

Federal Hill Neighborhood Association
General Membership Meeting
Tuesday, January 18, 2022
(via Zoom)

CALL TO ORDER:

Beth Whitmer called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
Approximately 63 participants were in attendance via Zoom

Approval of Minutes – The minutes of the November FHNA General Membership Meeting were approved.

ITEMS OF DISCUSSION:

Rash Field Update

Beth introduced Laurie Schwartz of South Baltimore Gateway Partnership (SBGP) and Kate Howard of the Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC). Laurie shared that the Rash Field café space has not yet been built out or occupied due to delays related to the pandemic. BDC has agreed to take the lead on leasing and outfitting the space. Kate Howard of BDC will be leading that effort. Kate shared that she showed the space to several local businesses in December. They hope to select the tenant and build out the space in the next few months and be open for the summer season.

BGE Gas Pipeline Project

The purpose of the project is to upgrade the gas infrastructure to provide more reliable delivery that is less susceptible to leaks and outages and upgrade the legacy pressure systems. The project includes upgrading the gas main in the street and connecting the upgraded main to the individual service lines on the street. The meters will remain inside the house and the risers and regulators will be installed outside the homes.

There has been an unexpected infrastructure challenge which may delay the project slightly. Beth shared that she has been working with CHAP, Bill Ferguson's office and other communities to address the issue of the regulators being installed outside the house. There is not a lot that we can do about it except, if your house is on the Federal Historic Register, you may be able to push back. It is a safety issue.

Eric Costello shared the purpose of the project and that it is now expected to start at the end of January. Cobblestone streets will be restored with cobblestone and sidewalks will be restored using the same material that was removed. Eric suggested that residents take pictures of their sidewalks, house fronts and streets prior to construction in case issues arise.

CHAP Update

Fran Landolf shared that there have been changes in the CHAP staff. If you want to make a change to your home, you need a permit from the City of Baltimore. If the change is visible to the public, you need authorization to proceed from CHAP and they will approve or disapprove.

The CHAP structure includes a CHAP Commissioner who runs the process, makes big project decisions and looks over appeals. The Commissioner has a staff reporting to him/her. The staff performs permit reviews. There are neighborhood volunteers, the Architectural Review Committee (ARC), who are liaisons between the neighborhoods and CHAP. The ARC helps residents navigate through the CHAP process. They help determine if the proposed changes to the home require authorization from CHAP to proceed. It is up to the resident to determine if they want to consult the ARC.

Fran introduced Tyriq Charleus who is new to the CHAP staff and oversees Federal Hill.

Committee Updates

- Sanitation Committee – Vincent Andrews reminded everyone that DPW will be replacing the recycling bins with new 65 gallon bins. Federal Hill is slated for delivery of the bins in February. If you want a smaller 35 gallon bin or do not want a bin at all, you must contact 311 in advance of the bin distribution. Vincent also reminded residents that recycling pickup days have changed due to so many DPW employees being out with COVID. Federal Hill is on the B cycle and recycling will be picked up bi-weekly next week. Do not put out your recycling this week.
- Public Safety Committee – Brad O’Brien shared that the Baltimore Police Department (BPD) has 350 to 400 employees out sick at this time due to COVID. Major Conaway has retired and Captain Pete Heron is standing in. Brad reminded residents of the camera program where you can fill out a survey if you have cameras outside your home so that Brad and the team know where there are cameras to obtain footage in the event a crime takes place. Brad can then obtain the videos and send them to the BPD. He and a team of people are considering putting a seminar together to share what to do in case you are a victim of a crime. The purpose is to educate everyone on the rights of victims. Beth shared that she is still working on a project to improve lighting on Battery Avenue by Federal Hill Park. She is meeting with the funder (SBGP) and Department of Transportation tomorrow to discuss lighting options.
- Parking Committee – John Bacci shared that parking stickers will be renewed this year. Beginning February 1, you can submit your application online and pick up the stickers/passes at the Lombard Street office. There is also an option to have the stickers/passes mailed to you. There will be no neighborhood event for parking pass pickup this year due to COVID.

God's Best Family- Beth introduced Turell Brooks who has started God's Best Family which is an outreach program for youth. They focus on team building and are launching an after school program. They are looking for volunteers for tutoring and teambuilding.

FHMS Update- Cathy Rosenbaum shared that she is working on applications for 2 safety grants. She is writing the grant to include string lights and security cameras in the business district. She is also submitting a SBGP grant to fund holiday events including Halloween, Christmas and possibly New Year's. She would like to obtain funding to update the FHMS business brochure. Cathy is also going to begin working on a membership program for residents and businesses and is looking for volunteers to help on the Membership Committee. If you are interested in joining the committee, reach out to Cathy.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Beth shared that the FHNA meetings will continue to be virtual in the near term. Beth also reminded residents to renew their FHNA memberships for the year.

NEW BUSINESS:

None

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:45 p.m.