

Northwest Carbondale Neighborhood Association

Annual Meeting

29 September 2013

2:00-4:00 p.m. at the Armory (a BIG THANK YOU to ANDY WALLACE for the use of this Neighborhood Facility and for providing refreshments!!)

The meeting was called to order at 2:15 p.m. with approximately 20 people in attendance. President, Adam Loos, read a statement recapping the history of the organization and what has been achieved to date.

"On 16 January 2012 a standing room only meeting was held at Hickory Lodge Park to discuss the impending fate of the old National Guard Armory on the corner of Oakland and Sycamore streets. Several residents were contacted just a few days before this meeting and walked their neighborhoods distributing fliers to get the word out. Over 70 people attended that meeting and the Northwest Carbondale Neighborhood Association was born.

A small group of residents met again on 30 January 2012 to discuss how to form an active Neighborhood Association for Carbondale's NW quadrant. While working to form a larger organization, this planning committee took on the tasks of monitoring

- 1. developments with the Armory*
- 2. development of Bleyer Field*
- 3. the potential sale and development of the Old Carbondale High School*
- 4. City Council and Planning Commission meetings in order to keep informed about issues affecting our neighborhood*
- 5. construction by the Hospital of an emergency "energy center" at 112 North Poplar*
- 6. the illegally operating Auto Garage on the corner of Oakland and Sycamore*

The boundaries of the new organization were defined as beginning with Memorial Hospital on the East to Denny's on the West and North to include the Industrial Park. By-laws were adapted from the Arbor District. The first Neighborhood Meeting was scheduled for 23 April 2012 at the Elks Lodge.

At the meeting, numerous areas of concern in addition to those above were identified, including: debris in the city-owned acre across from Hickory Lodge Park; poor lighting on many streets; a need for more community gardens; noise; speeding through neighborhoods; trash in streets/yards; infrastructure (streets, sewers, sidewalks, culverts); Zoning/Rezoning; poor maintenance; derelict houses, petty crime; serious crimes.

*It was agreed. We were an organization with members, by-laws and a name! Incorporated as a non-profit corporation in the State of Illinois on 11 June 2012, NCNA began to work. NCNA has a very small budget and there is not enough money to print newsletters or do mass mailings. A Facebook page was created with the tagline "People * Plans * Progress" and Facebook has been found to be a good way to keep*

people informed about what's going on. However, even though our membership is close to 50 people, only a handful have volunteered to do the massive amount of work that is available: forming Neighborhood Watch groups; monitoring nearby properties for code violations; attending City Council meetings; writing newsletters; recruiting more members. There is a lot more that can be done. Please think about how you would like to be involved."

President Loos presented all items that the Board of Directors felt were current issues for the organization and required a "vote" of the membership. These were discussed as follows: (with the result of the group vote noted)

Item: Accessory Dwelling Units. (12 Yes, 1 No)

Should the board advocate a zoning change permitting accessory dwelling units (ADUS) only on the condition that the following precautions are included:

1. ADU's must only be permitted on lots occupied by their owners. Landlords must not be allowed to construct or operate ADUs on rental property.
2. An appropriate minimum and maximum size requirement for ADUs must apply.
3. Appropriate off street parking must be provided.
4. Appropriate setback rules must apply to new construction.
5. The same occupancy rules must apply to ADUs as apply to the zoning district within which they are located.
6. ADUs must come under mandatory rental inspection regulations of the City.

Item 1(a): Exception Allowing Temporary Rental of Both Units on a Lot. (3 Yes, 10 No)

Should there be an exception to condition 1 (above) allowing an owner occupier temporarily away from home (e.g. a professor on sabbatical) to temporarily rent both the main house and the accessory dwelling unit?

Item 1(b): Exception to Off Street Parking When On-Street Parking is Available. (0 Yes, 13 No)

Should there be an exception to the off-street parking requirement when on-street parking is available?

Item 2: Removal of Trailers in 2014. (13 Yes, 0 No)

We affirm our support for the removal from residential districts of trailers not occupied by their owners in 2014 as currently required by the city code.

Item 3: Reconstructing Dilapidated Accessory Buildings in the Same Footprint. (9 Yes, 4 No)

Should the board seek an amendment to the city's zoning ordinance permitting the reconstruction of dilapidated accessory buildings in the same footprint they currently occupy?

