

Hudson/Park Neighborhood Association
Minutes of December 15, 2010 Meeting 7PM
Held at: Israel AME Church – 381 Hamilton Street, Albany, New York

Officers

President: Ellen Picotte (elected 12/15/10)

Vice President: Elizabeth Griffin (elected 12/15/10)

Treasurer: Richard Brash

Secretary: Sherron Winkler (elected 12/15/10)

Members Present: Ellen Picotte, Rich Brash, Rich Nagengast, PK Miller, Richard Conti, Stephanie Richardson, Michael Cox - AFD, Alan Lanier-AFD, Kenneth Sesock – APD, Matt Montesano - APD, Brad Glass, Alex Lord, Mac Mowbray, Chris Higgins, Rich Berkley, Danny Nerenberg, Kip Christie, Laura Castelli, Linda Ruff , Claude Graener, Doug Ponisi, Jo Anne Dolan, Kathy Bilos, Sherron Winkler, Dan Malsan

Introductions/Announcements:

Ellen Picotte and Mac Mowbray attended the public hearing Leif Engstrom (City Auditor) held last week and based on suggestions from discussion and the list serve presented him a with a list of suggestions for audits and investigation.

Secretary's Report – Ellen Picotte distributed the minutes from the November 17, 2010 meeting. Motion to accept by Stephanie Richardson, seconded by Kathy Bilos, all in favor, accepted.

Election Committee update: The slate of officers for 2011 was introduced by Mac Mowbray and all officers were approved (see above for list).

Speaker: Scott Davidson re: 330 Madison Avenue Variance Application

- Ellen Picotte handed out a copy of an e-mail exchange (between she and Scott Davidson) with specific questions about the operation of the potential business.
- Gave history of building usage (currently being used as a storage facility for antiques by owner) and discussed opening an upscale coffee shop/antique store (small pieces only due to size of building).
- Discussed the type of operation it will be: upscale coffee/tea/non-alcoholic beverages and baked goods. Mainly take out business with very limited seating.
- Concerns were discussed: double parking issue, trash pick up and if the neighborhood can sustain another coffee shop.
- The variance application is currently pending in front of the BZA. He will stay in contact with Richard Berkley.

Save the Date: the HPNA Winter Brunch will be held on Sunday, January 30, 2011 location to be determined. Per Richard Conti the Senior Services Center will be not be an option as they will be in the process of vacating the space.

Albany Police Department Report:

Michael R. Tremblay, Lieutenant, Neighborhood Engagement Unit

- Gave an update on the neighborhood police initiative. There should be officers walking the neighborhood in the first or second week of January. They are running a couple weeks behind due to a union/political issue.

Matt Montesano:

- There have been multiple break-ins in November occurring on Spring Street, upper State Street, Park Avenue and Madison Avenue. There was also an attack/rape on Dove Street
- There have been multiple arrests for burglary city-wide. In addition, the person responsible for the attack/rape was arrested. A discussion ensued regarding violent offenders and follow-up by the police or NYS Department of Corrections (DOC). Lieutenant Michael Tremblay offered to follow-up with DOC and perhaps have a representative from DOC attend a future neighborhood meeting to discuss procedures.
- Update on PAL toy drive. They have given out 2,400 toys to children who would not have had them otherwise. The Holiday Lights have been very successful including the walk through nights (both the toy drive and the humane society benefit).

- The City has updated their neighborhood watch signs. If the neighborhood is interested in starting one let him know.

HPNA Website Update – Stephanie Richardson along with Richard Berkley, will be working on creating a new website to make it a more useful/informational tool for neighborhood residents.

Emergency Services Report:

Deputy Chief Michael J. Cox announced that the entrance exam for the Albany Fire Department is being given on March 5, 2011. They are looking for both men and women to join – there is no maximum age this time. Applications for the test are due January 26, 2011 and can be picked up at any local Fire Station, City Hall and on the City of Albany’s website.

Update from Alvin Lanier:

- 419 Madison (which is actually 421 Madison on tax maps) - was cited for overgrowth
- 300 & 302 Lark Street - 300 has been cited
- 402 Madison Avenue – building is in danger of collapsing. The AFD is aware of it and is trying to work with the owner of the property.
- 384 Hamilton Street – the repair of the large hole in the sidewalk has now been turned over to the Department of General Services.
- Discussion of parked cars in vacant lots on Jefferson and Elm Streets. Once the exact addresses are obtained the information can be sent to Building and Codes to investigate.

City of Albany Common Council Report – Honorable Richard Conti

- Permit parking task force has been meeting every other week – a draft proposal will be shared with the public for review shortly.
- City budget was passed – it was a difficult budget and includes a 2% increase in the tax levy (total is 7 ½ % but 5 ½ % is due to the uniform tax rate increase). There will be an impact on future budgets due to non-reoccurring revenue.
- Funding for Public Bath #2 was vetoed by Mayor Jennings. There will be a override vote on Monday, December 20 by the Common Council. It’s unclear if there are enough votes to override the veto.
- Discussion about raising chickens in the city of Albany. There is a current ordinance that prevents livestock in the city limits. They are currently discussing a new law that would allow hens under certain conditions. More discussion is needed.
- Census numbers will be coming out within the next couple of months. The results may impact the number of Council Members, County Legislators as well as polling locations.

Albany County Legislative Report – Honorable Chris Higgins

- The County had adopted the 2011 budget. Again, it was a difficult budget. An early retirement incentive was offered, 33 people were laid off, an agreement was made on the Nursing Home and there will be a 5% property tax levy.
- Discussion on city owned recreation facilities. Although the Plaza ice skating rink is closed, there is a rink near the airport that offers ice skating to Albany residents as well as Swineburne Skating Rink.

Treasurers’ Report – Rich Brash: Motion to Accept, passed

Many thanks to Dan Malsan for all the great work he did serving as Secretary for the HPNA.

Meeting Adjourned – holiday party to follow at the Hollywood Café.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sherron Winkler, Secretary