

Neighborhood Preservation Commission
November 19, 2009
Minutes

A meeting of the Neighborhood Preservation Commission was held on Thursday, November 19, 2009 at 5:30 p.m. in Community Development.

Chairman Rebecca DeRousse was present and presiding.

In attendance – Bonnie Blair, David Jackson, Beth Jackson, Andrea Vu, Stanley Weinrich, Alderman - Mark Billingsley

Absent – Larry Farabee, Sandra Hayne, Sidney Kuehn, Hope Pittman, Rick Bennett – Planning Commission Liaison, Billy Brown – CONA

Also in attendance – Joe Nunes– Neighborhood Services,

A quorum was established and minutes were approved as written.

Chairmen's Comments – Thanks to Andrea Vu for opening up her home for the Holliday Party which will be held Thursday, December 10 at 6:30 p.m. Please sign up for pot luck.

This will be a great way to finish the year. This commission has accomplished the main items in the 2009 plan. The Home Tour was a major success, Germantown Cares was a new event, and the Neighborhood Summit was well received. Rebecca appreciates everyone's help with the successful year.

Please turn in your applications for the 2010 Commissions. If you have not done so already please get them in by December 1 to Dottie Johnson. If you know someone that would be good for this commission, please encourage them to send in an application. There will be a couple of vacancies next year.

Stan Weinrich has sold his home and will be moving to North Carolina. He will be missed. He will be in town through May and will be glad to come to some meetings and help out with some of the projects. Stan has a home that will be glad to put their home on the tour next spring.

Bonnie Blair will not be able to serve on the commission next year. She has been elected Vice Moderator for the Presbytery of the Mid-South of the Presbyterian Church USA. She will be Vice Moderator in 2010 and Moderator in 2011. She has also been elected to go to the general assembly next which is the top office of the Presbyterian Church which is where all of the policies are made. She promised to come back after her time with the church duties are up.

Reports

Alderman Mark Billingsley report – Alderman Billingsley reported that he hasn't received his packet from the city yet for up to date information. The second reading of the storm water fee will be next Monday night at 6 p.m. This item passed last month in a vote 4 to 1. Alderman Billingsley was the only no vote on this issue. The fee is being proposed for 3 different levels. The residential fee is not very significant. The business and the non-profit side, the fee is very high. It goes from \$45,000 for Germantown Baptist Church to local businesses to \$16,000. The great burden of the Storm Water Fee, sixty five percent of it falls on local businesses and non profits. In Alderman Billingsley opinion, this fee is not being equitable shared. There may be

some other alternatives. At this point the City is not proposing any alternatives other than what they are presenting. He encourages you to read the paper on this topic. Until you put the pad to the pen, you don't really realize how significant this is. We are federally mandated to control the city's storm water quality and quantity of water but we are not mandated in way that we pay for it. Alderman Billingsley is fiscally conservative and he would prefer for the city to find the money inside the budget. The city has done a great job with the tax dollars that they receive except it is getting tighter and tighter. The local sales tax is significantly down. All of the staff is keeping their expenses under; revenues are about as predicted or a little under. This year is not the problem however next year will be a big problem for the city to come up with a balanced budget. The storm water fee could help offset about 1 to 1.3 million dollars and maybe get the city through without a property tax increase however we are going into year 7 without a property tax increase and the last one was promised for 5 years. The city has done a great job however based on what citizens say it may be time for a property tax increase. If anyone has any input or questions Alderman Billingsley would be happy to hear them. Joe Nunes added that it is the second reading and a public hearing. Alderman Billingsley has a hard time passing this type fee onto churches and local businesses. Some of our businesses are having trouble with this economy.

If you weren't aware, there were two serious crimes that happened in Germantown in the past week. There was a murder at Fountain Square Townhomes. There was a robbery at McDonalds. The police were on the scene at McDonalds in less than a minute. No one was seriously injured.

There will be a third reading on the signage ordinance on Monday night. Some of the businesses are complaining that no one can find them in Germantown. The DRC has been looking to come up with some fixes. Alderman Billingsley needs to ask some questions as to how this will affect the future neighbors in the smart growth area.

Alderman Billingsley personally thanked everyone for allowing him to serve as the BMA liaison this past year. He has learned a lot and appreciates the kindness offered to him from this commission. He encouraged everyone to talk to their friends and neighbors about being on a commission. He also thanked Chairperson Rebecca DeRousse for working so hard this year, this is a well run commission and did a lot of hard work this year.

Neighborhood Services report – Joe Nunes gave an update on the American Association of Code Enforcement conference in Dallas which he attended last month and was unable to attend the last NPC meeting. The city tries to send someone about every two or three years when it is close. It is good to get with other municipalities to see how they do things. Joe met with such towns as Richardson which Joe thinks does a great job in their Neighborhood Services Department. He received some good information on probable code/ordinance changes. The board passed zoning revisions at the last meeting. Accessory structures restrictions were relaxed.

There was a concern expressed from Grove Park for the Race for Education. The race Started at Houston Middle. The special events committee will get with the organizers to take care of the issues.

Planning Commission – There was not a Planning Commission meeting due to a lack of applications.

CONA Report –David Jackson will be the new liaison for CONA. The presentation was from David McDonald, from McDonald's insurance to discuss liability from a neighborhood association stand point and the type of insurance that would protect the neighborhood.

Environmental Commission Report – Sandra was not in attendance.

Tree Board Report – Sidney was not present, however David Jackson did report that there will a tree give away again in March of 2010. More information to come next year.

Neighborhood Summit – Rebecca talked about information where we can improve. There were some people that saw the information in the water bill and on channel 19. The number were not where we wanted them however it did rain again. David liked the new format. David was disappointed at the attendance. Joe felt like the first break out session was well attended but the second session was not well attended. It was suggested to have advertising at other city events such as the 4th of July celebration. The evaluations really didn't give the proper feedback for next year. Alderman Billingsley suggested sending a survey to everyone that came to the summit and also to the CONA list. Alderman Billingsley explained how the new city website will help with communication with the residents for next year. There is also a section where you can have a survey for next year's summit. Bonnie suggested that we look at getting a well known name for the keynote speaker. Someone that is non-political. Bonnie also suggested having some music.

Unfinished Business – David will be chairman of the Home Tour next year and he suggested that a committee be formed to visit the homes before they are accepted for the tour.

New Business –

Concerns and or comments – none

As there was no other business the meeting was adjourned.