



To Preserve And Promote Our Historic Lifestyle

**Federal Hill Neighborhood Association (FHNA)
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES (April 16, 2013)**

Date	Start Time	End Time	Location	Minutes Completed By
April 16, 2013	7:10 pm	9:05pm	Christ Lutheran Church	Karen Angelici
Attendees				
Approximately 65 people.				
Agenda/Main Issues Discussed				
1- Call to Order (Eric Costello) – 7:00 2- Upcoming Election (Eric Costello) – 7:05 3- Membership Drive (Eric Costello) – 7:10 4- Treasurers Report (Gayle McClure) – 7:15 5- Mayor’s Spring Cleanup on April 20 th (Walt Saxon) – 7:20 6- SouthBmore.com Weed Pulling Competition – May 18 – (Kevin Lynch) – 7:25 7- BGE Smart Meters (Gina Maggard & Kevin Collins) – 7:30 8- Cross Bar Beer Garden (Brian McComas) – 7:50 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation from proposed proprietors (10 minutes) • Structured Q&A session (15 minutes) • FHNA discussion of next steps (5 minutes) 9- Upcoming Meetings (Eric Costello) – 8:20 10- New Business – 8:25 11- Adjourn				
2. Upcoming Election (Eric Costello)				
Eric announced the upcoming FHNA Board of Directors election for May 21st, and explained there are 7 out of 9 spots available. The Treasurer and Secretary seats are not up for election currently, as they are in the first year of a two year term. In order to run, you need to be a paid voting member for at least 30 days prior to the election.				
3. Membership Drive (Eric Costello)				
Eric explained that attendees are paid voting member if there is gray shading next to one’s name on the sign-in sheet. He encouraged attendees to join FHNA and explained that the dues fund activities that benefit the neighborhood.				
4. Treasurer’s Report (Gayle McClure)				
Gayle reviewed the latest report on income and expenses by category from 1/23/2012 through 4/16/2013, which shows approximately \$58k in income and \$37k in expenses, leaving approx. \$20k total. It was asked whether FHNA has spent all the grant money. Gayle explained we still have approx. \$800 from 2011 Grand Prix Funds. She explained that income from the Hillside is steady right now. She encouraged members to				

reach out to local merchants for additional advertising. It was asked whether FHNA has to submit any reports to the State. Gayle explained we file a Form 990 with the IRS because we are a non-profit and make below \$50k per year. And, with the State of Maryland, FHNA has to file a personal property return but since they have no personal property, they file it with zeros.

5. Mayor's Spring Cleanup on April 20th (Walt Saxon)

Walt announced the citywide Baltimore cleanup, and in the neighborhood. There will be a dumpster at 9am at the corner of Warren and William. It will be there until 1pm. Gayle will be there with coffee and donuts and pledge forms. He reminded everyone that one can't put hazardous materials in the dumpster. Walt explained they are looking for volunteers for Robert Baker Park and Federal Hill Park, even for just an hour. They are considering a croquet tournament, and will have a signup sheet at the next meeting for teams to do a round robin at Robert Baker Park.

6. SouthBmore.com Weed Pulling Competition (Kevin Lynch)

Kevin explained that SouthBmore.com is an online publication and they have been around for a little over a year. They did a weed pulling competition and pulled 900 lbs of weeds last year. They are doing another weed pulling competition Saturday, May 18 and he will come pick them up or they can be taken to Thomas Johnson Elementary School. They will partner with No Idea Tavern, and there are prizes for the winners. The goal is to clean up as many weeds as possible and to get on top of the problem. There will be a social around 4pm at No Idea Tavern to announce the winners. Each bag will be weighed on a scale to determine the winner.

