

Hillcrest Community Civic Association
Monthly Meeting
December 6, 2003

Minutes

Pastor Senger called the meeting to order at 10:10 am, and commended Members for attendance in the midst of a snowstorm. The minutes of the November meeting were approved on a voice vote.

Vince Spaulding reported on the morning's Board meeting, saying that guidelines for controlling meeting time would be presented at the January meeting; that the Board had approved Pastor Kenneth Burke as the new Parliamentarian; that Legislative and Education committee chairmanships remained open; and that Dennis Logan was retiring as chair of Neighborhood Watch. Pastor Senger then noted that the Board had also approved Mr. Spaulding's accession to the presidency of HCCA, and Mr. Spaulding said that the Board had named Pastor Senger President Emeritus.

Recreation chair Mark Johnson said the foundation is in for the new Rec Center, and asked for volunteers for HCCA's 15th Anniversary celebration, planned for the second week in September. Education chair Carrie Thornhill praised the acting DCPS superintendent Elfreda Massie, and noted that the Board of Education has approved an FY2005 budget within the Mayor's mark. She said that work on the second building at Randle-Highlands has not started yet due to overspending on Phase 1, which has been true of every DCPS modernization effort so far.

During the Public Safety report, Lloyd Davis of Erie Street reported another serious accident damaging his property. Kathy Chamberlain said this underscored the importance of getting a traffic light at Branch and Erie. Environment Chair Phil Hammond said the forthcoming Dec. 13 cleanup was still on. There followed a brief discussion of enforcement of the "Do Not Enter" signs, and Kathy Chamberlain suggested adding the topic to the next PSA 610 meeting agenda.

Vince Spaulding introduced several speakers for a discussion of the status of the Skyland project. Ted Carter of the NCRC said that Skyland remains "very important" to NCRC, and that "no one has retreated from it." However, the financing plan has changed. Since the District can no longer underwrite the full cost, NCRC will rely on revenues from the sale of the GPO building to finance the outstanding balance. He said they are working with Kevin Chavous on eminent domain legislation to be introduced in January as a "last resort, and said they have identified two tenants including a grocery and discount department store.

Paul Savage asked when the question of a grocery will be vetted with the community, and why there have not been more NCRC investments in the East Washington area. Mr. Carter replied that the developer feels that foot traffic will drive retail; he added that next

year's focus is East of the River and Georgia Avenue and that "I'll resign if I don't get something done here by this time next year."

The panel responded to a series of questions. Members asked the panel why NCRC does not "spend the first dollar" to show faith in the project even if the financing is not complete. Alex Nyhan (of Deputy Mayor Eric Price's staff) said that the Mayor has committed \$12.2 million and said the money will be forthcoming. Aakash Thakkar of NCRC said that \$20 million must be in the bank in order to invoke "fast-track" authority for this site. Mr. Nyhan said a low-cost HUD loan is another option for financing, but that the city is looking for the fastest, safest way to obtain funding and may not need to take this route if proceeds from the GPO sale are available soon enough. Asked whether developers will remain on board with the long delay, Mr. Carter said that mid-February will be critical.

Mr. Carter agreed to provide more information on paper about the steps ahead. Mr. Savage requested written responses to questions developed by HCCA leadership. Mr. Spaulding concluded by saying that Skyland will be a top priority in his term as President of HCCA.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 pm, with 30 Members and guests present.

*Respectfully submitted,
Nelson Smith
Recording Secretary*