

Highlands Community Association

October 23, 2012

Agenda

1. Introduction of Current Officers
2. Approval of Secretary's Report
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Nomination/Election of Assistant Treasurer
5. Introduction of Mayor Elect – Dennis Williams' by Chief of Staff,
John Matlusky
6. Crime Report
7. Dan Logan, D.A. – Crime Initiatives launched by State of Delaware A.G.'s
Office
8. Gerald Brady, State Rep. Update/Initiatives
9. Senator Harris McDowell
10. Bud Freel, Councilperson at Large, 8th City District
11. HCA Traffic Committee
12. Kentmere Parkway Storm Drainage Project
13. O'Neill Development
14. Famous Tim's /Gibraltar Gardens

HCA Fall Meeting Minutes for October 23, 2012

1. President Denison Hatch welcomed neighbors at 7pm HCA Fall Meeting held at the Delaware Art Museum.

Current Officers present included: Denison Hatch-President,
Meg Holden-VP, Paul Crawford-VP Zoning & Land Use, Rachel Macha-Secretary

Mike Cradler, Treasurer was unable to attend.

Charlotte Arnold was recognized and thanked for her years of service as Secretary.

2. The May 23, 2012 meeting minutes were approved by a voice vote.

3. Treasurer's Report – No change from the Spring Report
\$ 2,378.40 Highlands Community Association General Fund
\$23,927.07 Rockford Falls Working Group Fund
4. Nomination/Election of Assistant Treasurer – Herb Inden approved by unanimous voice vote.
5. John Matlusky, Chief of Staff for Mayor elect Dennis Williams after election on 11/7/12 addressed group and shared an update on the activities that have been underway in anticipation of the upcoming election. Dennis Williams' team met with Mayor Baker last week and his staff. Dennis's team has been meeting with the Emergency Services groups this past week (police, fire, ambulance). Dennis will bring in a new Police Chief after the election from the outside. Dennis has met with current State, County and City officials. All have been receptive and supportive of Dennis Williams as the incoming Mayor of Wilmington.

John relayed that Dennis will be active and involved in the community. Dennis comes from State Government and is from the City. He promises that he will ask a lot of questions and look at things with a fresh lens.

Dennis hopes to do some events in the various neighborhoods.

By way of background, John Matlusky is an attorney. He got to know Dennis working on various issues on the other side of the aisle. John saw leadership qualities in Dennis by his ability to make hard decisions. Dennis was willing to make tough decisions as the Chair of the State budget committee and has a lot of connections with the State, Police and Community. Dennis is very compassionate because he has seen people who have gone through very tough times. Dennis grew up in the Riverside area. Fiscal and public safety challenges are areas that Dennis will tackle as Mayor. Crime needs to be addressed. It impacts quality of life and we will work to get it under control.

HCA residents would like to see Dennis at the next meeting or event.

6. M/Cpl. Gliem, WPD – community officer for the Highlands area of the City gave an update on the various break-ins, thefts and robberies that have occurred over the past few weeks. He encouraged the residents to call 911 or the non-emergency telephone number 654-5151 to report a crime. Also, feel free to call M/Cpl. Gliem on his cell at 388-7165.

7. Dan Logan, Deputy District Attorney addressed the HCA residents to outline his role and directive from the Attorney General's office.

Dan is 1 of 6 prosecutors tackling crime in Wilmington. Dan has West Wilmington – will work with WPD on crime issues in this area.

One major initiative underway is Communication – a new Facebook page has been developed and two police officers have been designated to provide public information – good and bad. There is a movement to improve communication. So, when a press release comes out, residents can get it – info, mug shot, etc.... Different channels are under consideration to receive this information. An update with more information on this will be forthcoming in the next few months.

Criminal Owners Abatement Act – In Wilmington, there are 32k properties, 50% are rentals. In high crime areas, 6x3 block areas, 75%+ are rentals. There are as many as 420 different landlords in a 6x3 block area – many of which are located all over the country. As a result, Landlords don't know who is in these rentals. The State and City have launched training initiatives and are sharing best practices including screening to turnaround neighborhoods. Unfortunately, many landlords don't know basic, fundamental rules/laws to be landlords.

We're trying to prevent bad guys from living in these areas. There is an overcrowding issue with offenders – many are released as we constantly prioritize crimes/offenders. So, offenders go back in the community, start shooters others, vicious cycle.....

