

Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee Meeting

August 24, 2015, 7:00 pm

Minutes

Attendees: Cole Holocker, R Belcher, Lisa Miller, Anne Martens, PJ Brennan, Paul Carlson, Robert Day, Bob Ryan, Chief Mitchell, Bob Schnabel, Lt. Ken Calvert, Bonnie McClellan, Kristy Maddux, Karyn Keating-Volke, Stephanie Stulich, Patrick Wojahn, Alan Hew, Bill Gardiner.

Patrick Wojahn called the meeting to order at 7:05 and welcomed everyone to the meeting. He specifically welcomed Bob Schnabel as a new member and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

Patrick requested that item 2 on the agenda, the Annual Report Draft, be held for 20 minutes until Councilmember Stulich has arrived.

3. Committee Updates

a. Code Enforcement and Public Safety – fall plans, knock-and-talks, C-MAST

Knock and Talks have been scheduled and Deric Daves is the lead from the City. The dates are August 27th, 28th, and 31st and September 1st and 2nd from 5:30 to 7:30 pm. The IFC and Pan-Hellenic organizations have asked to participate in the Knock and Talks. People who are interested in participating should contact Deric Daves. Bob Ryan said that we need to be careful not to have too many people, and to consider limiting participants to Code, Police, UMD, and IFC. Lisa Miller said that the approach will be positive and provide resource information, but also let tenants know there are consequences for violations.

Lisa distributed a draft letter from PGPOA to all of its members with advice on leases and dealing with problem tenants. Lisa asked that the letter be provided to all rental property owners. She said that most problems occur in the first six weeks of school, and we should focus on getting information to owners and tenants now. There was some discussion about having the letter go out from the committee or from the City and PGPOA. Bob Ryan said that the City does not provide advice on leases. A copy of the letter is included in the draft annual report.

Karyn Keating-Volke asked what information is provided during the Knock and Talks, and Bob Ryan said a bag of materials are provided. Anne Martens asked if the letter would go to all rental owners or only to rental owners with student tenants. She felt that it should go to all rental property owners. It was agreed to change the language so it is broader and addresses all types of tenants.

Robert Day asked Cole if SGA was going to put out any information. Cole asked if the City was providing information regarding the new County nuisance law. He would like to provide information, but the legislation is somewhat complicated and nuanced.

Bonnie McClellan asked if materials such as the cards and cups with messages would be provided during the Knock and Talks, and it was confirmed that these would be provided.

Bob Schnabel said that the maximum number of legal tenants should be emphasized during the Knock and Talks. He has spoken with many students who have been unaware of the limit on the number of unrelated tenants. Cole said the landlord should be held responsible and we probably shouldn't focus on this at the Knock and Talks. If a six-person house is not causing a problem, we shouldn't focus on it.

Patrick said that we know overcrowding causes problems. Our question is should it be part of the information at the Knock and Talks. He thinks it should be provided, as well as information about the nuisance law. Bob Ryan said that it is very difficult to prove the over-crowding in court. Robert Day said that some students know and hide the fact when inspections occur. Bob Ryan said that ultimately the property owners are responsible.

Bonnie asked if landlords have to sign anything that acknowledges they will not rent to more than five unrelated persons, and Bob Ryan said they do sign a document which says they will comply with all City regulations.

Anne Martens asked if the City could put more teeth into its laws or have more strict enforcement. Bob Ryan explained that the maximum number of tenants is a County zoning law, and we do not have the direct authority to enforce it as we do with City codes.

Chief Mitchell reported on C-MAST. He said that burglaries are down. UMPD will use a similar deployment plan this year during breaks. A pedestrian was recently struck by a car but not seriously injured. On Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays they will have 9 pm roll calls with PGPD. UMPD have met with IFC on the tailgating parties, and there will be a limit on number of beverages that can be brought in. UMPD is ready for the alcoholic sales in the stadiums.

PJ said he is concerned about the pedestrians crossing Baltimore Avenue north of Paint Branch—concerned that there will be a fatality. Chief Mitchell suggested that the City bring this to the attention of SHA and to direct contract cars to the area. Bob Ryan said that the City is providing additional foot patrols in the downtown area, and using part-time officers in this area. Bob Schnabel said that the quality of lighting is a problem.

Stephanie asked how bad the pedestrian safety problems have been recently, and Chief Mitchell said we haven't had a fatality yet but there are many close calls. The University has a proposal for a one-year trial of a Safety Ambassador program that could help.

Paul asked about the nuisance property list and the interactions with the State's Attorney. Chief Mitchell said that the owners of eight problem houses were invited to Upper Marlboro to provide a warning. The properties were identified via C-MAST data. Officers are now using body cameras and that will become evidence in case further action is taken.

b. Community Building and Culture Change – tailgates, community building efforts

Robert Day said the committee has not met but there are a couple projects they are working on. One is a wetlands project that will involve residents, SGA, the State, County, City, and University. The committee will meet to develop a plan. The City is donating \$7,000 to the tailgating parties. That is a good deal because it takes the parties out of the neighborhood. Chief Mitchell said that the IFC has invited the police to discuss the off-campus parties and to encourage everyone to go to the IFC tailgates. They are also trying to figure out how to deal with the "illegal" fraternity houses.

