

## **WARD PARKWAY HOMES ASSOCIATION BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

January 7, 2020

Waldo Area Business Association  
7222 Wornall Rd., Kansas City, MO 64114

**Board members present:** President Nancy Bader, Vice President Richard Murray, Treasurer Gaye Tillotson, Secretary Amanda Rhodes, Jim Anderson, B. Michael McFarland, Alison Baker

**Board members absent:** Maureen Hardy

**Other attendees:** Linetta Thurman

Meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm by President Nancy Bader. A quorum was present.

**Guest Introductions:** none

Minutes from the November 7, 2019 Ward Parkway Homes Association (“WPHA”) Board meeting were reviewed. Bader moved to approve the minutes and Murray seconded. The November 7, 2019 minutes were unanimously approved.

Treasurer Gaye Tillotson reported on financials, which were provided to the Board via email prior to the meeting. Member dues paid to date are \$8,167.37 (224 homes) and Security Patrol dues paid to date are \$9,780.00 (164 homes). Total income over expenses for Fiscal Year 2019-2020 currently stands at \$9,876.30. Vice President Richard Murray noted that if 64 more homes pay Security Patrol dues then the service will be fully funded.

Next, Linetta Thurman and Jim Anderson reported on Security Committee activity, which was provided to the Board via email. Thurman noted that the committee is making a concentrated effort to attract Security Patrol members through the welcome kits and newer resident follow-up. Bader inquired as to the communication system in place to ensure that resident follow-up does not fall through the cracks. Anderson noted that he is presently operating based on the realtor solds list and will then forward to the necessary parties to add to the Excel spreadsheet. Bader noted that it is important that there is a system in place to continually feed the master spreadsheet so that multiple Directors do not communicate with the same new residents. Murray suggested designating a few Directors as those responsible for feeding the information to Lynne Madeo for updating the Excel spreadsheet.

Thurman also noted that the Security Committee will work with Sergeant Sebastien Hanriot and the Communications Committee to communicate important information through the newsletter. Thurman inquired as to whether it was possible to easily send out mass emails to residents in a timely fashion. Murray noted that it is not easy since we do not maintain a resident database. He also noted that any communications sent to “Ward Park” on Nextdoor will only be sent to the neighborhood, and that updates to the WPHA Facebook page only reach those users that have liked the page. So, it is unlikely that residents in other neighborhoods would receive communications on these platforms.

Bader inquired as to the process for providing welcome kits and promoting Security Patrol dues. Anderson noted that the intent is to deliver a welcome kit and discuss security at that time. If the resident is not home, Anderson will leave a door hanger and return later. If the resident is home and shows interest in the Security Patrol service but will not commit, Anderson will ask to follow-up in the coming weeks.

Finally, Thurman reported that Anderson has volunteered to coordinate the Vacation House Watch requests. Anderson noted that he will try to get an estimate of the busiest vacation times to better monitor the requests.

Next, Murray reported on Membership Committee activity. He discussed the contents of the new welcome kits. The kits will contain an envelope that includes a membership form, security patrol information, and a letter from Bader. The kits will not include a volunteer form, however Murray will follow-up with any residents who pay dues. He also noted that at the moment the WPHA has a sufficient number of volunteers, especially without a person dedicated to serving as a volunteer coordinator. In addition to the informational envelope, the kits will contain a tablet, pen, and pint glass. The tablet and pen do not contain contact information so that they will still be accurate in the event the WPHA contact information changes in the future. All of these items will be placed in the new, smaller WPHA-branded bags. These are more economical for the WPHA than the fabric bags, but not as reusable for the residents. Murray noted that he and other Directors will begin distributing welcome kits this week.

Anderson inquired as to whether the welcome kits will contain a history of the neighborhood. Murray responded that the history portion of the website was recently updated, however it was too expensive to produce the history for the welcome kits. The WPHA website address is included on the membership form.

Thurman inquired as to whether the WPHA should consider making the website more interactive in the future. Bader noted this will be discussed during the strategic planning portion of the meeting. Murray also stated that this would be a responsibility of the Communications Committee. Anderson suggested that the website include city services reminders (e.g., trash is delayed due to a holiday) like other area homeowner's associations. Murray noted that it is easy to provide these types of reminders to residents via Nextdoor and Facebook.

