

NORTH STREET AREA CIVIC ASSOCIATION

Summary of September 26, 2018 Annual Meeting

President Alan Himmelstein called the meeting to order at approximately 7:40 PM. Total attendance was 21 (18 residents and three guests).

After laying out the agenda for the meeting and briefly discussing the purpose and goals of NSACA, Alan recognized the attendance of the guest speaker, Rich Liebson, reporter for the Journal News/lohud.com and the NSACA board members – Bob Friscia, vice president and secretary; Pat Bernstein, treasurer; Allen Flissler, past president, and board members-at-large Sheila O'Brien and Stuart Pearlman.

North Street Beautification

Alan next turned the podium over to Sheila to discuss the continued progress on the beautification project for the North Street center islands. With one median strip already planted with trees, the goal is to similarly populate the rest of them, up to Bryant Avenue, with local species of trees. To do that, NSACA is working closely with the White Plains Beautification Foundation and the Mayor's office, and has established an online portal for raising tax-deductible contributions specifically for this NSACA initiative. Fundraising and work on the project is being done in phases, with total cost approaching \$20,000. Maintenance costs will be minimal, as the city's landscapers have, so far, been tending to the medians as part of their normal work. To contribute, please click on the "donate" button on the Beautification Foundation's website, www.wpbf.org, and earmark the donation for the North Street Trees Project. (Specific instructions on how to do this are posted on our website.)

Community Fire Protection

Alan then discussed the continuing concern about the adequacy of fire protection service in the south end of White Plains. While the engine company at the North Street & Ridgeway firehouse is said to be always on duty, Ladder Truck 34 is not, due to staffing availability. Current schedule calls for it to be operative on most school days, and not during most breaks, including the summer. It is also not operative when one of the truck's three firefighters is out. When the truck is out of service, ladder truck service would have to come from another White Plains firehouse or mutual aid.

French American School

In his update on the French American School of New York, Alan noted Judge Joan B. Lefkowitz dismissed the two lawsuits filed by the Gedney Association and neighbors who argued based on restrictive covenants. The Association, which has opposed the FASNY project for the past seven or eight years, in cooperation with many area civic associations (including ours) and residents, and the neighbors have each filed a notice of appeal and have until early 2019 to decide if they want to actually pursue an appeal.

Voter Registration

Alan also reminded attendees of the importance of voting in the next general election on Tuesday, November 6th. Residents who are not registered can do so by filling out, mailing or delivering the necessary form which is available online:

English –

<https://citizenparticipation.westchestergov.com/images/stories/pdfs/voterReg.pdf>

Spanish –

<https://citizenparticipation.westchestergov.com/images/stories/pdfs/voterRegSpan.pdf>

Registration must be secured at least 25 days before the election, setting the deadline by mail or in person at Friday, October 12th.

Guest Speaker

Next, guest speaker Rich Liebson, who reports on White Plains and Central Westchester for the Journal News and its lohud.com online version, gave an overview of the main issues he and his newspaper are covering. With his 34 years of experience covering White Plains, he spoke of how things work in the City government, pointing out that his coverage always seeks to report on the facts and perspectives of the governing institutions and city residents alike. He said the biggest story continues to be the city's focus on downtown development, as its policies and programs seek to attract young people to live, shop and play here. Rich noted that, in past years, more emphasis was placed on the surrounding residential neighborhoods, but that focus has changed in recent years, especially under Mayor Tom Roach's administration.

In an added note about the FASNY project, Rich reported his understanding that rumors about FASNY abandoning the project are not true, that the project will be moving forward but that the school has recently been seeking to sell off parts of the former Ridgeway Country Club property that it will not be using for its buildings and other facilities.

Rich ended his remarks and Q&A session by providing his business cards and encouraging contact from the city's residents with any news or tips they think are worth his attention.

Election of NSACA Board

All current members of the board were reelected, and two attendees volunteered to participate in the organization's activities.

Comments & Discussion

Attendees brought up a number of topics, including a brief update by Nick Wolff on real estate conditions in White Plains, which Nick said are strong, with a tight supply of houses for sale. Complaints were voiced about the ugly fence FASNY put up opposite the high school. Attendees also expressed concerns about the slow progress on the construction of an addition to the Hindu temple, the dangerous lack of a crosswalk at Eastdale and Bryant Avenues, and the need for the left turn signal from North Street to Bryant to be longer to avoid traffic congestion at that key area intersection. Also in attendance were representatives opposed to the development near Good Counsel and North Broadway who spoke briefly of their safety- and traffic-related concerns.

Email Correspondence

Attendees expressed their preference for communication to be via email. If you have not provided your email address to NSACA, please do so by sending your contact information to northstreetwp@gmail.com.

Next Board Meeting

NSACA's next board meeting will be held on Thursday, November 8th @ 7:00 PM at the home of Bob Friscia, 575 North Street.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:15 PM.