

Minutes of the Coalition of Norwalk Neighborhood Associations Meeting

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

Next Meeting: Monday, August 14th, 2006
City Hall, Room A322, 7:30 PM

Attendees:

Maribeth Becker (ENNA)	Diane Witkowsky (Spring Hill/Hospital)
Al Raymond (Spring Hill/Hospital)	Anna Mae Schaab (Silvermine Crossing)
Dick Vicenzi (Shorefront Park)	Lynne Pratt (Rowayton Advocates for Zoning - RAZ)
Ernst deFlines (RCA)	Bob Wagman (West Norwalk)
Jill Montesanto (Cranbury)	Marija Bryant (NPT/ENNA)
Lee Levey (NASH)	Diane Lauricella (Village Creek/LWV)
Jim DelGreco (Golden Hill)	Don Nelson (TAC/Clean and Green)
Keith Weston (Harbor Shores)	Corrine Weston (Harbor Shores/SoNo Alliance)
Hal Alvord (DPW)	

The meeting was called to order at 7:36p.m.

Minutes from the June 12th, 2006 meeting were approved.

Plea for Board Members – 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. It's a great way to get more involved with issues around town. If you are interested, please contact Maribeth Becker, Bob Wagman, Ernst deFlines, or Al Raymond.

Committee Updates -

Membership Committee –Maribeth Becker will send out the questionnaire via email after making a few final changes. The objective of the questionnaire is to determine how the CNNA can best support the various neighborhood associations. We want to hear from as many people as possible on this survey. If you and other association members take turns attending meetings, we want to hear from all of you.

Please take the time to answer the survey when you get it so that the CNNA can best serve all of our neighborhoods!! There will be a deadline for answering the survey so that we can get quick results.

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.

The group felt that the task force should continue as an ongoing committee of our coalition. The task force still has several things to do before presenting final recommendations like reaching out to a few more groups (realtors, environmental experts, affordable housing proponents, general public) and quoting our sources (developers, commissioners, etc).

Moratorium/Petition Update –

The Historical Commission has a Demolition Moratorium resolution that will be going before the Ordinance Committee of the Common Council on Thursday July 13, 2006. A document outlining CNNA's position was circulated to the group for comments and approval.

Some associations were able to immediately vote to endorse our position on the demolition moratorium (Silvermine Crossing, Shorefront Park, Spring Hill, Cranbury, Rowayton Civic). Others will check with their boards/members and get back to Maribeth Becker by Wednesday (NASH, Harbor Shores, SoNo Alliance, Golden Hill, ENNA, Village Creek).

Maribeth will send an email to the common council and mayor stating the CNNA position prior to the meeting and will make a statement at the meeting. All associations are encouraged to make their own additional statements in writing or at the meeting.

Marija and Maribeth will email needed documents to Golden Hill and other associations so that they can determine their associations' views on the moratorium.

A discussion ensued as to whether the meeting was legally posted. The group felt that even if it was not legally posted, everyone should still come out and state their views on the proposed moratorium.

The petition that was started by the Spring Hill Hospital Association (to halt demolitions and development until 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) is in a temporary holding pattern while we await the results of the demolition moratorium.

Old Business

West Ave – The plan (and amendments) were recently approved. The developer can now apply for preferred developer status and will need to submit conceptual plans and financial information. Maribeth Becker will try to set up a meeting to ensure that citizen input is included in these early plans.

Social Event – We talked about having a social event to celebrate our successes and have some fun as a group! Anyone interested in helping, please contact the 'party planning group' of Ernst deFlines, Bob Wagman and Diane Lauricella.

New Business

Fodor Farm – There is a committee that is working on this project. They are working with a consultant. Tod Bryant is heading the committee and will give us an update at an upcoming meeting.

Redevelopment Agency Annual Meeting – The Redevelopment Agency will hold their annual meeting on Thursday July 27th from 5-6:30. All neighborhood representatives are invited.

Other New Business

Ernst deFlines mentioned that there is a 4 acre-property on Highland Ave that is bounded on both sides by several acres of open space. The Norwalk Land Trust is trying to obtain this property, but it is currently on the market for \$4million. This could become a stunning park in Rowayton. Any ideas of how to obtain this property are welcome.

Witch Lane Park is owned and operated by the City of Norwalk and is sometimes used as a parking lot for events. A Rowayton developer wants to make it a park and has told people who utilize the parking lot (like Shakespeare on the Sound) to 'get lost'.

Diane Lauricella reminded us that there is a meeting of the Zoning Committee of the Zoning Commission to discuss several proposed zoning amendments (maximum height, dormers, auto dealers and auto repair, shared driveways). A discussion of the shared driveway amendment ensued.

The Transportation Board is having a meeting to discuss the plan for the state's transportation needs.

Marija Bryant told us about an event hosted by 1,000 Friends of Connecticut to be held at the Maritime Aquarium on Thursday July 20th. This group advocates for smart growth and may be able to offer some advice to our group. Maribeth Becker will attend this meeting on behalf of the CNNA.

Marija also shared with us information from a legal group that explained how neighborhood groups can form their own taxing districts and create some of their own laws and regulations.

Adjournment was 9:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

MB