GUILFORD ASSOCIATION BOARD –FEBRUARY 2, 2016 MEETING MINUTES

February 2, 2016

7:00 PM, Westcott Room, Second Presbyterian Church

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Margaret Alton, Adrian Bishop, Jarrod Bolte, Elizabeth Comer, Felix Dawson, John Doherty, Anthony Gill, Clarke Griffin, Angela Hamilton, Jeremy Hoffman, Tom Hobbs, Lynda Riley, and Francie Spahn.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Joshua Angulo-Bartlett, Cathy Boyne, Francesco Castellano, Tim Chriss, Carl Coscia, Howard Friedel and Sascha Sheehan.

PRESIDING: Tom Hobbs, Guilford Association President

The minutes from the January 5, 2016 meeting were approved.

**Snow Removal**: Tom Hobbs

After the recent record-breaking snowstorm in January we acknowledge how fortunate we were to have John Wittstadt and his crew plow the Guilford streets. John and a crewmember plowed the streets with two trucks through the night during the peak of the January 23rd storm. Guilford was in much better shape than other neighborhoods surrounding us (Oakenshaw, Tuscany Canterbury, Homeland and Roland Park). Most people in Guilford would have been able to drive on Monday morning, two days after the storm. There were many people in the City and County who were not plowed out for at least five or six days.

There are some streets in Guilford and most alleys that John cannot plow because there is no outlet (Norwood Road) or the alleys with parked vehicles are too narrow for the trucks with their plows.

HMD Landscaping was contracted to shovel the sidewalks along the parks. However, they were unable to do the work. Therefore, John Wittstadt stepped in and his crew did the shoveling.

**Dues Collection**: Tom Hobbs

Most households have paid the mandatory maintenance charges ($172,855 has been received to date). 192 households have not yet paid. Forty-seven percent of those who have paid their mandatory charges have paid the Guilford Association dues and 41% have paid the Guilford Security Patrol (GSP). Sixty percent of York Courts have paid their mandatory charges. (These numbers do include. Greenmount Avenue properties.)

**Baltimore Liquor Board**: Tom Hobbs

In July 2015 Governor Hogan replaced the Board of Liquor License Commissioners (BLLC) for Baltimore City with whom Guilford, Homeland, Pen Lucy and the York Road Partnership and other city communities had been working effectively. The new Liquor Board is more sympathetic to the liquor storeowners and has not been sensitive to the wishes of the surrounding communities. According to information documented by the Community Law Center, the board has granted unauthorized extension of time to complete liquor license transfers; they have accepted and approved incomplete applications for liquor licenses; they have made unauthorized reconsideration of the BLLC decisions; they have approved applications for liquor licenses without serious consideration of prior illegal activities of the applicants; they have adopted BLLC rules and regulations for both alcoholic beverage and adult entertainment licenses without meaningful community comment and involvement.

One of the most egregious examples of the new BLLC’s actions was reversing the suspension of the liquor license for the Stadium Lounge 3351-53 Greenmount Avenue whose owner had been caught by the Baltimore City Police of allowing illegal gambling in the lounge and of hiding money and evidence from the police in his car. The previous BLLC had suspended the Stadium Lounge’s liquor license for six months. The current BLLC removed the suspension after only 71 days. The Guilford Association has sent a letter to our state senator, John Carter Conway, requesting that the Maryland Senate investigate all of these allegations at a hearing.

Further related to the granting of liquor licenses Jarrod reviewed a proposal of Baltimore Good Neighbors Coalition to utilize the zoning process to regulate alcohol outlets. The Board voted to support the proposal. The Homeland Association also has voted to support the effort.

**2016 Board Agenda:** Board members were asked to prepare an outline Board objectives and priority activities for 2016. The statements were discussed as part of the Board meeting.

**Security**: Felix Dawson and Angela Hamilton

Given the current rate of payment of GSP charges (41%), it is anticipated that we will have the same amount of money for GSP as we had last year. Therefore, the hours of coverage will approximately be the same in 2016 as they were in 2015.

Second Presbyterian Church has offered to store the GSP vehicle on the church property. Also, the church will be considering engaging a McRoberts guard that they will pay for to watch the church on Sunday mornings. The specifics are to be pursued with the church and McRoberts.

**Parks**: Margaret Alton

Park, St. Paul median and common ground maintenance will continue with removal and replacement of dead plantings.

We will work with the City and Guilford residents to continue to plant trees in the area between the street and sidewalk where trees are lacking. Bedford Square needs trees as does Sunken Park. We will study how to respond to the emerald ash borer-treat or replace which may be less expensive.

**Sherwood Gardens**: Margaret Alton

We continue to implement the Master Plan as finances permit. Most of the changes to the flowerbeds have been made. Project Olmstead, which involved the planting of summer flowers in the beds, is expected to proceed again. Last year there were eight firms that planted beds and competed. 29 firms have been contacted about planting the flower beds in 2016. There are four confirmations at this time: Bob Jackson, Pinehurst, Beechfield and HMD.

In the past many of the community events such as the Spring Egg Hunt, Dinner at Dusk, and the Halloween Parade have been part of the Stratford Green budget. Going forward community events will be in the Association budget. Stratford Green will pay the cost for and manage Sherwood Gardens fundraising events such as the Holiday Party and the Wine Tasting. Chick Chickering has agreed to chair both in 2016.

The lighting of winter trees in Sherwood Gardens is being reviewed by the Stratford Green trustees. In the future tree lighting will be managed by Stratford Green. Francie Spahn will look into finding a company that might like to do the lighting for free or at a reduced rate for signage.

**Architectural Committee**: Tom Hobbs

On the York Road/Greenmount corridor the real estate downturn has had a big impact. Many of the 100 houses have been purchased by investors and about 25% are now being rented. In general, when a house is rented the upkeep of the property has not been as good as when the property is owner occupied. This change in occupancy has had an impact on the houses that back up to Greenmount making it more difficult to support value and sell the houses on Newland and Juniper Roads.

We are creating a committee to address in a coordinated way the many issues affecting Guilford properties along Greenmount Avenue. There are many violations of the architectural covenants. We are aware that many people on Greenmount are of limited income. To help we will continue to advocate the use of tax credits and try to help with the application process, seek a Healthy Neighborhood designation that would provide below interest loans, participate in the York Road Partnership and initiate greater interaction with the Waverly community.

**Other News**: Tom Hobbs

The State has approved the house for homeless youth on York Road across from Underwood Road. We are pursuing participation in the Section106 process.

It has been determined that some of the commercial properties north of York Courts on York Road are required by the covenants to pay the mandatory maintenance charges. We’re reviewing the deeds of all of the commercial properties.