Wagener Terrace Neighborhood Association

April 18, 2022

Minutes

[Virtual Meeting via Google Meet]

WTNA website address: www.wagenerterrace.org

The April meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by President Petar Lemajic. He welcomed everyone and asked for any new meeting attendees to feel free to introduce themselves. Jennifer Hajj introduced herself again, as this was her second meeting and it had been awhile since her first. No other new members identified themselves.

MINUTES: The previous month's minutes are posted on the WTNA website. Liz Bronneberg moved to approve the minutes from the March 2022 meeting as posted on the website. Treasurer Gail Thomas seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, and the minutes were approved.

FINANCIALS: Treasurer Thomas reported that we have $8,563.91 in Checking and $17,507.58 in Savings. The Checking amount has decreased due to a $250 donation to Florence Crittenton and a $250 donation to Lowcountry Food Bank. We make donations to both organizations on a quarterly basis.

POLICE/CITY COUNCIL/CITADEL: Councilman Sakran was present. He has recently finished moving into a new home near Peachtree and Ashley. He reported that the City has submitted a grant proposal to the Department of Transportation to start the funding and environmental remediation for the Lowcountry Lowline project. He joined the Lowline's Board about 4 months ago, and he is pleased with the City's level of engagement with the project. If the grant is funded, the project will be started very soon. Cm Sakran believes it will be a tremendous recreation asset for the peninsula and a potential economic stimulator.

Cm Sakran said that he is committed to trying to figure out a way to restore Gadsden Creek. He said it has significant historical value to the African American community, particularly those in the Westside neighborhood, dating back to the late 1800's and early 1900's when they used it for baptisms, fishing, and recreation. Barbara Gathers, one of our neighbors on San Souci, wrote a book called Back Da Green, which gives a historical look at that area. The City then used it as a landfill up until the 1950's, so there are environmental concerns and a need for flooding mitigation. Last year the City voted to support WestEdge's request for a permit to fill the creek. Cm Sakran said he voted in favor because there was no alternative plan at the time, but he has encouraged the Charleston Area Justice Ministry to present an alternative plan to

Council to help restore the Creek. He is fully supportive of restoring it if there is a viable alternative.

Cm Sakran reported that the King Street and Huger Street flooding project is heading into Phase 2, which should be completed in the next year or two. They have done a lot of work underground, which will culminate in a pump station near the Enston Homes. The pump will be substantial and should get rid of all the water during King tides. That project is fully funded and progressing.

The Planning Department is going to make public some planning changes to the BAR, primarily in adding flexibility to BAR standards. Cm Sakran stated that he is not anti-preservation and does not want to change the fabric of the neighborhood, but he wants to make it easier for homeowners to fix their homes, especially as it relates to roofs and windows. If it is too hard to make necessary repairs, then people circumvent the system, which negates the purpose of the policy. He will come back to discuss those changes once the Planning Department announces them.

One last issue Cm Sakran is working on is creating a fund to support rehabilitation of heirs property homes. There are a lot of homes in our area, including WT, North Central, and the Westside, that have been abandoned or are stuck in heirs property status. Developers who are building housing projects can either pay a fee or build affordable housing units, and Cm Sakran would like to propose to Council to use some of those fees to help homeowners fix these languishing properties.

Treasurer Thomas brought up a developer's recent request to change regulations to allow for micro apartments but noted that rent will be $1300, which is too much for people making minimum wage. Cm Sakran is supportive of the idea but notes that they are geared towards young professionals, not families, and for individuals who make a low-middle income, like $40,000-50,000/year. He thinks we need all kinds of housing. He said the WestSide neighborhood has communicated concerns about parking, and he recognizes the concern about the pace of infrastructure improvement in conjunction with ongoing development.

Treasurer Thomas expressed concern about damaged and collapsed drain lines throughout the city which could be contributing to flooding. She asked Cm Sakran whether the city routinely checks these lines to look for issues. She said the northwest side of Grove St. and 10th Ave. never used to flood until they repaved it, and now it is backed up and running over. Cm Sakran reports that damaged stormwater pipes were recently repaired on Grove near Rutledge Ave. He will look into the referenced intersection.

President Lemajic reported that neighbor Edmund Most informed him that the West Ashley Pedestrian-Bike Bridge secured $14m in incremental funding.

Cm Sakran noted that there have been no homicides in the City of Charleston this year. There has been a lot of crime and some shootings but no homicides. Poinsett Street, off of King

Street, has had a lot of issues with crime and suspicious activity. Neighbors are regularly calling the police, and pictures are being sent to Lt. Dasher, but progress is slow-moving. He also announced that the little market on the corner of King St. and Francis St. is going up for sale. He is working with the City and School District to see whether there is an opportunity for affordable or workforce housing for teachers or police/fire employees. He notes that right now it is a drug haven, so this change could be a good improvement.

