

MINUTES of the ANNUAL MEETING
of the
WALNUT GROVE HOMES ASSOCIATION

(Tentative Minutes- To Be Approved at 2020 Annual Meeting)

January 27, 2019
1:00pm

Stark Company Realtors
702 N. High Point Road
Madison, WI 53717

John Pinto opened annual meeting for Walnut Grove Homes Association at 1:08pm.

John Pinto distributed and requested approval of the draft Minutes of the 2018 annual board meeting. Motioned by Pat Delaney and seconded by Scott. Open for discussion. Meeting minutes unanimously approved as presented.

John introduced Board Members as follows:

President: John Pinto. Main job is to run meeting, neighborhood is safe, getting a lot of turnover. Farmington is leader in turnover battle.

Vice President: Katherine Bidwell. Very grateful to Katherine and Susan for arranging our meetings at Stark.

Secretary- Elizabeth Albano

Treasurer- Birgitta Larson Gamez

Social Chair- Diane Littman

ACC- Susan Ames is excused, but we have two reps for the ACC here, Pat and Derek.

Block Captains- Liz Fenster

Communications- Amelia Tastad

Greenways- Davey Philips

Thank you all.

Also thank you to past Board Members present, Mark Schmitt and Eric presidents Mark Schmitt, Eric Lewandowski. Thank you

John Pinto introduced the new west side Captain, Tim Paton.

Tim Paton provided the following commentary:

New district capital as of Dec 30th. Prior teacher at Memorial High School. Lives in Hemlock Street. Has a brothers in Middleton and McFarland. Has been in the west district his whole life. He is fully invested and

looking to hear what questions the association may have regarding the west district, neighborhood and city. Want to know how they can improve their services.

Questions:

1. *"Been in neighborhood 32 years now. Recently seen more patrol cars in area, given uptick on violence, really pleased to see that."*

Being out and being present is a priority for us. We will continue to do that. Thank you for that feedback.

2. *"What trends have you seen last 10 years and what do you predict next 10 years".*

Looking at some of end of year reports with burglaries and robberies, up and down. Burglaries, stolen cars, mostly people getting into open garages or getting into unlocked car on the street and using garage door opener to get in. Some are also going into houses if they find the door unlocked. Greatest concern for all of us. Younger people are creating the crimes.

Regarding Tree Lane, there has been an uptick of calls in that area. Younger and younger creating robberies.

ALWAYS HAVE CAR LOCKED IN DRIVEWAY AND IN STREET. Do not leave valuables in sight in the windows. Seeing uptick of breaking windows to get access to things left on the seats. We need to make this environment not so easy. Stolen autos in Madison- 32 city wide and 30/32 were running cars.

3. *"It seems like it's kids. Do you know who these kids are?"*

Majority use the cars for a ride. Same kids, know majority of them. Mostly local kids. City wide kids. There are people and kids unknown to us. Charges are brought if evidence. There is challenge of what options we do have. One thing we can do is keeping cars locked, valuables out of car seats. Garage door opener not kept in car. If out in yard for a long period of time, shut the garage door.

4. *"Big concern beyond opening garage is going into the house. Deadbolt lock going into kitchen."*

Would be good practice to lock them. It's been a change in trend in last 5-10 years, would not have worried about it the way I do now.

5. *"Are you finding kids are carrying weapons"?*

I would say yes. A group of juveniles traveling in one or more cars, looking for another stolen car. Likely hood weapon involved as well. Not everyone is armed, but when you start to see more organized groups, would want officers to respond as if they are armed.

John Pinto noted Coffee with a Cop is held on Thursday at 9:30am at Steep and Brew.

Krista Lipkee also present at meeting. Patrol officer 20 years, most on west side. Grew up and still live on west side.

John Pinto introduced Paul Skidmore, Alderman for the 9th district.

Paul Skidmore provided the following commentary:

Has been the Alderman for going on 17.5 years. Will be 18 years in April. Will be Alder for at least another 2 years.

Thank you for the Captain and Krista. Honor to be here. Served under 3 different mayors, one of them twice, 3 chiefs of police.

