

Minutes of the Coalition of Norwalk Neighborhood Associations Meeting

Monday, Monday, June 12th, 2006
City Hall, Room A333, 7:30 PM

Next Meeting: Monday, July 10th, 2006
City Hall, Room A322, 7:30 PM

Attendees:

Maribeth Becker (ENNA)	Bob Wagman (West Norwalk)
Al Raymond (Spring Hill/Hospital)	Anna Mae Schaab (Silvermine Crossing)
Diane Lauricella (ENNA/LWV)	Diane Witkowsky (Spring Hill/Hospital)
Ernst deFlines (RCA)	Pam Garrett (Harbor Shores)
Don Nelson (TAC/Clean and Green)	

The meeting was called to order at 7:37p.m.

During the quick 'around the room', Don Nelson mentioned that the City was planning to undertake extensive tree planting in the fall.

Minutes from the May 8th, 2006 meeting were approved.

“Get to Know Your Neighbors” – Ernst deFlines of the Rowayton Civic Association gave us an overview of the Rowayton section of town. Ernst explained that there are 3 levels of 'government' in Rowayton – the elected commissioners that manage the taxing district, the self-selecting board of the Rowayton Civic Association, and the boards of the various beach associations. Each group plays a different role in Rowayton.

One of the 3 commissioners is elected every second year to manage the budget (this year \$1.2 million) that comes from the City, which includes among other things, maintenance of the beaches and Pinkney Park. Ernst emphasized that the Rowayton beaches are open to all as long as a nominal entrance fee is paid.

The Rowayton Civic Association is run by a board of 20 volunteers who plan events and activities for the 1,500 households in the area. Approximately 300 families pay for membership in the RCA, which covers all of Rowayton. Their budget is all from fundraising and is typically around \$100,000. A large portion of this money – typically a third - goes toward Rowayton's annual fireworks display.

The third level is the individual private beach associations (Pine Point, Belle Island, and Rowayton Beach). They take care of the services not provided by the City like paving and plowing. These groups also participate in fundraising. These three beach areas account for about a third of Rowayton's households.

Rowayton is seeing a lot of change in their neighborhood and it is causing some friction. Houses are being knocked down and rebuilt in a scale that is not in keeping with the traditional village atmosphere. Also, many people are no longer able to afford to stay in Rowayton due to escalating property taxes.

Ernst then expressed some frustration with the City's tree program, and urged the City to respond to Rowayton regarding their request for trees. Don Nelson of the Tree Advisory Committee agreed to meet with Ernst and other Rowayton residents to discuss their concerns. Maribeth Becker will forward Ernst's original email to Don.

Plea for Board Members – With Danny Grundman recently resigning from the CNNA board, we are in need of another board member. The CNNA board sets the agenda for our monthly meetings and follows up on any issues that come up at our monthly meetings. In addition to our regular monthly meeting, the board typically has one brief meeting per month. If you are interested, please contact Maribeth Becker, Bob Wagman, Ernst deFlines, or Al Raymond.

Committee Updates -

Membership Committee – Al Raymond, Diane Lauricella and Maribeth Becker distributed the questionnaire that they had developed to determine the topics of interest to each of the various associations. The survey is to determine how the CNNA can best support the various neighborhood associations. Some suggestions were made that will be incorporated into the final questionnaire. Please take the time to answer the survey when you get it so that the CNNA can best serve all of our neighborhoods!!

Zoning Task Force – The group is focusing on and researching a few key areas and is aiming to have recommendations to the CNNA by July. We briefly discussed some of the group's ideas.

We then talked about the new proposed zoning amendment for reducing the amount of driveway required for adjoining properties. While the amendment may have good intentions, several people had concerns about the implications of this amendment on buffer zones and green space.

Moratorium/Petition Update – Al Raymond gave an update on the petition that was started by the Spring Hill Hospital Association that proposed a demolition/development moratorium while the City updates its Master Plan and enacts changes to its zoning regulations that will better protect the neighborhoods – particularly those in the D-zones.

Several people voiced concerns that the petition was too long and had some language that was making people hesitant to sign it. Bob Wagman and Diane Lauricella agreed to “scrunch it down” a bit.

The Historical Commission has a Demolition Moratorium resolution that will be going before the Ordinance Committee of the Common Council. More information will follow on this.

Old Business

West Ave – The Common Council votes on the West Avenue Redevelopment Plan on Tuesday June 13th.

New Business

Social Event – We talked about having a social event to celebrate our successes and have some fun as a group! We thought that a Sunday afternoon in September might be good – once people are back from vacations. We talked about doing it at one of the beaches – possibly in Rowayton. Anyone interested in helping to plan, please contact Maribeth Becker.

There is still a feeling among some group members that we need to ‘win one’ for the people. Many people don’t attend CNNA meetings anymore because they feel that we don’t accomplish anything as a group except complaining.

Resume Night – A reminder that Wednesday June 28th is an opportunity to learn more about the various city agencies and boards. This event was designed to get more residents to participate in local civic activities and start a ‘resume bank’ that can be utilized when making appointments to boards and commissions.

Adjournment was 9:49 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

MB