CITADEL: No representatives were present.

POLICE: Officer Shawn Ferguson was present to talk about the Charleston Police Department's Mounted Horse Patrol. The unit was originally formed in 1978, and at its height had 14 horses stabled in Hampton Park, but it was deactivated in 2011. It was reactivated in 2021 under the late Chief Luther Reynolds with 2 horses donated from Palmetto Carriage Works and 2 CPD officers. It was partially supported by donations from the Charleston Visitor Center. The Mounted Patrol unit expanded in 2023 to include 4 CPD officers and received additional donations from the LENS Foundation. The horses are housed in the Big Red Barn near the City Market.

Officer Ferguson noted that key attributes of mounted policing are accessibility, stamina, height, visibility, approachability, community relations, and authority. He said mounted patrols can access and patrol areas, like parking lots, crowded urban lots, and traffic, that are not easily negotiated by vehicles, and the higher vantage point gives the officer a better and farther view of the area, which is useful in large crowd situations. A mounted officer is also very visible to the public, and their presence on large horses can be intimidating and a path to de-escalation when it needs to be, but it can also make officers seem more friendly and approachable to the public than officers in a cruiser or on a motorcycle. The horse can also help open lines of communication between cops and communities, as the horses help create positive and memorable interactions.

The Mounted Horse Patrol monitors the downtown central business district, with its high profile patrol areas being upper and lower King Street, Marion Square, the Battery, and White Point Gardens. The two horses are Watson and Holmes, and both are former carriage horses with 2 years of police experience. When patrolling, two mounted teams work together, with police bike enhancement provided regularly. They do 10 hour shifts, 6 hours of which are in the saddle, and there are day and evening shifts. Two officers completed 6 weeks of training in Maryland alongside Watson and Holmes. A third officer is an experienced equestrian and the unit trainer. The fourth officer

had no previous riding experience and is currently in training locally and will probably be certified in the coming months. In the future, Officer Ferguson says they hope to be allocated suitable transportation and training resources, acquire additional police-trained horses, create collateral officer assignments, and hopefully bring back a volunteer program for citizens to come in and help with the horses.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Cheryl O'Donnell, Executive Director at Florence Crittenton, was present to provide a brief update. She reminded everyone that Florence Crittenton is a maternity group home and foster care facility on St. Margaret St. that has been in the neighborhood for 100 years. There are currently 10 young women and 4 babies in the house right now. She reported that the building is not sustainable for them at this point, so they are planning to relocate and are currently looking at proposals for people to develop the building. No decisions have been made yet. She said they are aware of some of our concerns and will keep those in mind when they meet with developers. She said she will maintain dialogue with us as their plans progress.

2. President Lemajic noted that MUSC is hosting the Building Health Communities 5K in Hampton Park on February 10, 2024. The Charleston Half Marathon will be on January 20 and will result in some neighborhood road closures.

3. Anne Jackson, the new College of Charleston Neighborhood Relations Coordinator, introduced herself as the middleman between the community and off-campus students. She wants to make sure CofC students are good to their neighbors and that their neighbors are good to them.

4. Madison Lee, the new Community Outreach Coordinator for the Preservation Society of Charleston, was also present to introduce herself. She said that she is a good point of contact for any preservation-related concerns. She said people can reach out to her at MLee@preservationsociety.org.

5. Clemson Extension will be offering a Master Rain Gardener online course this spring.

COMMITTEES:

1. Yard of the Month – Congratulations to January's Yard of the Month, Ruth Barrow at 353 Grove Street!

2. Sunshine – Gail Thomas mentioned that Sam Rouse, who lived on Grove Street for many years, died in September. Susan Cale reminded everyone to let her know of anyone in the neighborhood who has a major life event.

3. Environment - Nothing to report.

4. Publicity/Membership – Liz Bronneberg gave a shout-out to Blake Scott and the MARSH Project, which collaborated with Edmunds Oast to create a beer called the Marsh Brew.

