

Garden District Civic Association

Baton Rouge

Wednesday, May 16, 2007

The meeting was held at Heather and John Westra's house. President Randy Nichols opened by having everyone introduce themselves. The minutes of the last meeting were accepted. Treasurer Sonya Pickens gave the financial report. The Tour of Homes broke even. Sonya will need help in June with folding and stamping for another dues mail out. Mike Schexnayder gave the security report in Joe Alton's absence. Mike said that he would check the patrol log.

The Historic Guidelines for Roseland Terrace and Kleinert Terrace were discussed. They had come before the Metro-Council but were deferred until the June Metro-Council meeting because Larry Firmin and Mike Glisson said they had not received any mail about the Guidelines. Lorri Burgess chose to defer the vote so that everyone could be notified. She offered to mail everyone a hard copy at city expense. She said she has received e-mails opposing the guidelines. Kristin Sanders, from the Planning Office and Mark Upton spoke in favor of the Guidelines. Martha said that Mark suggests we call an emergency meeting to discuss the Historic Guidelines. Mike Schexnayder said he would look into securing a place for the meeting during a week day evening. A flyer will be delivered door-to-door announcing the meeting to discuss the Historic Guidelines. He will check with Mark Upton to make sure he is available. Pam Rice offered to get a screen and laptop.

Representatives are needed for the HPC. Mark has represented Drehr Place, but asked to now represent Roseland Terrace, since he has moved to Roseland Terrace. Martha Salomon is a general member at large, appointed by Lorri Burgess. Suzanne Schexnayder offered to represent Drehr Place. Ana suggested Jennifer Zell be asked to represent Kleinert Terrace. Suzanne and Jennifer were both approved.

Mary Fontenot said there might be a newsletter in June. Advertisers have been steady lately. Suzanne had no Beautification Report. Carolyn Schwarzhoff said that Peggy Hilzlim continues to deliver the welcoming packets to new neighbors. Heather asked if there was anything in the packet to inform the new neighbors that it is an Historic District. Martha said she would check with Kristin about deed restrictions. Some go way back. Maybe they could be put in the welcoming packet. Maybe zoning information could be put in the packet. Randy said that since there will be no Board meeting before the 4th of July, he and Heather will work out the details. Flo Ulmer, who was present, offered to host it in her yard. Carolyn Schwarzhoff said there were no controversies with the list-serve. There are 350 members on it. Greta Corona gave a report on the Tour of Homes. She thanked the hosts and helpers. Three houses and one garden made \$284.84. They sold 148 tickets. In 2005 they sold 240 tickets.

Randy introduced State Representative Michael Jacks on and Alfred Williams, from the Mayor's Office, who both arrived after the initial introductions. Randy gave a synopsis of the concerns about the group home for boys on Camelia at Government. David Haddad brought e-mails from Chris Faducia in 2004 with similar complaints. The boys are not always bad. As they rotate in and out it changes. They tend to prowl around at 1 and 2 in the morning. In the last two months he found some of them climbing on roofs from the alley to get to the VOA Girl's Home on Government St. He said there are never problems with the Girl's Home because they are well supervised. The boys have misdemeanor type activities rather than criminal. They leave their cigarette butts around, drink beer, kicked in the back fence, and tore pickets off Miss Norckauer's fence. He has been there since 1999. Sometimes it is quiet for one or two months, sometimes a week. He has never seen a supervisor. Once there was a boy crying on his front steps. The said the boys beat him up. David called the police, who took him back. A different boy came over later and said he was the supervisor. He was a teenager. The house borders the alley on Wisteria. Since he has been there 3 burglaries have taken place. There have been 3 arrests.

Things were stolen from the front porch. He saw some sort of transaction take place with someone in a car. There have been items stolen from the front porch. The boys may not have done that. David sees them out of school and wonders about truancy. He sees them throw lit cigarettes at the garage. Laura Glissy lives opposite the home. She was burglarized.

