

**Woodley Park Community Association**  
**Regular WPCA Executive Committee Meeting – February 13, 2024**

**Members Present:**

- *Executive Committee:* John Goodman (President), Barbara Ioanes (Vice President), Jeff Myers (Secretary), Courtney Tolbert (Past President), Leah De Hoet, Glenn Marcus and Linda Raphael (At Large)
- Other community members: Margaret Hennessy, Charles Warr, Rob Heffernan, Leonard Zax, Betsy Merritt, Ben (co-owner of Elsa's Ethiopian Kitchen)
- ANC representatives: Janell Pagats
- Robert Meins (Woodley Park Main Street)

**Agenda:**

1. Establish quorum/confirm everyone can hear/see
2. Introductory items:
  - a. Approval of agenda
  - b. Approval of minutes
3. Financial stuff
  - a. Acceptance of Treasurer's report
  - b. Annual review of books
  - c. 2024 Budget & schedule of major events
4. Grocery garbage enclosure
5. Benin
6. Wardman appeal
7. DCPS boundary
8. Aidan traffic issues
9. Website
10. Updates from Mayor's office, Council, ANC
11. Good of the order
12. Adjourn

**Minutes:**

1. A quorum was present (7 members were present)
2. Introductory items:
  - a. Agenda was approved
  - b. Minutes from January meeting were approved
3. Financial stuff
  - a. Several members asked if Stephanie can please send budget again
4. Benin – Rob Heffernan offered to explain the minutes from Zach Messitte and Rob's meeting with the Ambassador from Benin, and for the proposed MOU.
  - a. Barbara Ioanes asked: "What fund-raising is anticipated from the community?" John said: Zach estimated \$50k last meeting, which includes restoring the exterior wall
  - b. Rob said the vision is: No major structures (like restrooms). Just landscaping, grass seed, flower beds, decorative bushes
  - c. Putting together a budget will be a next step
  - d. FYI, the embassy recently signed a contract to repair the wall that has fallen into disrepair

- e. The Ambassador asked whether, since the Embassy has agreed to pay property tax, would it get a tax break if the Embassy cooperates with the neighborhood. John wondered whether the city would issue any permits with a large delinquent tax bill.
  - f. The Embassy wants to make sure that it is not committed for more than three years. John notes that it may be tough to get people to donate significant money if use of the property may be lost within three years
  - g. Jeff suggested setting a more modest target – say a maximum of \$10,000 – offering to share the cost with the Embassy, and making plantings that could be usable if Benin does build a new Embassy building on the site.
  - h. John suggests installing plantings as “squatters” – e.g., no cost, community labor donated or community-purchased plantings
  - i. Rob suggested that someone (perhaps Janell Pagats) reach to the city to see if the city would offer some sort of tax relief if Benin does support a Community Garden. Janell suggests that she will reach to Council Member Frumin.
5. Wardman appeal
- a. John described that the Board of Zoning Adjustment is hearing an appeal by two community members and a lobbying group against the building permits that were issued to Carmel.
  - b. Janell says that the ANC will provide public notice shortly of an ANC meeting where the appeal will be discussed and the ANC will develop its opinion
6. DCPS boundary change proposal
- a. WPCA developed and sent a letter generally opposing the Oyster-Adams boundary change proposal. There has been no response or action to-date.
  - b. Courtney noted that there continues to be significant opposition in the neighborhood against the boundary change.
  - c. Several members expressed deep concern against the boundary changes
  - d. Jeff suggested that the neighborhood could go beyond written communication of the protest to the Chancellor and Council Member Frumin. Neighbors could make personal visits (or picketing/other newsmaking events), and could approach School Board, School Administration, Council and Mayor/administration.
  - e. Rob suggested that the school attendance area property values may be affected, and pointed out that the alternate schools are not bilingual as Oyster is.
  - f. Barbara advocated forcefully for the benefits of the bilingual program, and Linda concurred (suggesting that other schools such as Eaton are of good quality)
7. Aidan traffic issues
- a. We discussed the issue a month ago, and sent a letter to the school
  - b. This morning, John got a note from a neighbor this morning, saying that a problem has returned
8. The grocery garbage enclosure – this has been on a tentative agenda for the Public Space Committee, but it has not actually been addressed in a meeting, nor resolved. John describes that the Historic Preservation Office has provided input.
- a. Ben (from Elsa’s Kitchen) is very unhappy with the upcoming grocery store’s outside garbage enclosure, because it will make his back patio much less attractive. He would like WPCA’s help opposing the outside garbage storage.
  - b. Other members expressed concern that the grocery store is using public space for the garbage storage, which they oppose – particularly as it sets a precedent.

9. Website - Leah expressed concern that the new website is still not operational. We agreed that it has been years since the new website has not been completed and that we will salvage from it what we can and find another vendor. The Board agreed that Leah will head up the website project, and John will ask members for help with this, and John will ask members to cc Leah with their responses.
10. Updates from Mayor's office, Council, ANC
11. Good of the order
  - a. Beniam and Jeff have arranged a Meet Your Neighbors Night for Tuesday March 19 from 6PM to 8PM at Elsa's Ethiopian Kitchen, which has recently had its application for a liquor license approved. (Ben's number is 404-992-4869.)
12. Adjourned at 9:07PM

