

Minutes of the WPCNA Meeting: 06/12/18

Education House, 5 Homeside Lane

Open Discussion: Air BNB, Bicycle Program, Downtown Development

WPCNA Board Members attending:

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| Bill Brady | Co-President |
| Andrew Custodio | Co-President |
| Chris Price | Co-Vice President |
| Ron Palmer | Co-Vice President |
| Ruthmarie Hicks | Recording Secretary |
| Tom Osbeck | Treasurer |

City Officials Present:

Common Councilman Dennis Krolian

Bill Brady Called the meeting to order.

It was announced that County Executive George Latimer would be the guest speaker for October.

The dues were mentioned since several neighborhood associations had yet to pay them \$25/year/neighborhood.

Topic I: AirBnb:

Dennis Krolian: House on Soundview had an Airbnb. This was the only one that came to the attention of the Common Council. People who owned the house were concerned about a hotel tax.

Billy Brady: Some homes are just regular rentals and not specifically short-term Airbnb - type rentals.

Dianne - an Airbnb host from Tarrytown: She is a single parent with three children and is in favor of it. You provide your social security number and it goes on your tax returns. They make sure you actually own the home. She feels not embracing it is short-sighted.

Ron Palmer: mentions that this specifies income taxes coming out. Also that there is a home that is being renting out as a hostel.

Dennis Krolan: The income taxes are transparent. But in residential neighborhoods, certain businesses are prohibited. It becomes a zoning issue. The status is not clear in White Plains. Doris Sassour's house was an example of such an arrangement in a residential neighborhood.

Deborah Zipf: There is an issue with condos and apartment houses having people using their units as Airbnb's. Co-ops and condos probably shouldn't allow it. It is hard to police or regulate.

Alan Goldman: One of the things to love about White Plains is that you know everyone in your neighborhood. But mentioned that he didn't move to his neighborhood with the idea that people would subsidize their housing with Airbnb's. There are also an enormous number of buildings coming. Could people buy units they never intend to live in and convert them to Airbnb's?

Ron Palmer: There is plenty of room for the city to lay down some ground rules.

Lou Kanner - from Renyl Park: We have neighborhood watch signs and most people don't want strangers in their neighborhoods coming in and out randomly. Residential areas should be for residential use.

Ruthmarie Hicks - People in SF are sharing apartments with many people in one small apartment. People are literally renting closets to sleep in. This needs to be supervised and regulatd.

Rich Liebson: Irvington and Mamaroneck are looking into this issue with respect to zoning at this time.

Terry: Homeowner hotels have to jump through hoops to become hotels. This is to protect the visitor. The home isn't necessarily up to code for becoming a hotel. What happens if there is a fire? Airbnb's are verified, but that doesn't mean they are up to code for being a guest accommodation.

Lou Kanner: What if your neighborhood wants a higher vetting level for guests than Airbnb?

Ron Palmer: Airbnb is not currently working within the zoning laws.

Chris Price: Finds the concept interesting from the business perspective. It can help transform the local economy. Used an Airbnb in Cuba last year. This facilitated bedroom communities in beach towns. The question is what does White Plains want to become? You can regulate the hosting requirements and it can be a real support

income for empty-nesters.

Topic II: Bicycle Program:

Bill Brady: The bicycles have been very popular immediately. But they are free for the time being, so this could explain the early heavy use. It means fewer cars on the street, and a different transportation option.

General comment that no one appears to be wearing helmets which are supposed to be required according to the app. However the state law is that helmets are required for age 14 and under.

General comment: People are leaving them everywhere.

General comment: Do these bicycles benefit the outer neighborhoods as much as close-in and downtown areas?

Max from Fisher Hill: This is a trademark of how White Plains works. It's simply launched as a pilot program and the details are worked out later. They (the bikes) are being left in places that are not advisable.

Riding on sidewalks isn't new. It didn't start with this program. People have been riding badly for years.

Lou Kanner: I am in favor of docking stations like they have in Manhattan.

Ira Wunder: Was this voted on by the Common Council? Dennis Krolian confirmed that it was.

Ira Wunder: Who is liable if the bicycle hits someone?

Mark - Battle Hill: Are the bikes specifically for White Plains alone? I have seen them outside White Plains. Is there engagement with vendors about this? Is there an actual human being that people can contact in White Plains about bike issues?

It is pointed out that the app makes people sign up. So the rider at the time of any incident is known. The last rider of the bike is known in the event that the bike is left in an inappropriate place.

Topic III: Big Development Projects:

Barbara Allen: 52 North Broadway is a combination of senior assisted living, dormitories for Pace Law and market-rate housing.

The developer was finally given notice about the violation of the contaminated dump area but they have yet to do anything about it.

This could be a traffic nightmare for everyone. It means 1000 more cars a day plus deliveries and the like. It impacts everyone in the city of White Plains due to the location. *The Collection* is also on Westchester Ave through to Franklin Ave.

All of this is feeding into county roads. The flow is going to have to be reinvented.

Ron Palmer: We will have up to ten 30 story buildings in 10 years. Our fire department ladder is by the train station. How is the fire department responding to areas near Stewart Place in an emergency?

Dennis Krolian: There are questions about the comprehensive plan for each of these developments. There was a big effort in 1997 and these matters were thought about and discussed.

Bill Brady: Mr. Gomez has been commissioner for a couple of years. The Council of Neighborhood Associations may need to take a stand on this issue. Our bylaws state that we have to have unanimous consent to do anything about a stand on such an issue.

Ira Wunder: This is a problem because it is a political issue.

The question becomes what can we do as a group?

Lou Kanner: We are asking what kind of city do we really want to be?

Maria: How does the Common Council decide on these projects?

Dennis Krolian:

Developers buy property and submit plans. The plans are revised and the site plans are approved or not.

The comprehensive plan is not law. But zoning is supposed to follow the comprehensive plan. A new comprehensive plan is very expensive.

Q: Thousands of units are being considered. Are there enough people to fill these units?

Katrina Jackson - Highlands: Developers are making this attractive to outsiders. What about our own people? Our closeness as communities is being hurt. The Mom & Pop stores are leaving. Ornesto was just lost. How do we connect and communicate with developers?

Ron Palmer: You have to control the development.

Ira Wunder: We keep getting holes in the ground. How do we stop the repeated site plans?

The meeting was adjourned by Bill Brady and we were reminded that we are taking a break for the summer and would be back to regular meetings in September.