

Forest Hills Neighborhood Association

August 18, 2016

Meeting Notes

Attendees: 4 Residents

Staff Present: Ross Zelenske, Neighborhood Liaison/City Planner; Battalion Chief Fisher and three members of Engine 3 (HFD); Police Lieutenant Edwards and Police Officer Lee (HPD A-PACT)

Meeting Notes:

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 PM by Gwen Belk.

Gwen Belk introduced herself as the neighborhood group leader and thanked everyone for attending. She stated they are continuing to recruit neighbors to come to the meeting and be active in the group. She then asked for the neighborhood police report.

Police Lieutenant Edwards from the Hickory Police Department introduced himself as the new commander for Adam PACT. He stated that Lieutenant Hildebrand had been transferred to Community Services. He provided the following report:

- He stated that for the past two months there had been no calls for service in the Forest Hills neighborhood. He stated even he was surprised to see no calls, although there had been calls in the area surrounding the neighborhood. One call included a theft of McDonald's toys from an unlocked vehicle at a park.
- Lieutenant Edwards provided a hand out sticker which had the Police Department's phone number for calls that are important, but of a non-emergency nature. The number takes you directly to the PD's Dispatch Center. He stated that people will sometimes see suspicious behavior, but not want to make a big deal out of it by calling 911 or looking up the number to call, which is why he is providing everyone the number.
- He then stated that the scam phone calls that were reported awhile back are still going around town. Do not fall for these scams involving money transfers or impersonations. If you do receive one, please contact the Police Department.
- Home break-ins around the city appear to be down. Edwards went over the Department's home watch program. Officer Lee stated police will check on your home a few times a day if you report that you will be out of town.
- Lieutenant Edwards noted you should avoid taking your trash out early if you are going to be away, as well as, avoid placing the flag on your mailbox up early if you are mailing something outbound. These are easy ways for criminals to target you.

Battalion Chief Fisher provided the following report for the Hickory Fire Department:

- There have been a total of 3 incidents in the past month for the neighborhood. All have been EMS calls.

- Chief Fisher noted that school is starting up again and discussed school bus safety and related. The FD provided a handout to pass around to neighbors.
- Chief Fisher also noted that recently a citizen inquired about the number of fire apparatus responding to calls. Fisher stated that depending on the call type, more apparatus may be needed. Many times, emergencies, such as a fire alarm that was accidentally set off, will still result in multiple fire engines. He stated that even if you cancel a fire alarm, one engine will still respond to confirm there is no fire. This policy is in place because a commercial fire alarm was once accidentally cancelled when there was actually a fire.
- A citizen then inquired about suspicious phone calls and mail then have received requesting donations the fire department and police department. The FD and PD said they do not solicit donations via mail or telephone and that tax dollars are used to pay for their services. Lieutenant Edwards stated this is probably a scam that involves impersonating a charity. The citizen stated she thought so and hung up on them.

Ross Zelenske, City Planner, provided the following info on local projects around Hickory:

- Ross passed around the August edition of the City Snippets newsletter, which included information on upcoming activities and notices. You can view the most recent newsletter on the City of Hickory's website at <http://www.hickorync.gov/content/city-snippets>.
 - Lieutenant Edwards stated that the upcoming Police Academy was probably too close to the starting to date to enroll in now, but another would likely be offered next year.
- Ross then provided a flyer on an upcoming Planning Department workshop on brownfields in the Highway 70 SW area. The city has received funding from the EPA to help plan for the reuse for the area, which includes the Ridgeview, Green Park, and West Hickory neighborhoods. Mailers were sent to many of these residents who are in the target area. He stated this is an opportunity to help envision how to improve the disinvested area and what the community hopes to see the area redeveloped into one day. The event will start August 23 at 6 PM at the Ridgeview Rec Center. See more - <http://www.hickorync.gov/content/planning-workshops-be-held-august-23-25>
- A flyer was then pass around regarding upcoming bridge work that would impact the neighborhood. Repairs are going to be made to the bridge on 21st Avenue NW not far from Glenn Hilton Park. These repairs are not emergency in nature and funding for this project was requested over a year ago. Work will begin August 22nd and last until mid-September. Traffic will be delayed as one lane will be shutdown. A temporary traffic light will be in place. The company that is completing this work was the same company that was working on the North 127 Bridge from Hickory to Alexander County. The City's Engineering Division is overseeing the project.
- Ross talked about the overflow parking area for Glenn Hilton Park that is nearing completion. A crosswalk was installed with warning lights to ensure pedestrians can safely cross the road. Ross believed that a gate was installed to keep folks

from regularly using it, which would keep pedestrian crossing down. Drivers should be cognizant in this area from now on.

Ross then provided information on the Bond projects and related.

- City Council will be making a decision on the contract that has been tentatively agreed upon by city staff and AMEC Foster Wheeler regarding the Highway 321 Gateways at the next Council meeting. A contract with AMEC will also be discussed with Council for the Citywalk.
- The draft version of the RFQ for the Riverwalk was reviewed recently by top city staff according to Ross and will be going on in September.
- Ross also mentioned that the City has created a new Bond Manager position to oversee the work. He mentioned that the previous consultant overseeing the process began contract renewal talks with the City awhile back. An agreement over the amount to be paid could not be reached. City management did not feel that the amount requested was reasonable given the work being provided and made the decision to create a new position to keep costs down and in house. The new hire will start in the next couple of weeks.
- Ross inquired if anyone had been able to attend in the recent Highway 321 meetings by NCDOT. He mentioned that the meetings received a lot of good feedback from residents and city staff. The drawings provided were preliminary and changes will need to be made to address issues with access and traffic flow. He stated these drawings are available online through NCDOT's website or by coming in person to City Hall at the Planning Department. He stated it would be much easier to see the drawings posted at City Hall for those interested. He clarified that this is a State project and that the City only had so much say.
 - A citizen asked if there would be another meeting to discuss revisions. Ross stated he was unsure, but anticipated that there would be another. He felt that NCDOT would probably not finalize something without a good amount of support.
 - The project may result in one of the existing bridges being kept and used for pedestrian purposes. Ross said he was unsure how likely this would be of happening, but it would link to the Riverwalk project.
- The Friends of Hickory Park is under construction. The park will be named Lowes Foods City Park (given the generous donation) and will eventually become a city maintained park after completion.
- Ross also mentioned the City Manager position was vacated by Mick Berry awhile back. The City has already advertised the position. He understood that Council will be meeting soon to discuss how to proceed with applications and the interview process. He stated he will provide updates, if the local news media does not get to them first.

With no other items for discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:38 PM.

Next Meeting:

September 15, 2016 at 7:00 PM at Geitner-Rotary Park. Notes recorded by Ross Zelenske.