Bader reported on Beautification Committee activity. Anderson noted that he is obtaining an estimate regarding maintenance of the WPHA common spaces but needed clarification of the location of the common areas and typical maintenance to get an accurate bid. Bader will provide these clarifications so that he can obtain a bid for comparison to Complete Turf & Landscape ("Complete Turf").

Tillotson noted that she recently paid a bill to Complete Turf for collecting leaves. The amount billed was \$99. Bader will follow-up with Complete Turf to confirm whether this leaf collection was considered in the submitted bid.

Murray reported on Communications Committee activity. He noted that B. Michael McFarland provided a copy of draft newsletter topics prior to the meeting. A draft will be distributed via email by Monday for review by Board members.

## New Business

First, Bader discussed the upcoming Harvesters Food Drive (April 25<sup>th</sup>) and noted that she is starting to meet with volunteers to discuss the structure and strategy of the event.

Next, Bader began the 2020 Strategic Planning presentation, which was provided to the Board via email prior to the meeting. She noted that the intent of the presentation is to initiate a broad-based discussion about the near-future and long-term goals of the WPHA. Murray seconded this sentiment and noted that it is a conversation starter and nothing is set in stone.

Murray first discussed the goals of the WPHA (slide 2). He noted that a full Board (8 members) creates consistency in the WPHA. With respect to scalability, this means that Directors and volunteers should strive to make things replicable for future volunteers. Doing so will increase efficiency and structure in the future. To increase engagement among residents, Murray stated that it is necessary to create a structure around volunteers to create and maintain engagement. In the past, volunteers have fallen through the cracks after expressing interest.

Next, Murray discussed Administration (slide 3). He noted that the WPHA acquired a storage facility yesterday at Storage Mart. It is the smallest available (5 feet by 10 feet with a height of 8 feet and a cage top) and on the first floor. The lease is month-to-month, so there is no long-term commitment. It is billed on the first of every month. Bader noted that the Board can start moving things now, but everyone should make an inventory of what goes into the storage facility so that the WPHA can confirm what items it currently has and create a sign-out system.

McFarland arrived at 7:37 pm.

Murray next addressed the use of a database as opposed to the current Excel spreadsheet. He noted that he has not researched companies and cannot provide price estimates. A database is a web-based product whereby the WPHA can restrict re-write rules and run direct reports. He also noted that a database would enable the WPHA to easily run email campaigns. Thurman noted that a database would be an immense help in administering the Vacation House Watch requests.

Based upon the interest of the Board, Murray stated that the next stage of the process is that he will engage with 2-3 companies and then present a summary to the Board. He noted that implementation would include loading the current Excel spreadsheet into the database, and this cost is typically assessed per line. This means that one consideration will be how much older data the Board wants to include in the database. For instance, does the Board want information for the past five years? There will be some homes with multiple owners in that time frame, and the WPHA will be charged for loading all of that data. Additionally, the Board will need to consider what information currently in the Excel spreadsheet is necessary for the database. The less information that is loaded, the less cost for the WPHA.

Murray noted that in addition to implementation costs, there is also a monthly fee for database management. This is usually based on the number of people in the database. McFarland stated that there is a company that gets property records and makes the changes directly in the database, which may be an add-on of interest. He also noted that the WPHA has been extremely fortunate that Madeo has volunteered to maintain the Excel spreadsheet. Murray also noted that her skills can translate to a database. Murray will begin making exploratory phone calls with an eye towards a mid-2020 start.

Alison Baker arrived at 7:50 pm. She noted that the Board has explored a database in the past and found it prohibitively expensive. Bader responded that the Board may need to sit with the sticker shock and consider the ways a database would allow the WPHA to grow. Right now, the Excel database is a limitation. McFarland also noted that database costs may have decreased as the technology becomes more competitive.

Next, Murray discussed the purchase of accounting software for use by Tillotson. Tillotson noted she looked into Quicken and iBank. At this point, she will probably move forward with Quicken. Murray noted the web-based version is more reliable and will allow her to migrate information.

