

## NORTHVILLE ESTATES CIVIC ASSOCIATION (NECA)

### Minutes of Annual Meeting -- March 24, 2016

#### In Attendance

Dan & Lisa Ondrus, Mike & Judy DeFrancesco, Sally & Ed Flayer, Chuck & Andrea Murdock, Bob Wiedmaier, Walter Davison, Rusty & Bo Sprauer, Ken Roth, Amy Kostrzewa, Chris & Frank Haas, Joe & Pat Sedgewick, Randy Gregory, Marilyn Price

**Meeting started** at 7:02 PM.

#### Volunteer Recognition (attachment included with minutes)

- Using a handout sheet, Chuck thanked all the volunteers who helped out last year – we had a total of 37 volunteers, with many doing multiple jobs. This is an all-volunteer organization, and it takes concerned and interested people to make things happen. Thanks to all.

#### 2015 – Year In Review (attachment included with minutes)

Chuck summarized the highlights of last year:

- Dues paying membership is up again year-over-year to 109 households (up by 50% in two years).
- Our e-mail distribution list is up to 115 households.
- The Welcoming Committee has visited 9 new homeowners in the past year.
- Sub-wide garage sale traffic was better than the prior year, with 8-10 homes participating.
- Based on a resident survey, we agreed to a new front entrance sign, and a design concept. But, we have struggled to get contractors involved, and to give us proposals/quotes.
- Annual picnic was a huge success again.
- Based on a resident survey, we decided against a streetlamp in the front entrance island.
- DTE pole replacements got off to a very rough start, but, the process has been improved greatly.
- Community Security Watch -- we've issued a number e-mails alerts to each other, which is a start.
- We kept up with sub business – landscaping, holiday decorations, sprinkler maintenance, etc.

#### Financial Report (attachment included with minutes)

- Andrea reported our revenues and expenses for the 2015 calendar year. Revenue was up slightly from last year, due to increased membership participation. Expenses were up about \$1000, as we applied new mulch to the front entrance island, bought a new sandwich-board sign, and made improvements to a commons area. Total available funds are approximately \$17,500 at year-end.
- Chuck summarized his view of what the 2016 CY budget might look – all line items are about the same, except the following:
  - 1) Another slight increase in revenue (goal is to increase membership to 115 for the year)
  - 2) Landscaping expenses will be about the same as 2015, maybe up a bit
  - 3) Do more to improve the commons areas
  - 4) Spend a little more on the garage sale to further increase traffic
  - 5) Do one or two more social events – set aside \$500
  - 6) Really make progress on a new sign for the front entrance – set aside \$15,000
- If the new sign happens, end of year funds could potentially decrease to about \$3,000. This is consistent with the plan, as we've been building funds for this purpose for a number of years.
- Dues for the 2016 calendar year will be due in April. A note will be mailed to all residents by the end of March with the dues renewal form – dues will remain at \$50 – which is unchanged for many years.

### **Landscaping of Front Entrance Island**

- We will do a Clean-Up Day in the next few weeks, as weather permits. Then, we'll have a Planting Day, as we did last year in mid-May. We will plant annuals with volunteer help. We decided to repeat the fuchsia and orange flower colors, which worked well last year. But, as the deer really like geraniums, we will switch to marigolds. As we put down mulch last summer, we don't think we'll need a repeat this year. We will have the trees and bushes trimmed professionally in the fall. Andrea will take the lead to organize.

### **Sign at the Front Entrance Island**

- Last year we contacted five contractors. The first quote was around \$20,000, which the Board felt was way too high, and we needed other proposals. After the other four showed no response, our enthusiasm dried up. The present sign continues to deteriorate with the wood structure starting to soften -- we need to get this project back on track, and we're looking for volunteers to help get it going again. Walter and Judy have volunteered, but we need more help.
- There was a suggestion to look into the Village workshop, to see what their capabilities are, and that we might have the talent in the sub to at least partially construct a sign ourselves to save money.
- Also, a suggestion to contact Allen Monument for a proposal.
- Dan said the light fixture in front of the sign is also deteriorating. He will inspect it, and if necessary purchase and install a new fixture.

### **New-Neighbor Welcoming Committee**

- As mentioned earlier, the Welcoming Committee greeted 9 new homeowners last year – thanks to Vicki and Patricia. There are 6 known homes for sale right now. We've collected welcoming packets from City Hall and the Chamber of Commerce as part of the welcoming package.
- There was a suggestion that new homeowners be "announced" to everyone through an NECA e-mail – we'll let the Welcoming Committee talk to each homeowner about this, and gain their permission.

### **Condition of Roads**

- As we know, Elmsmere was supposed to be repaved last summer, but was delayed, as construction quotes came back too high. For this year, the City's plan is to complete the three roads delayed from last year, plus two new roads originally scheduled for this year. Roadwork this year includes: Elmsmere, Rayson, Horton, Walnut and S. Wing streets. Wing and Walnut reconstruction includes water main replacement, which is very expensive – some Northville water supply lines are over 70 years old. The City believes that doing all five roads together may provide some economy of scale, and reduce costs.
- There was lots of discussion about the road improvement millage, which did not pass last August. There are probably many reasons it failed, but Ken believes a key reason was it wasn't communicated well to the voting public. As Mayor, Ken will ensure a lot of public input into the plans for our roads, and then very robust communications with residents.
- There was a concern expressed that Northville Estates does not get enough attention of City Hall, and our roads are last in the plans -- we are too far away, too quiet, etc. Having Ken and Marilyn on City Council should help.