7. BGE Smart Meters (Gina Maggard & Kevin Collins)

Kevin works with BGE as a Senior Engineer, and Gina is a lead for their Business Process Group. BGE is equipping all gas and electric meters with 2-way communication to collect energy usage and they transmit that usage to a collector, known as Smart Meters. With this new technology, they are able to read the meters every few hours instead of once per month. They are starting to install them in Baltimore this summer. Residents can expect a post card mailer and those with an indoor meter will need to call in and schedule an appointment to have it retrofitted, which takes only a few minutes. They are rolling out the Smart Energy Manager and residents can see their interval usage, down to the hour, 24 readings a day. One can also get smart energy saving tips and tips on how to save money. Kevin explained that the new technology would also integrate with the outage management system so that they won't have to rely on calls. Currently, it's still important for the customer to call BGE if there is an outage.

Gina talked about Smart Energy Rewards, which is different than Peak Rewards. BGE will announce an event and they will pay residents to cut down on their usage. For every KW over one's baseline, BGE will pay subscribers \$1.25. An "event" could be, for example, a very hot day. It was asked whether there is an option to opt out of the program...she said no, but they are waiting on a ruling on that. Someone asked about radiation studies. Gina said the meters give off less radiation than a cordless phone in the home. They are read every 4 hours for less than 2 minutes per day. Gina explained that there have been studies on meter banks in apartment complexes where 50 meters are lined up and they emit much less radiation than allowed by the FCC. She explained there is a time-of-use price structure now, but they will likely offer additional options. She does not think they will go to mandatory time-of-day pricing.

It was asked what the point is of all of this. Gina explained it will allow for 2-way communication, and can get the reads more frequently since right now, they have to drive by once per month to read the meters.

It was asked "What is the activity to replace the meter itself?" Kevin explained they prefer to work with the circuit breakers in the house. Gina explained they have done over 3,000 installations already. She explained there are national standards for installations. It was also asked what happens if one doesn't purchase electricity from BGE. Gina said that they encourage people to buy electric from others to save money. She said there is

no impact on the meters if they purchase electric from others.

She explained BGE doesn't know what you are using in your house (appliances, etc.). They cannot control the electricity from the new meters, the change is simply to digital.

8. Cross Bar Beer Garden (Brian McComas)

Eric provided a brief background for this segment of the meeting. Eric introduced Brian who will be one of the owners at the proposed Cross Bar Beer Garden on E. Cross Street. Brian's restaurant group is attempting to transfer the liquor license from Turners (12 – 14 E. Cross Street, which they own) to a different corporation his group owns, and then expand the use of the license to 12 – 18 E. Cross Street. He explained that Brian held an open house April 3rd to discuss the venture and take questions and it lasted 3 hours.

Eric explained that it is not appropriate to have the type of debate that occurred at the open house on April 3rd. Eric proposed that Brian discuss his proposed plans uninterrupted for 10 minutes. He asked attendees to write down any questions for collection and then the Board would go through the questions, remove duplicates and address questions that address Brian's current business, his proposed plans and the potential impact of his plans on the neighborhood. Due to how intense the discussion has been in recent months regarding this topic including on April 03rd, Eric suggested that it may be best for the Board to make a decision regarding how to proceed with FHNA's approach to a position on this matter.

A motion was made to suspend the rules consistent with the above and to give the FHNA Board the authority to make a decision on FHNA's position.

The group unanimously agreed to those terms and to suspend the regular rules for this segment.

Mr. McComas's Overview

Brian provided a brief overview of the plans. He explained the property has been in disarray and it's taken a few years to get all the pieces of the property together. The plan is to put in an open-air beer garden. Plans were distributed to members in advance. The open-air aspect is something that initially concerned people, but the opening is very minimal to cross street. The buildings are falling down and they have been advised to take down at least one wall. They plan to save as much brick and wood as they can. They are putting in a \$100k+ kitchen.

He explained that the previous establishment had no food, but they plan on food as they are a food organization, and are planning for something that will be different than "just another bar." They are flattening out what used to be 2 floors with no kitchen or storage facility. They are upgrading the building to a 21st century building. "We'd like people to be happy, and we understand the concerns. We are talking about our establishment and we can't debate things we can't control. We hope it's something the neighborhood is proud of."

