

CITY OF CUMBERLAND, MD

Neighborhood Advisory Commission

MEETING MINUTES – June 30, 2014

Councilmember Nicole Wagoner called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. and reminded everyone to sign-in. Attending were: Terri Hast, Allen Hedrick, Frances Cook, Mark Fisher, Barbara Salas, Louise Elliott, George Reynolds, David Cox, Philip Smith, Michael Cassidy, Dale Smith, Joshua Greise, Nicole Wagoner, and Lt. Brian Lepley.

The minutes from the March and April meetings were read and a motion to approve the minutes was made by Lepley and seconded by Hedrick. All were in favor.

Department Reports:

Community Development – Lee Borrer, Community Development Specialist, reported that the Block Grant applications are in and had been accepted by HUD (Federal Housing and Urban Development). \$743,000 was asked for this year. Environmental reviews are being completed now for last year's projects. ***Weatherization, Neighborhoods Matter/PIP and other CDBG*** funded rehabilitation projects. Ads have been taped with Francis Cook and Lee Borrer promoting the NAC and asking folks to join their own neighborhood organization. These should be heard on the radio soon and anyone interested in recording with Borrer for future spots is asked to let her know. Nicole Wagoner said this is a ***great way*** to recruit members to your group. Borrer reported that 2 groups had held dumpster days and she is looking for ***one May*** invoice to be turned in. The Human Relations Commission is continuing to hold ongoing ***Diversity Sensitivity Training***. Louise Elliott commented the North End group attended and it was very informative. Borrer said that evaluations would go ***out*** soon and reminded all that groups of 5-10 can attend and these trainings are offered for free.

Dave Cox, Building and Zoning Officer noted that his office includes another Zoning Office who work with two Code Officers. He has statistic for the month of May available to anyone interested in seeing them. He reported there is a good demolition program in effect currently and that Mayor and City Council had allocated \$175,000 this year towards the program. #100 Independence Street has come down. The City took possession of #728 Baker Street. #240 and #247 Columbia Street are down. They are now targeting the Maryland Avenue/Williams Street corridor with #257, #267 Williams Street and #601 Maryland Avenue being discussed. City is continuing to work in the Baltimore Avenue corridor and have, to date, removed 6 structures: #340, #342, #343, #345, #478, #480, and purchased #470-472, #474-476 and #471 for demolition. City is sharing some costs with #436 Baltimore Avenue owner to demolish. On Broadway Circle #309, #311, and #316 are coming down. #307 is recognized as an unsafe structure and will be coming down, although it's not owned by the City. City has purchased #728 Baker Street through foreclosure. Although funding is quickly being depleted the City is looking at several other properties that are blight on the tax sale list. The Neighborhood Matters Campaign continues to work with the Police and Fire Departments continued support as they go through neighborhoods to identify issues. Goethe Street home owners who don't have the funds for code compliance improvements will be eligible to receive funding through a State funded program. Mark Fisher asked how the City is leaving these demo project and Cox responded they are left in a variety of states depending on related projects. For example, one location is seeded and mulched, another has two phases with removal of 2 homes and removal of 8 trees on same lot, one property need the walls of the cellars tapered backed and filled with shale for now. The gas company working in the corridor will be using one space for material storage during the project, while another may become parking for a business. The City is trying to determine the best plant species to use on these sites for low maintenance and upkeep. Josh Greise asked if any of these properties became available, how would the someone approach the City for them. Cox said that although the City typically reaches out to adjacent property owners first, legal notices are often posted with the Mayor and City Council accepting the offer that is in the best interest of the neighborhood, with hopes the offers are close to the assessed value of the property.

Cumberland Police Department's (CPD) Lt. Brian Lepley reported they are doing saturation patrols in areas targeted as hot spots through the DDACTS program which builds a hot spot map based upon occurring crimes. Police Camp for 6th – 8th graders has been very positive. He attended Active Shooter Training with other members of the Police Department. A good many drugs had been taken off the street with a large heroin arrest recently. Heritage days saw no incidents. The Wing Off had in incident but overall was a safe event with such a large crowd. The HOG Rally went by very smoothly. Independence Day will be upon us this week and Police and Fire hope to see little or no incidents. Lt. Lepley did provide statistics for anyone that wanted to see them and noted that these are also available online. Visit the City website to view crime reports, the 2013

Annual Report and much more at [www.ci.cumberland.md.us/residents/city departments/ police](http://www.ci.cumberland.md.us/residents/city_departments/police).

Fire, Street and Engineering reports were not available.

