

Christina Anthony called the meeting to order and introduced herself and the other board members. There were 23 residents and four officers (Christina, Dave, Kris and Denise) present.

Treasurer's Report (Dave) –

Several more residents paid their dues after the spring newsletter mailing. Our bank balance is \$13,810.94. A total of 205 homes have paid, for \$5,365 of collected revenue. The breakdown of our expenditures is 9% on the website, 3% for the newsletter, and 88% on snow removal.

Website & communication (Christina) –

Carol Thomas and her daughter are maintaining our website (www.gwinhurstde.com) and Christina manages our Facebook page. We have 127 members. Christina reminded everyone to stay civil and polite. She has had to remove some inappropriate comments. Facebook is a good way to communicate news and concerns quickly though.

Community Yard Sale (May 17) -

Christina did a lot of publicity for the sale including online and newspaper ads. Twenty addresses were included in the ads (for only \$38 total). People who participated said it was successful, even crowded, in the morning. Unfortunately many of the paper signs got wet and were useless. We could use some generic signs with arrows directing people. There were a lot of other yard sales that day, which could have been good or bad. Perhaps participating houses could put balloons up next time.

Post office letter -

Denise read the letter she got from Senator Carper in response to her letter on behalf of the civic association about our delivery problems. He said that the Edgemoor Post Office which serves us has added some new staff, who are now getting up to speed. Also, they have adjusted some of the routes, which could change delivery times for some residents.

Senator Carper was optimistic that the problems are being addressed, but provided us some people to contact if problems continue. A new concern mentioned in the meeting is confusion between the east and west side of Philadelphia Pike, for example East Holly Oak versus West Holly Oak Rd. Another concern is that the delivery tracking information on the USPS website is not up to date.

Park committee -

Kris had nothing new to report. There was a concern that the county is falling behind in maintaining the park. We could consider doing a park cleanup day. Jenn says no one is doing maintenance (such as mowing) on the dead end section of road (which the county calls a “paper street”) between the two parts of Georgetown and the two parts of Harrison.

Trash proposal -

Jenn handed out postcards from Econo-Haul describing the deal she negotiated for us. The discount rate (if 50% of residents sign up) is \$19/month and the regular rate is \$25. Each resident does need to call to sign up, and also call their old service to cancel. They bill bi-monthly and provide trash bins. Recycling collection is every other week but they do take yard waste (\$4/month). Dave suggested we put a thermometer on our website showing how close we are getting to the discount.

Code enforcement issues -

Sandra Livingston is very upset about rats coming from the apartment house at Harrison and Delaware. She has tried to call New Castle County but no one is calling her back. Dave suggested that

a petition from concerned residents would bring more pressure to bear on the county. Another resident said that even though the house across from her is vacant, she keeps seeing large junk left outside.

Councilman Cartier spoke about the county Code Enforcement department, which has fourteen officers. He mentioned that in addition to calling (395-5555), you can also submit complaints through their website (<http://www.nccde.org/250/Code-Enforcement>), which are anonymous and you get a tracking number. It is important to provide the address with any complaints. If you would prefer to be anonymous, Councilman Cartier will submit the complaint for you.

How long should people expect to get results from code enforcement? It is highly variable. Initially the owner has twelve days to respond to a violation. If the owner has died, there is a process of contacting heirs, executor etc. There is an abatement fund the county can use to cut lawns and apply a lien on the property. Some residents have filed multiple complaints on specific addresses over a period of years. We need to create a list of the worst addresses that have been a problem for a long time and give them to Councilman Cartier to work on. If we can identify the bank or business that owns the property we could also try contacting them. Any property in arrears on taxes can be forced to sheriff's sale. He suggested that he could ask the county sheriff to come talk to us about the process.

Potholes -

Dave Paules contacted Bryan Short's office and got several of our large potholes fixed. Remember that roads are a state responsibility, not the county. The county only handles sewers.

Crime report -

Christina received the May crime report but didn't have a chance to print it out. She will make sure it goes on the website. A teen was beaten and robbed of his ATV and his phone on W. Holly Oak Rd on May 8. There was also a report of someone attacking vehicles on Grant Ave on May 28. A resident raised concerns about possible illegal activity on Laurel Ave which needs police attention.

Silverside Office Park drainage problem -

The old school building will be taken down and a new office building put up. Councilman Cartier will be visiting the drainage system with the property owner, trying to develop a cordial relationship before calling code enforcement. The fix might be a "major" rather than a "minor" plan which means it has to go before the county council.

Other information from county council -

The county recently passed their annual budget, with no property tax or sewer fee increases this year. The property at Maple Lane and Philadelphia Pike with the chain link fence around it is going to be an Auto Zone. The Coach House property that partially burned down has a demolition permit hearing scheduled for June 17 (5 pm at Government Center). Councilman Cartier is going to ask that the stones be saved.

A resident noted that the mobile home park nearby us is an eyesore. Mobile homes are "grandfathered" so they don't have to meet current zoning codes. They are considered motor vehicles, not real estate. As long as they continue in the same use (even if the trailers are replaced) they are still legal under the county zoning laws.

Adjournment -

The next meeting will be Thursday, July 3 (7 pm at the VFW as always). Christina reminded everyone that fireworks are illegal in Delaware, and also that they are very scary for dogs. Keep your dogs inside so they don't panic and run away.