

CITY OF CUMBERLAND, MD

Neighborhood Advisory Commission (NAC)

MEETING MINUTES – March 27, 2017

Allen Hedrick, chairman, called the meeting to order and thanked the City Reach Church representatives present for allowing the NAC to hold the meeting at their location. He asked how many present were from the Johnson Heights/Mapleside neighborhood. With only two people being noted, it was decided to not attempt an outreach/association start-up focus, and to instead redirect the meeting.

Attending were: Lakeal Ellis and her two children, Kathy Kinsman, Bob Clark, Sheila Harper, Francis Cook, Ed Cook, David Smith (City Reach), Barbara Hockman, and one other. Mayor Brian Grim, Councilmembers Dave Caporale and Eugene Frazier, City staff Kathy McKenney. NAC Commission members present: Allen Hedrick, Jenn Jeudy, Councilmembers Rock Cioni and Seth Bernard, David Cox, and Terri Hast. A City Police representative was scheduled to attend but an emergency came up.

Mrs. Cook made motion to accept the minutes from the February meeting which was seconded and all were in favor.

Ms. Hast gave a quick summary of what the NAC charge from M&CC is and brochures were provided listing this as well. She commented on a utility program for neighborhoods www.Nextdoor.com which is available for anyone to join. Ms. Cook explained that it's great for finding lost animals, notifying of thefts, and overall hosting neighbors talking to neighbors - and not to everyone on Facebook. Ms. Hast said that for the third year the NAC is again coordinating National Night Out – Cumberland event. America's National Night Out against Crime is in its 34th year nationally. Cumberland had over 70 partners and close to 1500 participated just last year. Support of all types needed for this year.

Mr. Hedrick stated that the NAC will need to attempt outreach again to the Johnson Heights/Mapleside neighborhood. Once its learned what kind of a budget the M&CC have allowed the NAC we can decide how best to promote the normal meetings and the outreach meeting. Commission members need to promote, pound the pavement, use radio, and newspaper marketing.

Ms. Hast made a motion to consider changing the NAC meeting night from Monday to another evening. With various associations stating their meeting date and times, Mr. Hedrick suggested we carry the discussion over to the next meeting. Mr. Hedrick also suggested the NAC consider another forum in this same location in May or June. It was noted that the scheduled May meeting falls on a City Holiday and the Memorial Day weekend.

Mayor and City Council were asked if they had any comments. Councilman Cionni said they are good listeners. Mayor Grim promoted a Town Hall meeting tentatively set for April 12 at Fort Hill High School awaiting word from the Board of Education. The main topic is the future of the City relative to budgetary issues. Councilman Frazier asked all to encourage others to get involved and attend so neighbors get to know neighbors. Drugs and crime are concerns but what else does your neighborhood need. How best can we reach out to everyone – we tried Facebook, radio, newspaper, door to door.

North End Crime Watch Association responded that although this meeting was at 7:00 p.m., most NAC meetings are at 5:00 which is too soon after the workday.

Cumberland's East Side Neighborhood Association commented that their best attendance came with a big issue. Three named were gangs, crime and drugs, and Banneker Gardens. Ms. Ellis said that by making calls and knocking on some doors that night had helped with attendance as well. An incident where the State Police were looking for a suspect who turned out to be hiding under her porch was very scary.

Chapel Hill Neighborhood association said that their older residents (50-80 years old), attend and no younger residents seem to want to get involved.

Mr. Cox reported that personal contact and door hangers have shown a 50% success rate for Code Enforcement, and staying in contact with the property owner on a regular basis has helped. Some cases are ongoing battles

and have gotten so bad though that they are unsurmountable. The NAC and those attending could help by passing along the word to neighbors and even offering to assist others in keeping their properties up to code. Bulk Pick up is offered throughout the City and is very affordable for many items such as appliances, furniture, etc. These will be available at the next NAC meeting.

The City received some compliments from attendees for efforts to date. Councilman Cioni reminded citizens to continue to call in with any issues and the importance of the Town Hall meeting attendance. Mayor Grim reiterated that the City is backlogged in all departments operating with smallest staff in decades, but please continue to call so we know where issues are. Resident input is important when deciding to reduce services or increase tax base or tax rate revenues. When discussing 24/7 paid fire vs. volunteer, it was noted that even volunteer companies have had to hire some staff lately. The City cannot continue to answer call outside the City limits. Ms. Ellis told of an example in PG where college students became volunteers at these volunteer fire departments or took EMS training and were allowed to live at the fire station while attending college. Mayor Grim said all this is good topic for the Town Hall meeting.

Ms. Cook said that CENA is looking for a way to do a neighborhood cleanup without being a stress to the City. She asked if Burgmeier's Hauling might be willing as part of community service. She was advised to call them.

Ms. McKenney made everyone aware of survey work to be held in neighborhoods to update the National Register of Historic Preservation as a means to help with Economic Development. Last major City-wide update survey was 40 years ago and now many of those overlooked properties are now 50 years or older. This designation is non-restrictive and could be helpful should floods, other natural disasters, etc. happen; to have a handle on what resources you have and how to best care for them. It's only when local, state or federal funds are used that some program restrictions may imply. White Oaks, the Dingle, N. Centre and Mechanic Streets, will see various people taking photographs, looking at houses, etc. Also, a State of Maryland housing stock survey is the early phase of gathering various levels of conditions in our neighborhoods which will help to develop a strategy working forward. Again, you will see people out in the neighborhoods gathering information.

Mr. Hedrick asked the Mayor and City Council if any decision has been made regarding the 2 Citizen at large vacancies - one since June and the other since September 2016. Mayor Grim replied that they are looking into this and it's sad when an advertised meeting only brings two or three from the featured neighborhood.

Councilman Bernard reminded all to attend the Town Hall Forum on the future of Cumberland and to help get the word out.

Councilman Cionni made a motion to change the April 24th meeting time to 6:00 which was seconded and all were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15.

Respectfully submitted,
Terri Hast, NAC Secretary

cc: Margie Woodring, City Clerk