

Minutes of HJWA meeting
February 17th 2011
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President Charles Finley called the meeting to order at 6:17 pm. There were 17 members present.

The President informed that there was a board meeting held on Tuesday February 8th. He announced that new members of the Board were appointed.

The President proceeded to introduce the visitors and special guests. He invited each person to introduce him or herself. Upon self-introduction, new board members identified themselves and what position they held.

The President identified the first topic on the agenda for discussion. He called on the officer in charge of the Jackson Ward Area to make his presentation.

Lieutenant Hood started out by passing out handouts and explaining the crime statistics and situation in the neighborhood. He used an example of a recent arrest to show the police's vigilance in the neighborhood and to continue to promote the partnership between the community and the police. He answered questions about the concerns of residents. The main issue that came out of his presentation was the emphasis on the increase in quality of life crimes in the neighborhood. He was very adamant in warning the attendees to be alert and not create an environment for crimes. The issue of the Abner Clay Park was discussed in depth. Suggestions were offered as solutions to the current problems of misuse of the park grounds. He agreed to look into getting the flood lights lit at the park as a deterrent to crime. He wrapped up by cautioning residents to always be on guard and reminding them of their responsibility. His presentation lasted for approximately thirty minutes.

The Second item on the agenda was to be a presentation by councilman Charles Samuels. The President noted that Mr Samuels was not present. He moved on to the next item on the agenda.

VCU Police

There was a brief report by the representative from VCU Police. He explained that they work in partnership with the city police. He outlined steps they are taking to address the issues presented by VCU students throughout the neighborhood. He explained that some things are outside of their jurisdiction so they still have to call on the city whenever they receive a report about students.

MPACT

The president focused attention on the small fliers that he had left on each table. He discussed the mayor's MPACT program. He summarized the intent of the program. He promoted the positive aspects of it. He encouraged members to visit the City's website and learn more about the mission and objective of the program.

Leighton Powell on Abner Clay Park

The floor was handed over to Leighton Powell to give an update on the plans for the improvement of Abner Clay Park. Leighton explained that there was not much progress since the last meeting. She explained that there were some stumbling blocks faced in trying to get the project from the initial level. John Meara commented that the plans were "pretty but generic." He offered some of the challenges one would face in trying to price the materials and job based on the current drawings available. He informed there can be a wide range of pricing based on what is there to work with. Discussions continued on specific targets of the park. There was comparison to the Monroe Park Project. There was no definite agreement reached on exactly what the park would be used for. The issue of a dog park appeared as if it could possibly be the most contentious. Leighton concluded that there will be a survey coming out to get residents' input on the final plan for the park. Members were reminded that the current drawings are available on the HJWA website and that they are free to view them.

RESTRICTED PARKING

John, one of the new board members, informed members that he has assumed the responsibility of resurrecting the issue of getting restricted parking in the neighborhood. A member immediately expressed her frustration over the on-going nature of this process. It was agreed that this cause had been started by two previous members and had eventually been abandoned by them. John expressed his commitment to see this assignment through to fruition. He informed that for starters, he will be having meetings with the city this week to get up to speed on how far the mission is and what needs to be done to move it to the next phase. He explained that the previous petitions are over a year old so the process has to start over. He appealed to members to volunteer to become "block captains" in order to manage the collecting of petitions on their blocks. He reiterated about the importance of getting all blocks to participate because of the possible chaotic situation that would arise from missing some blocks in between. He invited people to sign up on the map of the neighborhood he had available, the area where they choose to become block captains. He also educated about some of the challenges of restricted parking. He ended by promising to have more information about the process after the meetings with the city.

DUES

Vicki stood up briefly to announce that she was going to the bank the next day. She invited anyone who wanted to pay dues to go ahead and do so.

MAGGIE WALKER HERITAGE DAY

The last presentation of the meeting was by the ranger from the Maggie Walker Historic Museum. She announced that Maggie Walker Heritage Day is scheduled for April 16th of this year. She announced that she is aware that that is the same day that the semi-annual HJWA clean-up day is scheduled. She announced that since it is held from 11a – 3 pm in the afternoon it should not affect the clean up and the attendance of the clean-up day participants. She invited all to attend. She promised attendees will have a good time. The president endorsed her statement.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:23 pm.