



To Preserve And Promote Our Historic Lifestyle

**Federal Hill Neighborhood Association
General Membership Meeting Minutes
May 21, 2013**

Date	Start Time	End Time	Location	Minutes Completed By
May 21, 2013	7:07 pm	9:05 pm	Christ Lutheran Church	Ginny Gerhart

Attendees

Approximately 60 Attendees

Agenda/Main Issues Discussed

1. Call to order – Eric Costello
2. Elections - Bob Merbler
3. Treasurer’s Report - Gayle McClure –
4. CHAP District walk-about—Eric Costello
5. Federal Hill Prep Principal’s Search – Marc Muher
6. FHP Playground – Valerie McGuire (BCRP) and Sandy Apgar ((SHR)
7. DHHS Community Garden, Upcoming Groundbreaking – Jessica Damen
8. Baltimore Energy Challenge – Brian Line & Abby Moore
9. Baltimore Green Neighborhood Challenge – Matty Guerin
10. Baltimore Beach – Todd Webster
11. Rezoning of 732 S. Charles St. – Eric Costello & Jason Middleton
12. Grand Prix Community Impact Funds – Gayle McClure
13. Use of Casino Local Development Funds – Eric Costello
14. Parking Update - Eric Costello
15. Cross Bar Beer Garden Update – Keenan Dworak-Fisher & Eric Costello
16. New Business
17. Adjourn

Elections - Bob Merbler

Elections were held for 7 of 9 board members.

In middle of 2-year term

Secretary – Bob Merbler

Treasurer – Gayle McClure

Running for 2-Year Terms

President – Eric Costello

Vice President – Jody Martin, former board member at-large

Running for At-Large 1-Year Terms

Mellisa Colimore

Ginny Gerhart

Joe Halperin
Bob O'Donoghue
Diana Sugg

As all candidates were unopposed, a motion was carried to hold a group vote instead of voting for each candidate individually. Candidates who were present introduced themselves. Diana Sugg spoke about the importance of reducing the bar scene to bring back balance in the neighborhood. Joe Halperin was in Europe and not available to introduce himself to the group. The vote in favor of the slate of candidates was 25. There were no opposed.

Treasurer's Report - Gayle McClure

Gayle reported that the bank balance is \$23,708, which is on track with last year's balance. Since the beginning of the year, FHNA has taken in 8K in revenue and paid 6K in expenses. Later she revised the balance to the amount of \$15,000 to take into account a deduction of Grand Prix Community Impact funds. See starred (*) item under Grand Prix Community Impact Funds below.

CHAP District—Eric Costello

Eric discussed the effort to explore applying to CHAP (Baltimore City Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation) to create a CHAP district in Federal Hill. CHAP would put restrictions on the way property is developed in our neighborhood. He announced that he, John Thompson, and other members of the Preservation Committee, and a CHAP representative were conducting a walk around the neighborhood on Thursday, May 22, to look at historical properties. A questioner asked, "What is CHAP?" Eric explained that though Federal Hill is registered as a national historic neighborhood, much of the neighborhood is not protected against development that's not in character with our historic status. Because only part of the neighborhood falls under the protection of MURO, the Montgomery Urban Renewal Ordinance plan, MURO is not synonymous with Federal Hill's boundaries. CHAP designation would normalize construction standards across the neighborhood. It would put restrictions on the way property is developed. Another questioner asked, "What about elements that aren't historical?" Eric responded that CHAP restrictions are not retroactive. Eric stated that we have to discuss the issue: "Do we want the restrictions CHAP would impose?" CHAP designation helps maintain property values.

Federal Hill Prep Principal's Search – Marc Muher

Marc Muher, a member of the school's Family Council, announced the current principal is moving on. His group wants a principal that engages more with community groups, which want more partnerships with the school. He wants to have someone in place before the school year ends. Good schools encourage families to stay in the neighborhood. Their group will be meeting on June 11th to further discuss the principal search.