Some AG prosecutors are also focused on higher crime cases.

8. Gerald Brady, State Rep -

After a 12 year long project, 33 new streetlights have been installed and they look terrific! We are already looking at other areas for beautification. We have renovated the basketball court at Little Rockford and have found money/mechanisms to fund these projects which have saved residents tax dollars.

9. Senator Harris McDowell gave an overview of the State budget for

Fiscal Year 2013:

\$3,586.7M State Operating Budget

\$142.9M City Operating Budget

From the \$78M one-time revenue brought in to State, these funds were used to hire 111 new teachers, \$24M in the process, \$104 Capital funding for major school construction, \$3M for pre-K to better prepare kids for school, \$920k seed and aspire program, \$440k school safety, \$6.4M match for preservation – funded \$10M more than ample. All of this results in a balanced fund, reserve fund and maintaining of a AAA rating.

Two accomplishment Senator McDowell highlighted:

LTC for senior citizens - \$13-\$15M w/o raising taxes, green energy bond program – energy efficiency to pay private investors, sold \$73M in bonds in 90 minutes – going into public buildings, 980 permanent jobs, \$29M in taxpayer returns after bonds paid off...about \$100M to taxpayers w/o costing a penny.

Residents asked – With 32k properties in Wilmington – how many don't pay taxes. 48% of land mass is not taxable (Churches, Parkland, Public Buildings etc....)

10. Bud Freel – Councilman at large soon to be 8th City District

There is legislation underway to put a much needed stop sign at N. Union at E. Kentmere. There will also be a new stop sign installed at N. Lincoln at Delaware.

Thanks to Tracey Schofield for championing this legislation after Steve's resignation.

Fall Leaf/Yard Pick-Up – Rake leaves and yard clean up into street. Vacuum trucks will do pick up until 12/7. After 12/7, please use brown paper bags which are free from DHC for leaves/yard waste – plastic bags will not be picked up by recycle trucks. As a reminder, recycle day is Tuesday.

Paving – Residents asked about paving on Franklin St. and parts of Delaware Ave. that are in desperate need of repair. Bud offered that some funds would be needed for these projects and acknowledged that these streets are in bad shape.

14th & Union stop signs. Residents relayed that folks aren't stopping at this intersection. There may be trees blocking some of the signs. Residents also wondered if the stop signs could be bigger. Bud and Dave Blankenship will look into this intersection.

Pennsylvania Ave – The State will soon start a project to repave all the way from the City to the PA line. There may be delays and detours during this project.

11. Dave Blankenship, HCA Traffic Update

A new 'directional' sign has been placed on Red Oak by Kentmere/Woodlawn, Red Oak intersection.

If you have traffic concerns/requests, please send them to:

trafficczar@highlands19806.com

12. Storm drain project – targeted for Spring 2013 – April timeframe. More info forthcoming as this project gets closer

13. Dick Franta, O'Neill Development update

Denison reported that no substantive activity is going on with this project. A group of folks met this summer. Bud introduced a rezoning proposal for Riddle

Ave. The action was deferred. With the Economic slowdown and cost to remove rock, O'Neil has decreased to 60% of homes from original plan as part of new study. Ultimately, O'Neil wants to sell the property to a developer. It was stressed that all discussions are amiable and collaborative and that nothing is final. The project and property have been stagnant for the last 4 years.

14. Famous Tim's/Gibraltar Gardens – Paul Crawford

Famous Tim's – outdoor patio is up and running. A lot of legwork went into that project signing opposition petitions, Bud testified to oppose the patio. Despite documented opposition, the ABC granted the permit to operate the patio. They felt that quality of life should not be drastically imposed by the outside patio.

Gibraltar Gardens – tale of two sites. Commercial use for office space. No known interest to develop the site. The other site is the Garden site – 3 yrs. ago, a group worked with Preservation Delaware (PD) to take over the site. PD signed up 300 volunteers to care for the gardens and clean up the property. A lot of money was spent on the project. The plan was to solidify a long term relationship with PD to maintain the gardens. At the end of the day, PD insisted on new conditions which made it impossible for the volunteers to continue caring for the property.

Respectfully submitted by:

Rachel Macha

Secretary