Bader next addressed Board meeting time management. She suggested timed agenda segments to encourage efficient meetings. Baker responded that while it is fine to have suggested times, she does not like the idea of cutting speakers off and clock-watching. Anderson noted that the goal should be structure and exceptions to the stated times should be okay, as others can shorten elsewhere and give up time to keep the meeting moving. Murray stated that as opposed to reviewing things already emailed to the Board, he will ask if there are any questions on the emailed reports. If other committee chairpersons used a similar approach, it should lead to more efficient meetings. McFarland noted that he has never had a non-profit meeting without timed segments, but there is always wiggle-room on the speaking times. Based on feedback, Bader stated that she will add timed agenda segments with the goal of having meetings that are 1.5 hours at most. Each section will be condensed into suggested minutes.

Murray then addressed how the WPHA can improve visibility/engagement. Budget-permitting, the Board will purchase WPHA-branded runners and tablecloths for use at all events. Nothing has been purchased at this time, but the intent is to make it obvious that the event is organized by the WPHA and funded by the membership dues.

Next, Bader discussed reviewing and updating the Bylaws. Secretary Amanda Rhodes will be responsible for any revisions. Baker inquired as to whether there were any particular concerns. Bader replied that she could think of nothing specific, but the Bylaws seem to be lacking direction when she has looked to them for guidance. Bader and Rhodes will meet to discuss the Bylaws and return to the Board with suggestions.

Murray addressed engagement with the city and suggested two new positions: general city liaison (particularly with Councilpersons Andrea Bough and Kevin McManus) and a sidewalk maintenance point of contact. Bader noted that this is a big wish list item of hers, but the WPHA needs more volunteers that can dedicate themselves to these positions. Anderson stated that he will try to locate information from the sidewalk work order on his street this summer. McFarland noted that as the WPHA tries to do more things for the

neighborhood as whole (not just members), it is important that the WPHA connects with the city. Hosting events with our councilpersons, KC Water, etc. lets residents see the benefits of the WPHA and may encourage membership.

Bader next discussed the Beautification Committee (slide 4). The committee will strive to bring a number of bids to the Board each year for assessment. This will include maintenance of the common areas and the mums sale. The committee will also explore additional products/services for members, such as a poinsettia sale. As with the mums sale, any sales will roll back into the Beautification Committee for the benefit of the WPHA as a whole.

Murray then discussed the Communications Committee (slide 5). A marketing plan would potentially include rebranding and at the very least ensuring the WPHA is using consistent branding across communications and events. Murray noted that this is not currently a priority. With respect to platform review, this would be an evaluation of the current website platform (what the WPHA website is built on), which is currently WordPress. Murray noted that the intricate websites of neighboring homeowner's associations are very likely not built on WordPress.

Bader inquired as to whether the website platform is something the Board wants to consider sooner rather than later. Anderson responded that a great website is essential in 2020. Bader concurred and noted that a great website is one of those things that is expected now. Tillotson also concurred and noted that, in her opinion, it was something the Board let slide for many years. McFarland stated that with a website the real issue is upkeep. No matter the platform, there must be someone who can edit it. McFarland noted that the WPHA could hire someone on a contract basis to make revisions or request volunteers. Bader responded that if the WPHA were to hire someone to manage the website, someone would need to be responsible with feeding that person the necessary information. Murray noted that would be the responsibility of the Communications Committee. McFarland also stated that the Board should consider the extent to which information can easily be found elsewhere. In certain instances, the WPHA website does not need to be the primary resource and could instead direct residents to another resource page. Bader requested that McFarland consider a potential website revamp and return to the Board with ideas and potential concerns. McFarland also noted that WordPress is discontinuing the specific platform currently used by the website, so the Board will need to make a change regardless. However, he does not believe the website fees will be changing. McFarland will confirm.

Next, Murray discussed other communication strategies. McFarland noted that he will publish a production schedule and deadlines to the full Board for future printing, mailing, and merchandise. With respect to messaging, Murray noted that communications will feature more calls to action (e.g., "Act by DATE to get X."). On survey cadence and content, Murray stated the next survey will be mailed with the annual membership mailing in the fall. The Board will discuss survey topics at a later meeting.

