

LPCA General Meeting Minutes - February 21st, 2024

Held at Francis Scott Key Elementary-Middle School

Preliminaries:

- Pledge of Allegiance
- New Neighbor Introductions
- Treasurer Update:
 - \$59,558 - General Fund
 - \$3,744 - Dog Park
 - \$5,713 - Park Fund
 - Expenses this period were for donations to organizations that assisted at the festivals by offering tables and other equipment. ABC delivery messed up our table order and these organizations came to the rescue.
 - 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
- There was no update on paid memberships. Please renew your membership for 2024.
- January Minutes Review/Vote:
 - The January minutes were available online but not in paper form. The vote was postponed until the next meeting.
- Miss Twist
 - Miss Twist is opening a brick and mortar location in the current Southwest Roastery spot.
 - They are aiming for an early to mid-March opening.
 - Question: Does the truck still come around?

The trucks do run but not as often in recent years due to event demands.

Committee Reports/General Updates

Open Board Seat:

- There is one vacant LPCA board seat.
- Nominations for the board seat were opened.
- A motion to nominate Rachel Repkorwich for the board was made and seconded..
- Nominations were closed.
- Rachel Repkorwich was elected by a vote of acclamation. Her board seat will run until 2024..

Safety:

- There was no BPD Southern District representative in attendance.
 - Officer Rivera can be reached at Raul.Rivera@baltimorepolice.org.
- There was no DoT representative in attendance.
- The man living in Latrobe Park has accepted shelter services..
- 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:

- Park updates were deferred until the Community Garden update..

- 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:

- FSK's spring fundraiser, Pasta-palooza is scheduled for March 9th from 5-9pm. Tickets are going quickly.
- The 7th annual Scramble for the Art is scheduled for June 17th. Golfers can sign up on Eventbrite.
- 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.
- The LPCA has been approached for two letters of support:
 - South Baltimore Little League's Opening Day Parade (4/6/2024).
 - The Foundation Fighting Blindness's Baltimore Visionwalk (6/2/2024). This event is held around the park and there are no road closures.
 - There were no objections to these requests.
- The Knights of Columbus is having a neighborhood happy hour on March 1st from 5:30-7:30PM with live music. It is a way to say thank you to the community for support over the last year.

UA Community Garden Updates

- Park Update
 - The committee met with the city on the Longhouse project. It is not yet out for bid (expected in April/March). A timeline will follow the bid process.
 - Park Update - There will be a spring workday at the park around Earth Day, perhaps on April 17th. The committee is looking to drive involvement.
 - If you are interested in the committee, head to the website and message the email address for the parks committee.
- Garden Update
 - The garden committee met with the city 2 weeks ago. They still need an agreement with the City. The City wanted a 6 month agreement but the garden committee would prefer a longer term lease. It will take 2 months to generate such an agreement. There is a law firm working pro bono with the garden committee on this..
 - Preliminary soil sampling from the location shows high concentrations of lead and arsenic. They are working with the city to get next steps. There will likely be more testing and they expect this to happen in the next month.
 - Levels were far higher than acceptable.
 - Leads - 470 ppm
 - Chromium - 421
 - Arsenic - 14.4
 - Question: Does that create an exposure risk for the rest of the park?

There needs to be further testing to understand the scope of the issue.

- Question: Did we only discover this from our own sampling? What is Parks and Rec policy?

Parks and Rec does not do sampling at the moment. The committee is pressing them on this.

Comment from Councilman Costello - He spoke with Parks over the weekend and they are looking to bring on capacity for testing. They are following up with Team 46.

- Question: Have you notified the school, SYBL, and Volo?

Yes, they have been informed.

- Comment: The committee might reach out to UnderArmour because there was some remediation during the construction of the Banner Field.
- The current recommendations are to wash your hands after contacting park dirt and don't let your dogs or kids eat the grass.
- The current garden waiting list is at 20.
- The committee has raised \$16k in funds for the relocation so far,
- Regarding the road project at Fort and Andre: The project is scheduled to last 50 working days so it will run through April 17th at the earliest. The city has stated they plan to work on their communication plan & signage.
- Question: Who is responsible for the field that is responsible for the field behind the school?

It is the maintenance division. Please forward Councilman Costello any 311 requests.

- 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

Towson Hot Bagels Opening

- The LPCA Board was invited to the grand opening of the new THB in McHenry Row.

Election Judges

- Election judges are needed for the Primaries: Tuesday, May 14, 2024. See <https://mylocustpoint.org/> for more information.

City Council Candidates: Eric Costello and Zac Blanchard

- Eric Costello - Incumbent Councilman for the 11th district
 - Councilman Costello gave a 5 minute speech introducing himself and his platform.
 - Questions from the floor:
 - Could you set expectations? What are the primary responsibilities of a councilman?

The primary responsibilities of a councilman encompass a wide range of tasks, from addressing small issues such as untrimmed trees by the forestry department to tackling more significant challenges like violent crime. They work with state agencies, such as those dealing with unemployment, and federal entities, such as the post office, to ensure that issues are directed to the appropriate authorities. A councilman prioritizes constituent services over legislating and makes themselves available 24/7 to address concerns and follow up on issues. The 11th District is one of the most diverse districts socioeconomically in the city.

