

LPCA General Meeting Minutes - January 10th, 2024

Held at Francis Scott Key Elementary-Middle School

Preliminaries:

- Pledge of Allegiance
- New Neighbor Introductions
- Vote to move February meeting from 2/14/24 to 2/21/24.
 - A motion was made to move the February meeting to 2/21/2024 and was seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- Treasurer Update:
 - \$47,872 - General Fund
 - \$3,744- Dog Park
 - \$5,714 - Park Fund
 - Paypal payments for \$5 annual memberships now accepted (and checks to PO Box); cash will be accepted at meeting, and checks can be mailed to Locust Point Civic Association, PO Box 27097, Baltimore, MD 21230-0097
 - 2024 Budget Review - Large line items in the 2024 budget are:
 - LPCA Festival - \$28,000
 - Holiday Party - \$5,000
 - Fort McHenry Extended Days - \$3,000
 - Community Projects such as tree planting on the road to Fort McHenry & replacing the street light banners - \$4,000
 - Social Budget - 6k
 - Community Mini Grants - \$7,500
 - Question: Can the community garden apply for the mini-grants?

Yes, but the community garden has their own budget and typically does their own fundraising.
 - The total Budget for 2024 is \$65,550.
 - A motion was made to approve the 2024 budget and was seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- There was no update on paid memberships. Please renew your membership for 2024.
- November Minutes Review/Vote:
 - A motion was made to approve the minutes from November and was seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Committee Reports/General Updates

Safety:

- Officer Owens, the BPD Southern District representative was in attendance.
 - Sergeant Raul Rivera has been assigned to the area. He has been with the BPD for 7 years and prior to that worked as a police officer outside the city for an additional 14 years. His last assignment was in the South East district. He was assigned to the Southern district as of three weeks ago.
 - Officer Rivera can be reached at Raul.Rivera@baltimorepolice.org.
 - Question: What is the current patrol plan for Locust Point?

There have not been any changes since Officer Rivera was assigned to the

district.

- Comment: Residents are having problems on Latrobe Park Terrace with vehicles headed the wrong way.

BPD will make a note for the patrols to survey the area and to evaluate signage on the street.

- Question: When a stop light is out how should drivers treat the intersection?

It becomes a four-way stop.

- Question: Is the text message line to report dirt bikes still operational?

Dirt bike issues can be reported to Officer Rivera for now. There is a unit that handles it but it is down to two members. The officer does not think the hotline/phone number is still monitored and will look into reestablishing it. The Mobile Metro Unit is still working on the dirt bikes issue.

- There was no DoT representative in attendance.
- There is a man living in Latrobe Park: it was brought to the LPCA's attention by a community member at the November meeting that there is an individual living in Latrobe that is a sex offender. That has been confirmed; since that time the LPCA has been contacting the City asking for action to be taken. Eric Costello has been informed, and just last week (1/3/24) he contacted numerous Baltimore City Directors asking for action to be taken. We are watching this issue and hope for a resolution soon.
 - A representative from the Mayor's Office of Homeless Services was in attendance. They are engaging with the individual. To this point he has refused city services. They will continue to maintain contact with him.
- As a reminder, if you open a 311 ticket please email the board with the ticket number.
- Safety concerns can be sent to contacts@mylocustpoint.org.

Parks & Beautification:

- The Locust Point Community Garden is (hopefully) moving to Latrobe Park! Jayni Lanham (community member), and her firm Beveridge & Diamond, P.C., have volunteered to assist the LPCA with the legal side of things.
- A plan that was created with collaboration from FSK, the LPCA Parks Committee, Latrobe Terrace Residents, South Baltimore Youth Soccer League, and the Garden Committee was presented to move the park Latrobe at the end of the Latrobe Park Terrace.
- We are asking for commentary / feedback regarding the proposed plan to be submitted to the LPCA via email (contacts@mylocustpoint.org). Please let us know what you think!
- LPCA keeps the dog bags in the park full. It would be helpful if the neighborhood can please help to stock them.
- If you are interested in joining the parks and recs committee in one of the targeted task forces, questions can be directed to parksandbeautification@mylocustpoint.org.

Education & Schools:

- School 1514 is what to link to if you go into Harris Teeter to sign up - must renew annually (Aug - May). If you register through LPCA, we will create a database of VIC numbers and

automatically renew you in future years - either check the box on your membership form, or email VIC number to jjrs10132007@gmail.com.

Social:

- The 2024 Festival will be held on September 14th.

UA Community Garden Updates

- Questions can be directed to locustpointcg@gmail.com.

