

Minutes – Gwinhurst Civic Association General Meeting, September 4, 2014

- 1) Call to order and introduction of officers – all four officers (Christina, Carol, Dave & Denise) were present. There were 16 residents present plus Councilman John Cartier.
- 2) Review and adoption of minutes of previous meeting (8/7/14) – the minutes were available at the meeting as well as on the website. There were no objections.
- 3) Treasurer's report (Dave) – last month's balance was \$13,797.94. There was a \$50 deposit (2 dues payments) which means we have a \$13,847.94 current balance.
- 4) Report of standing committee on website and communication (Carol, Christina) – Carol reports that the website is up to date. Christina has been posting relevant information to Facebook like meeting minutes and a press release from police about a robbery in Silverside Heights. She also provided printed copies of the latter. Christina said that she had to delete some posts from Facebook and people should try to be more civil.
- 5) Old business –
 - a. Status of Econo-Haul trash collection proposal (Dave/Jenn) – we need 130 more residents to get the discount. Jenn warned us that Waste Management doesn't actually put their recycling in a separate truck (which is illegal). Econo-Haul doesn't delay pickup for holidays which is why they picked up today. Several residents who just switched are happy. Could we ask them to take into account that we have over 30 vacant properties?
 - b. Status of Silverside Office Park drainage plan (Cartier) – Mr. Cartier said he was away on vacation last month. He said overtures with the owner have been so far unsuccessful. It is definitely a code violation so it will eventually go to the county code department if he can't get anywhere with the owner.
 - c. Update on situation with derelict properties (Cartier) – 400 W. Holly Oak – ticket issued 8/22 but no response from owner; county couldn't serve papers because they couldn't find the owner, next step is Sheriff's sale; 108 Odessa – bank bought it back at Sheriff's sale. They are supposed to maintain them but often do not. Christina mentioned that many states and cities have laws requiring banks to

maintain vacant properties they own, but Delaware does not. County Council is working on possible legislation to address the issue that some banks don't file a deed of record when they foreclose. Regarding 28 Georgetown which was discussed last month, Mike (a Georgetown resident) took photos and provided them to Mr. Cartier. Mike also called Code Enforcement to get them to mow the lawn, which they haven't yet. Also the last time the county mowed (in June) they didn't mow all the way back to Milford. The property is not safe and should be condemned and then demolished. Councilman Cartier agreed and promised to try to get this resolved. He noted that vacant houses are a systemic problem throughout the county. There are also issues with maintenance of occupied properties, such as 2115 Harrison and 9 Clayton Ave. He promised to investigate these properties.

- d. Adding Gwinhurst information to New Resident Welcome packets (Kelly) – we didn't discuss this since Kelly was not here.
 - e. Mail delivery issues (Dave) – our regular carrier Veda is back.
 - f. Concerns about lack of attendance by police department (Christina) – the police said they no longer send police officers to civic association meetings due to staffing issues. Councilman Cartier goes to a meeting of police leadership every 2 weeks and says our neighborhood is not considered a “hot spot” (yet).
- 6) New business –
- a. Fall newsletter & grant application for newsletter funding (Dave/Christina) – Dave plans to create a newsletter to announce the November election (to be held at the regular meeting). Christina completed a grant application to get funding from New Castle County Council for the newsletter mailing.
 - b. Board elections coming up in November – we have received no nominations yet other than Kris re-nominating the four of us. The secretary is not running again.
 - c. Other community issues not already discussed – Carol said the county park is well maintained on the right but not on the left of Harrison (between Wyoming and Laurel). Perhaps the contractors don't know it's on both sides?

- d. Dave reported that Bryon Short promised we would get our potholes fixed in the first group when the crews go out. Mike on Georgetown brought up the problem of the contractors for the Milford storm drain project that left holes in his lawn. It was DelDOT contractor Mumford & Miller which has many complaints against it. Councilman Cartier says we should invite Rep. Short to our October meeting because roads are a state responsibility not a county one.

7) Community news -

- a. Crime report for August – there were 48 calls. A lot of them were calls for police to investigate noise, suspicious activity etc. A resident asked if there is a noise ordinance, which there is (10 pm) but it isn't enforced. Fireworks are a big problem year-round. There is a police bulletin out that vandals are targeting unlocked cars in nearby neighborhoods.
- b. Brian Hojalter (Cartier's aide) is taking a new job, so there is a job opening.
- c. An art studio next to Seasons Pizza recently opened; soon to come: Auto Zone and Thirst2Learn daycare, wood stove vendor (Harvey Rd), and the commercial parts of Darley Green development. Demolished Coach House site is on sale.
- d. Christina proposed we have a Halloween or Christmas house decorating contest – winner gets free dues for next year. Kris volunteered to be a judge. We tentatively agreed to do it for the Christmas season.
- e. Mosquito control – Jenn confirmed that DNREC brings out a truck with a fogger every year. They recently sprayed Perkins Run Creek.
- f. Issue of slander on Facebook – residents could apparently sue the association. We are not incorporated. Mr. Cartier suggested we should incorporate as a 501c4 DE corporation. We would still be liable for suits though; we would have to buy insurance in order to protect ourselves. Should we spend the money? Only a few residents thought so. Councilman Cartier offered to contact former state legislator Robert Valihura, an attorney with CCOBH (Council of Civic Associations of Brandywine Hundred). Christina said that CCOBH was not that helpful to her.

8) Notification of next meeting date (10/2) and adjournment – adjourned 8:07.