Whoever did it got a loaded gun. The boys have never been inappropriate or disrespectful to her, but she worries about their well being. Margaret said that in 2004 she and Chris went to the Board and made a formal complaint about the home. John Rice said that two Saturdays ago the Bousserts, who live across the street, saw the boys taking pickets off Mary Elizabeth Norckauer's fence. The supervisor, Mr. Dawson, said, "Oh, yeah, I know." When asked where they were he said, "We have them." When the tree fell on the group home recently, rather than hire a professional to cut it down, Collis Temple arrived with a forklift, wench and tow truck. Ms. Norckauer told him that this was not the way to do it. She tried her best to stop him. Then they caused the tree to fall on her fence, further damaging it. David said the tree should have been cut down but Collis Temple waited until it fell on the house. John said that he would go check for a logbook because there are national accreditation standards that require the boys sign in and out of a log book.

There are two different offices that oversee the home, the Department of Social Services and the Office of Youth Development. Randy said that the two offices do not coordinate. Susie Kruse said that the boys put a telephone book next to a neighbor's fence and set it on fire. They beat up a boy against her screen and tore her screen. She has had bikes stolen from her garage. Flo said that when Collis Temple owned the group home at Government and Drehr in 1991-92 there was a lot of vandalism. It was closed because there were too many people in it. She is for getting his home out of the neighborhood. There was a general agreement in the room about concern for the boys. There was a discussion of what can be done. Rep. Jackson suggested a meeting with Collis Temple. John said there is a credibility issue and Suzanne added that we already had an unsatisfactory meeting where he dominated the discussion. The neighbors said that they have a difficult time getting the police to come out. Alfred Williams said the Mayor's office could help get the police out and make sure they write reports. He suggested that if we have another meeting with Collis Temple, that we have a mediator to run it, possibly a social worker. Mr. Williams said he would check with the Capital Area Human Services to get a mediator. He understood that we don't mind the house being there. We just want them to be good citizens. He suggested we have a meeting soon. Rep. Jackson said that he would contact Dept. of Social Services and Collis Temple. There was some discussion as to whether we want them well supervised or closed. There was general agreement that we do not have a lot of faith in Collis Temple improving things, but will follow the procedure with DSS. The nearby residents were asked to please write down the things they see and when they happened. Martha moved that the GDCA should write a formal statement to DSS and the Office of Youth Development raising the concerns about supervision. Mike seconded it. David Haddad also suggested a follow-up meeting with the mayor's office about the police response. He also suggested that our mediator be familiar with the rules and regs governing the group home. Pam Rice set a short timeline (30-40 days) to revisit the issue. Perhaps early next week we could have a meeting. Randy will make contacts. There can be a follow up meeting with Rep. Jackson and DSS. Alfred Williams asked that when we e-mail Lorri Burgess we cc: him. (acwilliams@brgov.com)

Mike reported that the drainage problems continue. Three homes flooded last weekend on Park, Cherokee, and Tulip. Sonya's garage on Tulip flooded. There were 4 dead rats and 3 dead mice in it.

Rep. Jackson reported on two projects. On Florida Blvd. there will be a new federally qualified health center called Capital City Health Center, with a sliding fee scale. A bill has been filed to develop a tax increment (TIF) for Westmoreland. This is how the Hilton downtown was developed. Baton Rouge Foundation also helped the Hilton. Tax Increment Financing projects what revenues would come from it and gets state bond money to build it. The bond is paid off with anticipated sales and property tax revenue.

The state loses if the property doesn't work. The city would have to okay giving up some sales tax. The prop-

erty is selling for \$6 million. Martha thought that land would be put to good use by having a community use of it. Downtown does not have anymore space to expand. That land could go for educational purposes, meeting space, etc. The city could take \$1million from commercial development block grant money toward its development. Ana said she would like the area to be more pedestrian friendly. When asked about it, Rep. Jackson said that traffic counts were too high to make Government St. three lanes. David added that if there are condos built there, they might want an entertainment center.

Randy Nichols adjourned the meeting.