

Northampton Civic League Minutes 11/06/2007

The November meeting of the Northampton Civic League was called to order at 7:07 PM by NHCL President Bernice Jackson with 11 people present.

The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

Secretary Matt Asay summarized the minutes from the October meeting. The minutes were approved with one correction.

Elections

Matt distributed ballots to members, listing the candidates who had been nominated and including a blank to write in another name if desired. He noted that we currently had no candidate for Treasurer, as Bernice Jackson had asked that her name be removed from consideration.

Samara Walker offered to run for Treasurer.

The ballots were marked, folded and collected. Carlton Campbell and Alonzo Duncan offered to tally the results, which would be reported at the end of the meeting.

Near the conclusion of the meeting, Carlton Campbell announced the results of the vote tallies:

For President there were 3 votes for Bernice Jackson and 8 for Selvin Walker

For Vice President there were 10 votes for Wendell Midkiff

For Treasurer there were 11 votes for Samara Walker

For Secretary there were 11 votes for Matt Asay

New Business

President Jackson reported that she had received an inquiry from a local funeral home, offering to speak about making advance arrangements for funerals and burial. After some discussion the members decided that we would defer consideration of the topic for a possible February presentation which might include other speakers on related matters.

On the general issue of presentations by businesses, the group discussed possible guidelines for considering future offers: The presentations should include general information and not just a plug for the presenter's specific product or service. The time to speak offered should be limited and this should be communicated to the speakers in advance.

On a related matter, Bernice noted that there would be a presentation on Court TV on November 17 at 11:00 am on prepaid legal services.

Neighborhood Office representative Jonathan McBride announced that a new session of the Neighborhood College would be starting in January. Classes will be on Monday and Wednesday and run for about 4 1/2 weeks with a total of 9 sessions. He said he would be mailing out more information later. All of the members who had attended the Neighborhood College in the past recommended it for anyone who could attend.

Jonathan also noted that Budget Briefings for interested citizens would be offered soon and that he would provide information on those as well, once the details were nailed down.

Finally he mentioned that Karen Duncan (who was unable to attend this meeting) had signed up to coordinate a District 1 tour for the Neighborhood Tours during the Neighborhood USA conference next May. She will be looking for individuals and groups to participate and assist in the planning and presentation of the tour.

Organizational Development

Jonathan McBride, our Facilitator from the Neighborhood Office then asked for updates on the interest areas we had identified at previous meetings from the nominal leads for each area. He reminded us of our "homework" to choose specific goals for the league for the next 6-2 months.

Youth Involvement (Matt Asay) Matt asked about the level of interest in holding a Youth Awareness workshop lead by the youth members of the Neighborhood Youth Advisory Board (run by Alternatives). The members present indicated that they would like to plan a workshop for sometime next year. He also noted that he had received an offer of assistance from the daughter of one of the people on our email list who is a member of the Hampton Youth Commission. He suggested that we invite her to speak (possibly at our December meeting) about the Youth Commission and how she got involved and ask her for input on increasing our youth interaction. Vice President Wendell Midkiff noted that his niece might also be interested in working with us. Matt offered to have a more detailed plan at our December meeting. His suggested goal for the league is to conduct a youth workshop some time in 2008.

Drainage and Common Area Assessment (Carlton Campbell & Flo Randall) Carlton plans to look at the results of the City's flooding studies and meet with Selvin Walker on the issue. He will meet with Flo to continue assessing problems in our area. It was noted that most of the problem areas with city rights of way, etc. are within the scope of the City's Public Works department. A suggested goal is to establish a relationship with the department so we can seek their assistance with dealing with problems.

It was also noted that recently there seems to have been a decrease in flooding within our area, although no one was sure if this was just due to our (relative) lack of rain or due to drainage maintenance improvements by the city. It was suggested that we might want to invite the new head of Public Works to talk about what policies and procedures they were putting in place.

