

## **RIVERSIDE HOA, INC.**

### **Board Meeting Minutes for 11.3.14**

The Board meeting commenced at 7:05 pm. In attendance were Reed Haggard, Chris Elliott, Richard Kopelman, Megan Grout, Lori Welch, Carmen Mills, Suzanne Caruthers, Jessica Alderman, Willie Williams and Laurie Kirkwood.

Reed asked everyone to introduce themselves, as there were both newly elected and current board members in attendance. Following introductions, Reed opened by discussing that the goal of this meeting was for everyone to meet and discuss existing needs and priorities for the upcoming year.

#### **TRAFFIC**

It was agreed that traffic is still a very hot topic in the neighborhood. Suzanne reviewed some of the outstanding issues that the members have submitted to her. Suzanne stated that she gets many requests from neighbors for changes and always seeks to prioritize the requests that are made by large groups of neighbors who are also willing to help see the project through to the end. There is still an outstanding request for the city to perform a traffic study on Old Creek Trail based on the requests of those neighbors. There is a speeding issue through the Weatherly Circle and running of the stop sign at Mountain Brook Lane and Old Creek Trail. Additionally pedestrians all seem to use Old Creek Trail and Heards Creek since it the main route to the local schools.

Carmen Mills suggested that installation of sidewalks is something the HOA should review. Richard Kopelman agreed that it was definitely something that needed to be pursued. One employee at the city had indicated to Suzanne that sidewalks were not a possibility, but Rusty Paul did note at the annual meeting that they may be a possibility. If they were viable even on just Old Creek and part of Heards Creek, it would contribute greatly to pedestrian safety.

Those present discussed at length gathering several different options for the ongoing traffic issues. It was agreed that while entirely closing off a street from through traffic (as was done in Mount Vernon Woods) is technically a possibility – it is very unlikely that it would be something our neighborhood would want. Likewise, while some members had discussed gates, it was not a viable solution.

Suzanne also discussed that speed continues to be a problem on the hill on Edgewater Trail. Several neighbors have tried to contact Megan Wilson at the city, but she has not responded. Requests to look into adding a stop sign have been disregarded by the city due to the sight lines. This is something the neighbors and the HOA will have to continue to pursue with the city to get other options to control this serious problem.

Laurie mentioned that the parking situation at the top of Heards Creek is something to keep an eye on – since some Riverwood parents are disregarding the “No Standing” signs that the city installed. This is a very dangerous part of the neighborhood due to the hill and limited sight line. It was later discussed whether adding a small island on Heards Creek at Heards Ferry (similar to Weatherly at Heards Ferry but

much smaller) might help slow the traffic down, in addition to beautifying the neighborhood. There are also a few students at Riverwood parking in the neighborhood and this needs to be addressed.

Carmen mentioned approaching the traffic issues from a holistic standpoint to determine where the ongoing hotspots were. Suzanne added that it's important to get the city to regularly check the statistics of speed and volume on the major cut through roads to determine a benchmark and how things are changing (for worse or better) as the years go by, and calming measures are put in place.

## **SECURITY**

Chris and Reed both noted that the key to security work on the HOA is the ongoing open lines of communication between the HOA and SSPD. Overall, the HOA has been very pleased with the responsiveness of the SSPD. Chris discussed that burglaries have been down lately but there are still crimes of convenience occurring from garages and cars. The creeper has not been heard from in quite some time, although there never had been an arrest.

Chris suggested that the HOA continue to remind members about services SSPD provides, including consulting on the safety of your home, home checks while you are out of town, and various classes. He also noted that the security committee needs to continue to hire SSPD officers for Halloween and home football games at Riverwood.

Reed noted that he, along with Willie and Tim Ellington had lunch with SSPD leadership recently, where some topics regarding security and our neighborhood were discussed.

Willie asked about developing a more formal Neighborhood Watch program. It was suggested he might start by contacting the street captains to see what they may be willing to do. Megan offered to send the list of street captains to both Willie and the new membership chairs, so they can be contacted.

Chris also suggested that the members would benefit from regular reminders about preparedness for weather events – like buying salt well before a winter storm comes and reminding the neighborhood of who has chainsaws. Additionally, in the event of winter ice storms, we can remind neighbors who has 4 wheel drive cars and is available to transport people. The group then discussed that there seem to be several topics that can be developed into HOA email blasts over the next few months. The email reminders shouldn't be too long or go out too far in advance since we want people to read them when they are timely.

Reed also noted that some members have brought up the need for additional street lights in some very dark areas of the neighborhood. This needs to be examined under the security priorities for the upcoming year.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

While Sherry was unable to attend the meeting, Reed mentioned that one of the biggest upcoming changes for the HOA will be looking into getting a professional landscaper to tend the major islands in the neighborhood. Part of this project will also be to look into adding signage and replacing the signage

that currently exists. This had been supported by a prior neighborhood survey and will be a large expense. He noted that this has been something the board has been discussing for years as well, and the finances may finally support it.

While there are many islands in the neighborhood, the goal will still be for the neighbors to care for the islands on their respective cul de sacs, with the HOA reimbursing them for supplies. The islands at Edgewater, Tanacrest/River Valley, Weatherly/Heards Ferry, and the circle on Weatherly were all ones that are considered “major” islands in need of professional care.