Key Issues:

1. Public safety. Auto thefts, a lot of juveniles committing the crimes. Has been catch and release. There are kids stealing cars will laugh when they get arrested. There are no consequences. There is a problem with the judicial system, no place to put offenders. There are maybe only 30 of them committing these crimes in Madison. Some of them are armed.
2. Tree lane is an issue.
3. Crimes of opportunity- don't leave garage open or car unlocked. Use a security light or motion detector light. Don't warm car up in the driveway.
4. Traffic is a big issue, 50 miles on junction road and Westfield. Voice concerns via email because can forward higher in food chain vs calls.
5. Big box retailers in malls going out of business. West Town and East Town owned by CBL. Boston went away, they are in financial distress. Future is questionable. Toys R Us, Fontana Sports, ShopKo are all out. Will have impact on city economy. A lot of great high tech business, but a lot of people depending on 5-10% of property tax revenue would go away. Keep in mind when decide to shop online.
6. Sauk Creek Greenway- Not supporting 4 lane bike path. Study how to make it a better greenway. Because of floods, whatever we do in greenway put off for another year or two.
7. Trends-
 - a. Crimes of opportunity. Don't help people make you a victim. Lock your doors.
 - b. Traffic- still get calls
 - c. Drugs- seeing opioid epidemic. Seeing it throughout the city.
 - d. Serious crimes are up. We are becoming a big city. A lot of people coming in, city is changing, need to recognize we are getting bigger. We are underfunded in police department. We are at bare minimum for patrol. Safety Ed officers for elementary schools doesn't exist anymore.
 - e. Tree Lane- It is an affordable housing project. Not going to go away. Concept is good, but management is very poor. Do not have adequate safety. Housing department has made mistakes. Now is not the time to find softer easier way. Imminent threat does exist. Tuesday- if we have a council meeting. \$165,000 to provide additional security to provide 24/7 security. 2nd officer at night and weekend 2nd officer during day and night. Many people living there are armed. Security is not armed and mayor is not willing to support arm security. A lot of people there are armed. Weapons violation with knife in parking lot. Regular incidents of weapons violations. Number police department put together- in last 6 months 300 calls for service. Captain Patton and Nelson put together summary, there were 90 calls for service in last 90 days.. Can bring to counsel. Imminent threat. Still support project, but need to get it safe.
 - f. Madison not same city. Certain tension, need to keep house locked. Attitude now have to watch back and be careful.

QUESTIONS? Additional comments?

Open retail space, but continuing to develop additional retail. A lot of offices going up and expansion, but going to want to be. Some people want to redevelop ShopKo and Boston store.

Tree Lane- New midtown police station and redistricting. Created distinct west district. Middleton down Gammon Road. West of Gammon Road Precinct. East of Gammon road is precinct. Gammon is divider.

Memorial High School sits right on boundary and creates calls for service. Nice to open 6th district, but command staff working closely together.

Birgitta delivered Secretary Report:

- Build reserves up for the Greenways. Budget, no need to approve or disapprove.

Davey Phillips reported: Most significant part of budget is for the Greenways. It is a unique part of the neighborhood. Tim Craine has been involved in Greenway area much of life. Greenways were at one point open grassland. Before it was mostly pasture land. Our neighborhood association built on top of old farm. We decided there would be greenways and paths through greenways, owned by neighborhood association. Over the years it has become more expensive to maintain it. Our pathways are degrading. Already allocated a large part of budget just to resurface ½ of what needs to be done. Eventually will have to replace a lot of the pathways. Now we have large trees and invasive species. A number of years ago made a decision to control invasive species. A lot of people want to buy in neighborhood because of the greenways. Respects the tradition and keep neighborhood strong. That's our challenge. Able to do it for now, but have to think of ways how to allocate more money to maintain the greenways.

Question: "Would it be cheaper to use gravel or woodchips"?

Davey: Would wash away and wouldn't be a stable base for walking. Right now we can have people with wheelchairs, and would have to replace it every year. Have looked up new surfaces that are being tested. Not available just yet. May be cheaper options when looking to replace it. A lot of the companies that used to do this have moved to doing large parking lots and structures and got rid of equipment. Met with Wexford group who maintains greenways. Wexford just resurfaced last year. Contracted with same company Wexford used.

Question: "Good way to cut cost with contracting same company. For some of weeding that has to be done, could we as a neighborhood association do it?"

Davey- appreciate idea, but every year there would be quality and insurance issues.

Tim Craine- I used to mow the Greenways in college, but having trouble finding kids to do the work.

