

Clifton Heights Neighborhood Association Minutes **March 23, 2009**

President Becky Hughes called the meeting to order at 7:05pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Minutes of the February meeting were distributed, read, and a motion to accept as presented was made, seconded, and approved.

President Becky Hughes presented the President's Report. CHNA elections are next month; Josh and Julie will be stepping down; Becky would stay on, but would prefer to move into the VP position; Tiny is willing to stay on as Treasurer; any member can run for any position. Woody is heading the nomination committee; talk with him or any of the officers if you are interested in being on the Board.

Vice President Josh Wiese presented the Vice President's Report. There are developments with the former Senior Center in the former Presbyterian Church that we need to share with you. As many of you are aware, CHNA was the registered agent for the Senior Center, and there were tax issues related to the closing of the Senior Center...some of which have lingered on. We had not brought up before because it was ongoing and had hoped to get it worked out. Last year the IRS came to Josh's house and said that CHNA owed a substantial amount for federal employment and regular taxes related to the Senior Center, and that they were going to place a lien on his house. He told them that the Senior Center no longer exists, but they reiterated that they wanted their money. Josh worked for the better part of a year and got part of it settled...the 941 form (employee's tax filing); originally the IRS wanted \$6000, he got it reduced to ~\$180 in penalties. However, the income tax form (990) was never filed in 2004 and was overdue by several years, and they were adamant. They wanted ~\$5780 (all from fines for not filing taxes, not for taxes owed; each day they were not filed we accrued fines, interest, and penalties), and Josh has arranged an installment plan in which CHNA will pay \$192 per month for 24 months (\$4608 total). There were accounts from the Senior Center which were kept separate to handle in Senior Center debts; these accounts were with a different bank and the statements did not come to the CHNA PO Box. Tiny will go over the finances in more detail, but those accounts have been cashed out and *do* have sufficient funds to pay the IRS. The payments will be automatically debited by the IRS directly from our account, and nobody on future CHNA Boards will have to deal with this at all. None of the payments to the IRS will come from CHNA funds. **Member Questions:** *Does the Board have liability insurance? If not we should get it.* Josh thinks yes, but not sure. All other boards he's been on have had it. *Why not pay it if we can?* Because the IRS knew we didn't have the \$5780, but if we were able to pay most of it up-front then we would have had to pay the additional money. If there's no penalty for paying it early, we'll do that. The agreement starts on May 1st. *The person who was doing the food service is still in business, why is the IRS not going after her?* She's still in business, but using a different tax number; we were the registered agent for the Senior Center, and as such we were responsible. We didn't file taxes for four years. We had already been put into collection. We negotiated what we could. *We should have a tax attorney look at it. Do we have someone in the neighborhood who knows someone who would do it pro bono?* If someone else wants to take over being the contact with the IRS, they are welcome to take over the process. (Alderman Waterhouse offered to contribute \$500 towards a tax attorney).

Tiny Schaper presented the Treasurer's Report. You already lost one treasurer because of this IRS mess. This Board was not part of this mess, but CHNA's name was on the documents, so we are liable. A few months ago, Tiny started getting statements from accounts he knew nothing about: one for ~\$450; another for ~\$4000. It turned out that these accounts were related to the former Senior Center and were now under CHNA control. Tiny moved the money from two separate Commerce Bank accounts into a new savings account at 1st Community Credit Union. Commerce Bank account #8382 had \$4370.07 and account #0799 had \$455.75 in it, for a total of \$4825.82. After a \$3.50 fee for getting a cashier's check, he deposited **\$4822.32 in a new interest-bearing 1st Community Credit Union SAVINGS account.** CHNA's primary

checking account was at Southwest Bank, but they started charging us an “analysis fee”. Tiny opted close the account and move all our banking to 1st Community Credit Union, so that all of our money is in one bank. The **starting balance of \$3210.35** (after the \$2 analysis fee) from the Southwest Bank account was transferred into a new 1st Community Credit Union CHECKING account. He has since **paid \$180.61** to the IRS and **deposited \$370** (a \$175 donation from TML properties, \$25 in TML business membership dues, and individual dues memberships), leaving a **total balance of \$3399.74 in the CHECKING account and \$4822.32 in the SAVINGS account.**

Public Officials:

