



FRIENDS OF WHITE OAK
Meeting Minutes
2-5-19 at 7pm

Members present were Elisse Wright Barnes, Shane Pollin, Dave Feehan, June Henderson, Barry Wides, Shana Davis-Cook, Brian Downie and Pete Fosselman (staff). Kim Jones was necessarily absent.

- Pete welcomed everyone.
- The Agenda and Minutes were made available to the public.
- Minutes
 - Approved by email from December 5, 2018.
- From the Public
 - Yvette Piacsek is a new resident of White Oak and inquired about the status of the White Oak Town Center along Route 29. Pete replied the builder is in the planning stages still and hopes to be back at the Planning Board by spring.
- Guest speakers Kenneth Nichols and Austin McNamara from the Department of Housing and Community Affairs
 - Kenneth gave overview of duties.
 - Touched on the multiple issues (2600) with the Enclave Apartments in White Oak.
 - The County needed a better account of current housing stock.
 - In 2015 the County began ranking violations and increased the number of inspections/inspectors.
 - Approximately 80,000 units in the County.
 - A 2nd reinspection fee has been established to discourage landlords from delaying repairs.
 - Tenants may now make repairs and deduct the cost from their rent.
 - Brian asked if the Enclave was a typical representation of the County's rental units. Kenneth indicated No and the Enclave is unique because of its size and multiple ownership and management turnovers.
 - June inquired about the longevity of smoke detectors? They must be replaced if they are older than 10 years.

- Shana asked if the County monitored the repair costs being passed onto the tenants in the form of a rent increase? Kenneth said No and noted the effort of the Renters' Alliance on behalf of tenants. Shane reminded the group that the market dictates the rents.
- Shane commented on the fact that some issues require the cooperation of tenants and can only be solved by both Landlords and Tenants working together.
- Barry shifted the discussion to single family housing life/safety issues and lots over parked with vehicles.
- A warrant is mandatory in order to enter a home that does not have a rental license. Shane feels there is a lack of enforcement overall.
- June asked if the Air B&Bs were being taxed? Yes
- Kenneth touched on a program in California called SMART where multiple agencies worked on a problem property at one time to resolve the issues in a timely manner.
- Street Banner Program
 - Dave researched into various banner programs and how they functioned and were maintained. These banners would be placed along the main roads to help establish a sense of place, as recommended in the marketing concept.
 - Funding would be needed, and sponsors were suggested.
 - In general, the Board supports the concept.
 - It was also suggested by Shana that FOWO investigate County grants which Jewru has knowledge about.
 - Shana believes the Board should wait until the March meeting, where FOWO will prioritize goals, to make any decisions. Board agreed.
- Comments from the Board
 - Shane opined on his frustration with the County's review and outcome of the Hillandale LATIP proposals; as well as his disappointment with the FOWO for not sending a letter to the County. He has done some research and with 52 letters of support and 7 of opposition, Shane feels the process was polluted.
 - The Board agreed that the process could have been better and had issues, and requested Pete draft a letter to the Executive requesting the follow up study for Hillandale LATIP, determined by DOT to be necessary, be performed immediately.
- Comments by Pete
 - To save time, Pete is to email his comments on his duties with White Flint, repairs to the Lockwood Transit Center, tour of the Coca-Cola Plant, February 12th marketing meeting with the business community, and the February 28th meeting with Council Members Navarro and Hucker.
- **Next meeting will be on March 14th and led by Dave to focus on the direction and priorities of the Board.**
- Brian summarized the status of the Sears bankruptcy as it relates to the Sears store at White Oak Shopping Center. The principal investor in Sears submitted a bid to continue (post-bankruptcy) the business of Sears and Kmart in 400+ stores around the country, including the Sears store at White Oak. The bankruptcy court tentatively approved the bid, then scheduled a hearing on creditors' objections. Brian indicated that he expects the court to give its final approval to the bid, in which

case the Sears store at White Oak will remain open. Many Sears and Kmart stores around the country are closing as a result of this bankruptcy.

- Meeting adjourned