

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the
Neighborhood Council of St. Augustine, Inc.
January 26, 2020
86 Magnolia Ave.
3:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Kathy Schirmacher (SAUNA-Uptown), Rhey Palmer (SAUNA-Uptown), Melinda Rakoncay (Nelmar Terrace), Matthew Shaffer (Nelmar Terrace), Sharon Green (Lincolnvilleville), Van Cogley (Flagler Model Land), Karen Valachovic (Flagler Model Land), Jeanette Berk (SANDS, Treasurer of the NC), Martha Mickler (Spanish Quarter), Nancy Pellicer (Spanish Quarter), Mike Alfieri (Greater Fullerwood), Nancy Bertogli (Greater Fullerwood), DD Stein (Lighthouse), Burry Gowen (Old City South), Casey Welch (Ravenswood/SARNA). Guest: Chief Barry Fox, SAPD.

The meeting was called to order by President Melinda Rakoncay, who hosted us in her lovely home.

The minutes of the October 20, 2019 meeting were reviewed and a motion was made to approve the minutes with two minor corrections (Jeanette Berk) and seconded (Van Cogley). APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The Treasurer's report showed an account balance of \$3,338.11 as of 12/31/19, which includes the grant money received from the Community Foundation of Northeast Florida for our lecture series. Jeanette informed Nancy Pellicer that the Spanish Quarter statements are being sent to her home address, and this needs to be corrected.

The slate of officers for 2020 was presented: President - Melinda Rakoncay; Vice President - Burry Gowen; Secretary - Kathy Schirmacher; and Treasurer - Jeanette Berk. A motion was made to accept the slate as presented (Casey Welch) and seconded (Mike Alfieri). ELECTED UNANIMOUSLY.

The first of our lecture series with Susan Parker was presented on Tuesday, January 21 to an SRO audience in the Flagler Room at Flagler College. Our next lecture will be on January 28 (David Nolan will speak on Lincolnvilleville), and the third and final presentation will be on February 11 (Leslee Keys will speak on North City and Fullerwood). Melinda spoke to Mark LeMaire of the Community Foundation and she is hopeful that we will be able to get another grant next year to highlight the remaining National Register Districts, as well as the Lighthouse and Davis Shores neighborhoods.

The STR ordinances will be brought up for second reading on Monday, January 27th. Public comment is encouraged. The State bills which threaten home rule and the city's ability to regulate STR's have been passed in the first of several state House and Senate committees. The ordinances on the city's books regulating STR's in the residential neighborhoods prior to 2011 will remain in effect for now.

Chief Barry Fox was recognized. He stated that overall crime statistics for St. Augustine and St. Johns County have dropped by about 15% from last year, but there have been increases in the reporting of sexual assaults. Bicycle thefts have increased dramatically, so Chief Fox encourages all residents to please lock up their bikes! Some more statistics: the force currently consists of 58 officers; St. Augustine hosts approximately 15,000 tourists a day which works out to 4.5 million each year; about 24 million vehicles a year pass through St. Augustine; there were about 1,300 traffic accidents last year, mostly "low speed" incidents. The nightlife ordinance is being rewritten, with noise and sound being key issues. It is

important for city leaders to identify our vision for the future of St. Augustine and what we want our city to look like in the years to come. The gaming establishments which had been closed down may have found a way to reopen via the new technology which is being utilized. Chief Fox wanted to remind all present about the success of the SAPD's homeless outreach program, which has been in place for about 13 months. They have been able to reunite 146 homeless individuals with their families, 7 have been placed in rehab, 13 were sentenced to rehab, and 18 have been referred to Care Connect (the VA, social services, etc.). Four homeless individuals sadly died on our streets last year. People are encouraged to call Chief Fox with concerns. His cell phone is (904) 669-9030.

