

Merion Village Association

MEETING MINUTES

April 2, 2014

DESCRIPTION: Monthly Association Meeting

LOCATION: 1330 S. Fourth Street, Columbus, OH 43206

MEETING DURATION: 7:00 PM – 8:35 PM

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

- PRESIDENT: Tony Roell (TRoell@MerionVillage.org)
- VICE PRESIDENT: Anne Stewart (ASTewart@MerionVillage.org)
- TREASURER: Michele Audetat (MAudetat@MerionVillage.org)
- SECRETARY: Jessica Norman (JNorman@MerionVillage.org)
- MEMBER-AT-LARGE: Tracey Studer (TStuder@MerionVillage.org)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

- NONE

TOTAL MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: 18

TOTAL NON-MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: 7

GUESTS: Cutis Davis (*Vice-Chair, Business-At-Large, Columbus South Side Area Commission*), Malcom Cochran (*American Installation Artist*), Chris Macisco (*MVA Representative, Southside Area Commission*)

TOPIC: Introductions

DURATION: 3 Minutes

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION: Introductions of board members and welcome to the new Secretary, Jessica Norman. Introductions of all members, non-members and guests in attendance.

TOPIC: Southside Area Commission (Presentation by Curtis Davis)

DURATION: 40 Minutes

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION: Curtis Davis is the Vice-Chair and Business-At-Large Member with the Columbus Southside Area Commission. He and his team are responsible for reviewing and addressing zoning, variance and demolition requests. Upon receiving these requests, Curtis personally visits and investigates the properties in question. Curtis spoke to the association as to how the demolition process has been significantly streamlined over the course of last year. The process used to be convoluted and involved a large group of individuals. Now, Curtis receives notification of a demolition request and notifies the associated civic group(s) via a 10 business day notification. Last week, he received a request for the demolition of a duplex property on S. High St. across from the White Castle. Tony Roell received this notification and upon review, contacted Curtis asking him to review the property and determine why it would be demolished. Curtis learned that the owner of the property refused to make repairs and a Judge therefore ordered the owner to demolish. Curtis was not able to find any evidence that the owner had attempted to sell the property and requested 30 to 45 days to allow any interested parties an opportunity to acquire the building, prior to demolition. The lot is zoned for commercial and residential purposes.

The processes for variance requests have also been updated, and now include public site hearings where the requestors are able to show the civic groups and interested parties exactly what they want to change. Requests may include changes to zoning, line of sight, reduction in green-space, etc. The site hearings promote informed opinions and avoid blind decisions. The site hearings occur on the second Saturday of every month beginning at 10:00 AM at Barack Recreation Center (580 E. Woodrow Ave., Columbus, OH). Three properties currently up for review include a sausage factory off Lockbourne Rd. requesting a variance to add on to the existing structure and use the remaining area as green-space. The request would convert the property from residential to manufacturing. The second is a car lot in Innis Gardens that would like to update their zoning from commercial to manufacturing so the owner can also sell auto-parts. The third request is from Malcom Cochran for the property at 50 W. Gates St. (see next topic for additional information). Curtis' team has multiple requests pending, including the area around Children's Hospital.

The Barrett School project has been placed on hold again for an additional 30, 60 or 90 days to allow for continued negotiations. Homeport is attempting to appease those who have made requests for more single family homes which will make some groups happy, and other groups not as happy. The school district will likely have to make more sacrifices in order to make this happen. It could be another 90 days before the next community meeting. The civic group will have an opportunity to vote and attend a site hearing at Barrett. Curtis stated that he wanted to stress to everyone that when considering these issues, look at economics and how the space can legally be used. He cautioned about allowing emotions to form the only opinions and stated that any project has to make economic

sense for a developer. When concerns are made about property values, Curtis personally conducted research to determine the facts. Along with realtors, he has researched Italian Village, Victorian Gate and other properties like this that have been erected and found an average property value increase of 12.8%. A member asked if these neighborhoods that were researched are comparable and consistent with Merion Village. Curtis responded that the City says yes. This determination is based upon meeting a criteria of density and economics of the area. Another member asked if it's Curtis's job to decide if a project is "financial viable". Curtis said that is not up to him, but it is up to him to determine if a project makes sense. The Barrett property has been vacant for some time and other developers have not been interested. Homeports intends to rent the apartments from a range of \$1,750.00 to \$2,500.00 a month, marketing to doctors and others who work at Children's Hospital. Tracey Studer suggested that the Village Point project may be more desirable to Homeport's target market but that when push comes to shove, we should all remain cool, calm and collected and wait for the project to come to us before forming our opinions.

