Wagener Terrace Neighborhood Association

August 15, 2022

Minutes

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

WTNA website address: www.wagenerterrace.org

The August meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by President Petar Lemajic. He asked for any new meeting attendees to introduce themselves. Jared Ross was attending for the first time. He said he moved to Longborough at the beginning of this year and learned about WTNA through our shopping bag delivery. No other new attendees were present.

MINUTES: The previous month's minutes are posted on the WTNA website in a zip document that includes additional relevant meeting documents. Liz Bronneberg moved to approve the minutes from the July 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 there is $3,153.91 in Checking and $22,508.29 in Savings. We are also still expecting a $5,000 donation to come in from Lowndes Grove.

PRESENTATIONS: No presentations this month.

POLICE/CITY COUNCIL/CITADEL: Neither Lt. Dasher nor Councilmen Gregorie was present. Councilman Jason Sakran was present to share two updates. He said that the first reading of the rental registry ordinance is tomorrow. He said the idea is that landlords would have to register with the city with an actual name, not an LLC, and they would also have to have a business license. He is supportive of this conceptually but is not supportive of some parts of the new policy. The Planning Department has added additional language about the rental structures, in an effort to push owners who have 'C' and 'D' rated structures to make improvements to get to an 'A' grade. Cm Sakran thinks that part of the policy would exacerbate rental issues because it will force homeowners to upgrade and potentially cause further raises in rent. He thinks we just need a way to contact landlords and that, as a city, we should not make things more complex than they need to be.

Cm Sakran has also been working with the City Planning and Preservation community on the recommendations for BAR regulations north of Line Street. He is pleased and thinks they have gotten to a good place, and the preservation community is happy as well. If you have been in your house for a long time (25-30 years), there will be additional flexibility, which is an effort to keep generational homeowners in their homes. There will also be additional flexibility for lower income homeowners. He emphasized that we are not getting rid of the BAR or negating the importance of preservation but instead trying to create additional flexibility. They are trying to streamline the overall process so that the

staff can make more decisions instead of going through the bureaucracy of the BAR for everything. When it gets to the point of being a new policy, he will share it with us.

Cm Sakran said that at the last Community Development meeting, they also discussed the issue of abandoned and neglected buildings. He said that at tomorrow night's City Council meeting, the Livability team is supposed to give a report on the progress they have made with these buildings over the last 2 years and also give feedback on what help they need from an enforcement standpoint. Cm Sakran says he is still unclear on whether the issue is enforcement, or properties being in legal limbo, or fire marshal issues. He said the fire marshals have reached out to him and said that it requires a lot of their time to go out and investigate these structures and place the red X. He said as a city we need to do a better job of getting rid of these buildings, and while we do not want to kick anyone out, we need more legal authority to encourage progress and improvement.

Treasurer Thomas mentioned that the hoarder house on Gordon Street is becoming a growing problem again. Cm Sakran said that the police will get involved once it is seriously encroaching on the sidewalk and the public space, as it then becomes a matter of public endangerment and general public safety. President Lemajic said that Lt. Dasher has a mental health workforce that is prepared to handle calls like the one on Gordon. Treasurer Thomas also asked what to do about a neighboring home on Grove Street which is very neglected and owned by someone who lives out of state. She said it is not maintained, and it has things growing out of the roof. Cm Sakran says that Livability could potentially start leveling fines if it is clear who the owner is.

