

CITY OF CUMBERLAND, MD

## **Neighborhood Advisory Commission (NAC)**

*MEETING MINUTES – March 28, 2016*

Lee Borrer called the meeting to order at 5:00.

Attendance included: Jenn Jeudy, Josh Greise, George Franklin, Sharon Bennett, Tara Hartsock, Jen Thomas, Katie Gattens, Louise Elliott, George Reynolds, Barbara Salas, John Wunderlick, Chayo de Chevez, Bill Humbertson, Allen Hedrick, Councilmembers Seth Bernard and Rock Cionni, City staff Lee Borrer and Terri Hast.

A motion was made to approve the minutes from the February 29, 2016 meeting. A motion to accept was made by Katie Gattens and seconded.

Borrer pointed out that maps showing neighborhood designations are on display and the meeting focus is on the Centre City neighborhood as the NAC begins grassroots effort to begin functioning neighborhood organizations. An overview was given explaining the City's 2013 Comp Plan and how the 11 designations were given historically. It is hoped that residents will get to know their neighbors and help to create more accountability within the community.

Handouts provided included: NAC agenda, NAC minutes, NAC brochure, City departments contact information, Neighborhood Toolkit, Centre City comp plan neighborhood element piece, DDC and DCBA information.

There was no old business to discuss.

New business discussion began saying NAC chose Centre City as the first focus neighborhood and explained how effort was made previously in the Walsh/Humbird neighborhood for organizing. Because Westside neighbors had showed interest at a previous NAC meeting it was decided that the work group next month will be the Westside Neighborhood. No one was opposed. The goal is to get an organization into every neighborhood that does not have one active.

It was asked if any of the groups represented had any issues and possible solutions to discuss. All were reminded to report activity to proper City Departments when needed and it was stated that the NAC wants to help connect residents to the City. North End reported that Upper North End residents will join with the existing organization which will expand that group's outreach. Phone calls and discussion regarding the Artmor Plastic site at Wills Mountain had sparked interest in forming another organization. Allen Hedrick reported that the Chapel Hill Association held a meeting and discussed the recent heroin overdoses, arrests, and death on Arch Street. Although police presence is being increased, neighbors need to be more involved in assisting the officers. Jenn Jeudy mentioned that there is a meeting next Monday at Braddock Middle School which will address drugs in our area.

The April 25 NAC meeting will be a work session so all were reminded to read the information which will be provided before the next meeting.

Since three Centre City residents were in attendance, Lee Borrer asked if they'd like to take the lead and organize a meeting for the Downtown residents. Jenn Jeudy and Josh Greise went over the Toolkit handout explaining the basic pieces on: ways to get organized, the benefits of doing so, how to get involved, the various roles of membership, how to publicize your meeting, etc. it was stated that there is usually an issue that sparks interest for a group of people to begin thinking about forming: such as a dog walker watch for crime prevention, neighborhood cleanup, etc. Some discussion on trash ensued with a mention to contact the City for individual pick up of larger items for a small fee. Neighborhoods could also submit a project to Let's Beautify Cumberland! for consideration, nuisance trash should be reported to City code officers. The NAC wants to connect people and suggested groups consider inviting the NAC or other City staff and police to your meetings depending on the issue. One hot topic in the downtown area is the design concepts for the bricked in piece of Baltimore Street and

the NAC invited Shawn Hershberger, executive director with the Cumberland Economic Development Corporation to speak on this.

Hershberger reported that a nationally recognized economist led the Mayor and City Council charge of placing downtown Cumberland in the best possible position to succeed economically in the future. A design charrette was held and online voting was available on several design possibilities for the downtown pedestrian mall. 109 attended the charrette and 510 voted online with 3A being the most popular choice to date with the community. A question was raised on the viability of a bike lane which was answered that 15% of business reported downtown was GAP and C&O towpath trail users; and that there are no reports that show adding a bike lane having negative affect on a community. 100,000 people use the trail yearly. It is hoped that final recommendation will be made to Mayor and City Council within the next two months, and that the project will then go out to bid for full design work, and then several funding sources could be identified by early next year - some possibilities were mentioned. Overall reinvestment and rental rate increase could then begin to happen.

When asked of other issues they might like to see discussed at a Centre City meeting - residential parking was mentioned and that the Downtown is unique to other Cumberland neighborhoods. It was told that the Downtown Development Commission (DDC) was currently holding meetings for discussion on this and related topics and attempts to connect with that group would be a good thing. Perhaps sending a representative to their monthly meeting could be a good thing. Another resident mentioned siren issues and someone else a parking issue in the North End neighborhood - both were referred to City Code and code enforcement.

John Wunderlick agreed to take the lead and reach out to neighbors for the first Center City Neighborhood meeting. They will meet on Tuesday, April 19<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. at 31 Baltimore Street, Suites at 31 on the corner of Baltimore and Mechanic Streets. Borrer reminded all that [www.nextdoor.com](http://www.nextdoor.com) can help you form or increase membership to meetings and the City has a laptop set up to sign up before you leave today. The NAC brochure has information related to this app. The NAC commission, City staff and City police may also be invited to your neighborhood meeting and you can schedule speakers at various times. Each group can make their organization be what they want to make it. The NAC will assist in any way. Businesses in your neighborhood can also help in various ways including possible sponsorship, fund raising, etc., especially if you move on to become a non-profit 501(c) 3 organization. Other neighborhood groups can be good resources.

The meeting ended at 6:15 p.m.

The next meeting will be held at City Hall on Monday, April 25, 2016, 5:00 p.m. and will include a Westside neighborhood work session.

Respectively submitted,  
Terri Hast

cc: Margie Woodring, City Clerk