Curtis also conveyed to the Association that since these various developments began, 4 or 5 companies have come forward showing interest in locating their business on Parsons Ave., but they need more people in the area before they will locate here. A member asked if over the past 8 years that the Commission has been in place, how many times have the civic groups and the Commission voted on opposite sides? Curtis stated that this has happened a couple time. The member then asked how many times the City not taken the recommendations as made by the Commission. Curtis responded that this occurred once since he has been involved. The City always wants to know if the civic groups understand the economics, density, etc. The Commission has conducted research with Homeport. One of the Commissioners, Cassandra Paterson from Innis Gardens actually works for Homeport and therefore will abstain from any votes.

A member asked if the economic research is conducted based on what is good for the homeowners or what is good for the City and businesses. Curtis stated that economics cover all of these groups as a whole. He has to represent everyone. A member raised a concern that experts can be wrong, giving examples of the Arena Districts and Polaris Amphitheater. The member suggested that maybe the Barrett property is better suited to some other investor. Curtis responded that the Barrett property has been vacant for years and that the cost of maintenance of the existing building is too great. Two Charter Schools looked at the property and both came to the conclusion that the maintenance costs would be too high. Curtis stated to the Association that if someone has another solution, they should bring it to his attention directly.

Anne Stewart asked what we have gained from the Commission and the processes. Curtis and Tony Roell responded that we have input in demolition decisions, variance requests, etc. Curtis is responsible for 10 civics whom he immediately notifies of these requests. Curtis also communicates with the Police Department, working with local Merchants, the Parsons Ave. Association, etc. Anne Stewart then asked what the boundaries are for research about other projects that may be similar to the Barrett project or others. Curtis advised that the project for comparison must be in Franklin County and should be presented with facts. A member asked what has kept the Barrett School out of a Judge's demolition order. Curtis advised that the building avoids this by being kept up to all code requirements and has staff in an out early in the morning and can therefore consider the building to be "in use". Curtis left his business cards for Association Members to contact him and the group thanked him for attending the meeting,

TOPIC: Zoning Update Request for 50 W. Gates St. (Presentation by Malcom Cochran) **DURATION:** 17 Minutes

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION: Malcom Cochran is an Installation Artist who is interested in purchasing the property at 50 W. Gates St. The purchase of this property is contingent on Malcom's success with his request for a zoning variance. The formal application requesting the zoning variance was submitted to the City on April 1, 2014. Malcom came to Columbus, from, New Hampshire, to teach at OSU. He is best known in our city for the "Field of Giant Corn" in Dublin, the Fountain in Goodale Park and the Text Sculptures in the fountains at the Ohio Supreme Court. He has rented three different studios in Columbus. Malcom retired at the end of 2012 and is eager to have his primary residence and his personal art studio in a single location. The property at 50 W. Gates St. is currently owned by a Gentleman who is 75 and began working in that building when he was 15 years old. Malcom was not originally looking to buy in this area, but the space was suggested to him by a friend and upon visiting the property and seeing the view, he became very excited about the space.

The proposal is to convert one building into his residence and private art studio. The second building is currently used as a small office space. In the future, Malcom would like to renovate that building and ideally rent it to an Architect or Graphic designer as an office. A slide-show of photos and initial ideas was presented during the meeting and Malcom described his intentions and desires for the property. The second building is roughly 2000 square feet and currently has in place 8 parking spaces. A member raised a concern that those parking space would not be sufficient if the office-space would be renovated and used eventually. What kind of options would a future owner have with that property, etc. Malcom verified that he would not require the use of those parking spaces for his personal needs and therefore the 8 current spaces exceed the City's requirement of 3½ spaces per 1000 square feet of a unit. A requirement for additional parking was required by the city and was included in this vote. Malcom began negotiating the purchase of this property in November 2013. He conveyed to the Association that this is his dream.

VOTING RESULTS: APPROVED (Members Voting YES: 18 / Members Voting NO: 0)

TOPIC: MVA 501(c)3 Status

DURATION: 2 Minutes

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION: The MVA is not currently classified as a 501(c)3 organization. The appropriate paperwork has been submitted and is currently under review by the U.S. Treasury Department. Members raised concerns as to the deadline of when this would be completed and specifically whether or not it would be complete prior to the Garden Tour event on June 22, 2014. Tony Roell assured the Association that the issue would be resolved as soon as the paperwork clears through the U.S. Treasury Department.

