Wagener Terrace Neighborhood Association

August 17, 2020
Minutes
[Virtual Meeting via Google Meet]
WTNA website address: www.wagenerterrace.org

Meeting was called to order @ 7:00 by President Amanda Gurski. She asked any first time or non-resident guests to identify themselves. There were three: Kristopher King of the Historic Charleston Foundation and Executive Director of the Preservation Society of Charleston; Vicky Pittman, resident of Devereaux Street; and Patty Capers.

REPORTS

Minutes:
President Gurski postponed taking action on the Minutes of the July 20, 2020 meeting because they had not been posted on the website in draft form for the last month. The minutes will be considered at the September 21, 2020 meeting.

Financials:
Treasurer Gail Thomas reported a checking account balance of $31,000.01 and a savings account balance of $5,004.48.

PRESENTATIONS

1. ***Lowcountry Lowline***. Meghan Mills of the Friends of the Lowcountry Lowline presented a conceptual plan for this urban park that would substantially occupy the space on the peninsula that would be available by reclaiming 1.7 miles of abandoned railway track and highway corridor space (under the freeways) along the spine of the Charleston Peninsula from Mt. Pleasant Street to Marion Square. There are three districts in the proposed park: a.) the "North Central Corridor" that is the space around and under I-26 from Grove Street to Mt. Pleasant Street, b.) "The Parks," green spaces around and under freeways from Line Street to Grove Street, which is the largest proposed space in the Lowline (which could also provide temporary drainage spaces for storm water runoff mitigation on the peninsula); and c.) the "Urban Core," stretching in a narrow urban alleyway pattern from Calhoun Street to Line Street. Ms. Mills presented conceptual drawings of the map of the entire Lowline, as well as visuals of the kinds of activities and landscaping that may be employed in the three districts. Ms. Mills asked WTNA members to visit the lowcountrylowline.org website to learn more about the project and become involved. There were positive reactions to the presentation. Petar Lemajic asked about funding that may be dependent on the City of Charleston whose budget has been decimated by the pandemic. Ms. Mills noted that preliminary funding has remained intact and that the project will be developed in phases with potential state and federal grant funding sources added along the way. She estimated that the total cost of the Lowline would be $38 Million. Anna Turner noted that Charleston has lost a lot of greenspace over the years and that the Lowline is a good idea. Alston Middleton asked if there was a clear way to Marion Square. Ms. Mills noted that there were no announcements of commitments to remove fences and other barriers in the Urban Core, but that there were indications that there would be cooperation by downtown merchants/ developers to provide the clear way. Jarrett Nicholson asked when construction would start, and Ms. Mills responded that it could be between 18-24 months.

PRESENTATIONS (CONT'D)

2. ***Changing the WTNA Fiscal Year in the Bylaws***. Gail Thomas, WTNA Treasurer, again proposed a change to the WTNA By-Laws that would redefine the fiscal year from June 1/ May 31 to July 1/ June 30. The motion to approve the change was made by Gail Thomas and seconded by Alston Middleton. In discussion Mike Turner noted that the procedure for amending the By-Laws had been followed: The change had been discussed in two prior meetings (according to the minutes), and it had been placed on the agenda with the approval of the Board. Therefore, the approval of the motion by a quorum (19 household were online for the meeting with several households having two members) would make the change immediate. The motion was approved unanimously by those online.
3. ***2020-2021 Fiscal Year Budget***. Treasurer Gail Thomas orally presented the budget, although many of the members had not seen a copy of the proposed budget. For that reason, President Gurski announced that the proposed budget and the minutes of the last meeting would be posted on the www.wagenerterrace.org website and considered at the September 21 meeting. She noted that members could find the amended By-Laws under the "Minutes" pulldown on the website.

CITY COUNCIL/ POLICE/ CITADEL

Councilman Jason Sakran (District 3) was present. No other officials were present at the meeting. Councilman Sakran noted that there had been discussions about the council relaxing more of the Covid-19 restrictions for business owners/ patrons in the City. He asked for feedback from the members whether they thought the current restrictions should be kept in place. All the speakers to the issue thought that current restrictions, especially the wearing of masks, should stay in place. Many expressed frustration at witnessing large-scale non-compliance with the mask ordinance, including: a pickup basketball game in Corrine Jones Park with a large group with no masks; tourists and local shoppers in the market downtown with no masks, and groups of people from local gyms utilizing Hampton Park for exercises with no masks or social distancing. There were concerns expressed that there appears to be no enforcement, and that issuing of tickets/ citations was not being done. Councilman Sakran noted that in response to a question he had posed recently at a City Council Meeting, there were very few citations issued by the city. Councilman Sakran did clarify, however, that the current interpretation of the ordinance is that persons who are moving (i.e. exercising, etc.) and maintaining social distance are not in violation of the ordinance. Jarrett Nicholson commented that he felt that current restrictions on noise and music should be kept in place. Councilman Sakran projected that the College of Charleston, Citadel, and potentially public school start will be very challenging. He did note that a curfew is being consider in Columbia because of the USC start and may be considered in Charleston.