Communications/Newsletter/Website:

- If you would like to receive our emails, send a note to contacts@mylocustpoint.org and like our page on Facebook for updates. Send any editorial ideas or interest in volunteering on the newsletter - communication@mylocustpoint.org.

Community Improvement Grants:

- These grants are available to the entire neighborhood. Projects may beautify, benefit, or otherwise enhance the community with a preference given to those ideas with lasting impact or creating broad new connections. Please consider submitting a grant to contacts@mylocustpoint.org. The grant form is available on the website <https://mylocustpoint.wordpress.com/about-the-lpca/community-improvement-grant/> and on Facebook.

Design Review:

- No updates.

LPCA Website:

- Please check out the website at <https://www.mylocustpoint.org>.

Dog Park:

- No updates.

New/Old Business

Digital Bay Center

- This is the group that has come to LPCA meetings twice previously to introduce their food incubator concept to the community. They received a \$350,000 grant from the State, to open what was essentially to become a restaurant and bar. A letter was sent from the LPCA to the Community and Team46 in December (available on website), stating that we do not understand how the business fits the purpose of the grant it was awarded.
 - Team 46 has responded. They have informed Digital Bay Center that they will not be allowed to have a liquor license unless they want to return the state funding they were given.
 - Right now, the liquor license attached to the property is not in effect; a transfer needs to take place for them to operate the liquor license. If Digital Bay petitions the liquor board to transfer the license, Team 46 will release a letter written to the Liquor Board opposing the transfer.
 - Digital Bay never mentioned operating a restaurant or needing a liquor license when they asked for state funding.

- The state does not support the use of grant funds to operate a for-profit bar and restaurant.
 - Approving the liquor transfer would be contrary to legislative intent.
- What is next? Digital Bay can (1) run their food incubator without a liquor license, selling off the license and retaining the building, or (2) sell the building, with the liquor license, and move their project elsewhere. There is no update yet from the State, we are in contact with Senator Ferguson's office regarding this issue and will keep the community informed.

Locust Point Community Church

- The Church is asking for a vote on a Letter of Support regarding the Immigrant House project. Please see the separate Letter of Support for more details.
 - There will be a brief amount of time for commentary / questions at the meeting. Please see the draft meetings minutes from November currently available on our website; there is lots of information about the project contained there.
- Pastor Ramsey from the church was in attendance.
 - The Church is not getting money out of this arrangement. It will receive a small amount in escrow for use on the building.
 - The Church is in a positive financial situation. Their book is currently \$88,000 which is an increase of \$7,000 in the last year.
 - The Church's goal is to help others. They have had a relationship with Cornerstone Community housing since their creation.
 - The Church will partner with Cornerstone Community Housing to redevelop the second and third floor as low income housing.
 - This is a long term (multi-year project) and will not break ground until funding is secured.
 - They are seeking a letter of support but they do not require a letter of support.
 - They are making a commitment to communicate and be transparent as possible as the plan develops.
 - It is low-income transitional housing for the men moving through the Earl's Place program.
 - The church is voting at the end of the month as to whether or not to proceed. If the church moves forward the zoning already permits the planned use.
- Question: Should there be discussion about the issue before the reading of the letter?

Typically a motion is made, then seconded, then discussion. The letter is drafted per the request from the church.

- A motion was made to oppose the project and not support the drafted letter. The motion was tabled until the prospected letter has been heard by the community.
- The letter was read into the record.
- A motion was made to not send the letter of support and was seconded. The floor was opened for discussion.
- Question: Does the church care about the potential to negatively affect housing property values?

Property values are hypothetical. The building is in terrible shape and these repairs would help property values. If there was evidence of negative valuation they would evaluate that.

- Question: Why is this coming at a time that the church is strained for money?

The church is not in the process of closing down. There are no plans to do so.

- Question: If you are here to lift people up there are a number of other things that the church could be doing. Why is the church not doing those things or exploring other options?

This church has had a relationship with Earl's Place over many years and desires to work with a trusted partner.

- Question: At the previous meeting concerns were raised about statistics involving crime rates/relapse rates and nothing has been followed up on. Why not?

There is new information available on the community church's pages.

- Question: A leader from the church took down email information from several residents at that meeting. Why has no one heard back from them?

At the pastor's last conversation with that leader she indicated that she was going to reach out.

- Question: Why was Team 46 (state legislators for District 46) already approached for funding?

That was a different grant applied for by the Baltimore Immigration Museum. It did not go through. The housing project has not solicited any funding as yet.

- Question: Have you thought of the implication to people in the community struggling with addiction or previous troubles?