FHP Playground – Valerie McGuire (BCRP) and Claire Johnson, Ann Apgar (SHR)

Valerie McGuire, from Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks (BCRP), showed plans and schematics of what the new playground in Federal Hill Park would look like. It will cover the same footprint as the current playground. BCRP hopes to have the work done by next summer. The current shed will stay as is. A questioner asked: Will the new playground, with its historical structures such as the high sails of a ship, facilitate drug dealers and provide an opportunity for crime? And has BCRP or SHR (South Harbor Renaissance) discussed this possibility with the Southern District police? A member of the audience involved in the playground renovation stated that SHR has applied for grant money for park safety; the new design will use the latest and greatest in playground equipment, which is vandal resistant; and a real breeding ground for crime is a playground that's unattractive to kids & families and therefore deserted. Eric requested Claire et al. to contact the Southern District Neighborhood Services Unit to review the proposed design.

DHHS Community Garden, Upcoming Groundbreaking – Jessica Damen

The groundbreaking will take place June 1 at 9 am. The garden is located at the northeast corner of Digital Harbor High School's athletic field. The idea of the garden came from Nicole Veltre, a biology teacher, who wanted a living classroom for students & with community involvement. Jessica jumped on the opportunity to get the community involved. Chrissa Carlson is the coordinator of the garden. Jessica's asking for people to sign up to help out. They'll be planting vegetables, perennials, herbs, fruit trees, and vines. \$3K in grant money has been raised. Fat Larry's is supplying food for the event. Domino Sugar is providing additional volunteers. John Bacci, of the Baltimore Community Tool Bank, is providing free tool rental.

Baltimore Energy Challenge – Brian Line & Abby Moore

The Baltimore Neighborhood Energy Challenge is a city nonprofit program that wants to achieve a 15% energy reduction in the city by 2015. Brian outlined the top 10 actions residents can take to reduce energy use: change lights to LED or CFL bulbs; turn down thermostats to 78 degrees in summer and 60 in winter; turn down water temperature to 120 degrees; wrap hot water pipes in insulation (BGE will wrap a water heater for free); use low-flow shower heads, which save a gallon of water a minute; turn off & unplug electric items; wash clothes in cold water only, which uses 1/3 less energy, & only run full loads; increase refrigerator energy by cooling down food before refrigerating, cleaning coils, and if empty, putting in gallon containers of water; clean house fans every 4-6 months; insulate & air seal your home. He asked we share this information and he passed out pledges to sign.

Baltimore Green Neighborhood Challenge – Matty Guerin

Matty Guerin stated that through Retrofit Baltimore, an energy efficiency nonprofit, you can get your home air-sealed & insulated. The organization is launching a free neighborhood challenge that will recognize the neighborhood that has the highest participation in reducing energy use and becoming a green neighborhood. URL is retrofit.baltimore.org.

Baltimore Beach – Todd Webster

Todd Webster is the founder of Baltimore Beach, which organizes beach volleyball leagues, located on 7 courts in Rash field. Begun in 1999, there were 30 teams to start; now there are approximately 700 teams. 63% of the players are Baltimore city residents. All the groups pay, which finances the general liability insurance policy. Webster wants to expand, maybe to another site. One audience member was attracted to the neighborhood because of the volleyball courts. Baltimore Beach does the clean up.

Rezoning of 732 S. Charles St. – Eric Costello & Jason Middleton

Jason Middleton & his wife are considering moving to the neighborhood. They want to have 732 S. Charles rezoned from an R8 single-family use to multi-family use, so they can legally rent out the bottom floor unit and live in the top floor unit. Recently, Bill Cole sponsored legislation based on an MOU for Scott Pevenstein at 400 E. Cross St. to enable him to legally rent part of his residence; and any tenant will never be able to get a parking decal—Scott has to furnish off-street parking. The 2 units at 732 S. Charles have been rented out illegally since the mid-80s. One off-street parking space is available. Eric stated that FHNA would require that a similar MOU be in place restricting parking for tenants in the bottom unit so that any tenant will never be able to participate in RPP. A questioner asked if Jason would be able to get a tenant who doesn't have a car? Jason would have a parking space in the lot & would charge the tenant for an off-street space. Questions arose concerning 2 parking spaces behind 732, one which is deeded to 730 & 1 for 732. Bob Gisriel asked if Jason had a legal easement. At this point, Eric stated that the FHNA board needed to contact Bob Gisriel for further discussion. John Rehmert mentioned that the Board had told the General Membership that the Scott Pevenstein situation was a one-time deal only. He asked for a motion to move the request for rezoning to the power of the board pending a signed MOU permanently restricting parking. 30 approved the motion; 5 opposed. Eric stated that Bob Merbler, Rich Polan, Bob Gisriel, he, and Jason Middleton would meet later in the week to sort it out.

