

Northampton Civic League Minutes 12/05/2006

The December meeting of the Northampton Civic league was called to order at 7:01 by NHCL President Bernice Jackson. There were 8 people present.

The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

Secretary Matt Asay summarized the October minutes which were approved with 1 correction: Selvin Walker noted that he had reported that Chuck Fleming had taken Ted Henefin's seat on the Flooding Committee, while the minutes implied he had taken over Ted's job.

Treasurer Butch Heath provided a summary of the league finances. The previously received dues were deposited in the checking account. Our new balance is \$246.03.

Old Business

We discussed seeking re-registration of the NHCL with the Neighborhood Commission. Neighborhood Commissioner Karen Duncan provided Wythe's recently approved application as an example of the registration process. Matt made plans to meet with Bernice on December 19th to develop a first draft of an application for the NHCL. Other officers will attend if their schedules permit.

New Business

Selvin Walker reported on the most recent meeting of the Flooding Committee. They met on December 4th at the West Hampton Community Center. The meeting was chaired by City Engineer Fred Whitley. Bob Trahan from the city served as Facilitator. Councilman Paige Washington was there, as was John Payne from URC, the consulting firm hired by the City to study the flooding problems in this watershed (the Newmarket Creek watershed). The agenda was "getting organized" and "how to go about deciding" issues. The city has allocated \$110,000 for the study by URC. It will only cover flooding in this watershed. Other watersheds are to be covered "in the near future." There is a "creek walk" for committee members scheduled at 10:00 am on January 6. All of the citizens at the meeting were from the Newmarket Creek watershed except for Selvin and his neighbor Andy.

Vice President Wendell Midkiff asked Selvin "Why that watershed?" Selvin replied that he had been told the City "had to start somewhere." There was speculation that this one had been chosen first because of Congressman Scott's concerns over flooding there during Ernesto. The timeline for the committee calls for a proposal to be completed by April (their target date is April 1st) in order to get any work considered in the budget cycle review that happens in May.

There was a lot of discussion of "why another study?" Selvin said that he had asked for copies of all the past studies (which Mr. Whitley had agreed to provide within 2 weeks). It was noted that if the NHCL has concerns about the way the process is structured and defined we should take it up right away with the City Manager and then the City Council. Otherwise it will be too late for any action to happen this year.

It was not clear whether the \$110,000 for the study had come from the city's Stormwater Fees fund or from other sources. Selvin noted that, according to the City's Stormwater Fees web site, the monies are to be used for water quality, environmental education, street sweeping, and water quality monitoring. For those considering addressing the issue the next City Council meeting is on December 13th. Also it was noted that the deadline for stormwater property claims is approaching on December 30.

Wendell noted that he still has seen no street sweepers in a long time and still has seen no drain cleaning in his area which is very prone to flooding. Selvin noted that the citizens have responsibilities as well (i.e. not putting leaves or lawn clippings in the drains) and that he tries to emphasize this when he speaks to his neighbors.

We discussed the need for an NHCL action plan to get the city to address the flooding problem in our neighborhoods. When will the Northampton concerns be addressed? We talked about the need to gather citizens for a presentation to city council. We need to:

- ◇ Present our concerns to City Council

- ◇ Get a response from council
- ◇ Monitor City Council for action based on their response

Butch noted the need to hold our elected officials accountable. He urged putting together an email message to everyone on the city council, noting that it was the cheapest and quickest way to speak to everyone. He suggested sending copies to Jessie Wallace and the relevant department heads. We need to target our NHCL fliers to areas with heavy flooding. We need numbers when we go before council.

Selvin offered to put together some bullet points giving the “NHCL perspective” and send them to Butch (CC’d to all NHCL members for feedback). Matt offered to mail out the information to all NHCL members without email. A motion was made and unanimously approved to appropriate civic league funds to cover the postage.

Because of the lateness of the hour, the members decided that we would delay our election and accept nominations for new officers at the January 2nd meeting and would hold elections at the February 6th meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at about 8:35 pm. The next meeting was scheduled for January 2nd at 7:00 pm. Wendell Midkiff noted that he had confirmed that the community center had our room reservations for 2007.

Memberships: There two renewals (Karen Duncan and Darryl Krauch) and no new members.

Matt Asay, NHCL Secretary

Revised 01/28/07