ACTION ITEMS:

RESPONSIBLE

DEADLINE

01. Reestablishment of 501(c)3 Status

Tony Roell

ASAP

TOPIC: Treasurer's Report (Presented by Michele Audetat & Tony Roell)

DURATION: 4 Minutes

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION: Reconciliation with PAMA/PPOP is complete. The MVA received a check in the amount of \$2,573.57 as reimbursement for funds inadvertently spent. PAMA cut a check at an earlier date for a larger sum that they had available, unaware of their balance. Per the request of Anne Stewart, the MVA researched new options for our liability insurance coverage which covers our space and events we host. A new insurance company was selected and the initial savings were roughly \$500.00. Additionally, the MVA is going to be receiving an additional refund of roughly \$230.00 as the initial charge was over-estimated. The cost of insurance has been cut in half with this change. The MVA is still the lease-holder of the space at 1330 S. Fourth St. and the space continues to be sub-leased by Acupuncture & Wellness of Merion Village. A member raised a concern asking if the MVA, which is currently not classified under 501(c)3 status, but is a non-profit organization, can receive funds from a for-profit organization. Tony Roell responded that Acupuncture & Wellness of Merion Village does not claim any tax deduction and therefore there is no issue with the arrangement.

TOPIC: Give-Back Programs

DURATION: 1 Minute

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION: Attendees were asked to bring non-perishable foods to be donated to the St. Paul's Church Food Pantry as well as old shoes for the Plant Pride on Parsons project. Tony Roell asked attendees to continue bringing donation to the meetings or to the meeting space, when Acupuncture & Wellness of Merion Village is open for business. There are also several drop-off locations throughout the City. A member asked how the old shoes are used by PPOP. Tony Roell responded by status that the shoes are either recycled or resold to raise funds. The Food Pantry indicated to Tony Roell that they have a specific need for Canned Fruits, as they are not allowed to purchase these food items with the funds they receive.

TOPIC: Website Update

DURATION: 1 Minute

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION: Bob Leighty continues to work on the new MVA website. Tony Roell hopes to have the new site up and running by the end of April 2014. This version would not be the final, but will allow basic access to information. Tony Roell also indicates that content of the website should be available for Board review by the end of the week.

ACTION ITEMS:

RESPONSIBLE

DEADLINE

01. Board Review of Website Content

MVA Board

TBD

TOPIC: MVA Bi-Law Review (Presented by Michelle K.)

DURATION: 2 Minutes

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION: Michelle advised the Association that Joe (co-author of the current bi-laws) is able to meet with those involved in the review process on April 13th or 14th. Michelle also indicated that Dee is currently researching the differences between “Proxy Voting” and “Voting in Absentia” and how these relate to the MVA bi-law updates. Fran advised the Association that she conducted online research of roughly 20 associations, 16 of which allow Proxy or Absentee Voting. Fran also researched the various requirements of these associations and their voting processes, etc. Tony Roell suggested that we can discuss this further at a later time and amend these requirements to meet the needs of the MVA.

ACTION ITEMS:

RESPONSIBLE

DATE

01. Meet to Discuss Bi-Law Questions and Changes

MVA Board/Bi-Law Committee April 13, 2014

TOPIC: Scheduled Events and Activities

DURATION: 5 Minutes

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION: details...

DATE (TIME)	EVENT DESCRIPTION	COORDINATOR(S)
April 8 th (5:30 PM - 7:00 PM)	City Council Community Meeting (Open Floor)	N/A
LOCATION: Barack Recreation Center (580 E. Woodrow Ave., Columbus, OH)		
April 13 th (1:00 PM - 3:00 PM)	Germania Palm Sunday Dinner	N/A
LOCATION: Germania Singing and Sport Society (543 S. Front St., Columbus, OH)		
April 26 th (10:00 AM - 1:00 PM)	Community Clean-Up	Fran
LOCATION: Meeting at the MVA Information Center (1330 S. Fourth St., Columbus, OH 43206)		
April 29 th (5:30 PM - 7:00 PM)	City Council Community Meeting (Open Floor)	N/A
LOCATION: Marion Franklin Recreation Center (2801 Lockbourne Rd., Columbus, OH)		
May 10 th (9:00 AM - 3:00 PM)	Merion Village Community Yard Sale	Michelle K. & Joe
LOCATION: Community Maps Will be Available (Map Applications Due April 25 th by 5:00 PM)		
June 22 nd (10:00 AM - 3:00 PM)	Merion Village Garden Tour	Mark G.
LOCATION: Community Maps Will be Available (Map Applications Due May 9 th)		
August 17 th (TBD)	Second Annual Community Festival	Tony Roell
LOCATION: Moeller Park (261 Hanford St, Columbus, OH)		
September (TBD)	Community Clean-Up	Fran
LOCATION: Meeting at the MVA Information Center		
October (TBD)	Pasta Dinner	Tracey Studer
LOCATION: Explorer’s Club		
December (TDB)	MVA Potluck and Cookie Trade	TBD
LOCATION: TBD		