Item 4: Traditional Neighborhood District. (11 Yes, 1 No)

Should the board continue advocating the creation of a Traditional Neighborhood District within the city's zoning code?

Discussion:

Bridget Rose asked how ADUs would relate to same sex couples. Jane Adams noted that the city recognizes civil unions as a family unit. Couples not married or in a civil union are considered roommates. Andy Wallace noted that there is a case now before the Illinois Supreme Court reviewing discrimination against couples considered to be a "common law" family.

Mr. Wallace also noted that ADUs in other communities require off street parking and the occupancy rules are the same as the zoning where they are located. D. Gorton provided a history of the 1974 zoning laws and how they initially applied to suburbs of larger cities and these have not worked well for Carbondale at all. Currently, ADUs cannot be "claimed" and therefore cannot be valued as part of a mortgage, for example. Added income is an advantage to many people, not just the elderly. However, in Carbondale, there is a long history of problems with "slumlords." There are currently almost 500 rental units vacant. The "slumlord" problem may be moot. Mr. Wallace noted that his 250 rental units are full. However, because of high taxes in Carbondale and the increasing cost of advertising, among other things, most income for area landlords is 10-12% light. Taxes are 35-40% of landlord "income." Zoning may be a "cure" for ADUs not creating other problems. If the property is owner occupied and an ADU exists for rental, it must meet the same standard as every other landlord.

Patti Diggle asked if the City removes trailers that have been here since the 1960s/70s that are not owner occupied, would there be an increase in ADUs?

Ms. Adams noted that the AARP is promoting ADUs as something that may help the quality of life for seniors. Ms. Rose also noted that ADUs may also help people who are disabled to remaining in their own home and be functioning members of the city. There was additional discussion about the rules of the American Disability Act and how imposing those on ADUs may make them unfeasible. At this point it was moved and unanimously approved that item 1 be amended to include (6) ADUs should fall under the mandatory rental inspection policy for the City of Carbondale.

The group briefly discussed advantages for off street parking. It was noted that many people may not have a car, so why require parking? Parking should be available for guests, emergency vehicles, different tenants. Generally, there were more advantages to requiring off street parking than not.

There was little discussion about Item 2.

D. Gorton explained a recent problem in the Arbor District regarding accessory buildings (like sheds and garages) built on property lines/alleyways prior to current zoning to be rebuilt/improved in their current footprint. Suburban zoning was designed to encourage “urban sprawl” with shopping centers separate from neighborhoods. This led to discussion of Item 4, Traditional Neighborhood Districts. The revised City code fits new developments very well, but it does not work in older parts of Carbondale. Many properties are what is called “legally non-conforming.” Many people felt that these properties should be legal, period. The idea of a TND is more a concept than a specific proposal. For example, if someone wanted to construct an ADU by remodeling an old garage along an alleyway, current regulations forbid an extension along the lot line. Even though current code would apply to the remodel, this would not be permitted because of current set back rules. There are many related issues here which the Carbondale Planning Commission and City Council might be encouraged to consider.

Bylaws Amendment and election of officers.

It was noted that the current by-laws require a minimum of 8 meetings each year. The current board has been meeting monthly and members are “burning out.” All current officers agreed that fewer meetings would work for the organization at this time and that meetings could always be called as needed. An amendment to change Article VII, Section 2 to read “**Board meetings shall be held at least four times a year,**” **carried unanimously.**

Current officers (President: Adam Loos; Vice President: Yolán Presley; Treasurer: Patti Diggle; Secretary: Lorie Allen) agreed to continue service in their current positions. The floor was opened to nominations/volunteers from others. Being none, **the slate was unanimously re-elected via paper ballot.**

Mr. Loos noted that there were two vacancies on the Board and noted that any member wishing to serve could be considered by the Board at later meetings.

Announcements

Announcements about upcoming events next week-end: The Pumpkin Race; the Irish Festival; Keep Carbondale Beautiful’s tree sale; the Neighborhood Co-op’s tent sale; and that, due to the Hospital’s emergency generator building construction, Poplar Street will be closed from main to Oak next week.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.