

**HCA Fall Meeting  
October 25, 2017**

**I. Approval of HCA Spring meeting minutes (published @ [www.highlandscommunityassociaton.org](http://www.highlandscommunityassociaton.org))**  
Spring meeting minutes – approved unanimously.

**II. Treasurer's Report - Mike Drake – See attached.**

Assets – Unrestricted cash \$22,014.56

Assets – Restricted cash \$23,715.62

Total HCA Funds \$45, 730.18

HCA planted 15 trees – tree planting project basically break even

7<sup>th</sup> consecutive year of no dues

**III. Update by Tower Hill School Head, Bessie Speers (BOT Chair Michelle Shepherd will be available after the meeting)**

Bessie Speers – Joined Tower Hill Head of School 2 years ago. She relayed that

Tower Hill is about to turn 100 years old and would like the Highlands community to celebrate with them.

Tower Hill has a rich historic history and there is a lot to celebrate being part of Wilmington.

Tower Hill's student body is more diverse than people think. Bessie wants honest communication. Seth Kushkin, new Athletic Director moved from Denver to Tower Hill. Bessie wants to open up track for people on weekends from 8am – 4pm for people to use starting 11/4/17.

Bessie thanked the community for allowing Tower Hill to be a neighbor. If there is a way to better partner with HCA ... let Bessie know.

**IV. Presentation by Sam Sweet, CEO & Dan Butler concerning liquor license application at Delaware Art Museum**

A letter was sent to the HCA community today addressing issues.

Sam Sweet addressed the group and shared his sincere desire to align with the community and be a good neighbor. Sam joined DAM 16 months ago. Sam set out to listen, learn and meet people. He wanted to learn what people say about the Museum, culture, etc... Sam met with Gerald Brady and Bud Freel to better understand the history of museum from the community perspective. Sam shared that the DAM was founded in 1912 by the community so Howard Pyle could house his art and have money to raise his family. During the Depression, the Museum was built by the community and for the people. Sam wants to continue the original intent of the DAM to better serve the neighborhood and Wilmington. Mr. Bancroft gave 11 acres of land for the Museum, a beautiful setting in a neighborhood. Today, the DAM is a place for neighbors to enjoy by walking the gardens, enjoying the art, and a place for families to take their kids/dogs. A few years ago, Toscana was brought in to run the restaurant. Sam listened to the neighbors and started happy hour on Thursday evenings which has been very successful. He invested in the terrace for neighbors to enjoy views of the sculpture garden while enjoying a happy hour, coffee or lunch. Now, there is a technicality to work through – transferring the liquor license to Toscana. Unfortunately, a clunky communication didn't give the

neighbors a view that the DAM wanted to be a good neighbor. DAM/Sam want to listen, serve and be a good neighbor. Sam is willing to set up an informal group to get neighbors input/views of DAM ideas. Sam wants to hear the neighbor's thoughts.

Dan Butler reinforced that what you have now in the café is what is expected going forward. He also wished the communication could have been handled much better. He honestly didn't expect anyone to have an issue with the transfer of the liquor license since the DAM has had a café operating for the past 12 years.

Key points from Q&A with the audience:

The application has not been filed yet. When notice was given, there is a 30-day protest period. Enough people signed a petition that there will be a hearing.

A concern was raised that promises made in 1999 were not being adhered to now when the DAM filed for an expansion.

Several concerns were voiced about noise levels during the June 9<sup>th</sup> music festival.

There was concern about the application language that stated there would be occasional events outside and a variance request for use of external speakers. Again, the June 9<sup>th</sup> music festival was highlighted as an event that had high noise levels which was disturbing to neighbors. Sam relayed that the DAM follows the noise ordinance levels in the City code and for the June 9<sup>th</sup> concert all required permissions were in place. Some neighbors complained about the noise levels during the June 9<sup>th</sup> concert and the DAM lowered the noise level. Sam noted that there is one significant music festival each year which was the June 9<sup>th</sup> festival. The festival followed all requirements and ended by 10pm. Other DAM events don't normally go until 10pm and typically music at outside events is a guitar or chamber type music. Dan Butler acknowledged that he wants events at the DAM but they always finish by 10pm and abide by the City ordinance. A neighbor felt that acoustic changes being made outside change the quality of life for neighbors. Dan stated that the DAM has been doing outside events for a long time that include serving food/drinks and outside music. This is typical for restaurant operations at the DAM. There is concern that there will be outside events on Thursday, Friday, Saturday. Dan stressed that the type of events the DAM does do not change. Sam recognizes the speaker concern and wondered if there were ways to communicate with people in the neighborhood to understand what is acceptable.