James Bishop asked if bulk trash pick-up would be improved any time soon. Cm Sakran said that they are severely understaffed, and there has also been a significant increase in the volume of bulk waste across the city. He said that as the City Council gets into budget discussions this year, he is going to publicly advocate for a millage increase to support public service workers, as well as police and fire. He said they are sorely underpaid, and our pay rates do not compete with Mt. Pleasant, North Charleston, or Summerville. The state government recently passed a new law that will allow the City to be more flexible in how it assesses fees. He said that we currently get money through stormwater fees, accommodations tax, and millage rates (property tax), but the new law would allow us to create a public safety fee that could be tied to property tax bills and could be a one-time fee. Cm Sakran says that our property taxes have been stagnant for over 10 years, and we have to make changes if we do not want to keep hemorrhaging workers. He said that if we continue at this rate, we could get to a point where it is not just a trash delay, it is a fire response delay. Mr. Ross noted that our assessment values are market whereas most cities charge a tax based on the assessment value from 10 years ago. He said that as the owner of 3 businesses, he would be interested in looking at the City budget to see where all of the money is going. Cm Sakran said that he is happy to show him the budget and walk through it with him, but he does not think there is much fat to trim. He said that he owns businesses as well, and he has had to increase his menu prices so that he can raise his worker wages to $18/hour, and now he does not have to worry about losing workers the way other restaurants and businesses are. He said there is a clear correlation between keeping good people and what you are willing to pay them. He said the City did receive some COVID money - around $15m-20m - and some went to stormwater and sewer upgrades. He said that Mayor Tecklenburg gets a bad rap but that he was handed a City that was internally

neglected for many years, and there are a lot of infrastructure upgrades needed. Treasurer Thomas said that she supports a tax increase because you cannot get services if you do not pay for them.

Liz Bronneberg provided a Citadel update. She said that Colonel Crawford will continue being our contact. She said the freshman class of about 800 arrived on Saturday, August 13, and the rest will arrive in a week. September 10 is the first football game. They are doing a lot of infrastructure work on campus and that will include the red brick homes on Dunneman Avenue. The parade will resume in about a month. Treasurer Thomas asked who was responsible for maintaining the section of grass by the baseball field, which is overgrown and needs to be cut. Ms. Bronneberg said to send her the details, and she would follow up on it.

NEW BUSINESS/LOCAL ISSUES:

1. VP Jarett Nicholson reminded everyone that Patrick Properties is hosting Brew with a View at Lowndes Grove on August 18 from 6-8pm. They are welcoming neighbors to come for a free happy hour with cocktails and small bites. VP Nicholson said that it is an opportunity for us as a neighborhood association to get information out there and also for Lowndes Grove to be hospitable to neighbors and say thank you for putting up with the traffic and activity. Ms. Bronneberg has been publicizing it a lot on NextDoor, on our WTNA facebook page, and in the I Live in Wagener Terrace facebook group. Lyn Smith asked if children are welcome, and it was confirmed that they are.

2. Treasurer Thomas reminded everyone that it is time to pay membership dues. She said right now we only have 16 official members. Zelle is now available as a payment option, and she reminded everyone that those who pay by Zelle should add a comment with their personal information so that she knows to whom to attribute the membership.

3. President Lemajic said that he recently attended the Sector 1 Mayors Meeting. He said he asked about resources for the elderly and those who need repairs to their homes. Becca Hopkins, the City of Charleston's Neighborhood Services Manager, later sent him an email with helpful links to various resources. Secretary Nancy Wilson sent out those links to the WTNA email distribution list, and President Lemajic will also post that list on the WTNA website. Cm Sakran said that ideally these resources are half of the equation, and he thinks there needs to be someone on the City side to help coordinate the effort. He said the Department of Housing and Community Development is not a robust office, and he plans to ask the question of whether there is anyone helping coordinate the effort, especially in the context of neglected and abandoned buildings. At the Mayors Meeting, President Lemajic also asked about flood mitigation, and he said that other neighborhood presidents expressed concerns about developers taking over neighborhoods, Livability not addressing their concerns, and trash not being picked up. He was happy that everyone was really looking out for their communities and said that the other neighborhood associations invite us to attend their meetings.

ONGOING BUSINESS:

President Lemajic posted 27 emails related to BAR and BZA agendas and minutes, though only one agenda item was related to our neighborhood. He asked that Mr. Bishop review the agendas before our

meetings so that he can let us know if there is anything pertaining to us that needs feedback. He said that Margaret Hueter, who was not present at the meeting, had expressed interest in looking over the requests and assisting James Bishop and Carmen Gaston on the Zoning Committee. Mr. Bishop confirmed that he will look over the information and give feedback.

