

Wagener Terrace Neighborhood Association

May 15, 2023

Minutes

[Hybrid Meeting at 45 Moultrie St. and via Google Meet]

WTNA website address: www.wagenerterrace.org

The May meeting was called to order at 7 pm by President Petar Lemajic. Liz and Annie Conley of 217 St. Margaret Street introduced themselves as new attendees.

MINUTES: The previous month's minutes are posted on the WTNA website. Jarett Nicholson moved to approve the minutes from the April meeting as posted on the website. Tim Jarosch seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, and the minutes were approved.

FINANCIALS: Treasurer Gail Thomas reported that we currently have \$6,842.33 in Checking and \$22,509.82 in Savings. Since last month, we have received \$20 in membership fees.

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

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Treasurer Thomas put forth a motion that we buy 2 new signs to announce neighborhood meetings. Anna McAllister seconded. The motion passed with none opposed.

2. Blake Scott said that he knows of an environmental organization that is interested in donating native plants to our neighborhood. He said they will come to next month's meeting to present their idea.

3. James Bishop reported that he spoke to someone at Lowndes Grove about beautifying the end of St. Margaret Street by the Lowndes Grove entrance. He said that they would like to improve the area also but that it is not technically their property, and in the past they have gotten in trouble for updating it. He said that they are willing to raise the curbs there, which would prevent people from driving or parking on the grass/dirt area, but that the City's Streets/Sidewalks department has stopped responding to them. The area is City-maintained, so they would need to authorize work there. Mr. Bishop made a motion that WTNA write a letter to support a formal curb and beautification at the end of St. Margaret Street.. Donna Marie Patten seconded. All were in favor, with no objections, so the motion passed.

PRESENTATIONS:

1. Becca Hopkins, the City of Charleston's Neighborhood Services Manager, was present to give an introduction on navigating neighborhood services. It is her responsibility to liaise with the various neighborhood associations, and her department of Neighborhood Services oversees the Neighborhood Council, which is made up of the City-recognized neighborhood associations, and the Neighborhood Commission, which oversees Council members. Ms. Hopkins said the purpose of government is to create

public value where the market is not providing value, and when there are arguments amongst residents and stakeholders, it is usually because people place value on different things and have different priorities. She said that it is helpful to recognize what the City is actually responsible for so that you pursue assistance from the right places. For example, the City does stormwater but not sewer, and trash and garbage but not recycling. She reviewed the roles and responsibilities of the Mayor, City Council, and City Staff, and she provided a handout with relevant City phone numbers to use for City resources and work orders.

2. There were three representatives from the Magnolia development present - Stuart Hall, of 350 Grove Street, Stuart Coleman, and Neil Kittredge, land planner. The Magnolia development is the large-scale development on the other side of 'the bridge to nowhere,' and it has been in the works for 20 years. They have been working with DHEC and the EPA, and the environmental clean-up is officially done. There used to be fertilizer plants there in the 1870s, 1920s and through the 1960s. Clean-up was started in the late 1990s and finally finished in fall of 2022. The conversation has now moved on to the development of the site, which will be a large and complicated project that will take many years. Portman Holdings and Highland Resources are in a development partnership, and Beyer Blinder Belle (BBB), which is based in NY, is handling the architecture. BBB is known for historical preservation and urban design, and they are also currently working on the College of Charleston's Master Plan.

Since Magnolia is a large site of 180 acres, they want to ensure that it contains the elements of a city - hospitality, housing and affordable housing, commercial and retail, environment, open space, and placemaking. They hope to include these elements while maintaining a feeling of community and neighborhood. A big portion of the property is marshland and water, so the buildable area is closer to 130-140 acres. They said, for comparison purposes, the distance from Market Street to Marion Square is about the same distance as King Street to the Ashley River. Milford and Braswell Streets are the 2 major east-west spines from King. There is a transit point planned for right outside those streets, and they also hope that the Lowline will extend that far.

The site already has an approved PUD, which was most recently updated and approved in 2020. The PUD sets the density, parking, traffic, types of uses, amount of open space, and heights of buildings. They are conforming to the PUD but want a unique sense of character, so they are adding open space views and pedestrian pathways to the PUD. There will be a waterfront walkway around the entire edge of the property which will be public. They are planning a pedestrian corridor through the center of the development which they are planning as a retail and restaurants area. The buildings range from 3 to 9 floors. There will be a hotel that will sit closest to the bridge to nowhere. There will also be a pier and a dock. They want the first phase of development to be the retail and waterfront core and then build around it. The area is high ground because of prior fill and has never flooded, but it will still need to be raised higher due to regulations related to sea level rise. The site ranges from 6-20 feet above sea level, and they have to build it up 6-12 feet. They are planning to build the parking under where they have to elevate, and that parking will mostly be centered around the 9-floor building.

They plan to start building the infrastructure mid-2024, which will include stormwater and roads. The buildings will start construction at the beginning of 2025. The water is not allowed to infiltrate into the ground because of the prior history of contamination, so it will go into storm drainage on the site, which will then go into pipes. According to the PUD, there are 4,000 total housing units when the development is complete, and 15% of those will be affordable and workforce housing. There are 2 dedicated sites which were donated to the City for affordable housing units, and the workforce housing will be incorporated through the project. They also donated a lot on Heriot Street by Brewlab to the City for more affordable housing. They confirmed that there is not an option for them to opt out of the affordable housing

requirement. They also confirmed that Magnolia will be developed from one vision and remain under one ownership.

COMMITTEES:

1. Yard of the Month - Congratulations to May's WTNA Yard of the Month - Kirstin and Matt Daen at 165 Mary Ellen Drive!

2. Sunshine - Nothing to report.

3. Environment - Nothing to report.

4. Membership/Publicity - Nothing to report.

5. Zoning - Mr. Bishop said there are no upcoming BAR or DRB submittals. For BZA, 968 Ashley Avenue is seeking a variance. They have a double lot, and they want to build a pool and a pool house, so they want to continue a non-conforming setback of 5 feet instead of the required 25 feet. The owner of the property was in attendance and spoke up to say that it cannot be seen from the street and that the neighbors have no objections. Annie and Liz Conley were present with their architect Mary Mac Wilson to present their plans for 217 St. Margaret Street. Their house was built in the 1940s and had an approved variance in 2016 for a garage. They are now looking to amend that structure by connecting it more to the house. It is currently a carport and workspace but does not actually fit a car. They are keeping the same roof but want to connect it more to the house and create a new bedroom, which will require them to expand the footprint by less than 4 feet. They are relatively early in the conceptual design but wanted to first get our support in being able to proceed with the needed variance. Lyn and Greg Smith live next door and are supportive of the project and think the aesthetics will improve. Treasurer Thomas moved that WTNA write a letter to support the variance. Susan Cale seconded. All were in favor.

New Concerns: Officer elections will need to be held next month. Treasurer Thomas cannot serve again per the Bylaws. She suggested Donna Marie Patten as her replacement.

Growth Management: Dominion Energy received a permit to close the north lane of St. Margaret Street between Rutledge Avenue and 12th Street from May 15-May 31 in order to install a gas line.

Treasurer Thomas moved to end the meeting, and Ms. Patten seconded. There was a unanimous vote to close the meeting. Meeting closed at 8:18 pm.

The next WTNA Meeting will be June 19, 2023 at 7:00 pm.

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

Councilman Sakran (District 3) 843-819-0507

City of Charleston Citizen Services Desk 843-724-7311

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