**Hillcrest Residents Association Minutes**

August 12, 2024 at Hillcrest Hall (Lower Level)

**Attending:** April Panian, Pittman Ware, Jessica Saunders, Karen Ryall, Laurel Lawrence, Matt Price, Mike Jackson, Austin Sanders, Janet Flegal, Toni Johnson, Rob Hodge

**Absent:** Caroline Reddman, Steele Strauss, Karen Konarski Hart

**1. Pittman called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM**

**2.** Approval of Minutes: Motion was made by Jessica to approve the Minutes and Austin seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**3. Treasurer’s Report: Toni and Pittman jointly taking over in interim. Got with Jan.**Balance = $19,000+

**4. Elected Officials and Those Seeking Public Office:**

**Kathy Webb:
\***Lots of short-term rental submissions. Only 1 (Oakwood) on agenda for next week. Getting new program that will let us know how many in every neighborhood. 10 are within a mile of the submission on Oakwood.

**Tippi:** Absent (no real report with legislature being out of session)

**Those seeking public office:**
**Julie Blackwood (JP):** Not a lot going on. Money to crisis stabilization network.

**Antwan Phillips:** Running for at large board and works with Kathy Webb and shares concerns on STR’s. If can be of assistance let me know. Running for re-election. At large race. If I can do anything, please allow me to be of service.

**Brent Eubanks** – Circuit Judge here to say hi and thanks for having me.

**Blake Tiereny** – Running for at large board, but not against Antwan – running against director Adcock.

**5. President’s Comments:**

\*Emergency HMA meeting – they need volunteers for HarvestFest.

\*HRA has HarvestFest booth secured.

\*If anybody is looking for HarvestFest vendor booth the deadline is mid Sept. They are halfway to occupancy. Please note that there have been scammers, but you can only sign up for booth via Hillcrestharvestfest.com.

\*Anything for animal village please drop off on table and we will get it to them.

**6.** **New Business:**

**a. Presentation from LRPD on Social Working Program: Officer Tollette**

12th Street Division, which covers east of University all way out to Fouche and come up on 30 right under interstate park. River Market is one district. North side of Lee to river by Episcopal District 50. Liaison but still a police officer. If taxes pass hoping to get more of us. Hybrid. Homeless concern – seeing a lot of unsheltered in parks, businesses. Must be steady but firm. Nod and smile but call us and if they want assistance can call homeless advocacy group. Porter and Crump. Matthew Desalvo is boss – chief homeless officer. Advocate will talk and Tollette is a bodyguard like for the social worker. Can get them into shelter or UAMS center, crisis stabilization unit, etc. Not a ton of resources but have handful for those that want help. Cannot camp in city parks. A lot of people are new to the city that are unhoused. 2-3 times a day out in the woods trying to help folks. Social workers will have water and bus passes and able to call and have good partnership with folks within the city. Mallory is official social worker.

Q - Where area are you primarily covering? If we have homeless person in Alsopp park and we call, you do they get removed?

A – Officer - Will be a citation or can move them along with a warning. They have 72 hours to vacate. Many citations or no show and will issue a warrant. Trying to deal with crime and those who are unsheltered. Can try to break away and patrol the parks, but not a lot of bandwidth. Takes 2 officers per call. Got 30-40 calls. Resource constraint. What can we do?

Q - Many are mentally ill why can’t they be taken to UAMS?

A - Mallory – I cannot make anyone go to doctor. It isn’t a crime to have a mental illness. They might not want help. Might not recognize they need assistance, plus there are barriers to getting there. No insurance. Medicaid or Medicare have to wait and can only go to certain places. Issue of transportation to doctor and pharmacy. Meds also get stolen and then abused.
Q - Susan: recordings of flashers – ask if they can pet your dog and then they flash you. Have a lot of children in neighborhood. People camping in Allsop. Makes me nervous. Not going in there by myself. What do we do to protect ourselves?

A –

Officer T: Will leave my card.

Mayor: Have seen homelessness increase. We are fighting a 2-3 level front. It is hard to take away someone’s rights. We can engage and try our best to get them to services. Most we can do for those with mental illness is get them involuntarily committed for 3 days and then they’re back out. Building a microhome village for those that want health. Barry Hyde created a permanent village. 1200 homeless in Arkansas. 700 are in Pulaski County. We are making certain our officers have access to social workers. We are working hard to alleviate. Haven’t seen many in Hillcrest. Majority are not here. If you know their names let us know and we can get them moved. But not going to promise once moved they won’t come back. Get a lot more calls south of 630. Legal laws – behind Kroger on Springer is a tent got to wait 7 days before can do anything about it. State legislator issue. Using tax money to try and help the unsheltered. Let me know names and can have someone here. We need to get hose individuals help. We are not going to let it get it out of hand. Investing resources right now. We are state capitol, and they are coming here for the big hospitals and other resources we have available. Our officers got enough on their plate.

Kathy – don’t have enough resources. 2025 session – mental health will be on the agenda for all including unhoused. Arkansas housing trust fund since 2009 has not added any money. Session starts January.

