

Aiken Council of Neighborhoods Planning Meeting Minutes November 16, 2013
Smith-Hazel Recreation Center

Members Present:

Dexter Park - Gregory MacDougall
Ray-Walker Estates - Harvey Kinder
Cushman Drive - Shelby Saunders, Diane Saunders
Kalmia Hills – Roger Brock
Gem Lakes – William Busser
Crosland Park - Gary Yount
Greater Aiken Estates - Phillip Lockard

Guests Present:

None

Gary Yount convened the meeting at 9:15 AM with a quorum for ordinary business present.

The minutes from the October 22 monthly meeting were read and were unanimously approved.

The treasurer's report previously given and approved in October was reviewed, noting the elimination of ASCAT funds previously held in the ACON account.

Gary reviewed the history of the organization and the need for this planning meeting – to develop one or more concrete goals for the organization in support of our general mission statement, which is now printed on the meeting agendas, along with our new logo. He also provided a form which may be used to obtain information when new members join ACON.

A productive, if general discussion was held by those present regarding the issues before us, which include the interrelated issues of lack of specific goals, lack of participation, communications issues, and the lack of a unified approach.

It was resolved that we could best approach these issues by examining the existing vs. desired states within the organization, and the group proceeded in that vein with the stated objective of developing a few goals that all member organizations could support and that the ACON organization could speak to with a unified voice.

A primary need to have an organizational reference notebook was recognized, and Harvey took an action to develop that from the recently improved informational resources for the organization. This reference needs to include a comprehensive listing / map of all neighborhoods in the city of Aiken, along with those areas with membership in ACON. Shelby agreed to assist with mapping needs through his contacts with the city, and Gary offered his assistance as well. ACTION - HARVEY KINDER – ELECTRONIC REFERENCE FILE DUE JANUARY 28, 2014.

The group proceeded to use the attached presentation as a means to guide an open discussion. Issues were listed and ranked according to how many neighborhoods were affected and the perceived capability of ACON to act as an agent of change. This yielded the following results regarding 2014 goals:

Priority 1 - In order to obtain 501(c)3 status it was resolved to begin active pursuit of this application with the state of SC and the IRS. Diane, Greg and Ann will form the committee responsible for this activity. A motion was made and the committee was authorized to spend up to \$1000 in registration and consultation fees related to the effort through CY 2014. Diane took the action to develop a timeline showing activities necessary. ACTION – DIANE SAUNDERS - TIMELINE FOR EFFORT RESULTING IN OBTAINING 50(1(c)3 STATUS DUE JANUARY 28, 2014.

Priority 2 - The impact of jurisdictional interfaces between city and county properties was resolved to be the second issue worthy of group support. These so-called “Doughnut Holes” in and around city neighborhoods are prevalent throughout the city and are a major concern. Because the issues are not well documented or universally understood, an action was taken by Bill to develop an informative paper or presentation on the issue. ACTION – BILL BUSSEY – “WHITE PAPER” ON DOUGHNUT HOLES IN AND AROUND THE CITY OF AIKEN DUE JANUARY 28, 2014.

PRIORITY 3 – An issue that may bear a close relationship to the matter of “Doughnut Holes” is the

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requirement for landlord registration of rental properties in the city of Aiken. This has potential bearing on vacant homes in neighborhoods and the adequate upkeep of rental properties. Gary will coordinate with Bill and develop a similar informative paper or presentation on this issue. ACTION – GARY YOUNT – “WHITE PAPER” ON LANDLORD REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS AND IMPACTS DUE JANUARY 28, 2014.

Other issues of common impact to neighborhoods and of perceived importance as a possible goal for ACON involvement were:

Establishing improved dialogue between Neighborhood Watch Groups

Continuation/improvement of efforts to maintain good communication between city officials and Neighborhoods

Drainage issues in neighborhoods – particularly regarding apparent lack of project coordination between various responsible government bodies (SCDOT/Aiken Public Works)

Development of additional programs that could be established throughout the city to the betterment of the city as a whole through improving the quality of life in each neighborhood (e.g. – community gardens, assisted neighborhood watch efforts (mentoring), establishing interfaces between neighborhoods, etc.).

Improvements in street lighting

It was noted that there would be no further monthly meetings of the ACON until January 2014.

Near the close of the meeting, Harvey noted that an item brought up at the October meeting had not resulted in any input to him as of this date – to wit:

“Diane conveyed the information that Betty Myers would like some dates established to give select city officials tours of neighborhoods to view issues first-hand. A proposal was made for persons interested in participating in such a “tour my neighborhood” program to send neighborhood host names, proposed dates, issues, and which officials should be on the tour to Harvey Kinder (kind9358@bellsouth.net - 803-761-3592) , who would provide this information to the membership via e-mail upon receipt of same.”

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12 noon.

Respectfully submitted,

Harvey Kinder
Secretary
Aiken Council of Neighborhoods

Attachment (1)