4. Growth Management - President Lemajic introduced two requests he received from Thomas Tisdale, the City's Assistant Traffic Operations Manager, for ADA handicap parking spaces, one on Kyle Place and one at 2217 Mt. Pleasant Street. There was no opposition to the requests. President Lemajic will send a letter to Mr. Tisdale to say that we approve both requested spaces.

NEW CONCERNS: Amy Kunza Vargas and Kristina Jarvis were present to request that WTNA support the addition of a speed hump on Grove Street between 11th and 12th Avenues. They said that there are speed humps on other blocks of Grove, so many cars use this block to gain speed between humps. They reported 4 recent car accidents. There was a motion to send a letter of support for this speed hump request, and all present were in favor. Ms. Vargas and Ms. Jarvis will be responsible for getting at least 75% of neighbors on that block to sign a speed hump petition, and President Lemajic will supply a letter of support to submit to the City along with the petition.

ZONING:

1. 241 Gordon Street - The owners are requesting a special exception from the BZA to allow a vertical extension to a nonconforming east-side setback and a variance to allow a 1-story addition with a nonconforming west-side setback. This is the owners' current residence, and they have no plans to rent the property. James Bishop noted that the addition is sympathetic to the architecture. There was a motion to write a letter of support, and all were in favor. President Lemajic will write a letter of support to send to the BZA.

2. 32 Dunneman Avenue - The owner is requesting a special exception to extend a nonconforming east-side setback. The house is an early-20th century bungalow on the corner of Dunneman and 11th Avenues. They want to make more livable space, so the proposed site plan is a rear addition that will allow for a decent sized kitchen and a second floor bedroom. They are keeping the roof line the same. The square footage of the house will increase from about 1350 to 2200. Mr. Bishop appreciates that they are maintaining the roof line and keeping with the character of the home. The owner plans to live there after the renovations and does not plan to rent it. The architect, Johnny Tucker, did note that they would likely also be going to the BAR to request removing the rear porch and concrete block garage, removing the asbestos siding, replacing the existing dormer storm windows with 3/1 windows, and potentially removing the chimney that connects to the old gas furnace, but we did not discuss those issues at this time. There was a motion to write a letter of support for the special exception, with the caveat that they speak to the neighbors about their plans. All were in favor. President Lemajic will write a letter of support to the BZA.

3. President Lemajic showed everyone the Google Form called 'Request for WTNA Letter of Support' which was created to standardize future BAR/BZA requests. It will be available on our website for neighbors to complete. The form asks what type of support is being requested, whether the property is your primary residence, and whether the property will be your primary residence after the improvements are made. President Lemajic asked whether these questions were appropriate and whether anyone else had suggestions for what to include. There were suggestions for the following additional questions: "Do you plan to offer this property as a short term rental at any point in the future?", "Why are you making this request?", "Are you changing sight lines or blocking views for any of your neighbors?", "Have you received written or verbal support from your neighbors after sharing your full plan?", and "When are you planning to present at a city meeting (BZA/BAR)?" President Lemajic will reach out to real estate agents and Pennye Ashby, Senior Zoning Planner, to try to spread the word about our new process. Going forward, he will plan to submit a default opposition to requests that have not been brought before the WTNA.

Rebecca Bishop proposed an informal event at the Corinne Jones Park as a way to introduce neighbors to the WTNA and spread the word about what we do. She thinks it would also be a good social opportunity for young families. President Lemajic suggested that we form an exploratory committee. There was a motion to work on creating an informal event. All were in favor. Mrs. Bishop will work on getting this started.

Anna McAllister reminded everyone that she is taking orders for trees on a first come, first serve basis. The cost is \$295/tree, and WTNA pays half of that cost.

VP Nicholson moved to close the meeting, and Ms. Patten seconded. Meeting closed at 8:40 pm.

The next WTNA meeting will be February 19, 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