**Hillcrest Residents Association Minutes**

January 13, 2024 – Hillcrest Hall (lower level)

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

**Absent:** Steele Strauss

**1. Pittman called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM**

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

**3. Treasurer’s Report:** Balance = 21,917 last balances but had some money go out.

Need to get Luke’s signature removed and Pittman added.

There was no report, so nothing to approve.

**4. Elected Officials**

**Tippi:**\*All got sworn in and new speaker of the house got sworn in and new committee chairs got announced. A lot of leadership positions got sworn in today.

\*Tunnel that was built is beautiful and about 61 offices there. Not much room in the capital but in basement was bunch of cubicles. First time that all house members have an office with a door that can open and shut. Currently elevator with key card to access but plan to have public view it.

\*Tomorrow is first joint budget meeting.

\*Judiciary and City County Local are committees Tippi is on.

\*No chief justice today – someone else swore in new people.

**Kathy:**

\*City county local is so important!

\*Municipal league meets this week. They all come to Little Rock from Hot Springs, Fayetteville, Bella Vista, etc.

\*Grant jointly worked on and city did get million dollars from DOT for sidewalk by School for Blind and School for Deaf.

\*Took a while to pass city budget but it is passed – general revenue 330 million. We can amend budget if needed. Have not resolved all the issues but under a deadline to have it passed.

\*Looking for money to make sure we got equipment needed for firefighters to put out fires.

\*Quality of life – drainage issues, streets (already got potholes on newly paved Markam), code, housing shortage, neighborhoods, Cap View did not want property subdivided and will have to look at those as we do have a housing shortage in LR.

Children Youth and Families, Food Commission (week from Wed first meeting), and Sustainability committees. I will still be involved with the zoo as it is in Ward 3.

Legislature – Local control, zoning commission, STR’s

Trash will be one day late this week. Have catching up to do with snowstorm.

Mayor notes from Kathy –

\*Way the city handled unsheltered residents in snow – think the city did a good job and operated with good intentions with shelters and warming centers we had. Mayor was at the shelter a lot of the time.

\*Public Works – good job to public works and sent the thank you notes to John Honeywell.

Thank you for having grace and patience with us during the snow.

**Toni** – Brad Jordan got the planning commission position full time – congrats to him!

**Toni** – Update on road diet – Painted it but weren’t they doing the construction.

**Kathy** – they are getting ready to start I believe but will find out.

**Toni** - what about STR’s?

**Kathy** - ordered software – Brad said we would have it operational this month and then can look at ordinance.

**Pittman** – fire apparatus that wasn’t there was that just the fire engines not there as quickly.

**Kathy** – we have a shortage on apparatuses. We have a very small amount of money for other projects that didn’t get all spent. Have several things we want to use that money for. It is about 10 million I believe. Going to have to make tough decisions. The tax increase did not pass and moving forward we want to hear what the people of the city want.

Holy Souls 2/13/24 postponed,

**Mayor Scott**

\*Just came here to listen and learn and share appreciation to all involved including Kathy Webb. \*Partnerships that relates to transportation and resources. Sunday night to Thursday night it was nightly. 24-hour operations for shelters. We provided a lot of case management services. Not just housing but was also trying to setup plans for them moving forward. Cannot sustain emergency shelter status – may open back up Saturday. Threat to life and safety is when they open. Low degrees and intense snow and/or wind chill. We must preserve the team members when they are truly needed.

\*Micro home village construction to hopefully start in June and will hopefully be open before next winter.

\*Allison Segars was appointed as city clerk.

\*Susan Altrui is acting city manager temporarily and an applicant has applied and is being considered for a permanent City Manager. If don’t have confirmation on new applicant within 90-120 days then Chief Hubbard will take over due to the zoo picking back up speed during the Spring and Susan won’t be able to manage both.

\*Sales tax did lose – caught up with national economy and thank you for voting for the new tax in this ward.

5. **President’s Comments:**

Heat was not turned on so apologize for the cold.

Thank you to the communications team who did a good job of sharing our snow weekend.

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

**Lynn Wilson
The Buford Project**

\*Lives in the neighborhood on Ridgeway and Lee.

\*Animal rescue work for 30+ years and in this last year we are struggling with dogs and cats. Son and friend and some friends helped start The Buford Project.
\*501C3 and most fosters come from Midtown, Mabelvale, Sherwood, and other areas outside Little Rock.

\*We’ve lost at least 3 rescues that have shut down as it just so hard and not enough help to keep up.

\*We have a huge problem in central Arkansas. Not enough rescues and shelters are full. LRAV had about 4400 pets come through last year and only half placed. Spay and neuter needs to be done. What we can do is reach into communities and

\*Goal was to have 12-15 in rescue. We have 23 and just took in 2 more last night with too many more still out on the streets in the cold. We are over capacity and need more fosters.

\*Full time fosters are needed but also what we call pinch hit fosters who have ability to connect with other fosters for respite care and just foster temporarily.

\*Some dogs are puppies, some are older, some are crate trained, some aren’t. We try to match families with the personality of the foster dogs.

\*Just placed a 12-year-old dog and have 2 GSD whose owner was dying and foster actually adopted them.

\*The longest we’ve had a dog in foster care is 4 months, sometimes it is a month. We have a huge need and just need one person to step up to help a dog.

\*Read stories and share with anyone you know. Be that person that helps an animal in need!