NEW BUSINESS/ LOCAL ISSUES

a.) **Dog Park Improvements**
President Gurski called on Bradley Thompson to discuss ideas about the use of excess donated funds for the dog park that have sat idle for some time. The total of unexpended donations is $1,253. Mr. Thompson was the originator of the dog park fund drive and he noted that the funds could be spent in several ways: more plantings in the park; more benches; a gazebo. However, he emphasized that he wanted to consult with patrons of the park and get their input before proceeding. Also, he was hopeful that improvements could be made that would obviate the involvement of city officials. Finally, he asked WTNA members to give him input or ideas via e-mail: bradley@charlestonhomebuying.com.

b.) Laurel Island Development
There was some discussion about the speed of the approval of the PUD of this very large development on the peninsula. Despite assurances from developers, several members, most

notably Gail Thomas, reiterated that the PUD gave developers great leeway in making substantial changes to the original plans. Kristopher King, Exec. Director of the Preservation Society of Charleston, said that the development needed more external controls besides the PUD Board. He invited members to visit the Society website to learn about the concerns of that organization to the proposed Laurel Island project. Several members, including Council Sakran, expressed concern that such a large development was moving forward during a time in which it is difficult to get feedback from citizens potentially impacted by the development. He further stated that he was generally supportive of the development, but full citizen participation in the decision-making was very important. President Gurski asked members to read the materials on the website for the Laurel Island development: www.meetlaurelisland.com .

c.) Absentee Voting

President Gurski reminded members that if they planned to vote absentee in the General Election of November 3, that they needed to apply for their absentee ballot early….. NOW!!! She urged members to visit the site SCvotes.gov to get more information about the requirements of absentee voting. You can also visit the site vote.charlestoncounty.org and select the Charleston County Board of Elections and Voter Registration. Also, if you have an absentee ballot, but do not want to mail your ballot, but deliver it in person, there will be only one collection point for these ballots in Charleston County. It is a special collection box outside the Charleston County Board of Elections and Voter Registration building @ 4367 Headquarters Rd., North Charleston, SC 29405. The box is under video surveillance. Also, new voter registrations must be completed one month before the General Election -- which is October 3, 2020.

President Gurski also recognized Hannah Reynolds, a veteran poll worker, who appealed for persons who were able to volunteer as poll workers for the General Election on November 3. She noted that Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) would be provided.

d.) **Dominion Power Tree Trimming Petition**. President Gurski noted that there is a petition circulating to limit the trimming of trees around electric poles/ lines. Information about the petition will be put on the WTNA website: www.wagenerterrace.org. V.P. Petar Lemajic also noted that the petition is attempting to limit the dimensions of the trimming, not to eliminate it.

e.) **Request for WTNA support for Traffic Slowdown Initiatives on Mt. Pleasant Street**. WT resident of 20 years, Tyler Heuter is requesting assistance from WTNA to get a STOP sign on Mt. Pleasant St. & Ashley Ave. and speed bumps on Mt. Pleasant St. from Hester St. to Rutledge Ave. He said that speeding is rampant on Mt. Pleasant Street. Councilman Sakran said that there is reluctance to install speed bumps without traffic assessment and study. It is time-consuming. He noted that emergency vehicles (i.e. ambulance, fire, police, etc.) are slowed down considerably in their responses by speed bumps. Mike Turner opined that speeding in WT streets has increased significantly, and that one of the indicators of a neighborhood-wide problem is the number of parents who are buying signs out of their own pockets to post on the streets asking people to please slow down. He also noted that he had not seen one sign from the city on WT streets that said to slow down "children are playing." There needs to be a number of strategies brought to bear on this problem – not just speed bumps. Councilman Sakran suggested that a letter to Council from the WTNA about this issue, signed by as many WT residents as possible might to get the traffic study going. Petar Lemajic will draft a letter for signing that could be circulated in various areas of WT.

REMINDERS

Annual dues can be paid by mailing $10/ person to Gail Thomas at 354 Grove Street, Charleston, 29403. Gail says that the dues can also be dropped by if that was convenient.

Committee Reports:

Yard of the Month: Lance Boone, 950 Ashley Avenue.

Longborough Dock: No report.

Growth Management: No report.

Sunshine: Gail Thomas reported that Joe Wolfe's wife passed away recently, and she sent a card from WTNA expressing condolences.

Meeting was adjourned @ 8:00 p.m.

Next WTNA Meeting is **September 21, 2020**. An announcement will be made regarding format of the meeting.

Handy Contacts:

WTNACharleston@gmail.com
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: August 18, 2020