Lt. Dasher was not present, nor was any representative from the Citadel.

NEW BUSINESS/LOCAL ISSUES: Katie Ivey was planning to attend the meeting to discuss Compass Collegiate Academy, but she was not present. CCA is a public charter school on Race St. and still has openings for additional students.

ONGOING BUSINESS:

1. President Lemajic reintroduced the topic of using Venmo to make payment easier. He said there are a lot of issues to consider, such as whether we need to be a formal 5013c, or whether it would need to be done under Treasurer Thomas's name. He thinks we need to do more research into how we need to structure it to make sure we are being safe and minimizing risk and liability.

2. In several past meetings, we have discussed BAR expectations for our neighborhood and our desire for more input from the City about their perception of our role in BAR review, as it would be quite helpful to have specific standards by which we are operating. President Lemajic thinks it would be helpful to have a list of questions we provide to homeowners, like 'have you gotten the approval from your neighbors?' or 'does this significantly change the footprint of your home?' and then set those same expectations with the BAR. We have a Zoning Committee that James Bishop and Carmen Gaston have volunteered to work on, but President Lemajic thinks that our next step is to come up with a baseline from which we are operating. He emphasized that we want the neighborhood to stay viable for families, and we want our policy to be consistent in how we review requests. Carmen Gaston said that historically the WTNA Zoning Committee would meet with the homeowner and talk to the BAR, and then the neighbor would come to the meeting and we would vote yea or nay. Ms. Bronneberg thinks that Ms. Gaston and Mr. Bishop should outline the potential guidelines for the neighborhood. She thinks that, going forward, the names and emails of the people leading the various WTNA committees should be publicly available so that neighbors who are looking to make improvements know how to proceed and who to contact with questions. She thinks that people want to do the right thing, but they need to know how, and we need to provide that education. President Lemajic thinks we should take a proactive approach by reviewing the City agendas, attending the meetings, and speaking during the public speaking portion so that the City knows if someone never had their plan reviewed. Ms. Gaston would like to know if neighborhood approval is required now by BAR because it was not mandatory previously. Cm Sakran said he does not know whether it is an official requirement, but that is part of what he has been trying to work on, as the rules and how they are applied are currently unclear. He thinks that Tory Parish is a good person to connect

with, and he is happy to facilitate that conversation. Ms. Gaston will plan to report back next month.

3. At the October meeting, we talked about scheduling an additional meeting with Dale Morris. President Lemajic reports that Mr. Morris has agreed to come back for our May meeting. Mr. Morris and President Lemajic plan to meet prior to that meeting in order to curate a list of topics for discussion. We will carve out 20-30 minutes in the next meeting for him to speak.

4. VP Jarett Nicholson has been trying to find a place for us to meet in person, and while he was unable to find anything within the neighborhood, he did recently find success with Parkside Church, which is just outside our neighborhood on Moultrie St. by Rutledge Ave. They can commit to providing us with space in their Sanctuary on our scheduled meeting day. He plans to meet with Rev. Colin Kerr to make sure that the space is appropriate. President Lemajic said we will maintain a virtual option for people who are not comfortable attending in person.

COMMITTEES:

1. Yard of the Month - We are still seeking a new head of this committee to replace Bradley Thompson, who is moving.

2. Sunshine - We still need a head for this committee. This would be a neighbor who sends cards and well wishes to neighbors when they experience a birth, death, or sickness.

3. Zoning - We have a plan to improve WT's zoning request process and operate more consistently.

4. Environment - Tim Jarosch is interested in working on this committee. President Lemajic asked that he keep us updated on environmental issues affecting our neighborhood and perhaps bring in future presenters. President Lemajic said he will invite Mr. Jarosch to participate in the prep meeting with Mr. Morris.

5. Publicity - Ms. Bronneberg said she is happy to help keep our social media pages updated and work on a membership drive but has been unsure how to proceed. She wants to help build a sense of community. She will coordinate offline with Treasurer Thomas and Nancy Wilson.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT: There are no permits to discuss.

NEW CONCERNS: There are no new concerns.

Treasurer Thomas moved to close the meeting, and VP Nicholson seconded. There was a unanimous vote to close the meeting. Meeting closed at 8:08pm.

The next WTNA Meeting will be May 16, 2022 at 7:00 pm.

Handy Contacts:

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www.wagenerterrace.org

Tree Program: Anna McAllister

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, Tyler Hueter, Susan Cale, Nancy Wilson, and Anna Turner

Completed: April 23, 2022