

GREATER HIGHLAND CROSSROADS ASSOCIATION

General Membership Meeting

September 24, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by President Susan Scheidt.

Members of the Board of Directors were introduced.

Kelly Felix was introduced as Assistant Secretary.

TREASURER REPORT:

Beginning Balance 6/18/2015		\$20,29790
Income		
	Dues	\$ 1,775.00
Expenses		
	Insurance	\$ 750.00
	Picnic Food	\$ 450.98
Ending Balance		\$20,871.92

A MOTION WAS MADE BY Alan Schneider and seconded by Paul Collison to accept the Treasurer's report. Motion APPROVED and PASSED

MEMBERSHIP REPORT:

A mass mailing was sent out and Hilda received 125 replies. 55 are new members and about 30 are renewals. Today there are 130 memberships plus a few that were received tonight. Next year the mailing may extend further than the present mailing area.

OLD BUSINESS

1, Update on Highland's BRX zoning

On August 28, 2015 Susan attended a meeting at the George Howard Buildingg in Ellicott City. Attendees included Mary Kay Sigaty, Greg Fox, Valdis Lazdins, Director of the Department of Planning & Zoning, and Grace Fielhauer, Special Assistant to Allan Kittleman, County Executive.

Mary Kay stated that she did not realize the extent of the BRX zoning and the potential commercial expansion.

Also discussed was the problems with BRX for Highland presented at the June 24, 2015 County Council Highland Listening Tour. Issues included:

- Changes to the country character of Highland's unique 256 year old commercial crossroads.
- Existing commercial property is underutilized.
- Traffic flow is a challenge with few options for improvement without removing existing historic buildings.
- "Uses Permitted by Matter of Right" limits citizen input to protect the Highland character.

- Highland is a well and septic environment and existing commercial properties are having problems with septic problems and questionable water problems.
- Significant commercial development is in the works for Fulton and Clarksville.

Mr. Lazdins stated that there is a decreasing demand for commercial development worldwide. Europe is down 25%. People have changed the ways they shop.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Mr. Lazdins will review Highland's request to remove Highland from the BRZ zoning law and he will make a recommendation to the City Council. To date, Susan has not heard from P & Z or the County Council.

2. Chopra Property

A conditional use for a 16 bed nursing facility was applied for and was denied by the Board of Appeals on 8/23/2011. This decision was appealed to the Circuit Court. This Court remanded the case back to the Board of Appeals on 5/29/2012. There is no record of any further proceedings other an order for dismissal on 9/9/2014, with the applicants consent. There is no permitted use for this property other than a single family home. The property is currently rented with that license expiring on 1/24/2017.

The property is in the CCT (Community Center Transition) district. This district was established under the Howard County's Comprehensive Zoning Legislation. GHCA is interested in Mr. Chopra's future plans for the property and would like to work with him for the good of the Highland Community.

Paul Collison asked why it was so difficult to take the CCT zoning out. The zoning is a law and it would take another law to remove the zoning and this is a difficult process.

3. Highland Day

The date is October 3, 2015. The Committee has been working since March developing plans. Hilda implored anyone to help out, even if only for a few hours. We need someone on all four quadrants. Need an event coordinator, help in the booth. Kids that help out can earn community service hours. Additional help is needed at the petting zoo, hayride and parking. There will be a sign up sheet at the back of the room, plus on the web site.

4. Boarman Landscaping

The Association has asked Mr. Boarman to screen the numerous solar panels on his property bordering Highland Road. To date, this has not been done. Jeffrey Jackson from Oaklawn Landscaping has volunteered to do this project in return for displaying his business sign. Mr. Boarman is agreeable to having the project completed. Something will be seen soon.

The Executive Board did pass a motion to promote the Oaklawn business.

5. Highland Post Office

A "Thank You" goes out to Steve Thomas for his time and attention to the condition of the Highland Post office. Postmistress Dawana Cook reported that she is in negotiation with Oaklawn for removal of ice and snow this winter.

A question was asked about the Highland Inn. The restaurant is closed and is for sale on the market. It can only be used as a restaurant.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Highland Day at the Races

The date is October 10, 2015. The races start at 1:00 PM. Parking and admission is free. Food is available for purchase. You can sign up on the web site or at the booth on Highland Day.

2 Next GHCA Meeting

We are planning to invite a representative from the Howard County Police Department to come to our next meeting. These events are sponsored by the Community Outreach Division of the Police Department. The intent is to give the community an opportunity to interact in an informal setting with local officers, to ask questions, and make suggestions about community policing.

Please attend the meeting with your personal, neighborhood and community issues.

ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

Paul Collison stated we need to hear from Grace regarding feedback on the BRX issue

Q - Why can't members of the Zoning Board introduce an amendment to delete BRX. A – It is a law and laws are difficult to change. It was suggested to contact Greg Fox and/or Mary Kay Sigaty.

Please update your e-mail addresses in the back of the room.

There was no further business to discuss.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherrie F. Zabriskie

Secretary - GHCA