Our new 2nd District Police Captain Ronnie Robinson introduced himself the CHNA. He noted that property crime (mostly vehicle thefts and larcenies) is up in our neighborhood, but fortunately we have no other crime in the neighborhood. In short: park smart, don’t leave personal items in the cars, never leave car running (5-8am is highest vehicle theft period). The Police will deliver clubs for \$11. He will have Don Veile know that they will do an article on “parking smart” for our neighborhood newsletter. People are coming down from North St Louis and doing “quick licks” (hop off the interstate, drop off several guys to scout out cars and break into them, meet at a strategic place and get back on the highway). The Police are discovering 2nd District property in North St. Louis. It’s a non-violent raid, but he has a zero-tolerance approach. They have also had guys posing as roofers and breaking into houses (kicking in back doors). You know who your neighbors are; call 911 if you see anything suspicious. Their “manpower” is greater than has been in last 10yrs: 77 officers. He has instituted foot-beats in the higher “crime” sections, burglary detail, plain clothes officers in unmarked cars, crime analysis every two weeks. He gave a presentation on burglary in the district at the 2nd District Public Affairs Meeting, and agreed to give the presentation at a CHNA meeting (how to protect your home, photos of people who had been arrested or are wanted for burglaries in the second district); we should let Don know what day would be good. He will be coming back to additional meetings. Call him at 444-0120 if you have a concern for him (his direct line; leave a message if he doesn’t answer it).

24th Ward Alderman Bill Waterhouse. The banners are going up; not anything else going on. The next session begins March 27th, and Tuesday will be the regular meeting.

NSO Maria Cuciureanu was not able to attend, but sent materials. MSD Clean Rivers open house will be Thursday April 2nd at Lindenwood Park Neighborhood. MSD is selling rain barrels; you DO need to talk to them about hookup to downspouts.

Matt Luzecki on behalf of 65th District State Representative Michele Kratky. She sent copies of her Capitol Report and the bills she’s proposed. Two tax credits (disabled individuals who work 25+ hours, and a rehabbing tax credit if you live in property while rehabbing).

Special Guest:

Rebecca Rogers, candidate for the St. Louis School Board. She lives in the 24th ward and is a professor at UMSL. She teaches teachers, she’s established reading programs in the city schools. The elected school board *still exists* (right now it’s an oversight of the state board and communicates with the public). The state appointed board expires in 2011; School Board terms are for 4years, so this group would still be on Board during the transition back to elected School Board. She would like to increase the communication, get out information about schools. As an educator, she brings a set of expertise. She’s been an elected board member for the National Reading Conference and the National Council for Research in Language and Literacy. She would work to have certified teachers in every classroom and to make sure that every elementary school teacher is a literacy specialist. She would like full-service community schools (neighborhood/district/magnet schools) instead of having schools close (health care, GED, before and after

school care). Right now they are closing schools so that they can right-size the school/student rate. She's an advocate for in-sourcing for services (maintenance, food, transportation, groundskeeping). They are opening more charter schools as they close the public schools. Charter schools receive \$2000 more than public schools per child, but are not always providing the services they are supposed to. They are operating as their own educational agents. With charter schools under public schools, there would be some accountability. Students leaving St. Louis Public Schools are going to the county, not into charter schools...and the funding goes with them. The district is at a critical juncture, the magnet schools are neighborhood schools...and there's a long waiting list for them. St. Louis is expecting an influx of students with the end of voluntary desegregation in the next couple of years. The election is April 7th; please vote.

Old Business:

Vote on TML's Hampton/Columbia property rehab project. CHNA members voted whether or not they supported "TML Properties' proposed plan for the property located at Hampton and Columbia". Josh Weise and Alderman Waterhouse are counted the votes: 15 in favor, 2 opposed. The vote was to support TML properties' proposed plan.

CHNA Board election is next month. We still need a Secretary candidate. Becky and Tiny are willing to be on the Board another year. Anyone can run for any position. Being on the Board can be fun and you get to help the neighborhood.

For the Good of the Neighborhood:

New Neighbors: Levi Miller, 6281 Reber; Julie Harter and her husband, 6270 Magnolia; Tony Bauer, 6251 Magnolia.

Coffee in the Park will start on April 25th.

The Neighborhood Easter Egg Hunt will be at 1pm on Saturday April 11th; all kids 8 and under are welcome to participate. Park cleanup will begin at 10am. Mike Foster from the 7-11 has helped w/ Easter Egg hunt for years and will be providing treats again this year.

AMVETS will be having a BBQ at noon on April 4: pork steaks, chicken, ribs, 2 sides. On Sunday April 5th, the AMVETS auxiliary will be hosting a **breakfast with the Easter Bunny** from 8-11am. If you are running late, just call Vicky (781-4071). On April 18 AMVETS will have **another BBQ** with: pork steaks, ribs, hamburgers.

Eric Post gave an update on the **pond clean-up**. The Parks Dept pulled out most of the stuff; there's probably no need to do a major cleanup.

Mike Foster, there is a **business district on Watson Road** and part of its purpose is beautification (making it a destination not a thoroughfare). They are having a Trivia Night on April 17th.

The next meeting will be at 7:00pm on Monday April 27th.

Motion to adjourn made, seconded, and adjourned at 8:25pm.