

Forest Hills Neighborhood Association

April 21, 2016

Meeting Notes

Attendees: 7 Residents

Staff Present: Ross Zelenske, Neighborhood Liaison/City Planner; three members of Ladder 3 (HFD); and Police Officer Kyle Brown (HPD A-PACT)

Meeting Notes:

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM by Gwen Belk.

Gwen Belk introduced herself as the neighborhood group leader and welcomed some of the new faces to the meeting. She explained the purpose of the meeting and items on the agenda. With the firefighters and police officers running late, Planner Ross Zelenske offered to start off the meeting with his items.

He provided the following information:

- Ross started by passing around the April edition of the City Snippets newsletter, which included information on upcoming activities and notices. The Sails Original Music Series was the highlight of the April edition. You can view the most recent newsletter on the City of Hickory's website at <http://www.hickorync.gov/content/city-snippets>.
- Ross stated that at the last meeting he went over the timeline for the bond projects and that the first RFQ, which was for the City Walk, was released this week. Qualified firms will be given time to respond to the RFQ. The City hopes to review a number of responses and begin making a decision based on the qualifications and ability to stay within budget and on time.
- While on the topic of City Walk, Ross mentioned that the City had received approval to reapply for the TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) grant by City Council. The City has revised its application from the previous year to make it more competitive. The City met with US DOT who carries out the TIGER grant program to discuss critiques of the unsuccessful application. As such, the City is now seeking to use a portion of the TIGER grant funds to go toward the City Walk, but also toward a new North-South trail from the Ridgeview neighborhood to the SALT Block. This new section will add a more diverse group of residents and businesses, incorporate connectivity between libraries/cultural/recreational facilities, and be closer to the Frye medical campus, all of which will help strengthen the application. Ross mentioned that he would provide a conceptual look of this trail, when one becomes available. If this grant was received, this would free up a good portion of money already allotted to the City Walk, which would be used toward other high scoring bond projects, which were unfunded. As part of strengthening the application, one of the items Hickory needed to do was showcase community support. As such, Gwen, on behalf of the Forest Hills Neighborhood Association, was nice enough to submit a letter of support for the city's effort to retain the grant. Other neighborhoods, boards, and

businesses have also been asked to help. Ross thanked Gwen for her and the neighborhood's support. Ross asked if there were any questions on the bond projects before he moved on. There were none.

Ross then provided information on other projects going on around the City.

- At the last meeting or two ago, Ross mentioned that McDonald's on Highway 321 would be rebuilt. He brought a set of site plans and building elevations for the group to see. He mentioned that the new McDonald's would be completed rather quickly and would look similar to the setup on Highway 70 near the Green Park neighborhood.
- Ross provided a brief recap of the Lake Hickory Marina's request for a Special Use Permit to open a bar at the marina. Ross stated that the request was heard and that they had a rather large turnout from the neighborhood in Caldwell County. Folks in support and against the effort spoke at the hearing. In the end, the Commission agreed with the staff recommendation to deny the permit. Ross stated that the applicants still have about two weeks left to appeal that decision to the court system.
- Ross provided a handout of the press release from the new "Safe Exchange Zone" that the Police Department created at its headquarters near downtown. Captain Cates from the Fire Department elaborated on the purpose of the space. Two parking stalls that are outside the police station and are under camera surveillance are now able to be used for purchases between parties and other exchanges, such as child custody agreements. For instance, if you planned to buy something online, rather than going to a stranger's house, both parties could agree to carry out the transaction at the exchange zone.
- A meeting between the Lackey Family team and City of Hickory occurred earlier this week. The Lackey's have signed a contract with an architectural firm to move the design from concept to actual building plans. The City and Lackey's are now closer to finalizing an agreement on who will be responsible for what upgrades at the new park. Ross stated the timeline has now been pushed back, with a turn dirt date in late 2016. He will continue to keep the group updated.
- On a final note, Ross reminded residents that the Earth Day/Arbor Day event will be at the SALT Block green on Saturday morning starting at 10am. City reps will be giving out free trees and seeds.

Police Officer Brown from the Hickory Police Department introduced himself and provided the following report:

- An MVC occurred on Old Lenoir Road. A motor vehicle theft occurred at the Quail Run Condos. Officer Brown stated that the victims left the car unlocked with keys in the vehicle. He stressed that residents should avoid doing this, as this enables a crime of opportunity. A stolen firearm was located during an attempted suicide call on 12th St Dr NW. A service call also occurred after a concerned citizen reported a suspicious person. The subject was found to be intoxicated and taken to the jail to sober up. Brown stated those were just some of the highlights of the past month.

- A citizen inquired if Officer Brown had heard about a report of stolen pavers from her neighbor on 11th St NW. Officer Brown said he had not. She stated that it had occurred recently and that her neighbor, who worked for the Police Department, wanted residents in Forest Hills to be aware of the theft and to watch out.
 - Officer Brown stated that he was surprised to hear that this occurred, given that these items are generally not targeted, but did remind residents that when you are performing yard work to avoid leaving the house and garage doors unlocked while working around the house. Criminals will come in and steal items if they think you are distracted and they can get inside easily. Additionally, everyone should continue to lookout for suspicious individuals. With the warmer seasons upon us, more people are out and about, so it is easy to overlook a criminal eyeing up houses for potential break-ins.
- Officer Brown also mentioned that May 7th from 8am to 10am at the Chick-Fil-A in Viewmont the Police Department will be hosting a Coffee with Cops event. He encouraged residents to come out and meet the police officers of Adam PACT.

Captain Cates provided the following report for the Hickory Fire Department:

- There have been a total of 19 incidents in the past month. A majority, 12, have been EMS calls, with 4-5 calls being false alarms, and another two calls for an electrical malfunction. He reported that no MVCs had occurred, which was the first in a while, however there had been a large increase in mulch fires. He stated that this was because of the hot and dry weather combined with people throwing out cigarettes while driving. If you do smoke, please be very cautious with disposal of cigarettes and don't litter. Additionally, open burning is not permitted within the city limits except for small, contained fires for warmth, cooking, and religious events. Any brush that needs to be removed should be brought near the road and Public Services notified to confirm they will take it for you.
- It was also mentioned that hydrant maintenance has been occurring and that residents should be on the lookout for firefighters flushing the hydrants. Water discoloration is likely to occur. Do not run laundry loads or hot water if the water is discolored. Instead, turn an outside spigot on for a minute. The City's Fire Department Facebook page will announce which districts will have hydrant flushing going on in advance. Forest Hills is in Fire Hydrant District 20.
 - A citizen noted for the new attendees that the Fire & Life Safety Division will give out free smoke detectors and CO alarms when available and will install them for free.
 - *Contact them at 323-7522 and ask to speak with Terri Byers.*

With no other items for discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:34 PM.

Next Meeting:

May 19, 2016 at 7:00 PM at Geitner-Rotary Park. Notes recorded by Ross Zelenske.