Grand Prix Community Impact Funds – Gayle McClure

Gayle stated that FHNA has a little over \$9.5K in Grand Prix Community Impact funds. The proposal is that half will be used for the maintenance of Robert Baker Park and by Federal Hill Thinking Green for planting trees. A motion was carried and approved in favor of the proposal. The other half of the funds will be used for separate projects, capped at \$1500K each. Gayle asked that people contact her if they have a proposal for a project. The deadline for project proposals is 6/15. The “Hillsider” will announce the call for proposals.

*A question was asked if the \$9.5K was part of or separate from FHNA’s \$23.7K bank balance. Gayle stated that most of the funds were included in the balance; she revised her treasurer’s report to reflect the deduction of the grand prix money: FHNA now has a balance of \$15K.

Use of Casino Local Development Funds – Eric Costello

Eric asked for a motion to postpone a discussion of the use of casino local development funds. The discussion will take place using Survey Monkey, the survey and questionnaire online software. The motion carried and was approved unanimously.

Parking Update - Eric Costello

Eric reported the following parking committee activity:

- ZipCar locations in the neighborhood—Clair Mullins is researching;
- parking on the unit block of E. Hamburg St.—Karen Angelici, Bob Merbler, Paul Deltete, and Ginny Gerhart are surveying residents of the block, which currently has no on-street parking, to find out their opinion of getting parking on one side of their block;
- Lanasa Lane—determining where residents & their guests park to make sure no on-street spaces are being used (Gerhart);
- Do Not Qualify (DNQ) list of addresses—revising the list to submit to Steve Robinson, Residential and Permit Parking Program (RPP) Supervisor (Gerhart & Costello);
- 17 items in the matrix—monitoring the Department of Transportation’s progress in completing the 17 requests the parking committee has made via the matrix, which will create more on-street parking spaces & remove vehicles from our streets. 9 have been addressed so far; Bill Cole is working on getting the other 8 completed. (Ivo Jamrosz, Andrew Swanston, Andrew Kittell).
- Covington St. meters—signs are printed that will enable residents with Area 9 parking decals to park at those 63 metered spaces free of charge from 9 pm–8 am, 365 days a year. Signs will be installed pending legislation to address the issue of a multi-use parking scheme. Projected installation: in a month. (Costello).
- Angled parking—Eric reviewed and updated the status of the angled parking issue. The city proposed that 5 block faces could support angled parking. Originally, FHNA proposed a pilot plan to put angled parking only on block faces with no dwelling units. A group of residents became active in opposition to angled parking based on esthetic impact, light pollution through windows, and a possible safety hazard in backing into the spots. Some in opposition were angry because the 200 block of Montgomery was not included in the pilot and requested that all block faces take part. The parking committee sent out a questionnaire about the issue. At the January FHNA meeting, 32 responded in favor of all blocks participating in the pilot; 24 responded in favor of the 5-block pilot; 11 opposed any angled parking. Eric reported that members of the opposition sent a petition to Bill Cole on May 20 voicing their disapproval. Upon checking the signatures, it was discovered that 7 signers did not live in the neighborhood and 21, who do live in the neighborhood, have access to off-street parking. Then, Eric reported that the Department of Transportation has directed that the pilot will consist of 3 block faces—800 of Battery adjacent to the Park, 300 of Warren adjacent to the Park, and the 900 of William adjacent to old Southern High School. This provoked some anger and disagreement in the audience and