Murray then addressed strategies for the Membership Committee (slide 6). One goal is to increase Platinum memberships and close the gap in funding the Security Patrol by the fiscal mid-year (March 1<sup>st</sup>). As mentioned previously, the welcome kits are complete. Baker inquired as to the point person in distributing the welcome kits. Murray responded that he is the point person and when Madeo receives a notification of a new resident, she forwards

that information to Murray. Baker further inquired as to whether there is a new resident form on the website. Murray responded that there is no dedicated new resident form, but new residents can email directly from the website and some have in the past.

Murray stated that the Membership Committee will again host a Mid-Year Membership Drive, however this year it will be held in the middle of the fiscal year instead of the summer. One goal this year is to communicate more clearly that the discount only applies to 2019-2020 memberships and that residents cannot “prepay” 2020-2021 memberships. To prevent this, Murray will close the online store on a certain date so that residents cannot sign-up for Platinum or Gold memberships. The 12-month option will remain available. Baker suggested that he consider closing the store in July since it will reopen for membership renewal in September.

Murray next addressed the need to find a volunteer coordinator so that the WPHA does not lose the energy and enthusiasm of people who want to serve as volunteers. Murray noted that he has a volunteer in mind for this position and has briefly discussed it with her. The focus will be on coordinating volunteers for the volunteer-heavy events (Easter Egg Hunt, Harvesters Food Drive, Fourth of July Picnic, Mums Sale) and smaller areas of need, like making the welcome kits. Bader noted that it would also be the job of the volunteer coordinator to respond to completed volunteer forms, which would help make sure that no one falls through the cracks. Likewise, McFarland stated that he sees the position as an intake coordinator who can explain the different committees and roles.

Next, Murray discussed strategies for the Security Committee (slide 7). Thurman noted that her primary goal is to get more volunteers to serve on the committee.

Murray then discussed strategies in providing events for members and residents (slide 8). Increasing the member value of an event will help encourage residents to pay membership dues. For instance, a value-add for the Easter Egg Hunt will be an adult Easter bunny with a photo backdrop and a craft area. Dumpster Day is another example of a value-add exclusively for members.

Bader discussed offering options for residents to communicate and organize clubs (e.g., book club). She noted that these clubs would be resident-driven, not Board-driven. The WPHA would merely provide information for residents. McFarland noted that this would be easy to implement as the WPHA could add a link on the website to the effect of “Click here if you’re interested in Book Club” and forward that email directly to the resident organizing book club.

Murray then addressed increasing conversions. This means making sure that residents can pay membership dues at major events, such as Neighborhood Night Out. He also noted that conversions would be available at Dumpster Day.

Lastly, Murray noted the need for a block party coordinator. This individual would be the contact person if a member wants to be reimbursed for a block party. Bader noted that there is no individual in mind for this position, so Directors are encouraged to forward any interested residents to her attention. Baker estimated that 2-3 block parties request reimbursement every year, and many never request because they do potluck/BYOB and no one collects receipts. Bader agreed and noted that the block party coordinator would not

only be responsible for reimbursement, but also for encouraging block parties throughout the neighborhood and highlighting them in newsletters after the fact. Murray noted that reimbursement is a benefit of paying dues, so the WPHA should communicate that more clearly to members. Bader responded that maybe the volunteer coordinator could also look at the effectiveness of the reimbursement process (\$50 to member regardless of block membership; \$75 to member if the block has at least 75% membership; \$100 to member if the block has at least 90% membership). Murray suggested that the WPHA start communicating the block party reimbursement in the spring and see if that encourages reimbursements. Baker also noted that in the past the WPHA has seen very little use of the best block award from the Holiday Homes Contest. She suggested that a block party coordinator could make contact with someone from that block and remind them of the prize.

Bader thanked the Board for a productive discussion and encouraged the Board to continue to generate ideas for this year and future years.

