

## FREMONT/VERONA/McKINLEY NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING COUNCIL

APRIL 20, 2011

### Meeting Minutes

#### Attendees:

Members: David Nielsen, Sherry Sofia ,E. Helen VanValkenburg, George Wilson, Marcia Austin, John Hennink, Laurie Sullivan, John Walton, Dave Salerno, Mark Jones, Sandy Calderone

Guests: John Kenefick, Ron Cady, Mary Lou Ramon, Lynn Ward Gray, John Wright, Jim Haadsma, Susan Bedsole

The April 20, 2011 meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Chairman David Nielsen. Laurie Sullivan continued her role as temporary secretary for this meeting.

The minutes of the March 16, 2011 were approved with the addition of Jim Haadsma to the attendance list.

#### Reports:

**BCPD:** No officer present.

**City of Battle Creek:** Susan Bedsole

1. NSP demo's are now entered in the graph report
2. The rental properties ordinance was approved at the last city commission meeting
3. NSP rehabs are mainly in the NPC 4 area – please help keep an eye on them for signs of vandalism or break-ins

#### Member Concerns:

1. "Over-decorated" properties: Holiday decorations that create neighborhood problems such as sight obstruction or litter. If it is determined to be junk or trash it can be addressed by the city.
2. How is occupancy limit in rental units determined? The building code sets space limits. There may also be other statutes that apply.

**City Commission:** Commissioner Lynn Ward Gray gave the report in place of a voiceless Laurie Sullivan

1. Rental inspection fee changes: voluntary - \$25; compulsory - \$500. Inspections valid for six years instead of three. Approximately 50% of inspectors' time spent locating unregistered rental owners
2. Second Housing Board hearing fee changes discussed – no decision, will be brought up again.
3. Renewal permit fees from \$0 to \$20 – motion defeated
4. NPC 10 member removal – motion passed 5-4
5. Medical Marijuana issue still pending

**Member concerns:**

1. 2<sup>nd</sup> Housing Board hearing fee should be higher. Over 40% of owners appealing never show up for hearing, often using time extensions to avoid compliance  
Motion: John Hennink - for NPC 4 to support an increase in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Housing board of Appeals hearing fee  
Support: Sandy Calderone  
Amendment: Mark Jones – in order to reflect possible mistakes, change “appeal” to “time extension”  
Support: GeorgeWilson  
Amendment passed 5-4  
Amended motion passed 7-2. Chairman Nielsen to write a letter to City Commission recommending an increase in 2<sup>nd</sup> hearing fee.

**Program:** Lt. Todd Madsen, BCPD - Last minute conflict – unable to attend – rescheduled for May meeting

**Beautiful Battle Creek Award:** No new nominations

**Neighborhood Association Updates:**

Freedom Acres: had a storm drain/gutter clean-up last Saturday. City still needs to pick up debris. Note: Since this meeting that pick-up has been done

**Master Plan Update:** Mark Jones – Key issue is still “What can we do to help reduce crime?”

Suggestions:

1. Create Neighborhood Crime Watch programs that combine the efforts of Crime Watch and Neighborhood Watch. Make use of crime “diaries” to document and report illegal activities in neighborhoods. Organize neighborhood groups to help observe such activities. David asked members to talk with neighbors about this concept and bring back reactions/suggestions to May meeting.
2. Reinstate walking police patrols in neighborhoods
3. Ask Chief Hampton about officer rotations that make it hard to officers to “know” the neighborhoods and residents to know the officers
4. Discuss with PD the failure to return calls from some residents

2<sup>nd</sup> Key Issue: Youth readiness for school and support for students at Verona and Fremont schools. Several suggestions were made and David will ask Verona and Fremont principals to attend the May meeting and share thoughts on how our NPC can help support our neighborhood schools.

**Member/Guest Comments:**

1. Chair and vice-chair asked to comment about City Commission-NPC 10 membership issue:  
Responded that each NPC is different. Ours has a history of positive relationship building and trust and we do not foresee irreconcilable membership conflicts occurring.
2. Lighting at Salvation Army on Union Street is still not operating. The area is extremely dark.
3. More police presence in the area has been observed
4. We need to begin discussing how to “market” the unique qualities in this NPC
5. Be sure to vote in the May election.
6. 1 ½ hour time limit on meeting is good
7. Freedom Acres meets 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays, neighborhood gardens starting again, Spring into the Arts on May 13, May 12 Healthy Neighborhoods workshop 4:30-6:00 p.m.
8. Question to city commissioners about allowing inspectors access to homes without probable cause
9. Twinzy Toy Company, originated in Quaker Park area, to be reestablished by Heritage Battle Creek – descendent of original family to speak at Kimball House on May 24
10. Suggestion made to incorporate upcoming NPC area events into agenda

Meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.