

Garden District Civic Association

Baton Rouge

GDCA Board Meeting – January 16, 2008

The meeting started at 7 pm at the home of Beverly and Keith Arceneaux. In attendance were Randy Nichols, Tim Page, Becky Lane, Ana Forbes, Cindy Elliott, Carolyn Schwarzhoff, Sonya Pickens, Mary Fontenot, Sandi Lucas, Greta Corona, Mike Schexnayder, and Beverly Arceneaux. The minutes were read and approved.

Sonya gave the financial report. In 2007 \$24,000 was budgeted for security, but only \$22,000 was spent. This is 81% of the dues. More money came in than anticipated in 2007. It is difficult to guess ahead of time how much will be needed. It was suggested that the budgeted amount for security be raised in 2008. Sonya and Mike will work on a budget together. There was some discussion on whether to put the balance sheet on the website. Alex Tucker, a member, has been asking for the balance sheet. It has traditionally been made available to the membership at the annual meeting. Greta said that it should be available to members. Carolyn agreed but just questioned where to put it. Ana thought it would be prudent to look into the ramifications of putting it on the web. A discussion followed. For now the balance will not be posted on the website. Members will be encouraged to come to the annual meeting. Mike offered to call Alex and tell him the information on the phone and tell him that it will be available at the annual meeting. Randy said the topic would be brought up at the annual meeting. Sonya asked for help in stuffing and stamping envelopes at her house this Friday or Saturday night. Mary offered her house because her table is larger. It was decided that volunteers would go to Mary's at 5:30 p.m. on Friday. Sonya said that 1099's for the off duty patrols will be sent out this week. Greta offered to help Sonya by checking the mailbox at the post office for her. Sonya said that she has wanted to send thank you postcards to people when they pay their dues. No decision was made on whether to do that. Carolyn discussed the reasons for replacing the cell phone that the off-duty guards use. It will only cost \$20 to upgrade, we will be able to keep our current \$3 per month contract, and the new phone will have voicemail, which the current phone does not have. The current phone is huge and difficult to use. It is so old that batteries are not available. The board voted unanimously in favor of the upgrade.

Mary listed the upcoming articles in the February newsletter and asked if anyone wanted to submit an article. Mary asked Mike if he would like to write something about his website. Ana offered to ask her grandmother and aunt, who lived in the neighborhood, if they would give an oral history to us. Ana would like to do an article with "Fun Facts" such as how many homes on the National register or how many linear feet in the neighborhood. For the beautification report Mike said that Suzanne spent \$15 at after-Christmas sales to replace outdoor ornaments for the neighborhood signs. Peggy Hilzim is still handling the welcoming committee packets. The next social event is the Easter Egg Hunt on March 16th. Carolyn gave her e-mail list report. The list serve is very active with new people signing up. It is a lot of work because they ask to sign up, but don't give all the requested information so she must go back and forth with them trying to get it. There is no chairman of special events. Cindy said that the Holiday Lighting Contest for the past five consecutive years has been successful and would like to see a line item included in the budget for \$200, the current amount allocated for this event. She so moved and was seconded. The board approved the motion.

Carolyn discussed board nominations. Joe Alton, Randy Nichols, Cindy Elliott, and Ben Broussard do not want to serve on the board again. An e-mail and a solicitation in the December newsletter went to the neighborhood asking for nominations. Alex Tucker, Ellen Alderman, and Ray Mack have expressed an interest. Only Ray Mack has sent in the requested nomination information.

The annual meeting was discussed. Sonya asked that the Garden District Community Garden and Green Thumbs be removed as topics. Greta and Becky said that they wanted to be involved with the Green Thumbs

so Sonya asked to have it put back. Sandi suggested that Historic Guidelines be removed as a topic since they are no longer an issue. Becky volunteered to do the Tour of Homes in 2009. Bev offered to help her. Carolyn will ask Don Stone if he would like to come. Mike suggested we ask one of the patrolmen to come to a board meeting just to meet us. Everyone agreed that was a good idea. Bev offered to get the door prizes for the annual meeting. There is usually 4-6 given out. Carolyn said that she takes the newsletter with her to show that sponsors are mentioned. The annual meeting will be Feb. 24th at Baton Rouge Gallery. Whether to have it at the Christian Science Church was discussed but because there could be no refreshments there, the room is small and they are very strict about getting out by a certain time, it was decided to go ahead with the Gallery. Mike would like the By-laws affirmed at the annual meeting. The board plans to set up a table at the annual meeting and see who are dues paying members as well as collect dues at the meeting. Terms of board members were discussed. It is the intent of the By-laws to have staggered terms so there could be old and new members on the board. Not everyone knew who was up for re-election to their two-year term so the board was going to check. Greta explained the options with bulk mailing for the dues letters and possibly the newsletters. The options are:

1. Permit Imprints: We would have a rubber stamp imprint and/or have the imprint actually printed on the envelopes/mailers. Payment of postage to be rendered at time of mailing. Annual fee is \$175 (to be paid every year) Application fee \$175 (one time fee) minimum mailing 200 pcs. envelope/folded piece \$0.20-0.25 (depends upon weight of mailing)

2. Precanceled Stamps: We buy 10-cent stamps and affix them to the mailer (they are NOT self adhesive and need to be moistened). When items are brought to the post office the balance of the cost will be due (the actual mailing cost is the same as above -- \$0.20-0.25 per item). The stamps are sold in packs of 500 or 3000. Yes, this is more trouble, but there is an up side. If we decide to do this service we will not have to pay the one-time application fee of \$175. We will still have to pay the annual \$175 fee and the cost per piece is identical to the permit imprint service.

No one wanted to deal with the precanceled \$0.10 stamps.

If the mail is undeliverable do to wrong name or incorrect address there is a forwarding charge to return it to the sender. For each envelope it is \$0.50. For anything other than an envelope it is \$1.00. Greta figured that for one mailing it does not pay off, but for three it does.* Sonya said that we usually have three mailings a year. Last year we only had two. The problem lies with the returned mail. Bulk is so expensive to return and for dues the treasurer likes to know what is an incorrect address. Mary volunteered to see if she could get a map of house numbers from the Permitting and Zoning Office. Using bulk mail for the newsletter was discussed. Carolyn brought up the problems with using Glenn. He must be scheduled and he doesn't deliver in the rain. It was decided that he is less expensive than bulk mailing. Mike motioned to postpone any bulk mail decision until the next board meeting. Greta seconded it. The motion passed.

Security at Halloween was a topic on the list serve last Halloween. Mike thought that we should mention it at the annual meeting and ask who would like to head a committee to deal with it. There was a time in the past when men in vests patrolled the neighborhood and were very visible outside. Becky (Tomlinson) Moppert organized it for a few years. Closer to next Halloween we will encourage neighbors to not dress too scary. It was thought that this might have been the reason for a reported problem.

Baton Rouge High was on the agenda, but the School Board already made their decision to restore it if the tax election succeeds. Cindy suggested we invite someone to speak about the school tax. Mary offered to ask someone. The next board meeting will be Feb. 20, 2008.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Fontenot
Secretary

(*Greta was figuring her numbers with hundreds too few homes so the secretary refigured it and it should be worth it with two mailings.)