

WACA

Minutes of General Meeting, November 14, 2012

Place and Time: The meeting was held at BB Bistro at 7:00 p.m. Approximately 40 people attended, a new record.

Opening Remarks: WACA President Erica Hoffman thanked Carla, the owner of BB Bistro for hosting the meeting. Then she awarded the WACA Mole mascot to a representative of Monterey Avenue, the street from which the highest number of residents attended.

Mayor Josh Cohen gave a report on the following issues:

- The City now has a balanced budget for the third consecutive year, and is building reserves.
- Performance metrics have been adopted to assess the effectiveness of all programs.
- A new water treatment plant will replace one that is more than 80 years old, at a cost of \$35 million. There will be no increase in water bills.
- City offices have been relocated to provide a “permitting central” complex and expedite the permitting process.
- A circulator bus has been added to cover West Annapolis during special events, and on weekends.
- Trash complaints have been followed up with extra communication and enforcement.
- There is a new solid waste management contract, outsourcing from the City workforce and equipment. Leaf vacuuming is not included.
- Crime is down, almost half of what it was five years ago.

Alderman Fred Paone gave the following report:

- The Ridgeley Avenue pipe re-lining project will be finished tonight.
- No leaf vacuuming this year under the new solid waste management project, but he is working to get it reinstated for next year.
- The water treatment plant capital project is 15-20 years overdue and now urgent. Consolidating the City system with the County system was explored but the cost benefit analysis was negative.
- He is working on increasing circulator bus access to West Annapolis.

Question to Mayor Cohen: What is the condition of the sewer line under Back Creek?

Alderman Paone answered: Generally not good, for all sewer lines.

Question to Mayor Cohen: What other cuts are coming in the city budget? Do you anticipate any reduction in the fee schedule or taxes for city residents? Answer: The largest expense under review is pension fund liability. A task force has been appointed to evaluate benefit package adjustments. No other major cuts or increases are foreseen. We are in a holding pattern and trying to build up the reserve fund. Alderman Paone added that there

is a big hole in pension fund obligations as well as an urgent need to deal with aging infrastructure.

Sally Nash, Virginia Burke and Todd Schartung, all with the City Planning Office asked for WACA input on traffic issues.

Evaluate traffic improvements around WAES: the responses included comments about the need for speed cameras (which are coming); better enforcement of speed limits on Ridgley, Melvin and Annapolis streets; no place to walk on Ridgley; pedestrians can't see the traffic light at Ridgley and Melvin; signs and poles in sidewalks impede walkers; the flashing sign at WAES needs to start earlier; street lighting in general; need for a crossing at Ridgley and Monterey (the State has denied this request); need for sidewalks on Ridgley past Monterey (the State has approved in concept, but not included in the budget); beach traffic on summer Friday afternoons blocking access to Annapolis Street businesses; lack of enforcement for violators running stop signs and stop lights; low diligence from the crossing guard. Giddings Avenue was identified as the best bicycle route.

Mayor Cohen urges the group not to think piecemeal about solutions but take a more comprehensive view. Several members responded that many of the safety issues have been subject to study for a long time, urging another look at older comprehensive plans and studies, and a more local perspective rather than a generic traffic engineer's approach.

Lynne Sherlock reported for **West Annapolis Business Association**. On December 15 WABA will host *It's A Wonderful Life*, a family oriented shopping experience with Santa, face painting, carolers and a pedicab. This is in addition to *Cinco de Mayo*, and *Paris Flea Market*. Ms Sherlock described her business, *Tara's Gift and Party*. Stella, from *One Petticoat Lane* noted that November 24 is Small Business Saturday, urging patronage of West Annapolis shops and restaurants. Sue Ann, from West Annapolis Art Works and Framing also described her business.

A member of the audience urged everyone to honor the closure of streets for these and other community events rather than drive through the barricades, endangering volunteers.

Kurt Reigel reported on the progress of the WACA website and directory. More than half the residents have opted in. Registration is at westannapolis.org. He would like a printed directory and a door-to-door committee to increase participation.

Krista Criswell reported on the newsletter, commenting that there was no input for the last one.

Ginny Vrobesky reported on the Heritage Committee grant from Three Rivers Garden Club for a travelling display of Finding Your Roots in West Annapolis. There was an extensive handout with details. There will be another meeting of this committee on November 28 at 5:00 at 271 Scott Drive. The Heritage Committee is selling an archival map of West Annapolis at Tara's Gift and Party to raise additional funds for the project.

Heidi Petras reported on the ad hoc Pool Committee work. They have looked at a number of potential sites for sale, finding nothing suitable. They are also looking into open space and street end park possibilities.

Colby Peters reported on the Welcoming Committee. They have distributed 9 welcome baskets with very positive reception. They are looking for new ideas and considering expanding their role to other important life events. The committee was renamed the Sunshine Committee by acclamation.

Katie Cooke reported on the Social Committee. Katie urged everyone to take on a small role so that the work of this committee does not fall to a few people.

- Caroling will take place on December 16, beginning at 5:30 at the tree. The bonfire is at 6:30. Everyone attending should bring a dessert to the bonfire. Two volunteers are needed to set up the bonfire.
- A Barn Dance may be scheduled for February.
- A summer Block Party needs a leader.
- Karen Brown is heading the 4th of July party.
- Diana Love is heading up the Meet the Creek Day Committee.

Nominating Committee: Erica Hoffman appointed the following members to present a slate of officers and committee heads between now and January: Melissa Johansen and Kristy Myers.

Final Announcements:

- Annual dues of \$20 per household are now due. Please pay to Chris Maceo, Treasurer.
- On April 20 there will be a walking tour of Wardour, impacting traffic and parking.

Respectfully submitted: Pamela McKee, Recording Secretary.