Question / Answer Session With Mr. McComas (Presided over by Eric Costello and Jody Martin)

"Do you need liquor license approval?" Brian: We only need approval to expand the license to 16 and 18. It is not a transfer of locations for the liquor license.

"Do you intend to seek approval for live entertainment now or in the future?" Brian: We do want to seek live entertainment in the future, but we decided not to put it in immediately because we want everyone's support.

"Do you need any zoning changes from local govt to proceed to opening?" Brian: These buildings are very old and I intend to improve the facility with storage and trash. It will be an upgrade for both the neighbors.

"In the event that your license is denied or you can't expand to 16/18 Cross, would you consider a smaller

establishment?" Yes, we would, but then we wouldn't serve food, which is not what we want.

"Why should your business bear the brunt for the issues resulting from other bars in the neighborhood?"
Brian: Sometimes when you take leadership positions, you are put in the position to defend yourself and others. I am the front guy associated with establishments. It's a tough position and I don't think I should bear the brunt but it comes with the territory.

"What is the approved seating capacity?" Eric: There is no answer, and the fire marshall will go in and rate it based on a formula. Brian: Our guestimate is somewhere in the ballpark of 3,500 square feet of patron area.

"How will you manage crowd issues related to noise, vandalism and public urination?" Brian: We will manage crowd issues on our property. There are ample bathroom facilities in Federal Hill. I can't stop people from urinating in the alley.

"What experience do you have in Federal Hill with a liquor license? Why is there a discrepancy in the paperwork?" Brian: Technically the license is held by Brett and Josh. It was probably answered incorrectly and they have held a license since 2010.

"How will you control dumpster spillage onto Patapsco?" Brian: A trash room is the best solution and fully contained and we'll let other neighbors use it.

"In addition to \$100k for the kitchen, how much are you investing." Brian: It's a \$3 million project.

"Like Ryleighs, will the beer garden be child friendly?" Brian: We think it will be even more friendly. We've visited others in the US, which are kid friendly.

"What time do you plan to close, Monday-Sunday?" Brian: The license affords us the ability to stay open til 2am. Historically, Ryleighs doesn't stay open till 2 am. We generally close at 12 or 12:30. And, we don't discount alcohol.

"Restaurant kitchens are much more expensive then \$100k, so are you serious about a restaurant?" Brian: If you pay retail, it is more than \$100k, but we don't pay retail. We are committed to a food establishment.

"Will this beer garden participate in the Irish Stroll and other potential beer crawls?" Brian: I would not be able to say we would not participate.

"Will the patio be open on a seasonal basis only?" Brian: Right now we don't have plans for a retractable roof so it will be seasonal. The rest of the building won't close.

"We understand that the liquor license has been expired for more than 12 months, is this so?" Brian: No, there is no true expiration to a liquor license.

"Total occupancy of the new place?" Brian: The whole concept of a german beer garden is that people sit at picnic tables. The capacity will be in the neighborhood of 265 or 285.

"Having moved from NYC, I know noise travels. How is noise going to be contained?" Brian: I've been to NYC many times. We don't think it will be a problem and will follow the rules.

"Roof deck?" Brian: No

"Type of license?" Brian: BD7 liquor license

“What can you do to help mitigate noisy drunk people as they are leaving your establishment?” Brian: I don’t know if there is any way for any one to mitigate that. Our job is to not over-serve and we think we do a good job of that. We know people are going to other establishments. Our price point is \$6, 7, 8 for a beer.

“You mentioned \$3 million in investment in the property, how is that divided?” Brian: Half is to buy and half to invest.

“How can you mitigate the parking situation/impact of patrons and employees?” Brian: We make a minimal impact as a lot of our employees live in the neighborhood and we are strict about whether they park. The establishment is rated for 165 people. We don’t think we are attracting more people to the neighborhood, we think we will draw people from other establishments.