Reports from the Neighborhoods

Flagler Model Land - Van Cogley introduced Karen Valachovic to the attendees, Flagler's newly elected Vice President and Alternate to the Council. The Board is meeting on Wednesday. A slate of officers will be presented at the annual meeting on February 3rd. They are thinking about participating as a neighborhood in the St. Patrick's Day Parade in March. On March 29 a social event will be held in St. Andrews Court. They hope to get a COSA grant to reprint the popular walking tour brochures on display by the historical marker on the grounds of Memorial Presbyterian Church.

Greater Fullerwood - Mike Alfieri reported on several events, an Easter egg hunt, a neighborhood yard sale, a block party, and the "gnome door" project. Thanks to a grant from the Community Foundation, they were able to plant 3 cabbage palms, and would like to get a COSA grant to complete the landscaping project in the park, which may be named after notable neighborhood resident Herbie Wiles who passed away this past year. Elections will be held February 20.

Lighthouse - The community garden project is progressing. Water is being run to the garden. They are looking for sponsors to help fund the garden. Master Gardeners will be available for consultation and advice. No action has occurred with the sailing club. The city has accepted Stanley Parish's donation of the land and it will be rezoned GU (Government Use), which is not supported by many in the neighborhood. Their next meeting will be February 11.

Lincolnvile - Their next meeting will be Thursday, January 30. Elections are scheduled for March. The revisions to the Sebastian Harbor PUD will be presented to the PZB on February 4th. These changes could adversely affect not only Lincolnvile but the whole city.

Nelmar Terrace - All is quiet..... which is a good thing in Nelmar Terrace! The May Street intersection now seems to be working well. The Annual Meeting was held in October, and a successful holiday party was well attended.

Old City South - Elections will be held on March 19. They currently have 90 dues paying members at \$15 per year. They are trying to increase their membership through "March Madness Membership Month." Other neighborhoods are encouraged to adopt this idea as well. The statue of St. Francis in St. Francis Park on the corner of St. George Street has been restored, and the fountain is again operational. Uplighting on a tree and trash containers have been installed, and brush has been cleared away. The coquina wall needs to be repaired by the city.

SANDS (North Davis Shores) - Some residents at the end of Flagler Boulevard beyond Comares want a dock to be built over what is city-owned land. It is unlikely that permission will be granted, as everyone

feels very strongly about preventing removal of access to public waterfront land. Elections will be held on February 12.

SARNA/Ravenswood – No elections are scheduled yet. There are several new businesses on West King Street. An inventory of historic homes and sites is underway, with David Nolan assisting in the process. David will help to write text for the historic markers which will be installed.

SAUNA (Uptown) - An annual meeting is tentatively to be scheduled in the next few months. SAUNA did not host its popular "Uptown Lights" contest this year, partly due to the fact that with nearly 80 STR's in the neighborhood, many homes no longer participate. Following replacement of water mains and lines in the North City National Register District, to the west of San Marco Avenue, flood issues have worsened since storm drains were paved over in the process of repaving the roads. The city denies that this happened. It remains to be seen what the solution will be. FP&L is interested in putting in underground electrical services, but there are agreements which need to be signed and costs will still be borne to a certain extent by the homeowners. The Mission Nombre de Dios project seems to be on hold for the present, but we expect it will become active once again. Bishop Estevez is supposedly interested in meeting with neighbors, but nothing has been finalized yet.

Spanish Quarter - The Annual Meeting was held in December in conjunction with a holiday party. There were no changes to the slate of officers. Area businesses were included in the party and everyone had a good time. No decisions have been made on the Tolomato parking lot on Spanish Street. The Monk's Vineyard is now renovated and open for business. The pretzels and crepes food shop cut down trees in their back yard for dining and had to install sheet rock over the coquina wall, hopefully without damaging the coquina underneath.

Our next regular meeting will be on Sunday, April 26th at 3:00 p.m. at DD Stein's house in Lighthouse Park (4 Ponce De Leon Ave.). The meeting was adjourned at 5:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathryn Schirmacher
Secretary