2. Annual Report

Stephanie distributed a draft copy of a 25-page report. The report is required by the Council charge to the committee. Stephanie asked that everyone review the information and send corrections to her by August 31st. Lisa asked how committee vacancies are filled, and Stephanie said that the Council appoints the members. People who are interested should talk to Council members.

(Return to Item 3)

c. Expectations and Best Practices for Property Owners – report with student housing subcommittee about joint meeting, possible website

Paul Carlson said that PGPOA is working on the General Meeting in September or October. They are editing a video that will focus on quality of life issues and they will ask landlords to make tenants view it prior to signing a lease. The video should be completed before the meeting date. They are trying to add to the accreditation requirements for landlords. Paul also said they have discussed the City holding a couple annual orientations for landlords so they know the City requirements. The committee discussed the requirement that resident agents live within 75 miles, but no decision was made. Stephanie said they may try to find out how many resident agents live outside the state or outside a certain radius.

Paul said the committee also discussed improving communications with City Code Enforcement. He asked about the status of updates to the City's technology. Stephanie asked what the progress is, and Bob explained some of the issues with the current system that will be addressed. Stephanie requested a list of the issues and the steps that will be taken be provided to Council. Lisa suggested that Council should find out the status of implementing some of the

strategies related to system improvements, and wanted to know if the City's system could implement violation notices with the content and format of a sample in the draft annual report. Bob said the current notices provide almost all of the information, and Bill suggested that it will be better to complete the system updates and training recommended by the technology vendor (Sungard) and then create the forms that allow the system to be used as designed.

d. Diversity of Student Housing Options – report on joint meeting

Patrick said that they did have a joint meeting to discuss a website or database of housing for students in and around College Park, and possibly creating a rating system of landlords. The rating component was challenging, so the recent focus has been on creating a database with factual information. Cole said that Ohio State provides information on housing quality, and he will try to get additional information from them. The database could include information on code violations, rental licenses, and other concrete information. Cole will bring something back to the committee. Robert Day suggested that he look at the ITGA website. Cole will be taking over leadership of the committee.

e. Home Ownership – new grant program, etc.

Bonnie said that the University has been a great partner. The \$15,000 incentive program has launched. She is not sure how many applicants are in the pipeline. Another forum on aging in place has been scheduled. A scholar-leadership group from UMD may help with it, as well as a research methods class. On market strategies, Anne Martens said that UMD staff have created a list of eight realtors who focus on the College Park area. Bonnie said they plan to reach out to other businesses to encourage their employees to live in College Park.

The committee has invited Lupi Grady to a future meeting. A new series of meetings targeting faculty and staff called "Third Thirsty Thursdays" will be held at Ledo. PJ is working with Target of obtain door prizes. Bob Schnabel suggested that the committee reach out to WETA to see if they could do a feature as part of their neighborhood series. Robert mentioned the 4 Cities video that will be ready soon. The College Park section can be used separately for marketing. Patrick said that we will review the City's marketing program in the fall. The City has purchased the "livecollegepark" domain name to promote living in College Park.

f. Metrics

Stephanie referred to page 20 of the report to review several ideas for metrics. The data on public safety and code enforcement is generally available, but some of the other metrics may be very difficult to obtain. Anne said that the percentage of faculty and staff living in CP will be

updated every October. There was some discussion about providing the data at the neighborhood level (instead of the City-wide level) and Anne said that it could create some legal / privacy issues.

g. Public Outreach – ideas for public engagement, next public forum

PJ reported that he has had conversations with Kristi Maddux, a UMD Communications professor, about how we can use better community engagement techniques to get more productive feedback from the community about specific strategies.

Patrick said the Public Outreach committee can work on the forum agenda and format. PJ said they may want to focus on one particular issue or strategy—more focused than the first forum.

4. Student representation in new school year

Patrick said that he and others are working to fill the student spots on the committee, and Cole said that with the beginning of the school year students will be able to engage.

5. Next steps – meeting goals for the end of the year

Patrick said that the subcommittees know what they need to work on by the end of the year based on what is in the annual plans and report. Stephanie suggested that the sub-committee chairs try to have another meeting before the next meeting. Lisa asked if we could have a monthly report that would be emailed to help all the members know what is going on between meetings.

6. Adjourn – next meeting Nov. 9

Patrick announced that the next Live Smart Eat Local event will be at Azteca on September 21st with our County Council Members. College Park Day is Sept 26 at the County Parking lot. This year it will include a beer and wine garden.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15.

Attachments to Minutes: Agenda

Annual Report August 25, 2015 draft

College Park City Hall

Agenda

August 24, 2015, 7:00 pm

1. Call to Order/Introductions – Happy New School Year!
2. Annual report draft
3. Committee updates and reports
 - a. Code Enforcement and Public Safety – fall plans, knock-and-talks, C-MAST
 - b. Community Building and Culture Change – tailgates, community building efforts
 - c. Expectations and Best Practices for Property Owners – report with student housing subcommittee about joint meeting, possible website
 - d. Diversity of Student Housing Options – report on joint meeting
 - e. Home Ownership – new grant program, etc.
 - f. Metrics
 - g. Public Outreach – ideas for public engagement, next public forum
4. Student representation in new school year
5. Next steps – meeting goals for the end of the year
6. Adjourn – next meeting Nov. 9