Eric called for a motion for a rules suspension, limiting speakers to 30 seconds. Paul Deltete claimed that at a parking committee meeting he made a motion that was passed that FHNA take no action to endorse angled parking till Casino Community Impact funds were used to conduct a parking study. Others opposed stated that parking enforcement will not get any better, narrow streets are less safe, and that our neighborhood will become a parking lot during day for non-neighborhood people. Eric stated that he had asked the opposition for evidence against angled parking and that none had been forthcoming. Rob Goodman objected to this; Andrew Kittell stated that the parking committee had failed. Jody Martin requested that the discussion end and that the parking committee take up the issue again. Eric asked for a vote on whether FHNA should suspend moving forward on angled parking until a comprehensive transportation study had taken place and been completed. 13 voted in favor of FHNA taking no more action; 21 opposed.

Cross Bar Beer Garden Update – Keenan Dworak-Fisher & Eric Costello

Keenan, chair of FHNA's liquor/live entertainment committee, and Eric discussed FHNA's opposition to the Cross Bar Beer Garden, proposed to be located at 12-18 E. Cross St. At issue is an extension of a liquor license to the original bar, Turner's, that would enable Brian McComas, who would run the operation, to open a large, open-air establishment. Five area neighborhood associations oppose the license extension; FHNA has taken the lead and has hired a lawyer to represent FHNA at the Liquor Board (BLLC) hearing.

Roles: Keenan is managing the day-to-day efforts. Eric, who reiterated that he's opposed to the proposed plans, is acting as public spokesman, interacting with elected officials, and will make final decisions on process only. There is a third member of the lead team from South Baltimore, Marie Sennett. These three are the only individuals interacting with FHNA's attorneys.

Keenan said that there's a lot of community support against the bar's opening. He made a petition available that states that the signers are opposed to increasing the impact of the bar scene in Federal Hill. The bar provides nothing that the neighborhood needs; the open-air design would create a noise problem.

The Liquor Board has to consider opposition on three fronts:

1. FHNA has asked the Liquor Board first to rule on the validity of the license, which went dormant in 2009. FHNA is questioning the validity.
2. Having over 50% of the people who live within 200 feet of the property in question opposing the bar constitutes its own opposition for the BLLC to rule on, and therefore gives the Commissioners no discretion in shutting down the expansion, but not the transfer.
3. There is general community support of the opposition in the form of a protest.

No BLLC hearing is scheduled yet.

Eric & Keenan are going to get a map of the area showing residential units within 50 feet of the proposed location.

FHNA might have to enter into negotiations with the Cross Bar group, at the BLLC's request. What is non-negotiable is: The Cross Bar group signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with FHNA. All conditions must be memorialized in a signed MOU.

Eric asked the membership to vote on 2 of the following 3 big-ticket items based on importance (each person was allotted 2 votes) that the neighborhood could not live with out (the lowest number of votes represents the most important items):

A- Maximum Capacity - no higher than previous figure of 165

B- Completely Enclosed Establishment - free from open air concept and iron gate fences on Cross Street

C- Food Receipt Restriction - 50/50 or close food restriction to protect the community from another large establishment

Vote Totals:

A—2 votes

B—4 votes

C—20 votes

Each member was asked to vote on their three most sub-areas for negotiation (the three highest vote totals represent the 3 most critical issues to the members in attendance):

a- Historical Preservation – building must maintain historical character of street and neighborhood

b- Noise – restrictions and limitations to mitigate ambient impact to nearby neighbors

c- Parking – provisions to ensure no further impact to Area 9 parking

d- Public Safety – must ensure public safety and protection of citizens and patrons

e- Sanitation – must have zero impact or improve sanitation conditions in alley behind bar and on Patapsco and Cross Streets.

f- Use of Space – restrictions on outdoor area to ensure it's used as a beer garden

Vote Totals:

a. Historical preservation—**14**

b. Noise—**26**

c. Parking—**18**

d. Public safety—**20**

e. Sanitation—**14**

f. Use of space—**9**

Everyone was encouraged to attend the BLLC hearing, when it is scheduled.

New Business

None