

## MINUTES for NDRA/ND MEETING

Thursday, April 29, 2010, 7 p.m., Central Library, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

**In Attendance: Board:** Colette Hall, Bill Sampson, Debra Weiss, Alex Ix, Rick Berman, Jane Myers, Pat Napoleon, Catherine Wray, Mark Kavit and Ted Jones. **Residents:** Edith Good

Treasurer's Report: \$1,415.65 is in the Treasury

### OLD BUSINESS

- A. Recognition of ND Business :** We discussed ways to show our appreciation of downtown businesses whose design and maintenance of their properties enhances the downtown area. We agreed to present them Good Neighbor Awards which Debra volunteered to design. We plan to hand deliver these awards and do write-ups about the recipients in the Daily Progress Business Journal.
- B. Neighborhood Advocacy:** While there is some opposition to creating the position of Neighborhood Advocate because it will add a new level of bureaucracy to city government, Kristin Szakos is pushing it because during her campaign for city council, she observed that neighborhoods were not well organized to accomplish their goals. The Neighborhood Advocate, if approved, will work in the City Manager's office but will, in other ways, be independent of the City Manager. There will be meetings in the future for the public to contribute input about this possible new position.
- C. Alliance of Neighborhoods Survey Results:** The top 3 areas of importance to those who answered the Survey were: 1. First Responders (police, fire, emergency services) 2. Water and Sewer (Rates and Conservation) 3. Roads, (new, repair, replace, bridges)
- D. McGuffey Park Report:** The Rob Schilling Program on Gangs in the Downtown Area brought together Colette, Pat, Chief Longo and Dick Franzen, president of McGuffey Condo Assoc., who emphasized how lenient judges have been in punishing juvenile infractions like those in McGuffey Park which include dumping trash, throwing bricks, breaking off tree limbs, possible illegal drug and alcohol use, etc. Chief Longo said parents often don't know what their children are doing when they drop them off, leaving them unattended to roam downtown in the evening hours. After Colette spoke to City Council, the City will put up new signs saying "AFTER 9, NO TRESPASSING" in neighborhood parks. Alex Ix pointed out that this is not really a gang problem. As Colette said "it's just a bunch of kids feeding off of each other's energy" and vandalizing in the process with as many as 100 kids hanging out at a time. She suggested motion-detector lights in McGuffey Park might deter them. Alex believes that the increased exposure of

this issue will cause the problem to decrease. Colette spoke to the Executive Director of the Boys and Girls Club about alternative activities for these idle teens.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

- A. Report of City Manager's Meeting for Neighborhoods:** 1. The City has a list of over 100 sidewalks needing repair and gives priority to those which offer - 1. Pedestrian usability 2. Routes to School 3. Use by Senior Citizens. (F.H.W.A. has grants for building sidewalks to schools) Our city spent \$2.5 million in the past 10 years for sidewalk repairs. 2. There are proposals to change Residential zoning. While the Planning Commission sees Mixed Use zoning as a way to revitalize an area, the residents often see it as destructive encroachment on their Neighborhood, particularly when it permits new businesses that have late night hours as in Downtown Belmont. Some of these zoning changes could be voted on as early as June 7<sup>th</sup>.
- B. F.H.W.A .Memorandum of Agreement (concerning the 250 Interchange):** The revised M.O.A. showed some positive changes, but Colette Hall still finds the proposed mitigation insufficient. The Coalition to Preserve McIntire Park insists the City would be ill-advised to sign the MOA before the final McIntire Park Master Plan is complete. FHWA, VDOT and the City must sign the M.O.A. before the Interchange can be built, and the City may not sign if it is not grade-separated. The Supreme Court of Va. dismissed on a technicality an appeal regarding the Constitutionality of a non-supermajority vote by City Council to sell school property land to VDOT for the Parkway. The plaintiffs are reappealing.
- C. Martha Jefferson Project:** Crosland Developers, after losing access to commercial financing, pulled out of their contract with Martha Jefferson Hospital to develop its Locust Ave. site. The Locust Ave. Neighborhood Assoc. is applying to become a conservation district to give it some influence over what kind of development occurs next.
- D. Garden Project at Day Haven:** On the First St. side of the property, there are proposed raised beds for growing vegetables, to help teach Haven clients how to grow and prepare their own fresh food.

#### **Other news:**

Catherine Wray brought up the obligation of Marathon Organizers to better inform downtown residents ahead of time of the effect their races will have on neighborhood traffic.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Jane Myers, NDRA Secretary

**The next NDRA/ND meeting will be 7PM, Thursday, May 27 at the Central Library**