**Hillcrest Residents Association Minutes**

November 13, 2023 at Pulaski Heights Baptist Church – Parlor Room

**Attending:** Laurel Lawrence, Karen Konarski-Hart, April Panian, Pittman Ware, Jan Hollenberg, Jessica Saunders, Karen Ryall, Barbara Miles, Toni Johnson; Janet Flegal, Ross Noland

**Absent:** Caroline Reddman

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

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

**3. Treasurer’s Report: just under $16,000 is ending balance**

- $3500 Artist, paint, barricades (should get a 1500 grant and 2500 from HMA…maybe)

**Motion was made by Karen Hart to approve the Treasurer’s report Laurel seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

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

**-Tippi**\*Filing period all week and will know who is running by next week.

\*Primaries in March and general in November

\*Starting to dig the tunnel at the capital so it is a construction zone with limited parking and it the

estimated finish date is in 2025.

\*Fiscal session on even # years and to start in April

**-Kathy Webb**

\*Bruce Moore memorial service – going through Emily Jordan Cox who is filling in as city manager

and hopeful she will be the permanent city manager.

\*Running behind getting budget passed and hopefully done by mid December

\*Vacancies for city boards and causing issues with quorums. If interested please apply.

\*New commission for food access and food security – January available to apply

\*Short term rentals at most every meeting – contact planning commission if have concerns on any

particular rental. Heights also had meeting on the short term rentals along with other

neighborhoods.

* Pittman – HRA has issue with the part of the process where nonowner occupied rental properties will be re-zoned as commercial property permanently. We request as a board that those not be granted short term rental status.
* Mark – How can we get that requirement removed? Kathy – talk to Jamie Collins and get with him to discuss and she will talk to friends in Hot Springs and Fayetteville as they made mistakes ahead of us and may have solutions to problems we are running into.
* Pittman – What is the number where if you’re within a certain number of sq ft from a property it’s still considered owner occupied? Mark and Kathy both believe it is 1200-1500 ft.

**-Beth Burgess**

\*Running for district court of Pulaski County – Wayne Gruber retiring. Attorney 20 years and circuit

court judge.

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

**-Pancake Breakfast**

\*Smaller crowd but full room since it was the only dry activity at Harvest Fest

\*Total # on sales $651.00.

\*New hosts, Julie and Mike did a great job.

\*Line moved and never any backup. Cooked out front.

-**Hillcrest T-shirts**   
\*Bad weather at Harvestfest – only sold 4 t-shirts total – 146 tshirts still available $20

\*Not able to sell at the pumpkin roll due to pumpkin roll folks selling their tshirts

\*Need folks to help man booth at next First Thursday. Hoping to sell more shirts.  
\*Not setting up vendor marketplace in Hodge this year at December Shop and Sip

**-Holiday décor contest –**

\*Voting begins Thanksgiving Day on HRA website

\*Prize patrol be coming around week later along with prize bags and trophies

\*Many different categories

\*Map put out after fact for best route to see all the festive houses

**-Committee Budget Status Update**

\*2-month deadline for anybody chairing a committee. We need your budget next month or your

budget will be at the mercy of the board.

**-Future of DOD Update and Discussion**

\***Bruce** – we lost at planning commission and whole project is political at this point. Committee is partially dissolved. Scott Smith was adamant about not proceeding. More than half not willing to give up and are recruiting more people to restructure. Need decision about how to proceed or if we should proceed as it will be a challenge with the main issue being a procedural one. After the commissions decision called planning dept on appeal process and told there was not an appeal process. Now saying we should’ve appealed within 30 days. Road blocks at every turn. Should’ve been reduced to ordinance before went to planning commission. City of Little Rock seems to be more focused on developer influence. If we got right answer out of Tom then we can go back to Antwon who is a central figure in helping us out.

\***Larry** (Hillcrest resident) – Divisive subject between HRA and wishes they would give up. Lot of discussion and dissension between HRA and nobody knows the actual consensus from the whole neighborhood. Same house in Hillcrest for 38 years. I love Hillcrest. Keep Hillcrest alive. DOD is already in existence and seems to be working. Board believes communication has happened, but it has not.

\***Frances Carter** (Hillcrest resident) – Grew up on S Lookout and left for degree and came back and can offer a different perspective. Thinks DOD update is jumping the shark. If not careful what is going to happen is this narrative you run the risk where the historical aspect will lose value. About community as much as property and want to balance that. McMansions and what going on in Heights is part of stage of gentrification. Re-gentrification of a gentrified area. Super high property values means investors and can get around design overlay. Put out a survey and ask what they Invision for the future.

\***Mark Robertson** (Hillcrest resident)– opposition is not developer driven. Narrative being put about it being about greed and profit is false. Long drawn-out process. Not community wide support. Would like to see it put to rest. Lot of distrust. Not about people, health, safety, or welfare. All about personal aesthetic choices. Implore that you put a stop to it and start fresh down the lane. Please put it to rest.

\***Scott Smith** – Recent law that if a city restricts by ordinance then property values can be restricted. High level stuff that got pushed down to planning level commission and they should not be dealing with. If it got passed would snowball into major city problem was passed to Tom Carpenter. If it moves forward two tracked thing and no skills to take on either track. Re-constituted a different group. Getting LR to focus on this would be hard with all they have to deal with right now. The planning commission has to get passed property rights thing and then get past the merits of setbacks and floor to area ratio. Enormous outbreak with a perfect storm. Property rights people legit concerned about their property. Committee tasked to come up with recommendations. Do you want to take on these big issues and try to resolve them.

\***? -** Agree with Scott. Planning Commission cannot amend city code. Sidetracked issues. 20% issue. Legally not valid. Will become political issue. At least person on DOD Committee who thinks well we probably should shut this down because things came up with are minor and come back later with something with more teeth. Do we take it to the board or not? Nibbling around and not worth the controversy.

**7. Committee Reports**

1. Membership – No update
2. Communication – Will put out info on décor contest
3. Preservation and Planning – Bob was present but nothing to report
4. Parks – Daniel is out
5. Education – Jessica

\*Reminder school board election tomorrow.

f.) Tommy - Arts & Aesthetics – Cross walks done – one implementation about 5200 and it came

in around 4000. Leftover materials that can be applied to next one. Need to re-group about

how can fundraise for next one. 6 weeks of traffic and showing degradation and need to

monitor. Sealer was discussed and dealing with mfg representatives the cure time is a

challenge due to time for no traffic over it. Another product that is heavy dutier that would

recommend next time. Fair amount of paint can be touched up. Challenging venue to protect

and maintain.

**8. Upcoming Events**

1. Holiday Décor Kickoff Nov 23, 2023
2. First Thursday – December 7th
3. Christmas Tree Lighting – Dec 7, 2023 from 5:15 until 6:15. Street in front of Promenade will be closed. Choirs will be singing, and Santa will arrive and light tree. Homemade brownies and cookies and Simmons providing hot chocolate. Eric - Anyone have bigger than 500-watt sound system? It would be helpful. Jessica - Control Records DJ’s would his sound system work? Karen H – shop local. Gift certificates and other things to do in Hillcrest.
4. Eclipse Path of Totality – April 8, 2024

**9. Announcements – None**

* A concerned property owner of a rental property in Hillcrest raised awareness about some unhoused folks loitering on her property and causing some damage as well as safety concerns.

**11. As there was no other business, Motion was made by Laurel to end the meeting and Karen Hart seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:17 PM