

Gwinhurst Civic Association Minutes – April 3, 2014

The meeting was called to order by President Christina Anthony at 7:06 pm. The board members introduced themselves. Copies of last month's minutes were available to residents in attendance as well as on the website. The secretary promised to change the reference to “Cheryl” in the minutes to “Jenn.”

Treasurer's Report -

Dave Paules reported that the association has \$13,992 in the bank, which is more than we started with in October. We are in good shape for next year. We even got a few more dues payments this month. We're up to 42.5% of the residents having paid, which is actually very good for a voluntary civic association. Some people still don't know about it though, so spread the word to your neighbors!

Standing committee on snow plowing -

We got our last snow plowing reimbursement from the county so we are all caught up. We are optimistic that the snow season is over now. We need to touch base with Claymont Heights CA to clarify who is responsible for the hilly stretch of Lincoln going up to Maple Lane – probably them. The secretary agreed to reach out to them.

Standing committee on communication -

We can start using signs alerting residents to meetings (1st Thursday of every month) again now that the snow is gone. We might even buy more signs – we only have three and it's a big development. We discussed doing a spring newsletter – the board will work on getting one out soon.

Our website is in good shape. Brianna Thomas, our webmaster, came to the meeting so we got to meet her. Of course there is monthly maintenance, like uploading the minutes and the crime reports. It was suggested that we need to add a calendar to the website.

A lot of residents are using our Facebook page to communicate – the Gwinhurst Facebook group has 109 members. People who aren't on Facebook can contact the board by email or telephone - contact information is on our website, <http://www.gwinhurstde.com/>.

Old business -

Graffiti – Councilman Cartier brought us a spray bottle of stuff to remove it and says we can clean anything that is not private property. Most of it seems to be on road signs and electric boxes.

Parking on residents' lawns – Kris has an update from Jenn Downey. The school district can't do anything; they recommend calling the county police non-emergency number at 573-2800 and asking for officers to come by at pickup or dropoff times.

New Business -

Spring community yard sale – we discussed when to have it. We concluded it probably should be in May, to allow more time to get ready. We agreed on Sat. May 17 from 8 am to noon. Christina will advertise it on online sites and maybe buy an ad in the newspaper. Carol has some yard signs and so does Christina. Residents who want to participate may want to get signs at the dollar store.

Bus route – the secretary proposed that we ask DART to add a bus route running east-west along Silverside Road from Philadelphia Pike to Concord Pike, going through Gwinhurst on Delaware Ave. Longtime residents confirmed there was a route that ran along Delaware Ave for many years. Residents in favor of the proposal were invited to sign the letter after the meeting, which would go to DART.

Playground – a resident on Facebook asked about the possibility of putting one in Gwinhurst. There was enthusiasm for this idea but concern about where would it go. Councilman Cartier says we have a large enough population to justify a playground and that Gwinhurst Park would be suitable for a small play structure. He says nearby Rolling Park just got a new play structure which we could go look at. Typically they are plastic structures installed on top of mulch, with a couple of benches. He says it would come out of the county budget - “parks are within the purview of the county.” Our first step would be to get a group from the civic association to meet with Paul Johnson who manages/designs parks for the county. Kris volunteered to reach out to Paul Johnson along with the person who asked about it on FB. Several people asked about maintenance. Technically the county has a workforce to clean and maintain the parks - we just have to let them know if it needs maintenance.

Community News -

Christina brought up that there was an attempted burglary on Odessa Ave on 3/27. She got the monthly crime reports from County Officer Hessler, who reminded residents to report suspicious activity! There is a New Castle County police app you can download to your smart phone to report suspicious activity, graffiti and other problems, and to receive alerts.

Kris reported that a friend in another development received a police alert call about break-ins in the evening recently when people are home.

More county news from Councilman Cartier -

Crime is down in the county but we are still seeing many opportunity thefts, driven by widespread use of heroin. The heroin out there now is especially strong, cheap, widely available, and easily snorted (no needle required). Be smart about personal security. Addicts steal to pawn items for money.

Councilman Cartier commended the board for our efforts in keeping our streets clear of snow – this is very important for allowing ambulances, fire engines and police cars in. He promised to give us a grant to reimburse us for the cost of our next mailing, out of his next fiscal year budget that starts in July.

Sat April 12 will be the annual cleanup of Naamans Creek watershed. Meet behind F&N shopping center at 8 am. Box lunches will be provided.

Mon May 5 at 6:30 will be our regional public safety meeting, this time at the Claymont Community Center. There will be presentations about policing and other county issues.

There is going to be an “infill project” at the Silverside-Carr office park. In conjunction with it the county is going to deal with the drainage problem reported by residents at the February meeting. They will need to fix the perimeter drain, so it may be costly. He is going to organize a public meeting for us and Holly Oak Terrace to discuss the project.

A resident complained about a tree limb on someone's property not being cleaned up. Mr. Cartier said to call 395-5555 (county code enforcement) or go online to make a complaint anonymously. Currently there is no regulation of vacant properties, other than meeting the same regulations as a lived-in house. Councilman Courtier said they were talking about having a registry of vacant houses several years ago but then there got to be too many to handle due to the recession and they dropped the idea.

Residents on Facebook raised the issue of getting together and hiring one trash removal company for the development. We could get a better rate and not have so many different trucks coming down our streets. Jenn Downey is looking into this with the support of the board. We will bring this up at our next meeting for discussion. We only need 146 homes to do it, and residents present seemed interested.

The meeting was adjourned around 8:20 pm. The next meeting will be May 1.

Minutes submitted by Denise Brush, Secretary.