

**FEDERAL HILL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
MINUTES OF GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
February 21, 2017**

CALL TO ORDER:

President Beth Whitmer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

Beth asked if there were any questions on the minutes from either the January Membership or the February Special meetings. It was moved and seconded that both sets of minutes be approved. Motion passed unanimously.

BLLC-DOT UPDATE BAR CRAWL POLICY:

Commissioner Greenfield of the Baltimore City Board of Liquor License Commissioners and Connor Scott of the Baltimore City Department of Transportation were introduced, along with others present including Tom Akras and Chief Inspector Tommy (?) of the BLLC.

Commissioner Greenfield explained that coordination among City agencies, according to the new Pub Crawl legislation, is the responsibility of the DOT and that all the agencies involved want to make the City more proactive in coordinating pub crawls.

Mr. Scott explained that DOT plans to introduce a requirement for any organizer of a pub crawl to reach out to the community and that the City would be copied on any communication between the organizer and a community.

Many questions were raised and opinions expressed:

- This is unlikely to solve the problem
- Concerned about DOT being the coordinator
- Concerned about the promoter be the communication center
- Why can't neighborhoods be part of deciding how many tickets should be sold?
- Why can't applications be seen by the public?
- If the upcoming St. Patrick's day crawl ends at 9:00, what happens then--do all the security people go home?

Commissioner Greenfield commented that "we do need to focus on this--push back against the promoter". Scott replied that if more security is needed, the promoter is held responsible for that cost. He introduced the DOT representative for Federal Hill, Grishae Blackette.

More questions and comments:

- There are problems with races too--street closures prevent people from being able to get to work
- DOT people should deal with these issues, not the promoters (Commissioner Greenfield)
- There are so many people at the end of these crawls that the police close the streets--the surrounding streets as well as the main street, and that is a problem
- It is against a promoter's interest to reach out to us; they don't want to hear from us
- Beth Whitmer: What are our next steps? Would you come back for an update?
- Should there be a special meeting about this?

- We've been living with this for 10 years!
- How about liquor inspectors? Answer from Commissioner Greenfield, "Inspectors will work until 2:00 a.m." We should create a small task force to work on this.
- Mr. Scott: "We're on board; we will help".

HARBOR HILL EXPANSION UPDATE:

Fran Landolf, Chair of the Preservation/Development Committee explained there will be a hearing February 28. We sent a letter expressing objection to the request for a variance from the rear setback requirement and will also testify. He requested everyone who is interested, especially those who are directly affected to show up and speak up!

Question: Why has CHAP taken so long? Beth replied that it has been moving, that it goes next to City Council, maybe in March.

Question: What influence might CHAP have? Answer: CHAP can't comment because we are not a CHAP District yet.

Question: Why doesn't the Limited Development Area (LDA) apply? All the property descriptions are 3.22 acres--why are the developers leaving that out? (No answer to this.)

Fran explained we have developed our case based on the request for variance. We forwarded questions to the developer.

Comment: The President of Federal Park Association said they didn't answer those questions--they answered on a question that wasn't even asked! Fran suggested raising those questions at the hearing. The Federal Hill Park representative stated the hearing will look only at the variance.

Question: What other forums are there?

Fran answered, there is the Urban Design and Architectural Review Panel (UDARP) process, but Fran said he contacted a zoning person who said we should show up and speak at the zoning hearing--even though they may ask you to focus on the variance, it helps to show them that the neighborhood is fired up.

Comment: the developer has to prove that this is in the public interest; when the zoning board sees the community show up, they listen. The variance is not the only issue; there are other hurdles that haven't been addressed.

Fran noted the UDARP did make comments that the developer is to address and there will be another UDARP hearing. Any comments must be sent in advance, in writing.

Question: Who is going to testify at the zoning hearing? Leonard (last name?) in the morning. We need an alternate for the afternoon.

Comment: Any comments should be sent to David Tanner.

Question: Is there a flyer that could go out? Becky Quallich offers to spread a flyer for the hearing.

Question: We have heard that a traffic study is not needed.

Comment: There is the issue of access and exit from Riverside.

Answers: We are in a "traffic mitigation zone" which allows any problems created by a development to be mitigated. A traffic study was done by DOT previously and they found nothing.

Comment: That was before South Baltimore became a "mitigation zone".

Comment: Traffic flow is constricted by narrow streets.

Due to additional units being proposed the final ratio of parking spaces will be 1.2 vs. 1.4 (**Note: is this right?**)

Fran noted that the transition period during construction will be an issue. The developer proposes valet parking Harbor Hill resident (where?) and will remove 15 spaces on Riverside.

Comment: Could relief be offered by extending the time for parking on Covington for Federal Hill residents?

Comment: There is always a deficit of parking and this will just make it worse.

Beth thanks the Committee for working very, very hard on this issue. She and Fran will try hard to get the issue on the zoning docket early.

BYLAWS REVIEW:

Beth explained that Attorney Kelly Pfeiffer, of the Community Law Center, worked with a subcommittee of volunteers to develop a draft of revised bylaws. Kelly explained that her goal was to develop a document that anyone can understand. She went through the handout that shows elements of the old bylaws compared to the proposed draft:

- Roberts Rules was deleted because it is far too complicated for a small non-profit run by volunteers.
- Election of officers by the Board rather than the membership is proposed because it allows the Board members (elected by the membership) to sort out among themselves who has the time to commit and the skills required for each office.
- Voting--having a requirement to be a member for 30 days before being able to vote turns people.

Comment: We need treasurers reports; I haven't seen once since October. Answer: Beth, I apologize, we do try to provide those. Please send in comments so changes can be made prior to the March meeting when we vote.

- Quorum: 10% because we often have very low turnout.

- Tenure: Two years is proposed. The tenure issue has two sides--keep talent but get new people

Comment: This is a pro-board, board empowering proposal; removal of board members should require a membership vote; trying to disembowel the membership.

Answer from Kelly: this does give the board the ability to run the organization

Moved and seconded: that the organization not change the bylaws until after the next election.

Discussion: removing term limits is a bad idea, as is having the board be able to remove a board member without membership approval. Is there a staggered board? How will your motion be different from the process now? Answer: voting in March will make the changes in force now. This process started last September.

Vote: in favor-3
opposed-17
abstain-6

Motion fails.

- Return to comparison: last item is that the boundaries are now described as including both sides of the boundary streets. This is consistent with what surrounding communities have done.

Kelly thanks everyone.

NEW BUSINESS:

Jessica encouraged everyone to come and support the upcoming DigiBall which raises money for scholarships for Digital High students. The date is March 24 and she will have a flyer at the next meeting. (JESSICA, NOTE!)

Paul Quinn commented on items for future work: trash; trees; crime (we need more people on the ground). Beth noted that those have all been hotspots and added parking.

Josie Schwartzstein, from Harbor Hill noted that she attends meeting at the Southern District the third Thursday of every month and her understanding is that there are just not enough officers to cover the area adequately; there has to be more reliance on citizens. Question: what can we do? Answer: We need more officers assigned, and on the street, not in their cars.

Follow-up comment about Digital High: Digital has about 10% immigrant and refugee students and that group is 50% of the top achievers at the school.

Beth noted that there is to be a Gateway Partnership meeting on February 28 at MedStar Harbor Hospital at 6:00 p.m.

Comment on safety: Guilford has a security car roaming around; maybe we should explore something similar.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Submitted by:
Betsy Homer
Secretary