

Historic Spanish Town Civic Association Board of Directors

Minutes

Tuesday, January 8th, 2013 6:30 p.m.

at

Springboard

447 3rd St., The Kress Building

Board Members Present: Michael Beck; Stephen Carroll, Travis Moore, Chair; June Pulliam, Recording Secretary; Steven Belflower; Christopher Robertson

Absent Board Members: Derek White, Vice-Chair; Cherine Patin, Treasurer; Tiffani Patterson

Guests: Father Pat, Mary Jane Marcantel

Chair Travis Moore called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

Adoption of the Minutes from the December Meeting: The December minutes were adopted with only small revisions to typos. Carroll motioned that we adopted the minutes with the corrections. Beck seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Moore Thanked John Schneider and Derrick Fitch of Springboard, who originally planned to make presentation about their purchase of the Nixon property, but had to cancel due to illness. Nevertheless, they invited the Board to use their space for the January meeting as well as the February meeting, when they will make their presentation. Moore explained that Schneider and Fitch hoped that their restoration of the Nixon Properties would be of the same high quality exhibited in their renovation of the Kress Building and the Hotel Indigo.

Treasurer's Report: Patin, who was ill, emailed Moore to state that our finances were in relatively the same condition as last month.

Beautification Committee: Moore announced that the community garden is being tended collectively by the Baton Rouge Youth Collation (BRYC) and members of the Beautification Committee. Further, the BRYC has asked the neighborhood to collect pallets to use in the garden.

Invasive Pest Committee: Beck reported that there will soon be a "chainsaw" party at the 700 block of Spanish Town Road. Moore added the paper mulberry tree on the late Vernon Broussard's property on Lakeland would be a good target.

Identity Package: Bellflower stated that he was waiting to see the website updated with the new identity package. Bellflower suggested that Pulliam use Wix to re-create the site, which would give the advantage to the Board to maintain the website beyond Pulliam's tenure as Secretary. Moore asked Pulliam investigate easier softwares other than Dreamweaver so that the site can be easily edited. A discussion ensued about possibly purchasing other domain names such as spanishtown.us and pointing it at hstca.org.

Old Business: Moore reported that a stop work order has been issued to the owners of 764 Spanish Town Road regarding their new columns on the property, which are not in keeping with Historic Preservation Guidelines.

Moore suggested the creation of a new, more general Google group that would share important information with paid members of the HSTCA. He also suggested that this group would have rules about civility and what can be posted.

Marcantal resumed a discussion about the ownership of the Spanish Town Google group and how she could be better included in the discussions.

New Business: Marcantel presented her proposed solution for the post-parade clean up. Inmates of the Sheriff's Office would be used for the clean-up. In order to avoid worker's compensation liability, inmates would be given a suggested donation by the HSTCA so that they would be covered by the Sheriff's Office's worker's compensation policy. (If we paid the Sheriff's Office outright for their labor, then we would also have to provide worker's compensation insurance.) Inmates would clean the public areas of the neighborhood, while residents would be responsible for cleaning approximately a rake's distance from the sidewalk, unless the inmates were given prior permission to clean further on the property. Residents would signify that they have granted this prior permission by displaying some sort of clear signifier such as a red ribbon or another type of sign on their property. For this plan to work, it will be necessary that the HSTCA and the city make sure that no vehicles are parked on the parade route until after 5 on Sunday, February 10th so that all parts of the street are accessible for cleaning. Marcantel estimated that total cost would be approximately \$900. She further stated that we could put the \$1600 that we received from SPLP in 2012 towards the cleaning. Father Pat Mascarella added that the neighborhood could also recycle beads from the parade the way that others have done after the Southdowns Mardi Gras Parade by having someone in a pick-up truck follow the procession. In this way, beads could be picked up immediately after the parade, and then sold to organizations that recycle them. The Huggins family of Beauregard Town collects beads in this manner after the Southdowns Parade, and uses the money they make selling the beads to benefit their neighborhood.

Beck introduced to the Board a letter he had written to SPL, addressing the neighborhood's concerns about the impact of the parade on Spanish Town. Beck requested that Marcantel permit her name to be added to the letter as one of the Board's contacts. Moore asked the Board if they believed that Beck's letter represented the various concerns of the neighborhood. Bellflower said that while he agreed with the general tone of the letter, he believed that the issue of parade clean-up be framed with our proposed solution, which at the moment includes SPL paying for inmates to restore the neighborhood after the parade. Bellflower added that he thought we should frame the issue as one of preserving Spanish Town rather than cleaning up private property after the Parade so that we avoid the whole "not in my backyard" or NIMBY aspect. Father Pat added that it would be useful to phrase our complaints about damage as harm to "our" sidewalks or "our" trees, rather than as damage done to an individual property owner, as sidewalks and trees are community assets. Beck countered that it was important that we continue to emphasize to SPL that his letter is part of a long term campaign to educate the organization about how this is *their* parade, not an event sponsored by the neighborhood, and so they should be the ones responsible for mitigating any damage caused by the event. Beck concluded that one real problem from the past is that there is residue from the Parade that cannot be cleaned up such as beads in the trees that are inaccessible to cleaning crews, or the weight of heavy vehicles and hundreds of people on our grass and sidewalks.

Moore then asked the Board if they would like to revise Beck's letter to SPL. Robertson suggested that we change in second to the last paragraph the word "bland" to "mild." Moore also suggested that the names of all Board members be added to the letter. Beck agreed to send the revisions to Bellflower, who would put the letter on our new letterhead. Beck also stated that he was unsure about SPL's address, as he was only able to find a post office box on listed on their website and was uncertain about whether or not the box was still active, so we should also hand deliver the letter to Doc L'Harrison, the one SPL member who lives in Spanish Town. Carroll motioned that the letter be approved pending the small changes. Pulliam seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Entergy Tree Removal: Moore reported that the tree removal went well, and that two more young trees were put in their place. As a consequence, there is more light on Lakeland at night.

Free Trees: Patterson reported that a local nursery offered to the neighborhood some free drake elms for planting in the neighborhood.

Park Behind CP Apartments: Marcantel pointed out that this park included garden plots that could be claimed by any resident who desired land to work. The park includes a tool shed with individual lockers that residents could lock and store tools safely as well and water. Beck added that only part of the park had enough light to grow food crops, which might be a disadvantage.

New Business: Father Pat requested that the Board help educate area landlords about the relevant provisions under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Louisiana Law regarding the disabled, including people who have service animals. Moore asked Pulliam to also make a Renter's Resources page that would continue this education effort.

Father Pat also requested that anyone seeing a street light that is out report it to him so that he could contact Entergy about replacing it.

Bellflower reported that he attended today's DDD meeting to learn more about proposed the greenway that would bisect Spanish Town. The DDD will be having a community input meeting March 5-7. Bellflower believed that we could discuss some alternatives to the proposed greenway on 7th Street, perhaps moving it to 9th Street and thereby improving it. Marcantal stated that when the DDD asked residents to make comments about the new Victory Park downtown that they ignored all of the suggestions made.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 19th at 6:30 p.m. at Springboard, 447 3rd St., The Kress Building

There being no more new business, Pulliam motioned that the meeting be adjourned. Carroll seconded the motion. There being no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.