

## **Westwood Civic Association Steering Meeting**

**August 9, 2011**

7:00 P.M.

Westwood Town Hall

### **Attendance**

*Present:* J. McNulty, B. Weber, J. Hildebrand, J. Sess, V. Baumann, J. Kimmet, Sr. Anne Rene McConn, M. Jenkins, S. Lewis, M. Gweyn, M. Kuhl, J. Henke, K. Strasser, I. McNulty

*Absent:* M. Neeld

*Excused:* Jill Minor

Recording Secretary: Mary Jenkins

J. McNulty called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. He asked the board for review and approval of the minutes of the July 12, 2011 steering meeting and the July 19, 2011 general meeting. Both were approved as written.

### **64 Bus**

Ted Meyer and Butch Gaut, representatives of Metro, attended the meeting to discuss WCA's suggestions for the 64 bus route. Jim McNulty outlined WCA's concerns regarding ridership and problem locations and WCA's suggestion of a rerouting of the 64 route away from Westwood and to serve the new medical facilities out North Bend. Metro representatives said that service to that area is under study but that funding for an extended line will be the challenge. They commented that no transit route in North America pays for itself. Metro will conduct a ridership analysis. Metro does not want to end service to the shopping areas at Ferguson. John Sess urged Metro to develop a policy related to Metro drivers reporting trash, shopping carts, and other problems at bus stops. Metro does periodically report overflowing trash cans to the City, but does not have a policy of consistent reporting requirements for drivers. Metro representatives noted that nearly all stops are in the public right of way so they don't have full control and their greater concern is with safety. Following some discussion of pushing the Ferguson stop closer to the businesses largely served by the stop, board members recalled the WCA's efforts to move the Western Hills plaza bus stop out to the road. In response to questions about using smaller buses on routes with lower ridership at particular times of day, Metro representative noted that the standard buses are economical. Mary Kuhl asked how many free tokens Metro gives out. Metro says they do not but that some social service agencies give out reduced rate tokens. Joel Kimmet asked if WCA could provide a full proposal regarding the 64 route. Metro representatives welcomed that, adding that they will do a ridership study.

### **WestCURC & Madcap Puppets**

Sr. Anne Rene McConn reported on WestCURC's proposal for Neighborhood Business District Improvement Program funding for the purchase of the Bell building to serve as a new home for Madcap Puppets and for a related destination study. She noted the potential economic impact of the move, should it be funded. Further, she emphasized that there are no unwanted strings attached, like affordable housing requirements. Earlier, there had been discussion of the purchase of the law office property, too, but that is now considered out of the scope of the immediate project. There is a small parking lot on the Bell property and public parking at a nearby lot. Mary Kuhl asked about the review process and timeline. Sr. Anne Rene McConn reported that several copies will be submitted to city offices and, in

October, authors of proposals are called in for 15 minute presentations which are then scored by judges. Then a recommendation goes to city council, based on those scores.

MOTION by J. Kimmet to issue a letter from WCA, showing its support for the application.

SECONDED by M. Jenkins

PASSED unanimously.

### **Westwood Community Gardens**

Mary Jenkins reported that ten garden beds have been rented to date and that a brochure is now available. Joel Kimmet volunteered himself as WCA Gardens Committee chair. Joel Kimmet commented on the installation of the water line and noted that WCA would be responsible for the water bill, which could come out of Gardens' funds. Becky Weber remarked on WCA's liability for the water bill and noted that permission ought to have been sought first. Valerie Baumann offered a lawn tractor to the Gardens. John Sess will check it out.

### **Former Kroger Site on Harrison**

Joel Kimmet announced that he has a connection with Whole Foods and will meet with its management team to explore possible interest in the site on Harrison. Jim McNulty commented on the Family Dollar store's lack of managerial responsibility for the loiterers at the site. He noted that Matt Thompson of CPD District 3 is making it a priority to keep an eye on the situation.

### **Art Show**

WCA will be selling pizza and water at the Art Show on September 24, 2011. Mary Kuhl is working on pizza details with Queen City Pizza. John Sess noted that artists will need help unloading. Further, he commented that vendors will need to be encouraged to park away from the site as quickly as possible. Becky Weber said that she will look for LaSalle student volunteers to help with unloading. The YMCA is lending benches for the event.

### **American Flags**

Several WCA board members plan to install more flags along Harrison Avenue over the coming weekend.

### **East Westwood**

Jim McNulty reported that he, Karen Strasser, and John Sess recently had breakfast with East Westwood Improvement Association to discuss the history of the two organizations and their shared interests. Immediate issues of concern include the Lick Run project and the 3080 McHenry property. They expect that dialogue will continue.

### **2280 Harrison Avenue**

The city is accepting the work that has been done on the site for now.

### **2111 Harrison Avenue**

The city is moving forward with prosecution related to problems at the site. Becky Weber will check on progress. Mary Kuhl remarked on Scott Ryan's recent absences from WCA meetings and will reach out to him to attend meetings. Several board members commented on the necessity of reporting problem properties by calling 513.352.1937 or 513.615.5550.

**CMHA & 2329 Harrison Avenue**

Sharon Lewis reported on a breaking news story about a planned CMHA rehabilitation of 2329 Harrison, involving a \$1M loan for renovations of a multi-family property valued at \$280K. Related to CMHA issues, John Sess suggested that Bill Seitz be invited to a WCA meeting to discuss CMHA representation.

MOTION by Mary Kuhl for WCA to oppose the rehabilitation funding.

SECONDED by Joel Kimmet.

PASSED with 11 votes in favor and one abstention.

**Harrison at Ravogli**

Mary Kuhl commented on the high grass and disrepair at a property on Harrison at Ravogli. She will contact city officials.

**Chronic Nuisance Ordinance**

Becky Weber reported on a public safety hearing that she attended with Chris Bortz, opposing council policy. She would like to have a letter to hand out to possible code violators from WCA, explaining that official action may be taken if problems are not resolved.

**Parking Lot by Henke Winery**

Sr. Anne Rene McConn remarked that the parking lot on Harrison Avenue next to Henke Winery has an agreement with a local business to allow it to park its trucks there at night in exchange for lot maintenance. She also noted that the Park Board will be planting a rain garden at the site shortly.

**Adjournment**

There being no further items for discussion, J. McNulty adjourned the meeting at 8:58 p.m.