

Northampton Civic League Minutes 09/04/2007

The September meeting of the Northampton Civic league was called to order at 7:00 PM by NHCL President Bernice Jackson, with 12 people present. The President asked Vice President Wendell Midkiff to conduct the meeting.

The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

Secretary Matt Asay summarized the minutes from the July meeting. The minutes were approved as read. He then summarized the minutes from the August meeting. Those minutes were approved with one correction.

Treasurer Butch Heath provided copies of the treasurer's report. As of the end of August the balance in our bank account was 320.23. Mr. Heath also noted that he has additional dues money not yet deposited which will be reflected in the next report.

New Business

Several upcoming events were noted:

On October 5th there will be the Second Annual Harvest Fest Gala at Aberdeen Gardens.

September 20-22 will be the Virginia statewide Neighborhood Conference in Chesapeake. District 1 Commissioner Karen Duncan noted that she would be attending and promised to give us a report at the next meeting. For more information about the conference you can call 963-0945 or visit www.vsnconf.org. You can register by September 7th for \$65.

Noting that Jonathan McBride from the Neighborhood Office was not in attendance because he was home awaiting the birth of his first child, Vice President Wendell Midkiff asked Jonathan's father to convey "God speed and prayers to him and his family" from the members of the league.

There was also a brief discussion of the need to keep our meetings interesting, presumably by having speakers or presentations on subjects of general interest. Several members agreed that this was important in order to keep our attendance growing.

Organizational Development

The Vice President then used the notes from last months meeting to ask the "leads" in each subject area to provide a brief report on any activities related to their topics during the past month.

Drainage (Carlton Campbell) Carlton has a meeting with the City of Hampton later this week. He would like additional input from the members on their experience with drainage problems. He expected to have an update by the end of the week. Chris Hosman noted that the CERT folks are considering using Jeff Davis as an alternate shelter and Headquarters in the event of a disaster of some kind. Roger Mowery noted that the Fire Department is working with Liberty Baptist church on Big Bethel about using their facility as a staging area.

Existing Improvement Opportunities (Karen Duncan) Karen noted several school groups that might have current projects that we could participate in (or partner with) including: Hampton high school youth groups, Forrest Elementary (where she has been working with the principal) and the PTA presidents at all of the area schools. We discussed inviting them to our meetings or attending their PTA meetings to find out what's going on and get the word out about the NHCL.

Network Of Help (Karen Duncan & Alonzo Duncan) Karen also noted some neighborhood and community groups that we might work with or learn from: Aberdeen Gardens (which has a very large and active neighborhood group), Farmington (an excellent newsletter and much success with seeking city grants), Ridgecrest (Selvin Walker's neighborhood which should complete registration soon), Neighborhood Watch, and the Crime & Grime group. We decided that the first step with each group should probably be a one-on-one talk with the president to identify common interests. Then the person who held the meeting would report back to the NHCL and we would decide what opportunities looked the best to us. It was noted that we should be prepared with a list of questions and topics before we meet. We

should have a plan when we meet with these presidents.

Sandy Bottom (Wendell Midkiff & Flo Randall) Both Flo and Wendell had met independently with park personnel. Arthur Mertz is the Park Director. Willie Smith the volunteer coordinator. Wendell has some applications. Parks is working with VDOT on the Parkway corridor and on use of the newly acquired corner parcels. There was some discussion about possible landscaping for the corner and how the NHCL might participate in that effort. Wendell met with the Friends of Sandy Bottom group. They are already working with the Parks department. He noted he wanted to bring any specific partnership proposals back to the NHCL membership for approval before committing to them. The Friends group sent their thanks to us for our help in getting the city to secure the land on the corner. Wendell has heard that the house currently on Big Bethel is considered an eyesore and will be torn down eventually. He said there seems to be no plans to move the Bethel park entrance as was once proposed. The Rose Society maintains the roses at the Bethel entrance.

Crime & Grime (Jon McBride) Jon has been attending the monthly tours but had nothing to report at this time.

Youth Involvement (Matt Asay) Matt had nothing to report at this time. However Karen Duncan noted some organizations we might work with including the Neighborhood Youth Advisory Board, Youth Act, and the Farmington youth group.

Neighborhood Organizations and Groups (Jonathan McBride & Karen Duncan) Karen noted several organizations that might be a source of members or resources: Peninsula Foster Grandparents (this regional group might be an avenue to get the word out to area seniors), Lifelong Learning program at Hampton University (this program for those 50 or older might be a good resource for seniors who don't have mobility issues), the Mayors Committee for People with Disabilities (this group has a guide on parking and on making things accessible), the Hampton Fire Safety Coordinator (has fire alarms for the poor and special ones for the hard of hearing), Hampton Neighborhood Office (all sorts of assistance, training, and resources for neighborhood groups as well as grants through the Neighborhood Commission), Hampton Master Gardeners (we discussed a possible "curb appeal" presentation, perhaps for next March), and the YARDS program of the Hampton Clean City Commission.

Common Area Assessment (Flo Randall & Carlton Campbell) Flo and Carlton are meeting to figure out the best way to move forward. They are identifying points of contact with the City of Hampton and with various utilities. They asked everyone to "look around their areas" to find eyesore or safety problems we'd like to see addressed. One item mentioned was the sign for the new housing development on Todds Lane. A suggestion was made that we offer up candidates (on the web site?) for people to choose a "Top 10" list of the most egregious problems. That might be a way to build community interest and possibly get some publicity through the Daily Press.

Other discussion Jon McBride noted that we had identified a large list of resources that, if organized with contact information, could be very useful to new members or people wanting to pursue some interest. It would be great if it could be put on the website with links to these groups. It was also noted that we should collect it in binder form for people at the meetings or who don't have computer access.

CERT Training

Roger Mowery and Chris Hosman provided a presentation on the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program. Mr. Mowery is the District 1 CERT Team leader. They distributed information about the CERT program and the upcoming training to be offered.

Hampton was the first community in Virginia to develop a CERT program. The emergency responders realized that in a major disaster there would not be enough emergency personnel to provide all of the support needed. Therefore they wanted to supplement their staff with trained citizen volunteers.

In the event of an emergency, CERT Team members would first assure that their families were safe, then they would meet with their team to assess their neighborhood for the City responders. Station 6 (on Todds Lane) is the muster point for our area.

The next set of CERT classes will begin Oct. 2nd on Tuesday and Thursday nights from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. Station 9 (next to the main post office at Briarfield and Aberdeen) is the CERT training location.

After the basic CERT classes, the City is working on more training for volunteers. EMT training is planned as well as Fire Vehicle training.

Roger and Chris mentioned that they had been involved in a simulated disaster in Virginia Beach. There are about 30 CERT trained people in Hampton so far.

Other Business

The group reviewed a questionnaire from the Neighborhood Office rating their services and provided input to the President for her response.

The Secretary shared an invitation to the NHCL from the Neighborhood Office to apply to host a neighborhood tour during the NUSA Convention in 2008. The group felt that the league is not yet ready to tackle that big of a project.

Matt also mentioned that we have received an inquiry from Wayside Gardens about the possibility of purchasing advertising on the web site and in our newsletter. We reached no firm decision yet on whether to pursue it. Matt will forward the information to the Treasurer.

The President summarized recently received rezoning requests.

Karen Duncan noted the Clean City Commission is looking for volunteers for a Coliseum Central cleanup.

The meeting adjourned at about 8:52 PM, The next meeting will be on October 2nd.

Memberships: There were no renewals and 2 new members.

Matt Asay,

NHCL Secretary

As corrected and approved at the October 2nd, 2007 meeting.