

FEDERAL HILL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
General Membership Meeting
May 16, 2017

CALL TO ORDER:

President Beth Whitmer called the meeting to order at 7:04.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM APRIL 2017 MEETING:

A motion was made and seconded to approve minutes of the April 18, 2017 General Membership meeting. Motion approved unanimously.

COVINGTON/KEY HIGHWAY DEVELOPMENT -- BAINBRIDGE COMPANIES

ALEX BORROSSO:

Construction is expected to begin in October. There is not much change from the previous design. The property is at Key Highway and Cross St. They are purchasing it from Swirnow. Two hundred twenty-four (224) rental units are proposed--3 levels of parking and 5 levels of residential for a total of 8 stories. Because it will be built into a hill, only 1 1/2 levels will be visible from the Covington St. side. The project is expected to take 18-20 months to complete. Question: has there been push back from community re: parking and height? And what is the parking ratio? What is the difference from the previous design? Answers: 115 ft. is allowed--as tall as the high school. We are one story lower--8 stories/7 stories. There will be 227 parking spaces which meets Transform Baltimore requirements. No one who will live there will be able to get a parking permit. The project will be 75% one bedroom; 25 % two bedrooms. There will be more bicycle parking--70 spots. Question: will there be spots for guest parking? Answer: A few. The rents are to be \$2200/month on average, some lower some higher. Comment: that would work if we had decent public transit, which we don't. Question: where will the entrances be for parking? Answer: one on Key Highway, two on Covington. Parking on Key Highway will be taken away during construction. Comment: the Zip Car location has disappeared. What coordination has been done regarding timing of construction with resurfacing of Cross Street? Beth asks Karen Nichols and Christian Allen to look into this. Question: How is this project to be coordinated with Digital High? Answer: We will be coordinating in the future. The project will be presented to the Urban Design and Architectural Review Panel (UDARP) for final approval, schematic approval has already been received. Question: What is the tax incentive? Answer: 10 years. Comment: We don't have the street capacity for another development--our infrastructure is at or near capacity. Question: How does this affect the repaving of Cross Street? Answer: We are coordinating with that project. Question: Was there a traffic impact study? Answer: Yes, and it is available--he will give card to make that available. There are more stages with the Planning Department after UDARP approval is received. Question: What will be paid in taxes? What is the abatement? Answer: It's a formula. The reduction will be roughly 75%. Beth thanks the developer for the presentation.

POLICE REPORT:

Officer Graham introduced himself. He has been in the district 13 years, so he is aware of the problems in this district. Crime stats: robberies West and East Cross vulnerable people coming from the bars. At Banditos 4 people were stabbed, one a 17-year old reportedly from Brooklyn. Question: How did he get into the bar? Answer: We don't know. The individual is charged and under arrest. As for robberies: Four young black males 16-20. Multiple individuals involved in

multiple robberies. They have been working in groups to overwhelm victims--sometimes car jack first, then ride around and rob people. Question: a particular type of car? Answer: that used to be the case, but now now so much, but that has led to the carjacking method. Question: can we get more foot patrols? Answer: New recruits may be assigned. Comment: It is important for there to be more presence here in the commercial area. Answer: There is now only one. When there are events, there are more people assigned. Officer Graham will "up channel" request. Comment: we have had this promise before and nothing happens. There just aren't enough officers here. Question: do the police know if there was any gang involvement in the Banditos issue? Answer: we don't know. Comment: there was also the shooting on Cross St. recently. Question: did the victims of the stabbing have their blood alcohol levels checked? Answer: probably not. Question: is the big problem when people get released from the bars? They are vulnerable as the business pushes them out onto the street? Answer: yes, that sounds about right--we try to get them moving and off to taxis, uber, etc. Question: are there specific areas that are vulnerable? Answer: Isolated areas where there are no cameras, no people. Comment: Bob Merbler reported that we received a call from Otterbein, they are assembling a group to get support and money to put in cameras--about \$30,000 each, plus installation. Montgomery and Charles and Montgomery and Hanover. Comment: Banner Hill is not planning exterior cameras. Question: Who monitors such cameras? Answer: contractors, not sworn officers, but they are paid by the City.

DONATION REQUEST--ROBERT BAKER PARK--PEG McCARTHY

Peg recently put in a grant request for sculpture that would be placed at Robert Baker Park. She asked for \$27,000 and got \$22,000 from the Local Development Council. She is asking FHNA FOR \$3,000, will get the other \$2,000 from a go-fund-me effort. Beth explained that the Board approved this request but the request is at a level for which the membership needs to vote. Question: where would the statue be placed? Answer: that hasn't been finalized--either in the wall or immediately outside the wall--not determined yet. A motion was made and seconded to approve the request for \$3k. The motion passed: All present, with the exception of one "no" vote, voted to approve.