Neighborhood reports:

Chapel Hill West Neighborhood Association, Inc. representative Allen Hedrick reported that the last meeting fell on Fort Hill graduation night and was rescheduled to what turned out to be election night, so both had poor turnouts. The meetings will be rotating between two locations until further notice...Livingstone Church of the Brethren and St. John's.

Decatur Heights Neighborhood Association representative Francis Cook said they were worried about the sidewalks on Davidson Street that looked very dangerous and they were concerned someone would fall and be killed. They had also wanted to speak to someone about an existing white wall that could be used for the neighborhood kids to do a mural. They also wondered if they could post on the NAC Facebook page which Wagoner replied "of course". Jenn Jeudy handled the administrative duties of this page and advised all groups to post on this rather than developing their own, at least until we grow this group. Wagoner said she would allow Josh Greise as another administrator to post on this. A question was raised as to when the next tire round up would be held. David Cox said that during neighborhood dumpster days folks can leave tires separated to the side and the maintenance staff could pick them up. Mrs. Cook asked if a playground could be put on Goethe Street where some of the properties are coming down. Mr. Cox said that would be a question for Diane Johnson with the Parks and Rec Department, but that in his opinion it is very sloped and might not be the best location with this area being a corridor into the City. The Decatur Heights groups emets the 3 Monday of each month at the Kight Funeral Home at 309 ecatour Street, 7 p.m. She thanked the City for their work on Baltimore Avenue corridor.

North End Crime Watch representative Louise Elliott reported they held their dumpster day and went through 4 fully loaded dumpsters and could have used another. They meet 405 N. Mechanic Street

South Cumberland Business and Civic Association representative Terri Hast reported 42 attended the last membership meeting and SCBCA won't meet again until September. The 65th Annual Halloween Parade is scheduled for October 22, dedicated to Naomi E. Himmelwright, an original member and was also the founder of the SC Library. Donations are being sought to cover this \$6,000 expense as well as the need for volunteers. A newsletter will be going out in August throughout the neighborhood.

West Side Neighborhood was represented by Dale Smith who was willing to help develop a neighborhood group. She talked about recycling initiatives and suggested we all use social media to get the information out regarding this. She suggested we educate our neighborhood on the proper use of the recycling cans and refrain from using them for regular trash. Lt. Lepley wondered how to get a 2nd can and Fisher replied that if a neighbor doesn't want to use their can you could use it but no one was sure because City might be picking up those cans to redistribute to know who has them. Another wondered what if contamination of recyclable goods took place. The number for Burgmeier 301-777-0416, has been advertised online, on the radio and in the paper.

Councilmember Wagoner suggested we all try to recruit members and consider asking while attending sporting events throughout the year. We need to get younger people involved in their own neighborhood.

Old Business

No topics to discuss.

New Business

No topics to discuss

Public Comment:

Councilmember Wagoner mentioned a program that is run by Catholic Charities (she believes) with a good number of teenagers that will perform maintenance jobs around your home for FREE. Projects like painting porches, yard work, washing windows, are some of the things they do. She provided contact for the Catholic teenage group to assist homeowners is Stephanie Pratt with Bishop Walsh. The kids will be arriving on Sunday the 6th of July at Bishop Walsh. Meet and greet

steppratt@gmail.com.

Councilmember Wagoner said that Harold Hipsley with the Streets Department has mulch for Neighborhood Projects and to contact him if you need it.

Phil Smith asked if there are statistics for crime in the neighborhood districts that could prove hearsay public comment wrong. He feels that Cumberland doesn't do enough to market the good of our region. Lepley replied the website houses some good information including crime reports. The police department tries to reach out to educate the community through monthly reports, case reports, and their Facebook page distributes information as well. Lt. Lepley added that the Neighborhood Matters Campaign assists the police to distribute information and well as some charity work the department does. Mrs. Elliott said that having the police at monthly neighborhood meetings has been very helpful in enlightening everyone. Councilmember Wagoner agreed and said it's up to the rest of us to get that information out to everyone. Lt. Lepley wanted to remind us that the Police Department offers a FREE home security review and you can schedule yours at 301-722-1600. The Crime Prevention through Environmental Design brochure has some great suggestions for preventing crime and a few are available in the front lobby. Someone said they hope we all stick up for our police department when they here others talking them down. Wagoner said that the positive part about living in the City is that when you need the police they are there in 2 minutes. The County and the State can't beat that time!

If any neighborhood group needs trash bags, see Lee Borrer to get them.

A motion was made by Allen Hedrick to adjourn and seconded by Lee Borrer. Terri Hast reminded all to sign in before leaving. The meeting ended at 6:44 p.m. with the next meeting to be held Monday, July 28, at 5:30 p.m.

Respectively submitted,
Terri Hast

cc: Margie Woodring, City Clerk