

# Northampton Civic League Minutes 03/06/2007

The March meeting of the Northampton Civic league was called to order at 7:02 by NHCL President Bernice Jackson. There were 18 people present.

President Jackson announced that since we had a special presentation on the agenda, we would postpone the regular business of the league until the conclusion of the presentation. She noted that the NHCL had allotted 15 minutes for the presentation and another 15 for questions and comments from those present.

The presentation was conducted by Mr. Billy Milner, the attorney for Dan Rosinski who owns the property at the corner of Big Bethel Road and Hampton Roads Center Parkway. They are seeking a rezoning for the property (which is currently zoned residential) to commercial for construction of a Walgreens pharmacy. Mr Milner noted that the current zoning would allow up to 5 homes to be constructed on the property.

The proposal would include moving the existing entrance to Sandy Bottom off Big Bethel to the traffic light at the entrance to the Town Center shopping center. The 3-way intersection would become a 4-way intersection and would also serve as the main entrance to the pharmacy.

The developer was willing to offer a number of proffers as part of their rezoning request including purchasing and turning over to the city the Hill/Poindexter lot (which the city has been unable to buy from the owner), providing the light and the new road for the park entrance and offering the city \$1,000,000 instead if environmental issues should prevent the new park entrance from being approved.

Mr. Milner distributed some conceptual drawings of the proposed Walgreens and provided a list of reasons for approving the rezoning request

In response to questions from the audience. Mr. Milner noted that the environmental issue being discussed was concern that the road might impact the habitat of certain protected salamanders or rattlesnakes. He noted that there would be no entrance or egress to the Walgreens from the Parkway. He indicated that the developer had undertaken a traffic study to look at the impact of the new development on the existing signal over a 20 year period. He characterized the net impact as minimal and promised that the new development would follow all the recommendations of the traffic study. He was asked about the estimated trip counts from the study, but said he did not have those numbers available.

The president thanked Mr. Milner, the developer, and their team for their presentation. The rezoning request is due to go before the Planning Commission on Monday, March 12th at 3:00 pm and before the City Council on March 28th.

President Jackson then continued with the regular business of the league.

Secretary Matt Asay read the February minutes. The minutes were approved with no corrections.

Treasurer Butch Heath provided a summary of the league finances. The new balance is \$300.83.

Mayor Kearney, who had joined us for the evening, asked for our feedback on the proposed development. Several members discussed different concerns with the project including wanting to preserve the integrity of the Sandy Bottom Park "block", the concern over the traffic already present at the proposed entrance, the fact that the Big Bethel / Parkway intersection was already the worst intersection in Hampton, the conflict with future plans for an overpass at the intersection, and the noise, light, and pollution problems for the park from a 24-hour facility.

A motion was made and seconded that the Civic League oppose the rezoning request. The motion carried with 10 in favor, none opposed, and 2 abstentions. Matt Asay and Karen Duncan were tasked with drawing up the formal resolution and circulating it by email for corrections or concurrence before the Planning Commission meeting.

## Neighborhood Organization Registration

Jonathan McBride and Sabrina Carr from the Hampton Neighborhood Office were in attendance to

continue to assist with the Neighborhood Organization Registration process we had discussed at the February meeting. Mr. McBride indicated that the registration process isn't primarily about money but is about support and assistance with building the capacity of the NHCL to represent our area and accomplish our goals. He noted that the issue of the organizational boundaries (the issue that had stalled our progress at the last meeting) played a large part in determining the needs, goals, and structure of the organization.

He contrasted the structures of a Neighborhood Association (a small area and group), with a Civic League (representing a larger area and probably a collection of groups), a Neighborhood District (still larger and more diffuse), and the Neighborhood Commission (a collection of Districts).

As an aside, Vice President Wendell Midkiff noted that he had talked about the NHCL with the District 2 Commissioner (Robin Stortz) and she was not even aware of the existence of the league whose boundaries include part of her district. He expressed concern that the people in that Sanlun Lakes area have no other organization to represent them.

Mr. McBride noted that one possible goal if the NHCL chose to retain the current boundaries would be to act as a catalyst for neighborhoods within our area to form local groups and help them get organized. For existing organizations like Farmington we could ask them to send a representative to our meeting and provide a representative to theirs.

He asked us to consider our needs and our purposes. Several topics were mentioned including facilitating communication between residents to and from the City, and working on issues like drainage, flooding, and traffic.

Mr. McBride and Ms. Carr suggested that we speed up our work on this project by having a group of our members meet with them between our regular meetings and report back to the league. The group will include Bernice Jackson, Wendell Midkiff, Matt Asay, and Karen Duncan

The meeting adjourned at about 8:50.

Memberships: There were 2 renewals and no new members.

**Matt Asay, NHCL Secretary**

As amended and approved on 04/03/07