

CITY OF CUMBERLAND, MD

## Neighborhood Advisory Commission

MEETING MINUTES – March 24, 2014

14 Attended: Jenn Jeudy, Lt. Brian Lepley, Councilmember Nicole Wagoner, David Cox, Allen Hedrick, Tormod Svensson, Louise Elliott, George Reynolds, Brent Sterling, Tom Taccino, Mary C. Miltenberger, Brian Wodaski, Terri Hast and Steven Leyh.

Nicole Wagoner brought the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and reminded everyone to sign-in and pickup handouts. A quick introduction of those present was made. She reminded all that the meetings will be held on the last Monday of the month from this point on.

A motion to accept the minutes from February's meeting was made and seconded. All were in favor.

### Department Reports:

**Community Development** – David Cox gave the report for Lee Borrer, Community Development Specialist, who was unable to attend. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Annual Plan Recommendations are on the City's website. Total proposed funding is \$743,000. The 2<sup>nd</sup> public hearing is set for April 8. The Cumberland Human Relations Commission is taking registration information for "Building Inclusive Communities" event on April 15 at Allegany College of Maryland that replaces their April meeting. Free trees are available for North End residents. Details for all above, were provided on the handout.

Dave Cox, Building/Code Officer reported that during February, nuisance staff continued to monitor habitual code violators and worked with codes staff to identify blighted and unsafe properties that are suitable for demolition. 106 Roberts St. was removed due to blight, and demolition is to begin on 478-480 Columbia St., 100 Independence St., and 474-476 Baltimore Ave. #461 Goethe was sold to the city with plans to demolish. The CDBG Neighborhoods Matter Grant will assist us in working with contractors towards these improvements. A full planning, zoning and code enforcement report for February was made available to the group.

**Cumberland Police Department's** (CPD) Lt. Brian Lepley oversees patrols with the CPD and reported the Safe Streets Program was again grant funded and will continue. Crime was down 5.5% in the past year (34.5% in January) and much of this due to Safe Streets program. A Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) brochure was created and will go out to home and business owners, telling how to help prevent crime. The DDACTS program (Data Driven Approaches to Crime and Traffic Safety) looks at traffic safety and proactively puts special patrols in hot spots throughout the City. This past month South Cumberland from Fort Cumberland Homes through 1<sup>st</sup> Street and the 400-700 block of Maryland Ave., saw the most crime activity. A heat map will be produced regularly to show changes in crime as they are reported. The Hooley Pub Crawl was a success in downtown Cumberland having very little issues with such a big crowd. The Police Department is testing at Fort Hill to aid in the hiring process of new officers. They are working with the Allegany County School Board and Frostburg State University on a program where 8 students will 'ride' with City officers on patrol. He advised the neighborhood group to realize that soon schools will be out for the summer and be sure to help prevent crimes by locking windows, doors, cars, and turn on outside lights. Please call or email the CPD with any problems to report. They can't help if they don't know about it.

**Fire, Street and Engineering** reports were not available.

### Neighborhood reports:

**Chapel Hill West Neighborhood Association, Inc.** representative Allen Hedrick had nothing to report for February.

**North End Crime Watch** representative Tom Taccino has concerns about the Cumberland Neighborhood Housing Services (CNHS) annual picnic which is to be an Ice Cream Social this year and what their role in the event will be. Wagoner directed him to contact CNHS for details and ask about working together as they have in the past. There was discussion regarding handouts to the neighborhood regarding information on trash pick-up, events, etc. Cox offered the Public Works informational green door hangers for use to staple their information to and utilize for delivering information. This is the same piece used for the Neighborhoods Matter campaign with the CPTED brochure being attached this year. A question was raised regarding housing inspections and Cox replied folks should notify Buck Taylor with the City. The City then notifies the owner of the property and hopefully the problem is solved.

**Center – City / Downtown Development Commission** representative Steve Leyh, Downtown Promotions Director, reported the Hooley Pub Crawl had the highest participation to date. The summer season is returning with Wednesday's Dining Under

the Stars, Farmers Market, Fridays on the Bricks and more. The schedule for the season will be announced on April 2. An Open House of Commercial property is scheduled for May 31 with Mountain Plein Air Quick Draw and CASA Uncorked! Wine Fest scheduled for that same day. Wagoner asked if the history of the buildings could be included in this event packet. They are working with an engineering company on redo the planters with perennials, removing some of the trees, and move the bike lockers. With Leyh's approval, Wagoner suggested the neighborhood groups submit their events to Steve to place online with Downtown events. Jen Judy reminded all that a Facebook page for 'Cumberland Neighborhood Advisory Commission – Cumberland, MD' has been set up and posts can be made on that page as well.

**South Cumberland Business and Civic Association (SCBCA)** representative Terri Hast announced there were 43 members present at the last meeting with Dee Dee Ritchie, Executive Director of Canal Place Authority presenting. Plans are underway for Master Gardeners to hold a teaching workshop at Smith Park. SCBCA's next meeting will be held on April 15.

### **Old Business**

The Street light was fixed on Centre Street.

### **New Business**

Wagoner mentioned the Let's Beautify Cumberland! Day of Caring and Sharing is coming up in May and they need to partner with all neighborhoods to identify potential projects for them to work on that day. Let Nicole know if you have a need as soon as possible.

For the NAC to be able to do more for Cumberland, we need to grow in number. Wagoner asked all present to bring others to the next NAC meeting in April. Hopes fare to begin recruiting members for NAC and individual groups by radio, newspaper, door to door, etc. We need to build neighborhood groups up. Nicole pointed out the neighborhood element of the 2013 comp plans constrained in the leader packets handed out and hopes each group will look at their own neighborhood information for a guideline to help set goals. This work was done to give overview of each neighborhood including: history, changes, character, assets and needs.

### **Public Comment**

Tom Taccino asked that we not market the North End Dumpster Day too soon because folks from other neighborhoods try to use the dumpster and it fills up too soon. Lt. Lepley suggested working with the board of Education to acquire student volunteers who need to accumulate community service to assist in handing out information for various events. Taccino was concerned about the liability issues with this. A suggestion was made to have a neighborhood group supervisor on the street with the volunteers and let them travel the walkways and steps to each door Hedrick said the school counselors would keep track of time served. Cox offered the door hangers again for using to hand over door knobs, fences, etc. A badge or clothing identifying them as neighborhood or school volunteer could be helpful.

Neighborhood Matters will post their schedule on the website and will begin with the hot spots in Cumberland. Allen Hedrick asked if he could accompany the City when they walk the Chapel Hill area.

Pastor Tormod Svensson asked what the City did with properties after the building were demolished. He said his church is looking for a place to build a community garden. Cox replied that the City doesn't want to own the properties, and in cases such as fire damage, they remain in the hands of the current property owners. Often the City would offer a property to the adjacent property owners before putting up for tax sale. Some properties are not very developable such as those on the right side of Baltimore Ave heading out of town. He did say Pastor Svensson should look at 414 Grand Ave. or property on corner of First and Arch Streets as a possibility. Hast agree to send copy of the Virginia Avenue Plan to Svensson as requested.

Wagoner reminded all to sign in before leaving. The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m. and the next meeting will be held on the last Monday of the April 28, at 5:30 p.m.

Respectively submitted,  
Terri Hast

cc: Margie Woodring, City Clerk