### **Condition of Commons Areas**

- Chuck expressed concerns again that our commons areas could use some help. Surrounding neighbors have been maintaining these areas by themselves. But, garbage trucks and snowplows trying to navigate the turnarounds are ruining the grass and making a further mess of the asphalt.
- Last year, we got a quote from a landscaper for summer maintenance of our five turnarounds – it turned out pretty expensive. Maybe we should look at this again.
- We also tried to find a "champion" for each turnaround, to have the areas maintained by the champion's landscaper, and we'd pay the difference -- but that didn't work out either.

- We need to come up with a creative solution, and help our neighbors with on-going maintenance. If you live near a turnaround, please get with your neighbors, and decide what you'd like to see done, and let Chuck know.
- We still have a 50/50 matching grant (up to \$500) if neighbors want to get together and purchase and plant bushes or make other improvements to commons areas. We had one project last year.

### **Lanthorn Easement**

- We continue to have a problem with parents picking up their kids from Moraine school, pulling off the road into the grass, and completely destroying our neighbor's private property. Chuck has asked the City if they would join us to provide a solution – perhaps a gravel apron of 3 or 4 feet, and then some backfill of dirt and some new grass.

### **Sub-Wide Garage Sale**

- Chuck will ask the homeowners who led the prior two sales if they would be willing to lead it again. Plus, at the meeting, Bob agreed to help lead the sale. If you'd like to co-lead a garage sale, please let Chuck know.

### **Annual Picnic**

- As mentioned earlier, the picnic was a great success for the second year. We should plan to repeat the same format – why mess with success.

### **Saturday Euchre Nights**

- Monthly Euchre runs from October to June.
- There was a suggestion that in June the Euchre group hold a season ending celebration at a local restaurant. The entire sub would be invited to join the euchre players, and get ready for the next season.

### **New Social Events**

- Last year, we tried to start a new social event – we tried to organize a hayride, December sleigh ride with Santa, Secret Santa, and a road rally – they just didn't work out. We need some fresh ideas.
- There was a suggestion for a "Northville Downs" or "Genitti's" event – they would be good local venues that we could support. We will look into it for the fall.
- If you have any more ideas, please let Chuck know.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **DTE Utility Pole Replacement and Tree Pruning**

- Pole replacements and tree trimming started out very badly last summer. Ken talked about the improved process -- DTE is to communicate with all homeowners. DTE may trim a tree after reasonable attempts have been made to talk to the homeowner, but, no tree is to be removed without express written permission.
- After new poles are in place, it may take a long time for old poles to be removed, it's a complicated process of re-stringing the ATT, Comcast, WOW lines to the new poles, with multiple contractors for each step.

### **Neighborhood Security**

- There was a question: if we see something suspicious, who do we call? Call the police on the non-emergency number 248 349-1234.
- Ken mentioned that there should be more police paroling our neighborhood in recent months. And, many attendees agreed they have seen many more patrol cars. Chuck will send a thankyou note to Police Chief Carlson.

- There was a mention of a dangerous situation when traffic is backed up from the Beck road intersection all the way in front of our entrance. People will go barreling by in the center turn lane all the way down to the intersection. Chuck will also mention that to Chief Carlson.

### **Homeowner Directory**

- There was a suggestion to create and distribute by e-mail a homeowner directory. Lots of discussion about whether phone numbers and/or e-mails should be included. Finally agreed that the first issue would include only names and addresses, and at that time homeowners would be able to opt out of having phone numbers added in the second issue.

### **Election of Board Members**

- At the meeting, Amy and Bob agreed to serve as Board members. The slate consisting of the following members passed unanimously:

Chuck Murdock	Andrea Murdock	Dan Ondrus	Sally Flayer
Walter Davison	Amy Kostrzewa	Bob Wiedmaier	

- The Board will confirm its Officers at its first regular meeting of the year.

## **Q&A WITH KEN ROTH (MAYOR) AND MARILYN PRICE (COUNCILWOMAN)**

### **City Business**

- Ken talked about a few key things which the City is dealing with right now. He stressed that City Council will welcome public input and comment into the discussion and decision making process.
  - There's a potential project for the old Foundry Flask property which is across the street from the Village Workshop and Tipping Point Theater. A proposal for a senior living and memory care facility has been presented to the Planning Commission. This type facility does not fit the vision of the Strategic Plan, as that area is supposed to be an "arts and innovation" center, and help bring people downtown. However, this is a very messy piece of property, with huge environmental cleanup cost, a crumbling building, and a large sanitation sewer running right through the property, and options for real development opportunities may be very limited.
  - We need to decide what to do with the Old Village School on Main Street. It's been empty for 4-5 years, and it can't just sit there.
  - A couple of developers are trying to buy Northville Downs to build a mixed-use development, including single family homes, multi-unit homes, and first-floor business. Whatever happens, it will fundamentally change the picture of downtown Northville.
  - Ken talked a bit about doing business, as a small business, in downtown Northville – the struggles these small business owners constantly face.
  - The next ten-year cycle of the Downtown Strategic Plan is up, so it will get a complete update. A Steering Committee is being formed to help guide that process.

### **Roads and Elmsmere Reconstruction**

- Lots more discussion about the condition of the City's roads, and what's being done, with most discussion continuing about Elmsmere road. At the west end of Elmsmere, at the turnaround, a large section of road has sunken -- when it rains, a very large pool of water forms.
- More discussion about the failed roads millage of last year, and the impact on the future repairs.
- Ken wants the road plan to be more than an engineering assessment of need. He wants to put priority on roads with "high community impact" – high traffic, high visibility, high image, etc.
- The Elmsmere rebuild was thrifted to reduce cost – the original plan probably won't be re-instated.
- I-275 construction/closures will start soon. The Project Manager told Ken that the closure will not have a big impact on Beck road traffic – who are they trying to kid.

**Meeting Adjourned at 8:40 PM.**