

Autumn General Membership Meeting
November 12, 2014
Stanford in Washington

President Peter Brusoe gave the association open at 7:30PM. There were more than 35 members of the community in attendance at the beginning of the meeting.

Brusoe welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming. He thanked Stanford University for hosting and commented on how nice the renovations looked. Brusoe then outlined the evening which would include a report from the nominations committee, an election, an update from the president, a discussion on the 25% restaurant cap and then a chat with Councilmember Mary Cheh. He invited all present to enjoy the lemonade, water and cookies in the back as well as pick up a copy of the Acorn.

Brusoe then called on Past President Bill Menczer to present the nominations report. Nominated were:

President: Peter Brusoe
Vice President: Barbara Ioanes
Treasurer: Warren Gorlick
At-Large Executive Committee Members:
Dan Dembkowski
Gasper Martinez
Rob Meisnere
Stephanie Zobay

Emily Wagner, the secretary, indicated that she was not seeking to be re-elected. Bill asked if there were any nominations from the floor for secretary. There being none the position was left vacant. A motion was made by Bill Kummings seconded by Larry Aurbach to cast a unanimous ballot for the slate as presented. The motion was approved. The question then came before the association to vote on the slate, it was passed unanimously.

Brusoe thanked Bill Menczer and his group for their hard work and commitment to the association in finding people to serve the association. He also thanked everyone who agreed to serve. He also acknowledged the hard work and dedication of Emily Wagner as serving as secretary and how much she will be missed by the association.

President's report

Brusoe reported on successful events including the spring cleanup, co-sponsored by the Woodland-Normanstone association, and a spring picnic expertly planned by Sarah Taber. Details were still coming together for the annual holiday party.

25% Restaurant Cap:

The association then discussed the 25 % restaurant cap and whether or not the association should support keeping it at 25%, eliminating it, or changing it.

A robust, polite conversation occurred.

Some of those who supported the cap pointed out that the cap left room for non-restaurants to move into the neighborhood. Because landlords can charge higher rents to restaurants than to other retail businesses, landlords would naturally favor them over those businesses that residents might want. It was mentioned that the Wardman Park Hotel has shrunk and hotel business has been reduced due to the new downtown Convention Center, so there is less demand for Woodley Park restaurants. Other comments included that there would be added stress to the existing restaurants in the neighborhood, that if the cap did not exist we would not have had Wylie Wagg or Ace Hardware, that adding restaurants would remove some of the historical character of the neighborhood, and that they enjoyed how walkable the community is and how that cap helps them. One said that too many restaurants bring more trash and more rats. Others said that how the variety of stores allows for seniors to age in place. Several pointed out that they liked not needing a car to run many errands at neighborhood businesses. A restaurant owner said that a variety of businesses brought more people to the neighborhood, who then might eat at one of the restaurants.

The primary speaker against the cap said that the cap has the unintended consequence of limiting competition that results in mediocre restaurants staying in business and charging higher prices than would otherwise be the case, that he had to go all the way to Silver Spring or Friendship Heights for a family meal, that there should be free market forces at work, and that the zoning rules are a bit odd since establishments that sell nothing more than “cake pops” are classified as bakeries rather than eating establishments. One urged that the cap increase should be done on a case-by-case basis.

A motion was made by John Goodman that the WPCA oppose Nando's request for a variance as to the 25% restaurant cap, and it was seconded by Roger White. A voice vote was called for. The voice vote being unclear, a division of the house was ordered. The motion passed 15-6.

Guest Speaker:

Brusoe then introduced our guest speaker for the evening, the Honorable Mary Cheh, who represents Ward 3 on the Council.

The Councilmember gave an update on some of her activities including earmarking money for roads, cleaning up communities, and her hope for a BID between the Wisconsin and CT avenue corridors.

The Councilmember then opened it up for questions from the community. There were many.

One resident raised the issue about the delay in police responding to dead or nearly dead people in homes and apartments. CM Cheh offered that she would talk to the commander of the 2nd District to try to improve the response times.

Another resident raised the issue of a Fredericksburg, Virginia-based contractor who has situated a trailer used to hold building materials on Klinge Road for the past 18 months. CM Cheh agreed that it was a nuisance, but there was a limit to what the DC Department of Transportation (DDOT) could do under current laws. As a result of this and similar issues in other neighborhoods, CM Cheh has sponsored the Public Space Enforcement Amendment Act of 2014, which would allow DDOT to impose fines and take other appropriate enforcement actions to ameliorate such public nuisances. CM Cheh expressed optimism that the bill would be passed by the City Council later in 2014.

Another resident discussed armed robberies in the community. The Councilmember talked about the increased patrols and undercover work, but also the need for the police to catch a break.

There were some questions about school boundaries and feeder patterns. The Councilmember offered that she would look into some of the issues. She also talked about the need to have a critical mass of Ward 3 people going to Hardy Middle School and that we all need to jump into the pool together.

Another resident raised the concern that if her son were to go to the other school that there may not be a direct metro bus route there. CM Cheh responded that while she does not have the ability to directly control WMATA she would bring up the issue and make sure that they are aware of this.

Another resident raised the issue of the outdoor pool for Ward 3 and how it would be good to have it in our rec center rather than just a splash/spray ground. The Councilmember shared that she put the money in the budget, but did not have a decided place yet.

Another resident raised the issue of trying to get Cleveland Park's metro named "Cleveland Park-National Zoo" to help draw some of the crowds further north. CM Cheh stated that the costs of doing so are very high, according to Metro.

Another resident raised the issue of the ground being trampled towards the zoo and the need for nice looking tree boxes.

Another resident raised concerns about the reversing lanes on CT avenue, as well as having an earlier indicator if Rock Creek Park was closed or delayed by placing signs further up Cathedral Avenue instead of at the entrance to the Parkway.

Another resident raised concerns about the Library and if there was sufficient money to rebuild it as well as maintain a temporary library.

Another resident raised concerns about the visitor parking passes and how those were being distributed.

Another resident raised concerns about the soccer stadium deal and taxpayers' contributions to it. CM Cheh reminded us that it would be a significant revenue generator, particular in terms of tax revenue to the city.

Another resident raised concerns about all of the bottles that are polluting the Anacostia and the need for DC to have a bottle bill and a bottle deposit.

Another resident asked about the status of the Klinge Trail. CM Cheh stated that a contract will be awarded in January 2015 and preliminary work will follow.

Closing announcements:

Brusoe thanked the Councilmember for attending and for all her hard work on behalf of the community.

He updated the community about the passing of two long-standing members of the community, Armen Tashdian and Chuck Lupton and to keep them in their prayers and thoughts.

Brusoe also announced that there would be a tree planted in the Tregaron Conservancy in honor of Armen, once the Association received \$300 in donations to pay the charges for the tree.

The Community Association General Meeting adjourned at 9:05PM.