

WEST HARRISON NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF MEETING: May 21, 2008 West Harrison Fire House

Board members present: Lori Wilson, Gregg Rosenberg, Jeff LaGrotte, Mario Gallo, Angela Amodeo, Charlie Russo, Jo Ann King. Absent: Gerri Barbagallo, Lisa Faillace-Sciliano

President Lori Wilson opened the meeting and welcomed all.

The **minutes** of April 16, 2008 were approved.

Treasury Report: Jeff LaGrotte: Balance is \$25,381.00. Not a lot of activity. Paid for Board of Directors Insurance. Need to file new forms for the IRS. We will be checking with Pro-Bono attorney to be sure all paperwork is in order.

President's Report: Lori presented to the Town Board our proposal to purchase a cast iron bell to be included in the new streetscape project, placed across the street from the firehouse and dedicated to the West Harrison Volunteer Fire Department. They accepted our proposal. An article appeared in the Harrison Herald about this.

Our Board of Directors filled a vacancy on our board by appointing **Jo Ann King** to finish a term that will end in December 2010. Jo Ann will also be the new chair of the Planning and Zoning Committee, and no longer co-chair of the membership committee.

Lori showed plaque that will be presented to Monica Chimes Floral who was awarded the first West Harrison Neighborhood Association Beautification Award.

Kelley Dolce has agreed to chair our Youth Committee.

A meeting was held last week with the residents of Main St. and the town engineers - Commissioner Bob Wasp and Michael Amodeo. They reviewed the plans for widening Main Street to 40 feet needed for safety and plans for the flood abatement project. Also, opinions were sought on the possibility of closing Main St. off from White Plains and making it a cul de sac. Mayor Walsh wants the opinion of the community and asked us to take a poll. (*Discussion ensued including suggestion to make a connection at the end of Main St. to the parallel streets. Most present do not want to see the access to White Plains lost by forming a cul de sac: 21 against vs. 3 for the cul de sac.*)

Lori read a letter that she sent to Mayor Walsh and the Town Board stating responses and recommendations drawn from our extensive discussions at the April general meeting focusing on unsafe/illegal housing. Major items included in the letter: move quickly on raising the violation fines substantially; hire the necessary manpower needed to properly address this issue.

Membership & Communications: Angela Amodeo – We have 180 dues paid members. You need to pay 2008 dues to be eligible for the Member of the Month gift.

Senior Committee: Ro Verano – Committee met and discussed adding days to the lunch program. Will soon need to hire an aide to handle the program. Will ask seniors if they would like to have sandwiches on Thursdays instead of just snack. Ron Belmont contacted St. Anthony's and the seniors will be able to have summer program at St. Anthony's School. Will try to keep Monday movies going. Water aerobics will again be offered free to seniors at the pool in the park. There have not been any fire drills yet. CPR training for seniors cannot be offered because of the nature of the training. Still looking into a ceramics program on Fridays with an added lunch program that day. Will research furniture for the new center at the request of Mayor Walsh. May 8th there was a preliminary ground breaking done by Mayor Walsh with the Gaudenzi's and Nancy DeLeo.

Parks & Recreation: Charlie Russo – more cleaning of trails is being done. Have established a proposal for signage that will post information on the trails, gifted by this association. Ron Belmont has committed to connecting the Heritage Trail to the park. (*Charlie researched and prepared the information on the purchase of the memorial bell that will be placed across from the fire house.*)

New Business: Member Kevin Miller requested the association get more involved with the Sherman Ave. Development proposed in the Brae Burn section, behind West Harrison towards Dorrado Drive. Fourteen single family homes are proposed on the slope. It is a steep slope area and he says it should be monitored. Once this is connected by way of Madison St., the lots behind Woodside Ave. could also be developed. He says we need to be

against over development and overcrowding. We should consider voicing against it. The planning board will hear the proposal next month. The Cantors started a neighborhood association to oppose this development. Wants a letter to the town if the WHNA opposes this. Discussion – WHNA should ask for moratorium. The town is slow on reacting and then it is too late. Make a park with trails there. There is a planning board sign informing of the project on the Brae Burn side but nothing to inform the residents on the West Harrison side. Go to www.shermanave.com, the developer's web site to access a diagram of the development. Lori will send an email survey to our membership to access the opinions.

Complaint was made about noise at the Villa's project at inappropriate times. And the building department has not responded to these complaints.

Talking about need for more personnel for the building department, they should hire temporary help, which can be done.

Superintendent of Recreation Ron Belmont stopped by to inform us of upcoming summer events: Summer concert series on Wednesday evenings, this year including a "summer arias" concert similar to the one held at St. Anthony's church this spring. There will be movies on the mall. Brochure is in the mail. There are volunteer opportunities for older children. They will have birthday parties at the pools. New travel camp for 8th and 9th graders with trips every day.

Next general meeting is Wednesday, June 18th here at the firehouse.

Member of the Month for March was chosen: **John Vasta** was presented with a gift certificate to **Silver Lake Pizza**.

Guest Presentation: West Harrison Volunteer Fire Chief Pat Galluzzo – He introduced **Assistant Fire Chief Steve Mancini** and gave an overview of how the department officers are set up, administrative officers and firematic officers, all elected positions, all volunteer department. They have many young members willing to work. He is in his 5th term as chief. He joined as a teenager in a youth program and rose through the ranks. His job is challenging and heavy on administration. He and Steve are a great working team. There is a lot of intense work involved with compliance with state and federal laws. Their mission is to protect lives and property. They deal with structure and motor vehicle fires, brush fires like the recent difficult to reach fire in the woods behind the lake. They opened up a long path to reach it. Then the county helped fight it by sending a new helicopter that picks up water from the lake and drops it on the fire that spent hours working on it. They do a large number of mutual aid calls like the Harrison house fire the other night. They have a special response team called The Fast Team for mutual aid calls with 6 to 15 responders who help in rescues, with a fully equipped utility truck. Fire insurance rates for West Harrison residents are considerably lower than for downtown. The volunteer firefighters train at the town's Park Lane facility and the Westchester County fire training center in Valhalla. They have exercises Tuesday nights. The volunteers have 95 hours of training before they are even voted in. The residents voted for a pension system for volunteers in Harrison a few years ago. There are 13 members now getting pension checks. It is based on a point system. We do some donating to some other local organizations and families in need. Each year's budget includes funds for new trucks when the need arises so that there is no need for a referendum. They provide a \$15,000.00 death benefit. We put money into the pension system and are saving for a 100 anniversary celebration. We have 2 million dollars worth of equipment. Members must have regular physicals that are budgeted for and are done here at the firehouse. The volunteers hang out at the firehouse regularly which means that they are often here when there is an alarm. We want them here as you should. Volunteers all have pagers and are always on call. They include a number of town employees who are allowed to respond from work which helps cover during the work day. They never strip the district of equipment or men for parades. They have 350 to 400 alarms per year. Alarm to alarm location average is 4 minutes. Officers have to take courses and must qualify. They have one female firefighter. They are working to get youngsters involved. Men are trained to expect the worse and respond to any automatic alarms. We will be holding our yearly memorial service at St. Anthony's church on Thursday evening.

Respectfully submitted,
Angela Amodeo, Secretary