

Merion Village Association

Meeting Minutes: February 1, 2017



Description: Monthly Association Meeting

Open: 7:10 PM **Adjourn:** 8:25 PM

Location: 225 E Gates St, Columbus, OH 43206

Attendance: 29 **Members:** 22

Board Members in Attendance:

- **President:** Allison Willford (AWillford@MerionVillage.org)
- **Vice President:** Jessica Norman (JNorman@MerionVillage.org)
- **Treasurer:** Ibbby Fisher (IFisher@MerionVillage.org)
- **Secretary:** Phil Birnie (PBirnie@MerionVillage.org)
- **Member at Large:** Melanie McClure (MMcClure@MerionVillage.org)

New Meeting Location

IMPORTANT NOTE: The March and subsequent meetings for both the MV Block Watch and Association Meeting will be at the Merion Village Info Center, located at 1330 S 4th Street. (<https://goo.gl/maps/8hCB4xhjyXP2>)

The meeting times for the Block Watch and MVA Meeting will remain the same (6:30 and 7:15, respectively).

Information on MVA Board Vacancy Appointments (Presented by Allison Willford)

A resident has raised concern about how the Treasurer and Secretary appointments were filled during the transition of the 2016 MVA Board to the 2017 MVA Board. As a result, an investigation has been launched to examine the process and prevent any further confusion in the future.

Findings of the mediation and legal investigation will be presented at the next meeting (March 1, 2017).

Tony Roell, former president of the Merion Village Association read the following statement:

“At the request of an MVA member, the 2016 Board Members are investigating the process by which the positions vacated by the secretary and treasurer were filled. We plan to consult legal counsel to ensure we understand the MVA constitution and the rules that govern this process. Additionally, we will be working with a mediator from the city of Columbus Departments of Neighborhoods as an impartial third party. Given that this is an ongoing process we are not able to take questions or discuss further at this time. We plan to have this completed as soon as possible and will present the findings at the next MVA meeting or special meeting if available sooner.”

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Pocket Park Lease (Presented by Allison Willford)

The Merion Village Association has helped maintain a small pocket park at the corner of Morrill Ave. and Bruck St. for the past several years. The owners of the house adjacent to the property have indicated that they are no longer interested in holding the lease. As such, the Merion Village Association has indicated that they are interested in acquiring the lease to the property.

Because the property is on the northern edge of Hungarian Village, Allison has reached out to the Hungarian Village Association to see if they would be interested in partnering with us to maintain the park.

COTA Special Meeting. (Presented by Jessica Norman)

COTA will be significantly altering their route structure on May 1, 2017. Given the significant impact it will have to Merion Village, Jessica Norman contacted COTA and they met with concerned residents on February 7, 2017. Highlights from this meeting will be available at <http://www.merionvillage.org/meetings.html>

This meeting was well-attended and COTA responded to a number of resident concerns.

Full details regarding the Transit System Redesign (TSR) are available on COTA's website, including updated system maps, rationale for the changes and how to map your existing route with the new design.

<http://www.cota.com/Projects/TSR.aspx>

MVA Treasurer Report (Presented by Ibbby Fisher)

Ibbby reviewed finances listed on the treasurers report. Memberships can be renewed without an interruption of voting rights through February 28, 2017.

A concerned resident felt that given the solid financials of the organization, more money should be utilized for causes within the neighborhood. The Board responded that they will examine how funds are currently utilized and are open to ideas on uses of funds.

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United Way Grant (Presented by Jessica Norman)

Jessica Norman, Vice President of the Merion Village Association, recently submitted a grant for \$7,300 entitled, "The Merion Village Presence Development Project." The overall aims of this grant are to:

- Improve organizational infrastructure (website, online member utilities, membership tracking, internet service) of the MVA
- Increase resident understanding of the services that the Merion Village Association provides (events, programs, etc..)
- Highlight points of pride of Merion Village (and the existence of Merion Village itself!). Part of this grant will involve constructing a mural in the neighborhood at a yet-to-be-determined location.

The Merion Village association will provide \$6,900 in matching funds for a total initiative cost of \$13,700. We will find out if we were awarded the grant in mid-April 2017.

In the past, the Merion Village Association has applied for two smaller grants rather than one large grant. A few residents had questions about the likelihood of getting awarded one grant vs. two smaller grants (for which we have been successful in the past). The rationale for one grant was that this grant encompasses a common theme and will allow us to tackle several smaller projects and initiatives under the umbrella of a single grant. In addition, the two grants were typically for much smaller amounts (~\$2,500).

Committee Reports

Beautification and Zoning (Tony Roell)

No variances or approvals were submitted during January 2017.

Scott questioned the status of the Moler and City Park development. Tony noted that an investor abandoned the project at last minute and they are trying to get another investor. In the meantime, the property is again for sale.

Business Development (Eric and Luke)

The Business Development Committee has started their membership drive and focussing on the renewal of business memberships. **A meeting is planned for February 27; please contact Luke at businessdevelopment@merionvillage.org** if you are interested in helping or joining the committee.

In addition, a successful business membership drive involves reaching as many businesses as possible. If you have contact information (e.g. names, phone, email etc.) of business owners within Merion Village, please forward those to the aforementioned email address.

Education (Anne)

Two school fairs took place this month (February 8th for Elementary School, February 9th for Middle School) for those looking at school options. You can get specific information at www.ccsouh.us

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Block Watch (Mary Cannon)

Four assaults have occurred in Schumacher, German Village and near Children's Hospital. In all cases the victims were female and attempted robbery. During the block watch meeting tactics for best protecting yourself in these situations, including:

- Throw your belongings (e.g. phone, wallet, etc..) behind the perpetrator and run in the opposite direction.
- Never get in the car with someone else. Instead, make noise, scream, kick — do whatever possible to not get in the vehicle. Your likelihood of survival drops by 50%.
- Scream and make as much noise as possible. Yell "Fire."

Please always report crimes (even minor ones) online or by calling 614-645-4545.

Social and Membership (Melanie McClure)

The social committee will have a meeting in February - they are currently working on the "Buy Local" Tags and resident "Welcome Bags." At this point, printing costs and manpower to deliver "Welcome Bags" are the biggest barriers to success of this program. The committee is currently considering a number of options to help with printing including:

- Utilizing Children's Hospital (Allison has an email out to Carla)
- Utilizing MVA funds
- Applying for a grant to help with these costs

South Side Area Commission (Jessica C, Erin S., Bob L.)

The South Side Area Commission approved the parking variance at 1507 S High St (See January minutes for details).

In addition, a variance was requested and approved for an asphalt crushing and recycling plant near Alum Creek on Deshler Avenue. The plant will utilize green technologies to recycle asphalt thereby diverting waste from landfills.

As it pertains to the Parsons Ave. Redevelopment Project: the Commission has recommended additional crosswalk signage (mix of pedestrian activated lights and painted walks). Discussions continue with the City of Columbus; construction is planned to start in April 2017.

Other Concerns and Discussion

- Several residents raised concern regarding the COTA TSR (Transport Service Redesign); there was a meeting on February 7, 2017. In addition, the South Side Area Commission is working on consolidating concerns regarding the COTA changes.
- Planning for the Garden Tour and the Arts Festival Fundraiser are underway. There will likely be a call for volunteers at upcoming meetings.

Next Monthly Association Meeting; Wednesday, March 1, 2017 at the MVA Info Center (1330 S 4th St) beginning at 7:15 PM; the Block Watch meeting is at 6:30 PM