

WEST HARRISON NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Minutes of Meeting: February 17, 2005, West Harrison Fire House

Attendance: 51

Fred Sciliano opened the meeting and welcomed all and welcomed Councilman Pat Vetere.

Minutes: A correction to the minutes of January 20 – the spelling of Mr. Cory Rabin was corrected – he spoke from the floor at the meeting.

Business:

- **Fred** told of the presentation of our new organization to the Mayor/Supervisor and Councilmen at the town board meeting on the Feb. 15. by our Board of Directors.
- We now have a post office box and address – Box 111 – located at the Jottery.
- **Jeff** updated on the process of incorporation. The application was filed and will be final in a few weeks. Then we can collect dues.
- **Fred** appealed for new members to sign up – submit applications and dues will be collected at a later date.
- The matter of refreshments can be considered when we collect dues.
- Upcoming dates for committee meetings here at the fire house:
 - Wed., March 2 – Planning, Architecture & Zoning
Parks & Recreation
 - Wed., March 9 – Public Works, Utilities & Beautification
Traffic, Safety & Crime Watch
- The March WHNA meeting will not be held on St. Patrick's Day, but on March 31.
- Chief Hall asked to attend tonight to update us on the requests made at the last meeting.
- Our guest speaker next meeting will be Ed DiBuono, Code Enforcement Officer for the town.

Committee Report – Senior Citizens:

Rosemarie Verano, Seniors committee chair gave the report which is attached to these minutes.

Discussions:

- Floor - urgent need for a post office and suggested locations. Can a committee look into it. And problems of even the old facility like it closing between 12:00 noon and 1:00 o'clock. Fred explained that the town is trying to find a suitable location. Portable post office suggested. Mayor had said they may set up a non-manned station in the foyer of the children's library (Joan Walsh). Floor worried about the security of such an arrangement. Fred will call Congresswoman Nita Lowey's office (Pat Kegan – 428-1707) and ask for assistance. And will ask the Planning Committee to pursue this.
- Floor – the problem of no left turn on Westchester Ave. unto White Plains Ave. – a county road. Maybe we can talk to our county legislator Bob Astorino about this.

Dave Hall, Harrison Chief of Police – updated actions from last meeting:

- Since complaints at last meeting, police have issued: 25 speeding tickets on Lake St., 27 parking summonses by Preston School, 89 trucking violations for unsafe trucks on Lake St. with 9 impounds.

- He sent another letter to the county about the urgent need for a traffic light at Main & Underhill.
- He said car on Daniel was gone but resident said it was still there – he will check it out and call resident. Floor gave him more car and truck parking complaints and promised continuing monitoring.
- He listened to complaints and on the 2 side parking in front of St. Anthony's Church and the hazards and difficulty it causes – all illegal and not stopped.
- Took complaint about bushes on Underhill that obstruct the view of motorists.

Fred introduced **Councilman/Trustee Joe Cannella**:

- Spoke of the merger of Water District #1 to Westchester Waterworks which is now completed. It will improve quality of service and water in our neighborhood. The consolidation is making it possible for a major capital repair project which will increase water pressure with large water mains and won't cause significant rate increases.
- The compost facility is no longer at Park Lane – it has been moved to an area we are renting from the state near the airport. We now have a town yard at the Nike base and will provide higher level of services for West Harrison.\
- A postal kiosk is going into the side foyer at the children's library space. He took comments from the floor about the idea of bringing strangers into that facility used by children, but he said there would be no access to the library from the space. There was a lot of protest against this situation. A lot of discussion followed urging for better postal facility.
- Floor – town should insist that Con Ed and Cablevision remove their debris from their job sites around the neighborhood.
- Park improvement plan is moving forward with the design. A \$250,000 retainer has been paid to due preliminaries. The field plan is ready to go and will be scheduled. The diagrams are available in the town house. It is a massive project. With the water district consolidation, the old District #1 property is freed up and included in the plan. An organization such as we have here is vital for input and guidance. They want to do it right.
- Con Ed and Verizon have met with the town looking for a solution to the mess of overhead wires across the storefronts – will be high cost for underground. Waiting for estimates. Need to consolidate the lines underground or not – which side?
- Most significant issue of our town – illegal apartments – worse here than downtown and the town board understands this. Discussed the consequences of the problem – overcrowding schools, streets, fire and safety disasters in the waiting, felony for stealing on a large scale. The town board has no sympathy for it. Discussed the process and problems of reporting – complaints have to be signed if no entry is denied, judges not always willing to produce warrants. Town has created a task force with the building department, DPW, law, fire & police, Mayor's office. Will educate as to what to look for and what to do about it and to look for opportunities to inspect. He urged the attendees not to be afraid to put in a complaint. Floor - can our org. sign a complaint on behalf of a resident. There is a fine of \$250 per week for illegal apartment and the town wants to increase that fine. They want the opportunity to re-inspect the apartment and will except no compromises. Problem of everyone working between 9 and 5 so inspections have to be arranged in evenings and weekends to be successful. He pledged that the town is going to start doing these things and hire additional people where needed. If an affidavit is signed, the process will occur.

- Floor – our seniors committee wants the town board to know that we want the Mintzer Center kept permanently for the senior center and eventually seriously upgraded. Joe stated that they can improve the space at Mintzer and they can and will do it now.
- Floor – we want Councilman Cannella to work with us on a regular basis and he promised to follow up and will not drop the illegal apartments issue.
- Discussed issue of county/town roads and county be desirous of not continuing the maintenance of some and they want to pay the town a certain amount for each mile for the town to take it over. They will pay once but then we have to continue to pay for the maintenance. Issue need study.
- Discussed issue of county contributing to town parks or recreation needs – allows town to access potentially millions of dollars, but facility must be made available to the whole county to some degree. This will be done for the new downtown ball fields where our travel-team activities would cover that obligation. Not doable or being considered for West Harrison.

Councilman/Trustee Cannella was thanked and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Angela Amodeo, Secretary

Enc: attachment – Seniors Committee Report

**West Harrison Neighborhood Association
Senior Citizens Committee – Meeting 2/13/05**

Attendance: Angela Amodeo, Nancy DeLeo, Mario Gallo, Al Gaudenzi, Ann Gaudenzi, Charles Russo, Rosemarie Verano

Absent: Lisa Nero, Joan Walsh

The goal of this committee is to review the senior citizen program located in the Leo Mintzer Center, to make recommendations to improve and expand the program, and to work with the Town Board and Recreation Department to meet the needs of our seniors.

Immediate concerns are:

- the lack space
- program is only for one day a week – approximately 3 hours only
- there is no daily program/daily activities arranged
- seniors must leave by 2:30
- there is no TV
- the future development of the center to meet the needs of our seniors

Report on Visits to Other Senior Center Programs:

- Charles Russo visited the White Plains Senior Citizen Center. This day program provides daily activities, wheelchair accessible transportation, lunch at \$1.75 p.p. (funded by the recreation department), wheelchair accessible rest rooms, a large all-purpose room, training programs (i.e. computer), flu shots.
- Nancy DeLeo visited the Rye Brook Senior Citizens Center. This program has been available for approximately 10 years. This day program provides daily activities, card room, game room, community room, lunch at \$2.00 p.p. (funded by the recreation department), an on-site coordinator with an office, 20 parking spaces – some handicap accessible.

Plans:

- to speak with Councilman Joe Canella and request his assistance in working with the town board to address our concerns and put a proactive plan in place
- visit additional Senior Centers with day programs
- determine how the Recreation Department can financially assist the senior center
- secure an on-site coordinator to plan daily functions, betterment/enrichment programs, on-site health seminars (flue shots, glaucoma/blood pressure screening), etc.

Goals:

- address specific issues and concerns to the town board for improvement of the program and the center
- pilot a day program similar to other successful senior center programs
- work with the town to redevelop the Mintzer Center as a permanent, Senior Center Building

March meeting date is tentative for Sunday, March 20th