Baker then brought up the Waldo Tower discount card, which she had emailed the Board about prior to the meeting. A Waldo Tower Board member went to area businesses and received commitments, designed the discount card, printed it, and then distributed it to paying members. Baker noted that a potential WPHA discount card would not be limited to the WPHA boundary but would include all of Waldo. McFarland stated that he thinks a discount card is a great idea and a few Directors attempted to establish one last year. It is a benefit for both members and businesses. For members, the WPHA can use it as a marketing tool because a resident who takes advantage of the discount card can essentially pay for their membership. Baker noted that she does not currently have the time to visit potential businesses and would likely need a committee to accomplish this. McFarland stated that the issue is legwork. There needs to be someone (or multiple people) who can go to these businesses when they are not busy and discuss the discount card with a manager. Thurman noted that a discount card is a great idea as the Board is always looking for a value-add for members. Baker responded that the WPHA could also sell discount cards separately to non-members. Baker also inquired as to whether a WPHA discount card would conflict with the marketing plan. Murray responded that it would not at all conflict and noted that a few Directors tried it last year but got no traction with area businesses. Baker will contact the individual who organized the Waldo Tower discount card and inquire as to how she got traction with businesses. Baker inquired as to whether the WPHA could produce the discount cards. McFarland responded that the Communications Committee can handle any production needs.

In closing the strategic planning discussion, Bader noted that she and Murray will begin to examine what can be accomplished this year based on available resources (both volunteers and funds).

Bader then provided miscellaneous updates. New neighborhood watch signs have been installed at the locations determined at a previous Board meeting. The Romanelli Center Community Improvement District ("CID") discussed at the November meeting was recently approved by city council. Heather Frierson with the KC Water Communications Department reached out to Bader to schedule a time to discuss the water main replacement project. Baker noted that in the past these types of events devolve into residents complaining, so she suggested that Bader inquire as to the purpose of the meeting and whether it is information that is already provided in the Facebook group dedicated to providing updates.

Tillotson noted that the Board could invite Frierson to attend its February meeting and then pass any relevant information on to residents. McFarland agreed that Bader should follow-up and gauge whether the information is more appropriate for a Board meeting or a resident meeting. Bader will contact Frierson to gather more information.

Baker inquired as to whether the Board can establish a conference call during upcoming meetings for Directors who are running late or cannot attend. Bader will talk with the Waldo Area Business Association and confirm its capabilities. She noted that an absent Director could also call into a cell phone of a Director in attendance.

Baker also inquired as to the Holiday Homes Contest for 2020, which she had discussed in an email to the Board prior to the meeting. Murray responded that he had no issues with Baker and Maureen Hardy becoming co-chairs for the event. He noted that signs for the 2019 contest have been picked up and will be placed in the storage facility. Baker noted that two best block signs need to be re-done, and she will coordinate that project.

Next, Bader stated that if any Director wants to put anything in the storage facility, s/he should contact Bader at this time as the storage facility has a keyed lock. If any Director needs access to the storage facility for equipment or records, Bader suggested the Board implement a procedure whereby Tillotson maintains the key to the storage facility along with an inventory list for check-in and check-out. Baker responded that this procedure is very inconvenient and that she will not use the storage facility. Bader responded that the purpose of the storage facility is that all WPHA property is contained in one location and not scattered amongst various Directors' and volunteers' homes. WPHA property, documents in particular, have been lost after a Director or volunteer moved out of the neighborhood. There is also the possibility of WPHA property being damaged in a basement flood or house fire. The storage facility is intended to address these concerns. Baker recommended that the storage facility use a combination lock so that a Director does not have coordinate obtaining the key from Tillotson. Bader responded that she will maintain a spare key in the event Tillotson is unavailable and that she does not support using a combination lock because she has concerns regarding whether the combination can easily be changed when Directors change. Anderson inquired as to whether the storage facility can accommodate a realtor box. Baker noted that a realtor box is too big and will not fit on the handle. Bader stated that all WPHA property should be stored in the WPHA storage facility and that the Board needs to begin the process to transfer all equipment and documents. Anderson volunteered his SUV to help transport. Anderson will coordinate with Baker in transferring any equipment and documents currently in her home. Tillotson will collect and organize the WPHA documents in her home and coordinate transport with Anderson. Bader stated that all Directors should confirm whether they have any WPHA property in their homes.

Meeting adjourned at 9:46 pm.

*Minutes submitted by Amanda Rhodes.*