Sandy Bottom (Wendell Midkiff & Flo Randall) Wendell met in the afternoon with the head ranger at the park. The house that was on Big Bethel has been cleared, but there is no decision what will be done with the land yet. The ranger is working with Parks and Recreation to develop a list of options. He will contact Wendell when a decision is made. There are no plans to move the entrance on Big Bethel to a new location (as was suggested in the Walgreen's proposal). They are thinking about the possibility of putting some kind of sign (possibly electronic) near the corner of Big Bethel and the parkway. The idea would be to give more visibility to the park and highlight programs and events. Some beautification will also be considered. He mentioned that they are also thinking about putting some kind of split rail fence around the park. There is a problem with homeless folks camping in the woods near the roads. A suggested task was to develop a relationship with the park personnel and identify a possible future project for the league.

Neighborhood Pride Tour (Karen Duncan & Jonathan McBride) Reiterating what he had mentioned earlier about a District 1 tour, Jonathan noted he and Karen were soliciting ideas and support. Karen had contacted some of the area churches. Bethel Temple has agreed to help. Alonzo Duncan suggested a league goal of meeting with area churches to explore joint interests.

Building League Awareness Members discussed the idea of increasing the awareness of the civic league throughout the Northampton area. A suggestion was made that we develop a flier or fliers about the NHCL and just start targeting various neighborhoods throughout the area (month by month) as time, manpower and our budget permits. Matt Asay, Tanis Mowery, and Samara Walker agreed to meet and come up with an initial flier. They are targeting having it ready by January. It was also suggested that we contact area churches about including information about the league and our projects in their newsletters.

Jonathan noted that after this meeting he would be "stepping back" for a time while we push forward in December and January towards implementing the tasks we choose. Perhaps in February he will return for an update on our progress and help us with a "self assessment" to see how we feel about our progress as an organization. Then, if we feel we are ready, he'll work with us on reapplying for renewal of our status as a registered neighborhood organization.

Other Business

Treasurer Butch Heath arrived late (after election duties) and provided a summary of the NHCL bank account. We have a balance of \$356.23 after an \$18 deposit he made this morning.

Wendell suggested that in the future we might want to be a little more formal in the voting process noting that some of the steps in Robert's Rules of Order, such as requesting nominations from the floor had been omitted. The question of absentee ballots had come up and we had no policy in place. The consensus was that we could do a little better, but that we didn't want to get too formal in conducting the league business because that might turn some potential members off. The membership agreed it might be time to take a fresh look at our bylaws in the near future.

Selvin Walker also spoke briefly about some of the flooding and drainage issues he was aware of. The city is in the process of developing a preliminary maintenance schedule. The flood briefings for City Council were postponed until the December meeting. There are many small Northampton storm water maintenance projects in progress and there will probably be more in the next budget cycle. He suggested that citizens need to be involved in the budget process and in the planning for new developments. Extra crews have been assigned to storm water maintenance and there will probably be an increase in the storm water fees in the upcoming year.

Matt noted that a recent Hampton eNews article had highlighted a new feature with HRT (Hampton Regional Transport) bus routes. There is an online link for trip planning, similar to using Google Maps or Mapquest, that identifies the bus lines to get you to where you need to go. We are the first community in the area to have this service.

Pot Luck Dinner

Flo Randall noted that our next meeting would be in the middle of the Holiday Season and be our last meeting of the year. She suggested that we have a pot luck dinner with each person bringing some sort of dish to share. The suggestion was enthusiastically accepted by the members. She offered to coordinate the event and keep a list of who was bringing what type of item (main dish, salad, dessert, etc.) so we could balance the menu.

The meeting adjourned at about 8:50 PM, The next meeting will be on December 4th.

Memberships: There were 3 renewals (Selvin Walker, Flo Randall, and Alonzo Duncan) and no new members A total of \$28.00 will be passed on to the new Treasurer.

Matt Asay,
NHCL Secretary

As approved at the December 4, 2007 meeting.