

Minutes from IHLNA Board Meeting, February 3, 2022

Prepared by John Tomasino

Board members present: Marie-Claire Leman, KC Smith, Jason Khan-Hohensee, Ceci Michelotti, Melissa Farley, Edward Reid, Doug Martin, Laura Dearman, Charity Myers, Katie Clark, and John Tomasino

Board members absent: Ashley Arrington, Eli Wilkins-Malloy, Charlotte Stuart-Tilley

Other neighbors in attendance: Ernie Payne, Stephany Cecil, Zoe and Buddy Mahoney, Keith Hughes, Betsy Tabac, Judith Rainbrook, Connie Bersok, David July, and Angel and Thomas Eason

Approval of the January Board Meeting Minutes: KC moved and Marie-Claire seconded the approval of the January minutes. No corrections or additions.

Treasurer's report: No report this month.

Updates and Neighbor Concerns

1. English Property Development: Doug provided the update. He attended the meeting and submitted comments on his own behalf. Edward, Ramona, and Grant all attended. Doug stated that essentially we won a victory. The developer withdrew a rather aggressive development plan which would have included things like car washes, gas stations, etc., along steep ravines. Doug's issue was worry about the lack of stormwater mitigation. There are already flooding issues, and those would have been made worse. Doug reported that the developer discussed having a major greenway through the plan. He was receptive and said some good things. They are going to develop 38 acres of land farther south on their property. That request will be going to the growth management board in February. Ultimately, it will come before the city and county commission. This property is the largest undeveloped property in the southside. Edward added that three days before the meeting, they greatly reduced the scope of the project. He doesn't see this as much as a win. They are still moving forward with the apartment complex. Edward said the reason for the change is the developer's contractor is running out of time. Stephany (from the Blairestone Woods community) added that the apartments will be near Publix and will be built with much impermeable materials and this might impact a closed basin underneath this area. There is a meeting coming up the 16th, but the developer asked for an extension through March. For interested neighbors and neighborhoods, there is a meeting this Saturday at 10:30-noon at McLean Center, 700 Paul Russell Road, about the EP PUD. Jeff VanderMeer is joining the efforts to guide input on this project.

2. Campaign Contribution Refund Program {CCPR}: Ceci and Judy went to a recent meeting, which was led by Ernie Payne. If someone donates to a city commission candidate, they can submit the receipt for their contribution, and they will be reimbursed up to \$25 from the CCPR program. There was discussion about how to get more information about this program to the neighborhood. Ceci suggested perhaps we can include information in the newsletter. Another idea was about doing a booth at Nene Fest. Judy had ideas on getting this information out to

her organization (Neighbor to Neighbor in the Nenes). John suggested a motion to have the Board endorse providing this information to the neighborhood. Charity asked why the city is doing this. Ernie relayed that this came from the 2014 formulation of the Independent Ethics Board. The idea was to try to dilute the influence of deeper pockets. The idea is by getting more people to participate in the electoral process, more average citizens would become involved. The purpose of the meeting was to come up with ideas for how to best advertise this program. Some of the requirements of the CCRP were hard written into the city charter. Certain conditions were written into the charter, so that can't be changed unless more work is done to amend the charter.

Ceci seconded the motion. The neighborhood association supports the Independent Ethics CCRP program. Doug was against this program initially, but he isn't opposed to providing information to the neighbors so they can make their own decisions. Ernie added that the money for the program comes out of the budget of the Independent Ethics Board. There has been very little use of this program in past elections. **The motion (the Board supports disseminating information about this program through our various communication channels) passed unanimously.**

3. Fruit Tree Grant: John provided a short update. The completed application was submitted, and now we wait to hear from the city. John expressed thanks to neighbors who helped collect needed signatures from neighbors who live near the impacted areas, including Ceci, Heidi Fox, and Edward Acoff. John also thanked Eli and Marie-Claire for all of their assistance.

4. Membership Drive: The fliers are being printed, and the invoice is with Melissa. Charity also copied Sandy Neidert to make her aware. We will get the fliers the first of next week. This is our annual membership drive. The contributions are voluntary. A resident can donate by mailing/dropping of a check or using PayPal.

5. New Items Brought by Neighbors: Thomas brought up the greenway and the spraying for exotics. He would like to discuss this with anyone who is interested. He works for the Fish and Wildlife Commission.