TOPIC: Southside Area Commission Report (Presented by Chris Macisco)

DURATION: 2 Minutes

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION: Chris Macisco reported that the project to revamp Lincoln Pool is in the works. This will be a topic of discussion at the Barack Recreation Center on Wednesday, April 9th beginning at 8:00 PM. The architects for the project will be present. They have worked on other similar pools in the area. The project is still in the conceptualizing phase but is projected to cost 4.2 million dollars. The current plan is to close the pool 1 to 2 weeks earlier than the normal closing schedule to accommodate the renovation. The final schedule will be up for vote. Chris also brought several copies of the new Southside Newspaper and had nothing else to report at this time.

TOPIC: Gateway Grant and Kiosk Meeting Report (Presented by Tony Roell)

DURATION: 1 Minute

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION: A meeting to discuss ideas and plans to use the Gateway Grant funds was held on March 24th at 7:00 PM. The plan is to move away from free-standing kiosks in order to do more, with less funds. The Board will follow-up further and report at future monthly meetings.

TOPIC: Parsons Avenue Library Project

DURATION: 2 Minutes

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION: Tony Roell advised the Association that very little news has been available with regard to the project. A member raised concerns that other recent Columbus Library renovations have been undesirable. Tony conveyed that while the City must present the MVA with a "request" to demolish the standing structures, after 60 days, they can demolish regardless. To date, no design proposals have been presented. Tony will conduct further research about the project as information becomes available.

TOPIC: Updated Liquor Permit for the Explorers Club (Presented by Tracey Studer)

DURATION: 3 Minutes

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION: Tracey Studer discussed an issue on the upcoming election ballot with respect to the Liquor Permit for the Explorers Club at 1586 S. High St., Columbus, OH. The restaurant's current permit does not allow sales of wine and spirits on Sundays. The Explorers Club is open on Sundays from 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM and 5:00 PM - 9:00 PM and asks for votes supporting their request. The Ward 1 (B) Precinct will have the ability to vote for this issue. Boundaries of the Ward 1 (B) Precinct are as follow: (*NORTH: E. Welch Ave. SOUTH: Innis Ave. WEST: The River EAST: Ann St.*) The Explorer's Club has 15 employees, 9 of whom live in Merion or Hungarian Village. Tracy loves this area and wants to continue helping to bring revenue to the community but also wants to be able to keep up with competitor restaurants in the area who have permits for Sunday sales. He currently leases the property where the Explorers Club is located, but hopes to purchase the building in a few years. The Association was also reminded everyone to check their polling locations for the upcoming elections as there have been quite a few polling place changes.

TOPIC: Building Renovations at 116 E. Moler St.

DURATION: 1 Minute

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION: The owner of the building reported to Tony Roell that a bakery may lease some space in the property once renovations are completed. He has other leases interested as well but at this time, Tony has not been made aware as to their business interests. At this time, the owner still plans to allow the MVA to use the lobby space for meetings as well as some storage space in the basement of the building. The owner still needs to finish renovations and obtain the final occupancy permits. Tony estimates the project will take a couple more months to complete.

GENERAL REMINDERS:

01. Kroger Community Rewards: Remember to sign-up with through your Kroger card account, selecting the MVA as your designation for rewards. When you register and shop at Kroger, you contribute to the percentage of funds the MVA receives from the program each quarter. There is no cost to you for this program.
02. Report potholes, and other requests for City services through the 311 Program. Call 311 from your telephone or visit www.311.columbus.gov

NEXT MONTHLY ASSOCIATION MEETING: Wednesday, May 7th at the MVA Information Center (1330 S. Fourth St., Columbus, OH 43206) beginning at 7:00 PM.