SOLICITING COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON THEATER IN SOUTH BALTIMORE--AMY BERNSTEIN

Amy explained that she volunteered to work on grant writing -- up to \$5,000--the small grant level for South Baltimore Gateway organization distributing money from casinos. The small grant level is good entry for people. We do not have a community theater space--a place for local people of all ages to experience and create all varieties of spoken word and theater. Question: Like Creative Alliance? Answer: No. Something on a smaller scale, with classes, theater, etc. We can't even count the number of bars we have, but we lack the cultural opportunities to bring the community together. I feel this is important, but I can't seem to meet with other community groups. Beth offers to help her reach other community groups. Amy would be delighted to have help. She is planning on going after one of the small grants to do a demonstration project next winter. Amy can be reached at: alb457@gmail.com, or 410-491-3133.

Beth introduced David Mitchell who is working on an arts and culture game plan for South Baltimore with the City Office of Promotion and the Arts. He is going around meeting with people and noted that he was happy to hear Amy's ideas. David is working out of School 33. He said that space that is looking for more exposure.

CHAP UPDATE:

A few steps are left but the bill has gone to City Council. It is expected that CHAP will be approved by the end of summer. Question: When should I paint my house? Answer: Before September, but we haven't heard of CHAP questioning paint colors.

Beth announced that at last week's Board meeting the Board voted to donate \$1,000 to the legal effort to fight the variance requested (and approved by the BMZA) by the developer for the Harbor Hill expansion project.

ELECTION:

The new people running on the slate for Officer or Board Directors introduced themselves:

Michelle Lee (for Secretary): she has lived in Federal Hill 17 years and has been a block captain for over a decade; Michelle lives on Grindall St. and works as a government contractor

Emily Lamasa (for Treasurer): she has lived on Grindall St. for 5 years, loves the neighborhood and is a bankruptcy lawyer;

Christian Allen (for Director): he is a gas trader at Excelon;

Ted Millspaugh (for Director): he has lived in Baltimore all his life, but is new to neighborhood; his father was a planner for the City; Ted is a real estate lawyer, a career that takes him to many other cities and that allows him to bring ideas back that might apply here;

Jennifer Morgenstern (for Director): she has lived for one year at 301 Warren Ave.; she wants to represent renters and young professionals; she is a dietician;

Aderonke Omatade (for Director): she has lived in Federal Hill for 9 years; she is a psychiatrist; she became involved because of parking.

The remainder of the slate are returning Officers and/or Directors as follows:

Beth Whitmer (for President);

Walt Ettinger (for Vice-President);

Nancy Gordon (for Director);

Sharon Johnson (for Director);

Bob Merbler (for Director);

Deb Nelson (for Director);

Karen Nichols (for Director);

A motion was made and seconded to accept the slate as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

There will be a Flag Day ceremony at Federal Hill Park with a band, lowering and raising of the flag, fun for kids and local dignitaries speaking. It will begin at 6:30 p.m. on Flag Day, Wednesday, June 14.

Beth announced there will be a meeting with Major Ward at Bob Merbler's office and it will be open to anyone interested in attending, at 6:00 p.m., May 24th, 1011 Light St.

Ivo raising question of whether, in view of the recent trouble at Banditos, we want to ask the Liquor Board for closure of the establishment, either temporary or permanent and whether we want to challenge the expansion recently approved by the Board. Comment: Great concern over the events there, but lets get facts before taking a stand. Obviously, there will be push back from the owners, so we need facts to support whatever position we take.

Comment: At the Jan. 5th meeting the Liquor Board said they should work with FHNA, WHICH THEY NEVER DID. We fought against the expansion, but SBNA supported the application. At the Liquor Board hearing on the request to expand, a Commissioner asked why there was a discrepancy between the kitchen hours and bar hours. The applicant's response was reported to be that the money is in the liquor. Comment: Senator Ferguson said he was going to pursue action in this case. Comment: this establishment is notorious for allowing underage drinking. They should be shut down until they can prove they can control their operation. Comment: it isn't just about age, this isn't good for anyone. Comment: there are problems trying to report questionable operations, e.g. recently at CrossBar the bouncer reported 227 patrons were in the establishment when the MOU restricts customers to 155. Reporting on-line to the Liquor Board did not work, so then on a call to the Liquor Board and Deputy Executive Secretary Akras said the report was "hearsay" unless the Liquor Board Inspectors were there to count the customers. Commissioner Moore said she wants to know what is wrong with the system and referred questions to Mr. Akras. Comment: 911 doesn't work either. Comment: consider that it took years and about \$200,000 of pro bono legal time and individual donations to finally have one old liquor license declared dead. There is a lot of money in liquor and a strong lobby. That is what one faces with these issues. Motion made and seconded for FHNA to send a letter to the Liquor Board and the City, voicing FHNA's very serious concern about the incident and underage drinking and our expectation for accountability and remediation. Motion passed with 4 members abstaining.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40.

Submitted by
Betsy Homer
Secretary (outgoing!)
Edited with board
approval