No.

- Comment: The problems these potential men have already exist within this community. The project would not be introducing them as new issues.

- Comment: A resident is concerned about the location. It is far from bus lines and close to the school.

- Question: In the past you indicated that community support was needed. A portion of November minutes was read where Dialo Flucas from Episcopal Housing Corporation stated they don't plan on moving forward without community support. If the community votes no tonight do you still plan to move forward?

The decision is up to the congregation. The pastor would tell them the outcome of the LPCA vote. The congregation will vote on whether to move forward or not. The church board has indicated they want to put it to the congregation.

- Question: How many are in the congregation?

There are about 50 members.

- Question: Is your church open to membership?

They would not have new members vote on this issue.

- Question: Are you open to other ideas? There is a need for transportation and housing for cancer patients in the area.

They had not evaluated such an idea.

- Question: How many members of the church are Locust Point residents?

The pastor estimated 10% of the congregation reside in Locust Point.

- Question: Will non-congregants be permitted to attend the voting meeting at the church?

The meeting will be limited to the congregation.

- Question: Is your congregation aware of the neighborhood's concerns and questions?

They are aware of previous discussions and will be made aware of those raised tonight.

- Comment: The need for this type of housing will not disappear without projects like this. If these men are not housed in a structured environment they will impact the community in other ways.

- Comment: Team 46 confirmed that the grant asked about earlier in the meeting was for the Baltimore Immigration Museum. There are no current requests for funding regarding this project.

- Question: If it moves forward, what is the church's arrangement with the housing project?

The current plan is for a \$1,000 a month lease from the church. It would be a long term lease of 15-20 years. Cornerstone Community Housing would do the fundraising and Episcopal Housing Corporation would develop the building. The Church would work to build their mission into community.

- Question: Could some of the community concerns (such as monitoring) be addressed in the lease?

The lease is not finalized.

- Question: What if Cornerstone Community Housing leases the property for 5 years and then wants to sell the development? What is stopping them from selling to a different operator?

The grant funding would typically require the lease to be for the duration of the funds.

- Question from Councilman Eric Costello: Are there any plans to seek state/city funding for the project?

The project has not progressed that far. They have met with an architect and with the LPCA. There is no cost yet for the build out.

- Comment from Councilman Costello: There will be no funding without community support from the city or state. He is gravely disappointed with the tone of the conversation. The conversation should be collaborative and participants should work directly together.
- There was a call to vote on the motion of not sending the letter of support. There were 105 votes for the motion. There were 19 votes against the motion. There were 12 abstentions.
- The motion carries. The LPCA will not send the letter of support for the project.
- A motion was made for the LPCA to write a letter of opposition against the project and was seconded. There was no call for additional discussion. There were 110 votes for the motion. There were 11 votes against the motion. There were 24 abstentions.
- The motion carries. The LPCA will draft and send a letter of opposition against the project.
- Letter will be authored and provided on the LPCA website before the next meeting.

1426 Hull Street

- Nate Preddle was in attendance to speak. They are planning to redevelop the property into 4 single family row homes by subdividing the lot.
- They are requesting a variance from the city for one of the planned homes with frontage on Haubert to forego an off street parking space. There will be 2 public hearings. One will be on Tuesday and the other that has not been scheduled.
- Question: Could you clarify what the variance is for the curb cut?

They are not asking for the curb cut for the property in question. That is why they need the variance.

For new single family row homes there is a requirement for one off street parking space. They cannot provide that for one of the proposed homes. The existing home on Hull Street does not have off street parking as it is old enough to be grandfathered in. On the Haubert Street side there are existing curb cuts for garages for two of the planned houses. They are seeking a variance for the third home on Haubert.

- Comment: The BMZA will ask if they have support from the community and the neighbors.

They have talked to one of the neighbors and will knock on the doors of other neighbors.

- Question: What will the height of the homes be?

They will be level with the other properties on the block. There are documents on the LPCA website that show this.

- Question: Will there be any remediation of the property due to its use as a machine shop?

They will need to check with their head contractor. Their recommendations will be followed.

City News / Upcoming Events

- Elections - We will have our two City Council Candidates (Eric Costello and Zac Blanchard) at our February meeting (2/21/24).
- Hopeful to have City Council President candidates at our March meeting, and Mayoral Candidates at our April meeting. Stay tuned for confirmation.

Community Announcements / Guests

- There were no additional announcements or guests.

Motion and Second to Adjourn the Meeting

- Motion carries with no dissent.
- Reminder: Our next meeting is February 21, 2024.

Adjourned 8:47 pm