

WEST HARRISON NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF MEETING: June 21, 2007, West Harrison Fire House

Attendance: Total – 31+: Board members present: Fred Sciliano, Lori Wilson, Gregg Rosenberg, Jeff LaGrotte, Charlie Russo, Mario Gallo, Angela Amodeo. **Board members absent:** Gerri Barbagallo, Lisa Faillace-Sciliano.

Vice President (Acting President) Lori Wilson – opened meeting and welcomed all.

President Fred Sciliano – has been officially nominated as republican candidate for Town of Harrison Councilman/Trustee and read a prepared statement explaining that he has stepped back from his duties as President during the campaign.

The **minutes** of the last meeting of May 23rd were approved.

Treasurer's Report: Jeff LaGrotte – Bank balance has approx. \$18,700.00. We will be able to hit \$7,500.00 budgeted for community give back for all the planned events.

Fundraising & Community Building: Mario Gallo – The picnic date is September 29th, 12:00 to 5:00 pm. All members current with their dues are free, non-members \$25.00, children 6-12, ½ price, and under 6 are free. Catered by Powell Caterers. Games with prizes. Sign up for Bocce tournament. May have a walk around the lake. Working on children's activities. Need lots of help, please volunteer. Must be a member by Sept. 15 to be free.

Seniors Committee: Rosemarie Verano – Ceramics off for the summer because of heat. Lunch now being held at St. Anthony's School for the air-conditioning. Looking to start golf foursomes. Water aerobics will begin June 23, both here and downtown – open to anyone, 3 nights a week. A doggie swim will be held the last day that the pool is open. A senior safety program will be worked on in October with Harrison Community Services. The mayor spoke to the seniors to inform them of progress with the new senior building. Next Thursday, June 28th it will come before the town board.

Parks & Recreation: Charlie Russo – Progress, but slow in getting things cleaned up around the lake. Talking to county about their role. The hill has had some clearing. The Dawson center is open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 12 to 5 pm (newsletter said just Tuesdays.)

Planning & Zoning: Lori Wilson – Villa's housing on Underhill has been approved and will go condo. They will update infrastructure - water mains, repaving Daniel and Harrison Streets, new fire hydrants. Parking will definitely be a problem but the planning board can't do anything about that. If you want legislation changed, residents have to tell the town board that the law be changed so no more two family house could be built. The planning board can't do that – maybe we can discuss this next year. Town is moving on illegal apartments – this would alleviate parking problems all over.

Public Works/Traffic & Safety: Lori – If you want an 8 to 10 ft. tree planted call Kelley in Public Works: 670-3103. **Maryann DiSimone** – name will go on waiting list. The homeowner has to water young trees. **Floor** – traffic light is needed at Main and Underhill – very difficult to get through intersection and dangerous. Harrison now owns the road, not county (Underhill & Lake).

Youth Committee: Lori – Meeting will be held July 30th.

Membership & Communications: Angela Amodeo – We have a few new members. Please pay dues to support the organization.

The **next meeting** will be on **Wednesday, September 13th** at 7:30, here at the firehouse. Let us know about concerns and suggestions.

Floor discussion: new DOT construction may cause a serious drainage problem at the end of Main Street concerning the creak, detention basin and new drainage tanks to be installed that are much too large. Residents are concerned about water that they are diverting with the new piping systems. FEMA has declared it a flood area and they are putting more water there.

Guest Presenter: Harrison Town Justice Mark Lust – He is one of 2 Harrison town justices. Each justice is on call 24/7 every other week. There is a lot of court action in Harrison besides parking tickets – murders, drunk pilot, internet gambling ring, criminal acts do happen and home invasions – most coming from out of town via parkway and thruways. Drunk driving still a major concern. Our court has a very good reputation. Is a busy court. As a justice, his personal opinions don't matter; he must just enforce the law. Harrison court has civil (small claims) and justice court jurisdiction under \$3,000. Traffic and municipal jurisdiction on Tuesdays is very busy. They have a very efficient staff. Court Clerk for 25 years, Rosemary King, is very respected in the county. Fridays is criminal day. We can try and sentence misdemeanors up to 1 year. Can have felony hearings but if it doesn't plead down it goes to county court. We conduct a few jury trials a year, but most are bench trials – before the judge. He is a part time judge, also a lawyer and trial attorney by day, so he is very familiar with rule of evidence and how a judge should conduct himself. He treats everyone with respect and expects that from all involved. Hasn't had to bang his gavel yet.

We have a very pro-active police department in our town. Harrison High School has a great student law program with a court room at the school. They come to sit in on court. We have a wonderful police force working hard to protect you and he tells the students this. It is a safe community because of it. He talks to students about avoiding crime and asks kids about why there is so much underage drinking. Some of their responses have been - nothing to do in town, police don't let them hang out. It has to start with the parents who have to set the ground rules. Tells them they can't have a fake ID. That when they get caught they could be charged with a felony, which could wreck their whole future. Tells them just being with someone using drugs or riding in a car where there are drugs, everyone is charged. It is up to the parents to help our kids to develop strategies to use to avoid such circumstances.

All illegal housing cases are settled one way or another – one case is going to trial. He generally tells landlord tenant must go and to come back. We don't let cases drag on. They are fined in most cases and the fine can go higher or lower. We don't let anyone off the hook but try to work with them. It is not a matter of fines but of remediating the situation. His sense is that code enforcement is working hard and we are prosecuting violators. They deal with many other different municipal violations. Come and sit in on a session and see what goes on. We are very strict with all municipal violations.

He said “Whatever you can do as a neighborhood association, do it. No one gets away, they always come into compliance. Your West Harrison Neighborhood Association has come to be a force in our town in the last few years and a force that must be reckoned with... What you are doing here, opposing illegal apartments, is very important. It impacts taxes, schools, parking, fields, etc.”

(Floor discussion followed and he answered various questions.)

Respectfully Submitted,
Angela Amodeo, Secretary