John Pinto asked if ACC committee had anything to report:

Derek reported it's been a quiet year for ACC. Starting to keep some records digitally. Starting last year starting to keep files electronically if there is an issue. ex. Fences in yards.

John Pinto urges everyone to get on Next Door. Derek Pavelec is one who runs it. Great platform for us to use.

John Pinto asked if anything reported from Communications:

Amelia Tastad reported function has been mostly centered around writing the newsletter. If anyone is interested in getting involved, please contact Amelia.

Liz Fenster reported have been improving communications. Relaunched the website this year. Any suggestions for the website are welcome. We are fully staffed with Block Capitains, but some would be happy to retire. Any volunteers please contact Liz.

NEW WEBSITE: Wanutgrovemadison.org

All Board Members contact information is on the website.

Diane Littman reported regarding Social Committee:

Another great way to connect with neighbors. Can find socials to attend on website and Next Door. There have been lukewarm turnouts the the events. People want to connect, but are busy. Keep an eye on the website if you are looking for something nice to do. Neighborhood is really nice and want to create functions where people can get together and reconnect.

At 2:01pm Katherine Bidwell, Vice President report:

Best way to get involved is be a Block Captain. Has been a Block Captain past 10 years as well as on the board. Has been a lot of turnover in the area which is good.

Birgitta revisited Treasury report:

Birgitta Reported took over Treasurer role 2 years ago now. Proposed budget is \$20,035.. We have a park fund from 35 years ago. Last check written out was 1999. Just did write a check to Madison Parks Foundation to add to \$45,000 walnut grove getting for play structures. That fund is now going down to about \$200 to get additional swing bay.

A lot of expenses come from Greenways. Doing a resurfacing project in phases. Start with Greenways C & D, largest ones resurfaced in 2019. Seen significant increase in water and sewer. Pay for 15 circle maintenance, pay for rain water, sewer, drainage, and electricity for lights on greenways.

Every circle entitled to \$40 if do any work on greenways. Have circle grants if need to do some type of maintenance like removed.

Questions?

"A couple years ago changed electricity. Non-profits get a lower rate. Anything happen?"

Actual 2016 is higher than the 2018 budget. Not sure if something went into effect.

"Is our park no longer a neighborhood park?"

It went from a neighborhood park to city park, that's why new structure is \$45,000 vs \$30,000. Amount of budget dollars increased with the change.

When approve a budget, voting on values shown on sheet. Resurfacing project, over course of multiple years, not just next year. \$21,500 coming from estimate from the budget. Estimate of 5 years after resurfacing. Will need to do something more major in another 10 years.

Arbor Prep for resurfacing: Going to cut some of trees on C & D. Trying to bring in more light and air so don't become more mossy. A lot of efforts in arbor area.

John Pinto reported Board voted to approve \$15,000 to resurface the pathways. Will need to increase dues by raising them from \$70 to \$75.

Birgitta reported right now our dues cap is \$75 in the bylaws. Currently our annual dues are \$70 per house hold. Proposing raising dues cap to \$125 in the bylaws. Would have to go through the process of raising the cap. Would need 50% of neighborhood approval to increase the cap, which would be a big process. Not increase dues to \$125, just the cap in the bylaws. HOA has not set up as 501c4.

Budget represents \$75 for single homes and \$40 for condos.

Mark Schmitt motioned to accept the annual dues increase by \$5. Pat Delany seconded. Budget unanimously approved by all present by verbal vote.

Cannot do poling on Next Door for increasing due cap to \$125. Need to go door to door. Last time cap was raised by association involved complex activity. It was intense. That got us up to \$75 cap. One thing,

thinking about rather than going about another cap knowing inflation is going to reach to \$125, might want to signify index tied to inflation. Allow flexibility in bylaws. Jim Howards comment, dues should have been raised to \$115 or \$120.

John Pinto opened discussion about new board member voting.

John is resigning as President.

Katherine Bidwell, Birgitta Larson Gamez, Caleb Van Horn, Liz Fenster, Hyden McCann, Rita Black-Radloff, Pam Conrad up for nomination.

Additional nominations? Motion to close nominations and cast unanimous ballot.

Motioned by Scott. Liz Fenster seconded motion. Approved unanimously by all members present.

Annual meeting is adjourned by John Pinto.