Regarding signage, it was discussed that the existing signage was in bad shape, and a new sign should be added at Weatherly/Heards Ferry. If an island were constructed at Heards Creek, that should also have matching signage. The island at Tanacrest/River Valley has a “Tanacrest” sign, even though that area is part of the Riverside HOA. (It is believed it was once considered separate from Riverside – with the division being the creek. This would explain the Tanacrest sign). It was agreed that the members on the three Tanacrest streets should be asked if they want to switch the sign to Riverside or keep the existing Tanacrest sign.

Suzanne also noted that some neighbors complain that the islands on Edgewater are difficult to see at night. While there is no electricity that would allow for lights on the island, the city may be able to add reflective paint to the curbs to increase visibility.

## **ZONING**

Carmen and Reed both noted that there are many issues that will be affecting our neighborhood in the coming years that would likely fall under the zoning umbrella. The City Center, Braves Stadium, and Roundabout installation will all impact our neighborhood. Likewise, within and near the neighborhood, the HOA needs to monitor zoning changes that may impact our neighborhood – such as requests for variances and changes in density. It was noted that a real estate agent has been trying to market the property on the west side Riverside between 285 and Heards Ferry as one large lot, “ideal for a school or church.” It was discussed that if such a variance were granted (which was unlikely) it would devastate an already very bad traffic situation. Carmen mentioned it was likely that owners in that area (as well St. Andrews church) will be negatively affected by the installation of the roundabouts, and are seeking to simply unload their property.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

Megan noted that she has a meeting scheduled for the upcoming Friday with Ramona to go over the communications software. Ramona is a communications professional and Megan is confident that Ramona will be able to easily handle it. There are no real communications issues other than those who simply do not read the emails and Facebook. Only about 20 people on the membership list do not have email addresses. There are about 612 email addresses in the HOA database.

Megan mentioned the HOA Facebook page has been an ongoing issue because of a bug on Facebook that doesn't allow others to post to a “business” site, even if the settings are set to allow this. There are

several message boards complaining about this problem, but no solution noted to date. Right now, in order to get something posted, it can only be posted by the administrator- which is not very helpful. This is why Nextdoor is a good site for posting immediate things like lost dogs, announcements, etc. If Facebook ever fixes the bug, it will make the Facebook page more useful to the HOA.

Reed mentioned that the main communication for the HOA should always be the HOA email blast system and the main way for any member to communicate with the HOA should be through the info@riversidehoa.org email address that is regularly provided to the members. With a few exceptions, most people use the email address to reach the Board. Reed does post announcements for the community on Nextdoor, but he does not monitor Nextdoor. It is very reasonable to ask any member with a question or comment to email the board as they have been reminded to do. It doesn't take any more time to email than it does to post a comment on Nextdoor.

### **SOCIAL**

There have still been no volunteers for the social committee position since the revitalization of the HOA. Carmen noted that the Earth Day celebration was a great event that brought neighbors together, much like Halloween does. She offered to reach out to see if she knew of anyone willing to take on that event. She also mentioned it may be a great opportunity to sign up new members.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

The timeline of membership drive was discussed and the method for invoicing the members. Reed suggested it may be a good idea to set a goal of reaching closer to 500 members, if that is possible, and to discuss ways to contact those who have not joined yet. Lori, Laurie and Megan will get together to go over the software for accessing online signups. Megan noted that there are some members who pay exclusively by PayPal and may not be motivated to sign up if it weren't so easy. At the same time, there are members who do not want to use PayPal at all, and don't even use the online form to pay by check. Some print the form out, write on it, and send it in with a check. While this requires a great deal of extra work (and room for error), we need to continue to provide both methods of sign up due to address the needs of the different populations. Also, it is essential to follow up with many who fill out the "pay by check" form online but never actually send in the check.

Lori and Laurie also agreed to reach out the street captains to see if they are willing to continue to serve. They will also get with Jessica Alderman to discuss how to share information on checks received. The issue of how many magnets to purchase and whether to upgrade them will also be discussed.

### **FINANCIALS**

Jessica mentioned that she is working with Deborah to transition the financials. Based on the discussions at this meeting, there are several potential projects that will require ongoing funding – like landscaping and traffic calming measures. While the current balance is a very good start, the board will need to get numbers on these future projects. It may be necessary to raise the dues.

The group all discussed that the current amount (\$35) was very low and an increase would be justified to provide these additional projects. The amount of the increase will be determined by the rough estimates of the projects discussed. Reed and Megan noted that in the prior survey, most members had supported an increase in dues – some who went so far as to suggest they would pay \$100 per year. Megan offered to send the survey results to the entire board to review. With regard to a vote on an increase in dues, that could be done once an estimate on the projects was made available. The key would be to announce it before the membership drive begins on January 1<sup>st</sup>. The vote should be done before December 15<sup>th</sup> if possible, and could be conducted by email if the existing Board agreed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:54 PM.

These minutes were approved via email on November 5, 2014.

Megan Grout

Riverside HOA Secretary