

MINUTES

General Meeting

University Hill Neighborhood Association

April 12, 2010

The meeting was called to order by President Marc Manos at 6:13.

Guests: Marc Mylott, Robert Anderson, John David Spade, Officer Waggoner, Sgt. Bell.

After an announcement from the floor about the theft within the hour of a red SUV, residents were asked to be on the lookout for keys to the car.

President Manos accompanied by slides, described the neighborhood accomplishments and concerns:

Beautification:

Plots around four of the neighborhood entry signs have now been planted thanks in part to grants from Columbia Green. The sites are Gervais & Gregg, Barnwell & Gervais, Pickens & Pendleton, and Laurens & Greene. A volunteer neighborhood initiative is also underway to clean up the College Parkway.

Restoration:

The UHNA is still working closely with the USC administration to deal with the historic structures on campus at 814 and 816 Henderson Street. No bidders came forward following the first offer, partly because of the condition of the buildings. The University has decided to repair and restore structural elements of the buildings including roofs, entryways, and porches in order to enhance the salability of the structures. While this work is going on, protective fencing has been placed around the buildings.

Issues:

The gate opening onto the 1000 block of Henderson Street from the Inn at USC has occasionally been opened to allow buses to exit the Inn's parking lot. Too often, the gate has been left open for several hours, in violation of the UHNA's agreement with the Inn that the gate would be closed when not in immediate use. The Inn has agreed to keep the gate closed.

A number of properties have been on the market or otherwise unoccupied for well over one year and are deteriorating. The chief example is the Rose Hall Bed and Breakfast, which is in receivership and untended by its owners, a local bank.

Neighbors have voluntarily cut the lawn and cleaned up around Rose Hall, but this is not the case with another property, the Weasmer house at 1019 Laurens.

Celebration:

President Manos along with Council members Kathryn Fenner and Charles Hiott took part in the St. Patrick's Day parade in Five Points on 13 March.

President Manos announced that USC President Harris Pastides would be unable to attend due to the funeral of USC Trustee Michael Mungo.

Guests:

John David Spade, Parking Services Director for the City of Columbia, discussed changes and improvements to the parking situation since his office was given control of parking permits and enforcement 15 months earlier. Traditionally renters have had more passes than homeowners. Currently, there are 463 homeowners who have 189 Resident permits and 274 visitor permits. The 347 tenants have 207 permits and 140 visitor permits. There is a maximum of two tenant permits per rental property. So far 6 permits have been revoked. Permits are now good for two years. Spade has employees inspecting all property to evaluate parking needs: if a building has a parking area of its own, the number of permits will be reduced accordingly. Beyond the neighborhood, the City is experimenting with the use of smart cards at the facility at 820 Washington and the Taylor Street garage. The challenge is to install technology before it becomes obsolete. The next wave of technology will use cell phones and text messages. spade@columbiasc.net

From the floor, a resident complimented Parking Services for the courtesy and helpfulness of its employees. In response to a question about replacing permits, Spade replied that lost permits are easily replaced because his office retains all records.

Marc S. Mylott, Director of Planning and Development Services/Zoning Administrator with Planning and Development Services for the City of Columbia, said that his office was in charge of land use in the city from permits to demolition. His office enforces land use regulations, conducts building inspections and enforces property maintenance according to codes for one- and two-family homes. Mylott distributed a few copies of a map showing this year's code-enforcement activity in our neighborhood. Rollcart enforcement is also his office's responsibility. The issue of more than three persons in a rental unit is the responsibility of the Fire Marshall. msmyott@columbiasc.net

Gerry Lyn Hall, Neighborhood Liaison with City Services, noted that any complaints or questions could be filed with her through the city's website. The website is: <http://www.columbia.sc.gov/coc/index.cfm/development-gateway/planning-and-development-services/>

Robert Anderson, Director of Public Works, is responsible for Animal Services, Street Division, Forestry and Beautification, Traffic Engineering (signage, timing of traffic lights), and Solid Waste. The state is grinding sidewalks on Senate Street and installing handicapped ramps since 70 percent of the streets in Columbia are owned by the State Department of Transportation (Senate Street is officially a state highway). Streets are cleaned only twice a year, when school is out. Questions from the floor asked if it could be done more often. A question concerned the trash left behind when tenants move out. If Anderson's office gets a call that there is a move-out, they will try to pick up the trash the day of the call. There are no restrictions on trash in the street but if a clean-up notice is not obeyed, the owners will be fined.