**b. Short Term Rentals – Review revised position:**

Pittman: Concern on severity of our position. In beginning we opposed everything but has changed as more information has come to light.
Bob: Tone of letter came from a position we wrote early on. In general, we felt like as a neighborhood STR had some advantages like proximity to UAMS, promoting our neighborhood and merchants. Some things were bad though like too loud, too many people, etc. Outlined all the things people had concerns about such as rezoning properties to become STR’s. Remote ownership (out of state owners), safety, insurance, some are out of scale with neighborhood and large houses were becoming party houses. Incentives where properties pay attention to historic preservation. Limits on overall numbers. Enforcement needs to be followed through on rules once determined. We felt like as a neighborhood this is what we are concerned about. Not totally against but would prefer them to be carefully controlled and considered.

Pittman: Any discussion prior to adopting this as our position?

Toni: STR2 – nonowner occupied. This is where the party houses come in. 2nd the concerns about zoning. Once the owner moves the property doesn’t keep the zone designation. Feel like letter addresses all those things. We aren’t saying blanket no but outlines the problems we have identified. Can give to Kathy. Make motion to approve letter.

Matt: I agree but the difficulty I have is the downside is not real quantified. Like what is the real problem we are trying to solve?
Resident: Went directly to city as there was behaviors that were not good coming from the guests.

Resident: Possible to find out addresses?

Kathy – will get it from Brad Jordan (only 10% of what is out there.) 75 in Hillcrest and most were not approved.

Resident: Planning commission did not approve for STR. Approved as Long Term Rental so every 30 days I have a new neighbor. Better than every 2 days. Owner lives in Oregon. It has changed my block and not for the better.

Motion was made by Toni to approve sending the letter and Jessica seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Antwan: Letter will be great but there will still be applications moving forward.

Pittman: Previous position was black and white and we were not clear on rules so we were firmly against.

Toni: When would ordinance be re-vised?

Kathy: In next month. Will vote at city board meeting – would come from board. If we can get moratorium would give us time to get the program and see exactly what we have and be able to get the input from Hillcrest and Heights where most of ours are.

Different options to be better with enforcement then we currently are.
Mark: I see a problem with STR. I have not read your letter and have not seen any drafts. Would be helpful if it went out before you voted. Need better communication and need to know what is being done.

**c. Potential Pub Crawl Membership Drive:**

Toni: I dropped the ball and have not done anything. Recommendation to do it in October. Still working on it. Pre-HarvestFest – 1st Thursday. Will work with Karen R.

**d. HRA Pancake Breakfast and HarvestFest** – Mike and Julie chairing that again this year. Need volunteers. Good group from Catholic High and Boy Scouts helped last year. Hope to add kids activities maybe if weather is nice. HRA after breakfast will setup booth. Try to sell t-shirts this year that we were not able to sell last year due to weather and will also need volunteers to work that booth. Will send out sign up genius.

Eric – we need volunteers for HarvestFest. Trying to attract younger crowds. Soccer Mommy to be there this year. Email Ericmcdaniel.hma@gmail.com if have any questions.

**7. Committee Reports**

1. **Membership** – Nothing new to report. Will work with Toni on Roper Romp.
2. **Communication** – Caroline had a work commitment. Tackling issues with membership automation still and getting direct support from Wix.
3. **Preservation and Planning** – Bob – nothing else. Talked recently about road diet and it is being moved forward on. Proposing making a statement to finish it rather than stop at phase 1. Start date? Documents still being worked on and environmental work being done. Earliest would be bidding this fall, but think that is optimistic. Antwan can follow up on that.
4. **Parks** – Daniel not here – the watering program has been successful. Got lucky with lot of good rain and saved money on watering.
5. **Education** – School started back today. Watch out for kids during early morning and afternoon.
6. **Arts and Aesthetics** – looking for new members. Proposal for new planning meeting. Art not holding up on crosswalk but still visually appealing. Questions have been raised about sealer. Would involve 2 more weekends. Maintenance – need to repaint in couple years. Book design scheduled for 2nd crosswalk – estimate if did it with thermoplastic would be 22k. 13th and Main was simple design and was assigned by professionals and see how it holds up. Maybe fundraising for professional installation in the future. Review in a year or so. 3rd floral design has been discussed at Allsopp. Would be easier and probably hold up better at that location.
7. **Safety** – Alex
Survey is ready to review. Aiming to try and get a gauge of safety in Hillcrest. Covers variety of things. STR’s, lights, etc. Start with HRA members first and then move out to everyone in Hillcrest.

8. **Upcoming Events** –

1. Hillcrest Garden Club 8/25/24
2. HRA Board Retreat 8/24/24
3. Hillcrest Neighborhood Pancake Breakfast 10/12/24
4. HarvestFest 10/12/24
5. Hillcrest Pumpkin Roll 11/18/24
6. Hillcrest Christmas Tree Lighting 12/6/24

**9. Announcements:** None

**10. Good News To Share:**

\*Pittman - Power went out but was on 20 minutes later.

\*Hillcrest Garden club is now on calendar on website and social media.
\*Antwan: There were no ‘no votes’ on tax initiative. Excited about what that could bring to the city. As a board we all got on the same page.

\*Kathy Wells could not appear but asked to mention there was a debate recently between miller and griffin and will have that out as resource.

\*Officer Tollette – will put patrols in for Allsopp Park for streaker. Need to call Sgt and put in a request for whatever you need. Homeless one last thing – don’t engage just call so that they’re sitting there, and an officer can pull up on them. Call non-emergency # (staffed 8-5). Can also email Mallory Visser (social worker) at mvisser@littlerock.gov.

**11. As there was no other business, motion was made by Matt to end the meeting and Toni seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:13 PM.