6. Optimist Park Issues: Connie Bersok joined to discuss the invasives issue at Optimist and the trail. She has been in communication with the city, and she's been very involved with this issue. She talked with Brian Hopper with the Parks and Recreation Department and asked about the plan for spraying for the invasives. He relayed that the city is reluctant to apply for the grant from Fish and Wildlife because when staff sprayed before, there were some negative reactions. What Brian would like is guidance on whether they should proceed or not. We have a couple of very invasive ground covers. The main ones are small-leaf spiderwort, and the other is Tahitian bridal veil. These evasive invasives create a very dense mat and prevent the native greenery from being able to germinate. He also thinks we need to work on helping to rehabilitate the canopy in the greenway, and this could be part of the grant application. Connie also spoke to John Kunzer (sp?) with the Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) and asked whether this could be done without using herbicide. It can be done, but it is difficult and must be done to stringent specifications. He assured Connie that the sprayers would not use anything that contains any

form Round-Up. They would like to treat from the greenway opposite Koucky Park, all the way up to the beaver pond. All of that land is under the "Public Conservation Lands." The city does plan on planting site-appropriate trees after the invasives are removed. There already have been two treatments over the past five years. John would hate to see us lose the progress that we have made.

Judy endorsed the idea and doesn't believe manual removal will work based on the prior experience with trying to eradicate the coral ardisia. She does feel that we've made great progress with educating the neighborhood about the harms of invasives.

Thomas is also supportive of this project, and his agency (FWC) reached out to seek his assistance with educating the neighborhood and the board. He said he believes FWC has spent more than \$55,000 thus far on this project. FWC would like the Board to help move this project forward with the city. Connie said two things are needed. The first is letting Brian Hooper know whether the Board supports the application. The second is setting up a visit/meeting with John from FWC.

Doug made a motion that the neighborhood draft a letter supporting this project. John asked Connie whether the city needs a letter, or would it proceed with just our affirmative vote. Connie said the city just needs our affirmation, and we could follow up with a letter.

Doug restated his motion for the Board to express its support for proceeding with the grant application and the eradication efforts, following that up with a letter if needed. Ceci seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Charity suggested maybe the city could include signage during the application. Marie-Claire asked Connie to let Brian know that, if he receives inquiries from concerned neighbors, he could direct those folks to email their concerns to our Board email address, and then Marie-Claire and/or Ceci can reach out to them.

Marie-Claire updated about the construction work on the trail. The city is working on sanitary sewer improvements. The trails on the north and south sides are generally open, but if they need to close them, they will post signage. The work is slated for completion by late April.

Also, the city very quickly repaired the stairs on the trail after reported by Connie. Thank you, Connie, for reporting this issue.

7. Pony Rides: Charity provided the update. The event is planned for Sunday, February 13, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. at Optimist Park. This will include the petting zoo plus the pony rides. There will be no potluck. Marie-Claire will advertise this event on Facebook, the email list, and information will be in the membership drive form. Doug added that he will make the arrangements, and the price may go up from the past price of \$600. Doug will be there when the animals arrive and will arrange payment with Melissa.

Nene Fest 2022: Before the Board meeting, Melissa, Charity, and Marie-Claire discussed the various ways to make Nene Fest possible and safe. They also discussed the things we should stay away from, such as crowd-sourced meals. We have until February 28 to get the plans on paper so the info can be in the newsletter. Marie-Claire asked the Board if they had any thoughts to share. Charity mentioned that we already have t-shirts labeled as Nene Fest 12, but that event didn't go forward, so we could possibly also sell those. Charity would like to use the snake again and update it with a cohesive theme. She suggested that we can use all of the space and spread things out. Masks would be optional. Charity thinks we can do this safely and smartly and leave it to the attendees to protect themselves. Charity thinks we should have food, just like we need to have the music and the puppet show.

Marie-Claire added that they discussed new things that could be done to make it safer. One idea was microphone covers that could be easily replaced in between singers. What else can be done safely? KC suggested contacting others, perhaps with the city, who have successfully put on recent events. Another suggestion was box meals. Charity asked the members to send an email with any suggestions or concerns for planning purposes. The idea was to get our input and then they can share a draft plan for approval from the Board.

Newsletter: KC is roaring ahead. She has plenty of material but of course she welcomes submissions. The deadline for submissions is February 26. Doug relayed that Dr. Genae Crump is willing to do an interview about what she and family love about the neighborhood.

The meeting concluded shortly after 8:40 p.m.