\*We need fosters, supplies, vet donations, shares on social media, etc. Really anything helps!
\*Please also spay and neuter your pets! There are 3 low cost spay and neuter clinics in somewhat close proximity and a few organizations who give out vouchers.

**Clay Mercer** – Update Holy Souls
\*Lives on N Tyler across from Holy Souls

\*They bought two remaining houses on the block and plan to demolish them and turn them into a parking lot.

\*The letter did not mention tearing down houses. The letter said they were looking to relocate structures. Holy Souls does want to meet and discuss the situation.

\*I am communicating through Toni as board suggested.

\*We identified speakers at planning commission since have a 20 min window only. Going to script it out and give it to Kathy for feedback.
**Toni** – Checked with Steve that moved house behind Hill Station. House was free and he paid to move and rehabilitate and already had the land. Someone would have to purchase land and pay to move two houses so that would be highly unlikely.

**Clay** – What we need from city and what residents need? City Planning committee said let’s do this. How do we get them to change their mind?

**Mayor** – Many times the staff makes an approval on a planning item based on certain guidelines and perimeters without politics, public pressure, or neighborhood involvement. Staff recommendation is just saying to the planning commission it hits all of our guidelines (legal, hits zoning correctly, etc) from planning code perspective is all it means. IF your 13 supporters gets to 100 supporters – staff says this is legal – the community says I dislike it then the planning commission will weigh those two things and if they get 100 people they will likely shut it down. Sometimes things happen in the past and you got new folks looking at it. Brad Jordan will listen to everything.

**Clay** – They have been incredible to work with.

**Susan** – I emailed Brad but look at Pulaski Heights Methodist and how many buildings they tore down but when you know better you do better. We want housing in our neighborhood and not a parking lot.

**Toni** – Thanks to Clay for doing so much legwork and doing all the things.

**Clay** – Been a group effort. Sad way to bond as a neighborhood.

**Toni** – Quapaw and preserve Arkansas will both plan on speaking at the planning commission meeting and Bob will speak. Bob confirmed he is available – Bob is part of the 20 minutes.

**Karen Hart** – What contact have you had with Father Velasco?
**Clay** – None – were told to contact Susie – pass the buck. Neighbors haven’t wanted to engage them directly.

**Hillcrest neighborhood KREWE float in SOMA Mardi Gras parade** – wanted to get more neighborhoods involved. Hillcrest float get buy in from merchants and community. March 1st is parade date. 50.00 fee for non-profit. Krewe of Characters? Since hillcrest has character.

Preliminary budget $1000 to throw stuff. Don’t think it will cost that much. Maybe wildflower seeds – visit butterfly garden at Alsop Park. **A motion was made by Jessica to allocate up to $500 for parade and Matt seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.** Need subcommittee. Pittman Chair and Jessica and Matt to join and will get with Tommy and Marilyn.

Toni to walk in it.

**Marathon – Bob** - art committee has signs in their court. Wouldn’t take much to do it. Would only be a 100 or couple 100 for Burma-Shave signs. Toni will help put up signs. Starts at 7 on Saturday and Sunday it starts at 5, but takes a little bit to get to Hillcrest portion of marathon. **A motion was made by Toni to allocate $200 for Bob’s signs and Austin seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

**HRA/HMA/Garden Club update – Karen R** –

Had a meeting with the small group of people (3 HMA and 3 HRA).

\*Discussed revitalizing 1st Thursday and looked at low hanging fruit and what would be easy to start.

\*Big push April 1st first Thursday making a calendar with themes on them. Making banners and signs and make it more visible and get back to 1st Thursday excitement that was there before the pandemic.

\*Think it will be a very productive group.
Matt – hurdles were some of the merchants didn’t want to extend hours on 1st Thursday.

Karen R – we will work on beautification.

Janet – to help make Hillcrest look the fun way it should.

Toni – need to take wreaths down. HRA paid for the wreaths.

**Spring block party** – if want to be on committee let me know - Pittman

**7. Committee Reports**

1. **Membership** **(Karen)** – Nothing to report
2. **Communication (Caroline)** – Just posted about trash being late a day and repost about planning meetings reschedules.
3. **Preservation and Planning** **(Bob) –** Just spending lot of time letting people know about things coming up. 2/13 Holy Souls parking lot and sober living home. Planning commission meeting. Have not confirmed if they bought another house on Woodrow. So would be 3 houses next to each other on Woodrow and then 2 on Monroe (but one may be for sale).
4. **Parks (Daniel)** – Nothing to report
5. **Education** **(Jessica)** – Nothing to report except kids going back to school tomorrow.
6. **Arts and Aesthetics (Marian and Tommy)** – Nothing to report
7. **Safety** **(Alex) – through Pittman -** Alex apologized but would be reaching out about another safety committee meeting and will have more info at Feb meeting.

8. **Upcoming Events** –

1. HMA Meeting 1/16/24 at Hill Station

Karen merchants report – revitalizing more than a decade ago we did disaster training in Hillcrest. Included LRPD, LRFD, MEMES and insurance people. Looking at doing that again. Revise Lenten services. All churches in Hillcrest would get together and each Friday in Lent they would have hour meeting and lunch would be provided. Meeting Wed afternoon. Schedule would be created for churches.

9. **Announcements**

**10. Good News to Share**

**Clay** - Have heard back from church and Father Velasco does want to be part of next conversation.

Kids go back to school tomorrow!

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:19 PM