It was suggested that the neighbors don't really know what the DAM is asking for nor do they know how the application request will impact their quality of life. The neighbors want the DAM to survive and thrive but neighbors want to enjoy the quiet. Neighbors are requesting communication, clarity and assurance in writing regarding DAM events. It was suggested that there might be potential deed issues that Bancroft put in place when he donated the land for the Museum. Another suggestion was to consider a performance bond for Dan Butler. Another comment was that the DAM license in place is not the same variance being requested now.

Denison closed the discussion by reinforcing that Sam Sweet isn't interested in upsetting the neighborhood and suggested that, as a next step, the DAM have a separate meeting with the concerned neighbors on this issue.

**V. Report concerning status of BPG development on Riddle Avenue extension & Bancroft Mills**  
**Michael Hare**

Mike Hare/Rick – BPG project:

Mike provided an update on 2 Rockford Falls projects:

The upper portion will have access on Riddle Ave. There will be 32 single family homes. BPG is the developer for the site. Two lots were sold today. Montchanin Group Builders will take all 32 lots. BPG will continue their work to fill to create infrastructure for 32 homes. This is expected to be a 2 year project. Currently, there is blasting occurring in the upper portion. BPG needs to get sewer lines in so sub-surface blasting is needed. This blasting is down 15-20 feet below the surface two times/day.

Lower portion update: No further information from WFD on fire that occurred on Election day 2016. The intent was to save the large building on the site. Unfortunately, the structure was too unstable so, for the past 7 months, BPG has been demolishing the entire site. The smoke stack was imploded on 10/15 which was the safest choice for surrounding residents. BPG is completing the demolition of that now.

Ingress/egress will occur from Mill Rd. Years ago, former developer O'Neill sued for access from Rockford Rd near the park entrance. When BPG acquired the site, they didn't want to do that. There is a court agreement that provided that access. BPG worked for 6 months with neighbors to terminate that access. Sole access is Mill Rd. If you look at the existing condition, there is a fence which is essentially the line. Emergency services will get access. Anyone accessing community will be from Mill Rd.

The plan is for 4 buildings – 346 rental properties in the Lower portion. Rent will be set at market prices. Vehicular /Bike access will also be from Mill Rd. Ped access will remain the same as today from Rockford Rd.

Environmentally, there are 2 levels of remediation with asbestos. It is taken to a special spill site. There were several hot spots prior to ownership. Hot spots have been remediated. There was public notice for remedial action, BPG is on track for that. Just a footnote on demolition, BPG is keeping the existing foundation, but building over the foundation.

As for future plans for traffic studies, BPG has no further plans for an additional traffic study. Bud Freel raised concerns, there may be a signal placed at Scott and Lovering, but not sure. Bud Freel said he would look at the Warrant study and study these intersections in March 2017. City will do warrant study and provide independent study and update numbers. This is taking time but BPG believes the City will update warrant study.

There was a concern raised with about the abundant levels of noise/vibration above decimeter readings causing dishes to rattle and constant high decibel level noise readings above 85 when they should be below 65. Residents above project site have complained but don't feel they are being heard. Mike asked neighbors to call him so they can work on this and see what can be done to mitigate the situation and figure out a remedy. Mike said the project must continue, they have the proper permits.

A concern was raised about the traffic that will result with 346 rental units. BPG plans parking for 1.2 cars/unit. BPG said that it was why they did the traffic study. Improvements will be done at Riddle/Mill. Mike asked everyone to remember that, at one time, 10,000 people worked at the Mill.

Mike estimated that the lower portion project would take 5 years and would happen in stages. He expects construction to start in Spring 2018.

A question was asked about re-routing traffic. Mike again said that they are waiting on the City to give suggestions on improvements for Riddle/Mill.

A concern was raised about no sidewalk at Riddle Ave – residents might get squashed like bugs. BPG responded that it is a city street. Traffic study outlines traffic peaks/load. Mike can share the traffic study with everyone.

A question was asked about a study that was done on the Dams on the Brandywine and the change of chad population expected in 2 years. BPG/s project actually owns part of a dam but doesn't expect any negative impact on project. Neighbors may lose a little whitewater over the Dam ... BPG will discuss with DNREC.

## **VI. Crime/Safety issues WPD Capt. Mathew Kurten**

Matt Kurten relayed that a lot of issues we deal with are quality of life issues. Matt and his team have been working hard on theft in vehicles. The ComStat model with directed patrols is beginning to work. The goal is to be where crime is at the right time. 19<sup>th</sup> district encompasses a large area including Highlands to west of Union to Union Park Gardens. The trending report from back in May 2016 showed crime up 64%, June 2017 it was down 47%. Now, it is 4%. Matt takes pride in this reduction in crime. The goal is to get to a negative %.