Traffic Engineering: There needs to be a crossing marker, like the ones in front of Capstone, in front of the Blatt Center on Wheat Street. From the floor the department was complimented on the courtesy of its employees and Anderson noted that Public Works employees often are cited as employee of the year by City Council.

If there is any Public Works issue, call 545-3780. If the problem is not in their purview, they will direct the message to the appropriate department.

Captain Isa Greene introduced herself. She is now in charge of the Metro Division, taking over from the recently promoted Captain DesRoches. Earlier in her career she had been a patrolman in our neighborhood.

Officer Waggoner reported that there had been 30 arrests in our neighborhood since January 1. The arrests were chiefly for misdemeanors, some were for narcotics violations. We are getting more seasoned officers incoming months and will be more of a presence. Sgt. Bell has responsibility for this area.

Officer Waggoner introduced Officer Wines (315-3792), Community Police Coordinator, who will follow up on any complaints given to Officer Waggoner. Complaints can also be registered by going to www.columbiapd.com and clicking on "Traffic Complaints."

Question: With no right turn allowed at Gregg & Gervais, why are u-turns allowable at that intersection? Officer Wines will look into it.

Waggoner: There was a break-in in January. An arrest was made. She has noticed that stop signs at Pendleton & Laurens and College & Laurens are frequently ignored.

Our Community Safety Officer is Officer Leverette. She cannot arrest anyone or give tickets, but she patrols the community looking for problems.

Question: is the bar on Harden Street that plays loud music at night still a problem? It is not a problem. Amplified noise without a permit is not permitted and cannot take place after 9 PM.

Question: Can anything be done about the loudness of motorcycles driving through our area?

Kathryn Fenner stated that she is on the Code Enforcement Task Force and would be happy to know of any problems.

President Manos: We are trying to resurrect a previously proposed regulation to prevent trash, furniture, and other junk on front porches. We shall try to get it on the City Council agenda.

Secretary (Briggs): Asked approval of the minutes of the meeting of 13 October 2009. APPROVED.

Treasurer (Hagen): We have \$2243.62. Membership rates are \$20 for a family; \$10 per person. Dues pay for communication, meeting expenses, beautification, annual neighborhood gatherings, etc. We have many new members or newly renewed members. Any questions on membership, contact Miranda Hagen at mirandasc@bellsouth.net.

Question: Does the UHNA send out renewal notices? No, but we should.

Safety (Herman): Call Todd at 254-4381 or write him at therman@columbiamuseum.org if necessary for chronic problems. We can track the problem. Since most infractions occur very late at night from Thursday to Saturday, we asked the police to beef up their presence and received very quick positive response.

Walkabouts (Aluri): We will increase the frequency of our walkabouts of the upper and lower neighborhoods as students move out of their apartments at the end of the school year.

Zoning (Gttshall): Zoning is a kind of social contract, which protects our property values. It is both the making and the preservation of a neighborhood. We are zoned "Residential Duplex" which means only two units permitted per lot. After World War II many single-family residences were converted into apartments. In the 1970s, the code stated that if a multi-unit home were restored to single-family status, it could not be re-converted to a rental property.

We had a two-year battle with BellSouth who wanted to double the size of their building on Senate Street. They were under a special exception and wanted an exemption from the architectural guidelines. We negotiated a new façade for the building that was in keeping with the architecture of the neighborhood.

The Inn at USC is also the result of negotiation. We have an elaborate agreement with USC (we have already heard about the Henderson St. gate issue) that, for example, prevents the Inn from ever being used for undergraduate housing.

Parking (Hiott): Absent; no report.

Landlords (McMaster): Called away on business; no report.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:22.

The Fall General Membership Meeting will be on **12 October 2010** at 6:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ward Briggs, Secretary