- There has been some news lately about a potential ballot initiative to reduce council size. What are your thoughts?

Councilman Costello has not taken a public position on the matter. He acknowledged that compared to surrounding districts, the city council is larger. However, he pointed out that the volume of challenges faced by the city is also higher than in surrounding jurisdictions. Each council office currently consists of one member and three full-time employees. Increasing the number of constituents from 40-50k residents to 90k would present significant difficulties.

- What are your opinions on the Inner Harbor project?

The proposals are exciting. For context, the current structures are managed by MCB Real Estate (headed by Dave Grambill) with an investment of \$83 million, and the city owns the land. There have been some concerns about the lack of a Request for Proposals (RFP) but the city cannot issue an RFP for what it does not own.

There will be no development south of Conway Street due to legislation preventing it so Rash field will not be impacted. Ensuring the safety of the area will be a priority. Overall, he is generally supportive of the project.

There have been community meetings, including one on October 6th with 200 attendees from the National Federation of the Blind and another on January 24th at the Maryland Science Center with 100 attendees, with more meetings planned.

The project will be put to a vote, with a charter amendment issue on the ballot in November enabling this and everyone will have a chance to exercise their right to vote and have their voices heard.

- Zach Blanchard

- Candidate Blanchard gave a 5 minute speech introducing himself and his platform.
- Questions?
 - What background do you have in administration?

Candidate Blanchard is a Naval Academy graduate and a former leader in the Marine Corps. He mentioned his consistent involvement in the Federal Hill neighborhood association and various other organizations. Economic development is part of his professional career

- Regarding Safety, what are your plans to decrease car vandalism and carjackings?

Regarding theft, as soon as the TikTok videos started trending, the Baltimore Police Department (BDP) should have been walking the neighborhoods to distribute flyers about using clubs for Kia and Hyundai vehicles, emphasizing the need for a more proactive approach.

Regarding carjackings, there should be an expansion in the use of license plate readers to assist law enforcement, including a successful apprehension in Bolton Hill due to the use of these readers.

Addressing social mobility in the bottom quartile is the broadest approach to improving safety in the community.

- Can you elaborate on ideas for school improvement?

Real driving issue is the high school (2nd largest) - no one is sending their kids to digital - not and overnight solutions. 1. MONSE - start violence reduction program at Digital (they are 14th month behind). 2. Need a program like Poly's ingenuity program to entice kids and families that are seeking a challenge.

While elementary and middle schools can always strive to improve, schools like FSK, TJ, and Prep rank among the top three out of six in the city, with residents consistently choosing these schools over other options.

High school is the real driving issue, with Digital being the second largest in

the area. No one is sending their kids there and there are no overnight solutions to this challenge. To address this issue, he suggested starting a violence reduction program at the school. MONSE is currently 14 months behind. He also advocated for implementing a program similar to Poly's Ingenuity program to attract students and families seeking a challenge.

- You mention you are a Marine Corp reservist, what type?

He serves in the SMCR. He acknowledged that as an Active Reservist, there is a chance he could be called to active duty deployment. He expressed his commitment to figuring out how to end his military service obligations in order to focus on this position if elected.

- Do you have 60 day/90 day/immediate plans if you win the position?

Due to the Democratic primary election being on May 14th, there would be a six and a half month period until the general election, allowing for a long transition. For immediate movement on the issue of the 14,000 abandoned properties in the city where owners often pay \$250 or less a year in property taxes, he would seek to advance legislation to raise the taxes on those properties to encourage the holders to engage or divest them. This would require state legislation to enact.

City News / Upcoming Events

- Regarding the Immigrant House project there are no updates from the church since the last meeting not has the pastor given an update.
 - Councilman Costello - The Episcopal House Corporation has requested a meeting with him. They have a grant deadline March 18th. They will be encouraged not to proceed without community support (there will be no funding from State and City).
- Rezoning/redistricting update.
 - Councilman Costello - Redistricting is complete. The 11th District lost 7 precincts.
- Update on 1429 Hull Street
 - There is no update from Digital Bay owners. The board is monitoring for any liquor board hearing requests. Our elected officials will intervene if that happens and are still hoping for a resolution via sale. There will likely be no update until April.
- 2/24 Dumpster Date - Due to the roadwork at Fort and Andre, we will need to find a better place for the dumpster and the board will disseminate when we know more.
- Elections - We will have our President of City Council candidates at our March meeting (3/13). Sneed and Cohen are confirmed thus far.
- The LPCA is hopeful to have Mayoral Candidates at our April meeting. (4/10/24). Stay tuned for confirmation.
- Dumpster Days 2024: 2/24, 5/4, 8/24, 11/2. The dumpster is normally dropped at Fort & Andre around 8 am Saturday and is there until full.

Community Announcements / Guests

- There were no additional announcements or guests.
- Question: Could the agenda be put out earlier?

The board tries to get it out at least a week early.

Motion and Second to Adjourn the Meeting

- There was no motion this month.
- Reminder: Our next meeting is March 13, 2024.

Adjourned 8:38 pm