October 25<sup>th</sup> at 1:17am, a suspicious person call was received around 2400 17<sup>th</sup> street. A canine chase ensued and apprehended the guy who is 26 years old, lives on NE Blvd. Obviously, he should not be in this area. Although the crime was minor, the guy was on probation which now was violated. He is in custody. Matt will send out a list of property on him – coins, car charger, etc. Matt encouraged the neighbors to PLEASE lock their car doors.

Key points from audience questions:

There is no knowledge of thieves being able to break into cars without setting off alarms. There was a thought that if you leave car doors unlocked and coin tray open, thieves will not damage cars if there is nothing to steal. Thieves are looking for things they can take/sell.

Police are aware of dirt bike rider groups buzzing through city. Police are trying to enact legislation if the bikes are parked on the sidewalk, they will be confiscated which means they don't get returned, they get crushed. Police recognize that the dirt bikes are a hazard to joggers and walkers. The dirt bikers disrespect police and take off on police then a chase ensues. Police are concerned that eventually someone will get hurt. Matt also introduced the platoon leader, Malcolm Stoddard.

## **VII. 2017 Tree planting program in Highlands (Blair Ferguson)**

The committee of 3 completed the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of obtaining funding for tree planting. They learned about the Urban forestry grant and applied for it last year and this year. The grant covers half of what is spent on tree planting projects. The committee has planted 11 trees in public access areas of the community. Last year, they received funding for 50% and donations from Highlands community for the other 50%. This year, they will follow the same process so please respond to Denison's email if you are interested in a tree in your area. Denison thanked Blair and Larry for their work on the tree planting project. Over the past three years, the committee has planted close to 30 trees.

## **VIII. City of Wilmington – Phase 2 Storm Water/Sewer Separation Project.**

Bryan Lennon reviewed the work done to date on the Kentmere Parkway sewer/storm project which separated 4 blocks of storm/sewer and overflow of storm water into the Brandywine River. In Spring 2018, the City will do a phase 2 of this project on Shallcross from Union to Woodlawn. The project will also include 1 block on Union – Shallcross to Kentmere. The project will get storm water out of combined sewer system to Brandywine. The same company that did the Kentmere Parkway project will do this project and apply learning from the Kentmere Parkway project. The project uses state of the art technology to manage storm water out

of a combined system instead of discharging to rivers as done historically. Green infrastructure will be installed to capture storm water on Shallcross so it can infiltrate into the ground, reducing enough rushing to clean water as it passes thru greens planted before going to the river. Water mains on Kentmere Parkway have been replaced. The water pipes in phase 2 are about the same age so not only will this project replace storm lines, water lines will be replaced and sewer lines will be inspected. The water mains replaced on Kentmere Parkway were about 110 years old. At this age, they probably only had about 2 inches of flow left. So, for example, the fire hydrant at Grant and Kentmere was generating 200-300 gallons per minute of flow for a fire which is inadequate. With the new water mains, the Fire department now has 1000-1200 gallons per minute. Roads will be repaved curb to curb with the new water sewer infrastructure. The project will be bid in Winter 2018 with a notice of construction expected in late April. Construction in front of St. Anns will take place in Summer 2018 and last 4-6 months. Kentmere Parkway is a significant commuter route. Shallcross is not as significant a commuter route so there should be less impact.

A resident asked if Riddle Ave. will be repaved. Brian worked on the water side but he believes that at least half of the road will be repaved. Realizing there is a trench down the middle of Riddle Ave., the City may be required to repave the entire road.

Brian provided visual drawings of the project for residents to see the green aspects. There will be bump outs at various intersections (Shallcross/Grant, Shallcross/Woodlawn and others) to slow traffic and clean water. Larry Carson will review the visual details with interested residents after the meeting.

Residents will be notified by the City when final plans for this project are received which should be near the end of the year. Again, it is expected that this project will be less disruptive than Kentmere Parkway. If lead concentration is identified, the project team will address it at that time. This isn't anticipated but it may happen.

**IX. HCA Thanksgiving Food Drive 11/16 through 11/19:**

Alison Cassidy will take care of the food drive this year. There will be empty barrels on the porch at 1420 Hamilton Street. Denison will send out a notice.

**X. State legislative reports: Rep Gerald Brady**

Review attached legislation report. Introduced Scott, new legislative assistant.