

FEDERAL HILL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
Minutes: April 18, 2017

CALL TO ORDER:

Bob Merbler called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

Moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the March 2017 General Meeting. Approved unanimously.

UPDATE ON RECENT DHHS INCIDENTS AND PUBLIC SAFETY:

Jessica Damen introduced the Principal of Digital Harbor High School, Ms. Mobley, VP Dr. Bowden and several teachers from DHHS.

Ms. Mobley stated that there have been incidents in April as we all know. She said the school does apply sanctions; there are hall monitors and police too; there have been multiple incidents and as a result additional people have been added to the posting of Baltimore City police and school police at Grindall St. Ms. Mobley addressed a letter to parents re: the increase in police presence at dismissal and issued an advisory to students. Several students have expressed concern with the effect these incidents have had on the community's view of Digital High students; as for community relations, Ms. Mobley would like to see a connection between students and community members; she is looking for adults as well as a couple of students to work together in a different way; for us to feel safe; for the students not to be feeling we look at them negatively.

Comments: it would behoove us all to have more contact with each other; we don't want to go back to the worst days of years ago with shoot-outs along Cross St.; the bus stop at Light and Pratt bus where Digital kids are is not a good scene; could we have kids come via a school bus, not MTA buses? Question: is Digital the largest high school in the City? Answer: no it is one of the largest; Question; are there students from the 21230 zip code? Answer: a very low number. Questions: we hear a high percentage of students have criminal experience, is that true? Is the City willing to sell the property and redevelop it? Answer: No. Question: how do kids get assigned to Digital. Answer: kids do a lottery, who is interested in Digital?

Question: Transportation--could we get more buses? Answer: Currently buses are full--we might get more, looking at that. Question: As for kids who have had some experience with juvenile justice system? Answer: Don't know, but we do have people who have contact with those kids. Question: How many actually chose Digital? . Answer: Dr. Boden, it has always been by lottery, but cannot send kids back now. Question: we always wondered, how many for tech. # 1, tech #2, good neighborhood? Answer: 24% for tech.

Comment and question: Bad kids vs. good kids-- what is it? Most are great kids, but what happens when the kids don't act behave properly? What is the punishment? Answer: it has changed, suspensions are not as long, e.g. with recent incidents, because the school must follow the "code of conduct". Mr. Kennedy: the State has changed discipline, but can't get away with really dangerous stuff, but we do need to deal with the State requirements..

Comments: The Code of Conduct is ridiculous: the local school doesn't have power, e.g. kids screwing with dogs bags at Federal Hill Park; I had volunteered but I can't deal with it, I resigned, I can't deal with this anymore. the Code of Conduct is ridiculous; there are students there who should not be there; there are kids there who don't want to be there; why are kids going in late?; leaving early?; 50 kids got into a fight and nobody could do anything about it! Comment: As both a teacher and community member with 15 years in the neighborhood I sympathize, but this is a segregated city; we have students pimped out by their parents; students who don't get food; the principal has no power; I need to see all sides! consider the

frustration of all sides! there are kids who are homeless, abused, whatever, and they come every day and try.

Comment: this is bigger than the Baltimore City Code of Conduct. It is different than it used to be, it is not just the City it is the State.

Question: Any info on the carjackings? knife point hold ups? 3 times within 4 days! Answer:

Major Ward: both vehicles have been recovered. We do have deployment in that area, with additional units--both Foxtrot and ground cops.

Question: school hours--what are the hours? Answer: If students are out, the school can be made aware and we can try to find them. Typically, we send staff members or police.

Comment/question: Could there be a mentorship or something? Is there something we could do with the students? Could we get some students who are among the worst too? How do you get beyond that? We need to work with the kids who are angry and feel disenfranchised.

Comment: the City is disempowered.

Principal Mosby: need to hear, to listen and to work together. Students have reached out to me (Principal Mosby). She will reach out to those students who want to find a way to change the perceptions about the school.

Question: Is there any way to make this a true lottery school? Answer: not now.

Councilman Costello: Community mediation is another possibility--find way to mediate discussion between community and school students.

Comment/question: the Principal has invited us to join the communication; are there people who will enter an honest dialogue? Principal Mosby: be aware that the kids are far more savvy on Facebook, etc., do not stoke their response. Don't stoke them! The dialogue needs to occur, we need something sustainable: we will start next Tuesday at 1:30 p.m. six volunteers, please! We will have a structured dialogue. Several people volunteer to go.

DECORATIVE CROSSWALKS--DISCUSSION AND VOTE:

Karen Nichols explained that the City is going to do a paving overlay on Cross Street and we can put in put some decorative crosswalks in concert with that work. Discussion: several designs shown in the Federal Hillside; cost of resurfacing is about \$7 million; money for crosswalks will come from casino money as a Federal Hill project; where did idea come from?

Councilman Costello: South Baltimore Gateway and the Local Development Council were involved.

Motion made and seconded to approve imprinted crosswalks. Motion amended and seconded to specify plain brick imprinting. Motion passes: 21 for; 3 opposed.

MAYOR'S SPRING CLEANUP--WALT SAXON:

Walt explained that there will be a dumpster, as usual, the for Mayor's Spring cleanup on Saturday April. 29; you can bring anything smaller than a Volkswagen Beetle, but no solvents, paints, etc., the dumpster will be available Saturday from 9:00 - 12:00; walk your items in; Mike Dickensheets won't be around, but if anyone wants to help clean up Robert Baker park or streets, please do. Trash bags will be available. Also a recycle bin will be available to take anything re-usable, stuff will be available for picking over! Paint and electronics will have to go elsewhere. Remember that Second Chance takes stuff too.

ANNUAL ELECTIONS REMINDER (MAY 16):

Elections for the Board will be May 16. All officers and director seats are up for election or reelection. The nomination form and more information will be in the May Hillside. The last date to submit nominations is May 10th.

NEW BUSINESS:

Question: Will the City notify us as promised of races etc., Councilman Costello said he gets alerts, tries to alert us in advance for comment. For about 90% of special events that are not street races he gets information and gets a chance to comment. Comment: can they spread it out a bit so we don't get landlocked every weekend!

Question: CHAP progress? Councilman Costello: will present April 24; refer to committee; there will be two separate hearings: housing and urban development; then 3rd reader possibly in May/June. There may be a community hearing for education purposes. Question: will existing Montgomery Urban Renewal Ordinance be repealed as part of the CHAP process? Answer: Councilman Costello: that is to be determined. CHAP will be law, probably, by end of summer. Comment: Rufus suggested it would be cool to put up flags with 15 stars (the Ft. McHenry style) throughout the neighborhood in concert with the South Harbor Renaissance event on June 14 for Flag Day. There will be a ceremony; 6:00-7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Submitted by:

Betsy Homer, Secretary