COMMITTEES:

1. Yard of the Month - Congratulations to the September YOM winners, Jason and Lindsay Sakran at 97 Peachtree Street! VP Nicholson will dig a hole for the YOM sign, and Ms. Bronneberg will post a picture of the yard once the sign is up.

2. Sunshine - There was no Sunshine news this month from Susan Cale.

3. Environment - Tim Jarosch hopes everyone is getting better recycling service. He said there is nothing new on the potential wall. Cm Sakran asked what WTNA's position is on the wall. President Lemajic said that we have a few members who are concerned about the potential impacts, but the bigger concern is about general flood mitigation. Secretary Wilson noted that we have never actually taken a straight poll asking whether people were for or against it. Cm Sakran acknowledged that there has not been widespread distribution of good conceptual drawings, so many people still do not realize that it would not be a single-size uniform wall around the city, as it would instead depend on the elevation of that section of city and would likely include many variations such as a 2-foot wall, 10-foot wall, natural berm, etc. He said it would be hard to have a poll when so much about the wall is still uncertain. Cm Sakran said it is supposed to come back before the City Council at some point for them to decide how to move forward.

4. Zoning - Mr. Bishop asked whether anyone had reached out to the BAR recently about their expectations and their system of enforcement. He wants to know so that we can set the whole neighborhood to the same standards. He said he has not seen a draft of the proposed changes, and Cm Sakran said that he will share it once it is more official. Mr. Bishop said that he has witnessed an uneven level of enforcement, with some people jumping through hoops to do things the right way and then others not following the rules and receiving no penalty. He even informed them of something that was nonconforming, and they never showed up. Cm Sakran said that for this year's budget they have already approved an additional BAR enforcement official. Mr. Bishop thinks there is an opportunity for us to set our preferences, especially because more and more of the houses in our neighborhood are going to meet the age standards as time goes on.

5. Publicity/Membership - Ms. Bronneberg put in an additional plug for people to pay their membership fees - $10 by cash, check, or Zelle.

6. Growth Management - There is one zoning request from our neighborhood on the next BZA agenda.

NEW CONCERNS:

1. Treasurer Thomas introduced the idea of using the Rose Pavilion to have the oyster roast in Hampton Park. VP Nicholson said he will look into it and will also check out other potential options.

2.Treasurer Thomas would like the drain lines washed out. She thinks some of them have been crushed, and they should be checking them out to make sure they are still operable. Cm Sakran said he would like Matt Fountain from Stormwater Management to tell us which areas have had work done. Treasurer Thomas noted that the intersection of Gordon St and 10th Avenue always floods now, and it did not used to. Cm Sakran said Mr. Fountain is usually very responsive, and President Lemajic suggested that Mr. Jarosch reach out to him.

3. President Lemajic said thank you to Colin Kerr and his congregation for letting us use their church facility for our meetings. He said we would continue to improve our hybrid meetings and would be getting a better screen to use.

4. Edmund Most, the City's Deputy Director of Capital Projects, said the City is receiving a $70m grant for the Low Line, and the Mayor is having an event tomorrow at 10:15am at 652 King St. across from the Recovery Room to kick off the planning phase. He also said that although Stoney Field is not complete, Burke High School will be playing their first football game there on Friday night at 7:30pm, with a ribbon cutting ceremony before the game. He said they still have to wrap up some work but that there have been significant improvements completed, including a synthetic turf field, air conditioning inside, and better lighting.

Treasurer Thomas moved to end the meeting, and VP Nicholson seconded. There was a unanimous vote to close the meeting. Meeting closed at 7:59 pm.

The next WTNA Meeting will be September 19, 2022 at 7:00 pm.

Handy Contacts:

Wagenerterrace@wagenerterrace.org

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), 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

Completed: August 25, 2022