



HISTORIC SOUTHWOOD PARK

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

POST OFFICE BOX 12991-FORT WAYNE, INDIANA 46866



Southwood Park Association Board Meeting – September 11, 2013

1. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order by Steve McCord at 7:01 pm.
2. Roll Call – Establishment of a Board Quorum
 - a. Members Present:

Kelly Benton	Joe Henry
Cheryl McCarthy	Blaise Moore
David Goodman	Steve McCord
Lisa Oberlin	Kelli Showalter
Brittney Collins	Diane Dickson
 - b. Members Absent: Charles Northrop, Brooks Beatty, Andrew Boxberger, Pat Thomson
 - c. Guests in Attendance: Dave Wilson, Chris Cooper, Bev Zuber
3. Bev Zuber, Wayne Township Assessor, spoke about the following issues:
 - a. There have been questions about what are legal rental properties lately. It is important to look at the legal description of the property to determine whether it is actually part of our Association. There are some areas within our borders that are not subject to our Association. (Steve pointed out that any property on Southwood Park Section A, B, C, C-Extended, D, E, F and Westover Place are subject to the restrictions. Southwood Park Section G is now part of Woodhurst Association. Section H is within our borders but does not have the Association mentioned in its covenants and plat.)
 - b. Bev spoke to changes that are occurring in state tax law regarding rental properties. During the recent state overhaul of property taxes were capped at 1% residential; 2% rental; and 3% commercial. In addition, the rental industry lobbied to make rental **properties taxable at income-based valuation** instead of **the market value**. In other words, a house worth \$100,000 on the market would only be assessed at the value of the rent over a year's time making it worth (for tax purposes) a fraction of its market value. In effect, landlords would pay less in taxes than homeowners.
 - c. Lafayette Place Neighborhood Association has a "no rental" covenant similar to Southwood Park's. Lafayette Place challenged the tax status of an illegal rental. Bev took the position that the landlord should have realized the "no rental" clause in the deed, and that the property must legally be taxed at market value not rental value. And it is taxed at 2%, with no Homestead Deduction.
 - d. This combination of things makes holding a rental property in a "no rental" neighborhood financially difficult. This may help give "teeth" to making our no rental restrictive covenant work. Bev's position was upheld by the local Indiana Board of Tax Review. Those higher rates will be sent to rental owners for the next tax cycle. Steve mentioned that Southwood Park would be willing to testify before any future Tax Board appeals on the issue.

- e. Bev revealed that banks and closing companies have one year to file paperwork when a property changes hands. This explains why some properties appear to change ownership but the county's tax databases do not show it.
4. Presentation of the Agenda – Unanimously accepted.
5. Open Forum & resident concerns – There is a new business going in a few storefronts down from the Friendly Fox, but it could be up to a year before it opens. It will be a storefront selling locally-produced foods and products, including gourmet ice cream.
6. Acceptance of July 2013 Minutes – Unanimously accepted.
7. Treasurer's Report – Cheryl McCarthy
From July to August, our balance was just over \$33,000. We had \$3034 in expenses, which included AEP, utilities, security, office supplies, garden hoses, gift cards for volunteers, stamps, and expenses from the picnic. From August until now, our balance was just over \$30,000. Expenses included city utilities, security, expenses from the picnic, esplanade mowing, and AEP. Our current balance is just over \$28,000.
8. Committee Business
 - a. Beautification – Pat Thomson
There is a Beautification Day in October. Steve believes it's Saturday the 27th.
 - b. Membership – Steve McCord
Block Party Wrap Up – David, Lisa, & Blaise: They sent out a survey and received good response from the board. There was a lot of positive response from people who attended. They went over budget a little bit (about \$800). They feel like the new attractions this year brought young couples and young families out, which is great. Some suggestions were expanding the menu, asking people to bring dishes, extending it later into the evening, and adding a cornhole tournament for the adults.
 - c. Nomination – Kelli Showalter
There have been a few people who have showed interest in running for 2014. We will have five 3-year positions that need to be filled, and we may have more. The ballot will likely go out in November. Bios are due by October 15th to the board if you plan on running.
 - d. Finance – nothing to report
 - e. Public Relations – Steve McCord
We need to come up with a set of posting guidelines for our Facebook forum page. Steve will work on this. There was a suggestion to keep it simple, something like "Southwood Park reserves the right to remove any content from Facebook that is defamation of character, derogatory, etc."
9. Continuing Business
 - a. SWAP Report – David Goodman: The meeting was about gangs. The speaker was a member of the police force. He said building graffiti is territorial gang markings. Gangs are well-organized, well-funded, and extremely sophisticated businesses. There are 7-8 gangs operating in the Fort Wayne area. These are all chapters of gangs that are established in larger cities. These national organizations are recruiting young members constantly. Reporting the incidents (even if it's as small as graffiti), is very important. The biggest thing we can do to deter gang activity in our neighborhood is keeping our yards nice, keeping an eye on abandoned houses, reporting crimes, etc.
 - b. Crime Activity Discussion: There were 10 attempted break-ins, with 1 being successful. The good news is the person who tried to break into all those homes only succeeded at

about 10% of his attempts. People in that area are being very vigilant now about locking their windows and doors, and reporting suspicious activity. Don't be afraid to stand up for yourself and call the police when sometime doesn't seem right. Southwood Park has one of the lowest crime rates in the city of Fort Wayne. This is because our members are very vigilant about reporting things.

10. New Business

a. Pillars – Steve McCord

The pillars need work badly. Some of the stones aren't even stable. During freeze and thaw cycles, the loose stones are getting looser and creating worse damage. There have been several bad repairs done in the past (it looks like someone just went to the hardware store and tried to fix it themselves). There is a chunk of capstone missing. The discolored portion of limestone is actually an old patch that someone did. Steve has been in touch with a few companies and brought in an estimate from Byers Masonry. They estimate it will cost \$6600 to fix the entire thing. If it's going to be done, it should probably happen before winter hits. Eric Byers specializes in historic masonry, and always matches the materials. He is who ARCH uses on many of their projects, and has done all the masonry at Canton Laundry on Broadway, so he comes highly recommended. Southwood Park made about \$6000 on the 2009 Home Tour, which has not been spent. The 2008 Treasurer's Statements show \$3148.07 in donations made towards the "Pillar" fund. Other than buying new light bulbs, we haven't spent any of that. If we don't fix it now, it may not be fixable in the future, and will definitely cost more. This motion was approved unanimously.

b. Chris Cooper suggested setting up a meeting, having someone from the FWPD come in and talk to our neighborhood and other neighboring areas. It would be a public meeting/forum where people could come, learn, and ask questions. We may hold it at a local church (maybe First Missionary).

c. Kelly suggested doing an Award Home in December for holiday decorations. All residents can decorate and are eligible to win. Winners will be announced the morning of Saturday, December 7th, and the two signs will be placed in their yards.

d. Blaise mentioned that we planned on creating a booklet/brochure on Southwood Park a while back, and it never happened. She already has some interested advertisers. We could hand it out at events, our picnic, and give it to new homeowners when they move in. Steve says we have one from 2006, and can make changes to that. Kelly offered to design the new booklet.

11. Adjournment – 8:46pm, the next meeting will be the second Wednesday in November, the 13th.