“What age group do you plan to market to?” Brian: Any one who is willing to pay for good beer, world beer. We intend to make our own food and keep thing fresh, but we won’t be cheap. Ryleighs is not inexpensive.

“What is your role in the new establishment?” Brian: I am the president of our restaurant group, we now have 3 restaurants. My brother-in-law has 35 years experience and Josh has been at Ryleighs for 7 years. We have a solid management team and it is not an investment from afar.

“How long has Turner’s liquor license been non-operational?” Brian: Since 2010

“Why did Brett state on the application that Turners is open and operating?” Brian: I don’t think he did. I think the question is whether it has been open, and 12 and 14 had been open at some point. The liquor board knows exactly whose licenses serve liquor today.

Question / Answer Session After Mr. McComas Left

Eric then explained that the class BD7 is the most unrestricted type of license, and explained we are dealing with an expansion of the license to 16 and 18 to make it 4 properties, with 3,500 square feet. FHNA has asked Brian to sign an MOU with 22 restrictions (such as requesting that he close before 2 am and take major steps to mitigate noise). Brian said he is open to sign an MOU but not anything that limits his license, contrary to his public comments on April 03rd.

A resident asked “Why does he need our approval?” Eric: He doesn’t need our approval but the liquor board will ask for our position on this.

Attendees expressed their concerns about the proposal over capacity, noise, trash. There were concerns about the documents provided being incomplete. It was also explained that there are other reasons retail is leaving our neighborhood, not related to the bars. It was mentioned that Crossbar will bring jobs to the neighborhood which is good.

Eric explained that the Board is meeting tomorrow night to make a decision as to whether to support or oppose. Keenan explained that the liquor and live entertainment committee met and covered a lot of questions that were raised tonight and they voted to make some recommendations to the Board. They recommended, 1) that FHNA oppose this and file formal opposition to the transfer/expansion to the liquor board. They’ll need petitions signed; 2) the neighborhood association hire a lawyer; and 3) that the association hire a pro bono lawyer that is known to committee members. Eric asked attendees to raise their hands:

1. How many attendees support the proposal in its current form? 0
2. How many attendees wish to negotiate and then oppose? 10
3. How many attendees wish to flat-out oppose? 50

9. Upcoming Meetings (Eric Costello) – 8:20

- a) 04/18, Thu, 7pm – SDPCRC Mtg, SD Police Station
- b) 04/20, Sat, 9am – 1pm, Mayor’s Spring Cleanup, dumpster at William & Warren
- c) 04/25, Thu, 7pm – COP Walk, Porters
- d) 04/28, Sun, 11am – 7pm, FHMS Spring Block Party
- e) 04/30, Tue, 7pm - Liquor Committee Mtg, YWGC
- f) 05/01, Wed, 7pm – Parking Committee Mtg, YWGC
- g) 05/05, Sun, 11am – 3pm, Neighborhood Spring Party, Federal Hill Park
- h) 05/05, Sun, 11am – 9pm, FHHA Cinco De Mayo Event, E. Cross Street
- i) 05/09, Thu, 5:30 – 8:00, FHNA Social, tbd
- j) 05/21, Tue, 7pm – FHNA General Membership Mtg, CLC

10. New Business

Gayle discussed the One Piece Initiative and the pledge forms, which ask members to pledge to pick up one piece of trash per day. She’s looking to figure out how to get across to different groups. They are looking for more volunteers, called “Ambassadors,” to assist. She explained that they have an event planned for June to meet up with neighbors to pick up trash and then celebrate. She encouraged attendees to take a pledge form, go onto OnePieceSobo’s facebook page, or to email Gayle if there is interest in volunteers.

Brian Line spoke from the Baltimore Energy Challenge, a city nonprofit which wants to reach goal of 15% reduction in energy consumption by 2015. He encouraged residents to see him if interested. He will be back at the May FHNA meeting.

Eric acknowledged Jim Hall and his book on the Baltimore row house being published in the Hillsider.

Next Steps

--The Board will decide how to approach the Crossbar Beer Garden proposal.