November 16, 2015

Present: Brain Sweeney (President) has sign-­‐up sheet for list of attendees/members/board members on file

Next meeting: December 21, 2015, 7:00PM, Salem UMC, 3405 Gough St

**Agenda Items**

1. **Call to Order/Pledge to the Flag (Brian Sweeney)**
2. **Treasury Report –** Agnes Arnold briefly reported out on the Highlandtown Community Association (HCA) accounts.

|  |
| --- |
| Balance as of 9-30-2015 |
| Checking | $12,386.86 |
| Savings \* | $2,257.69 |
| PayPal account  | $100.00 |
| Garden checking  | $26,310.00 |
| Totals | $41,054.55 |

\* earmarked for a permanent art installation

1. **Minutes Review –** To conserve time there was no review of the previous meeting’s minutes (Minutes posted on [http://highlandtown.com/hca-­‐](http://highlandtown.com/hca-)meeting-­‐info/) - *Erin Kirley recorded Minutes for the 11/16/15 meeting*
2. **President’s Report (Brian Sweeney)**
	1. Brian Sweeney stated that the HCA budget and meeting minutes are posted on the HCA website
	2. City Youth Snow Program – Brain Sweeney introduced Liam Davis, who works in City Council President Jack Young’s office – Liam Davis explained the program:
		* Collaboration between the Baltimore City Department of Transportation (DOT) and Youthworks
		* Students sign up to shovel sidewalks for seniors who register for the program
		* Students can earn between $500 and $750 or credits towards graduation
		* There were communication mistakes during roll-out (different sign up dates for seniors and youth) but Council President Young expects will inform and improve process for next year
		* Liam Davis noted that the students must be within walking distance of their assigned area
		* Liam Davis will report back on whether or not it is too late to register for the program and encourages everyone to provide feedback to the DOT, the Mayor’s office and the City Council
		* The City Council President’s office can be reached at 410-396-4804 and Liam Davis can be reached by email at liam.davis@baltimorecity.gov
3. **New Business/Announcements**
	1. There will not be a formal HCA meeting in December; instead the HCA will host an annual holiday party; attendees are encouraged to bring a dish and spread the word to neighbors
	2. Holiday decorating contest – details will be posted on Facebook, the HCA website and possibly the Baltimore Guide; Delegate Luke Clippinger will act as one of the judges but two more are needed, please contact Millicent Hoffman for more information or if you are interested in being a judge; prizes will be awarded
	3. Meals on Wheels Housing Upgrades to Benefit Seniors (HUBS) – new program in Baltimore City:
		* Provide minor home repairs, weatherization, and energy efficiency modifications
		* Mission of HUBS is to extend the amount of time seniors can remain in their homes by making them more comfortable and aging friendly
		* Eligibility Requirements: Baltimore City resident; Age 65 or older; 80% or below the Baltimore metro-area median income based on household size
		* More information is available at 443-470-9871
	4. Highlandtown Train Garden – 7th year at the Conkling Street Fire Dept (520 S Conkling St); Opens Nov 28th ; free of charge; more information at [www.highlandtowntraingarden.com](http://www.highlandtowntraingarden.com)
	5. Art Cart Derby – volunteers are needed; scheduled for June 4, 2016 (Sat after Memorial Day); Blockenstein organizers will coordinate with Derby organizers as the two events will be held jointly
	6. Update from Officer Beale with the Baltimore City Police Department (BCPD) –
		* robbery is still high, there were 9 street robberies in the last 30 days (7 were Latino so the BCPD is working to better alert the Latino community); 3 commercial robberies; shooting on N Highland and Noble St - male not from area but was known to police, female was a SE resident; stolen autos and ag assaults are down
		* Question about Police and Federal Task Force – drug unit participated in 2 operations 40+ guns were recovered in the Southeast area due to served warrants and searches; the BCPD needed task force assistance to deal with the increase in crime since April
		* Southeast Police Department’s Community Relations Council – the meeting is open to the public and his held the 1st Monday of the month at the SEPD (5710 Eastern Ave) at 7PM
	7. Community safety update provided by Nick Kirley -
		* Invited attendees to join the weekly Citizens on Patrol (COP) walk, which meets at The Laughing Pint every Thursday at 7PM; the group walks through the neighborhood looking at areas of concern;
		* Asked residents to pay particular attention to any vacant and unsecured properties as break-ins and house fires are common as winter weather approaches and the homeless look for shelter; it’s important to report these break-in locations to the city to create a record and “hot spot” for the police department and the Housing Department
		* Question from resident about best way to handle a dismissive response from the City on an issue submitted by 311 – Nick Kirley and Brian Sweeney both suggest using the 311 app and take photos so you have a record of the complaint; the app also tracks your history of complaints; be advised that you may see some cases closed before the problem is resolved but it is because they have assigned a course of action for it
		* Question about the use of panic alarms, the resident reported activating an alarm and waiting an hour for police response – Officer Beale explained that the 911 system has a priority system so violent and active crimes will get a higher priority over property damage; noted that if there is a shooting, it may take half of a district out of commission to canvas an area
	8. Conkling Street Garden (CSG) update provided by Mike Dorsey -
		* Blue Water Baltimore planted 70 trees in the neighborhood and would like to continue with their Deep Blue Initiative in this area – Highlandtown is the 1st neighborhood on their list for future projects
		* Leverton Ave Stormwater Management Project – still underway, explained there are three parts to the project: a structured rain garden, converting that section of the street to one-way, and repaving; the project should deter dumping and the CSG has committed to a maintenance program
		* International Refugee Center New Roots Garden – losing their lot so they’ve asked to partner with the CSG for space; will move their raised beds (and gardeners) to the open area in the CSG
	9. Parking and Transportation update from Erin Kirley
		* The DOT approved two of the twenty-eight requests to remove “No parking” signs around the neighborhood for an additional 40’ of parking
		* Additional “Stop” signs, to create all-way stops, were requested for five intersections in Highlandtown (S East Ave at Bank and Gough Streets, Highland Ave at Gough and Pratt Streets, and Pratt and Bouldin) but none of the intersections meet the minimum number of accidents within a calendar year (five) so all requests were rejected; Jeff Amoros from Councilman Kraft’s office said they are aware of the community’s concern and are combing through social media and other possible sources for unreported accidents or near misses that might support the installation of the stop signs
	10. Councilman Scott’s office update from Rachel Timmons –
		* excited about installation of the new bus stop at Highland Ave and Baltimore St
		* Co-sponsored Councilman Henry’s bill to hold a non-partisan primary election;
		* Big Brothers/Big Sisters program – following the protests and unrest in April, over 700 inquiries were made, mostly from women, to join the mentor program; the program really needs more men to participate as big brothers; more information is available at www.biglittle.org/volunteer
	11. Councilman Kraft’s office update from Jeff Amoros – the final Transform Baltimore hearing will be held on Dec 15th at Baltimore Polytechnic Institute (1400 W Cold Spring Ln) at 6PM
	12. Highlandtown Main Streets update from Amanda Smit-Peters with the Southeast Community Development Corporation –
		* There are several upcoming events to celebrate “Holidays in Highlandtown”; more information is available at [www.facebook.com/highlandtownmainstreet](http://www.facebook.com/highlandtownmainstreet), by calling 410-342-3234 ext 26, or by emailing amanda@southeastcdc.org
			1. Kick-off Small Business Saturday and the Shop Small / local initiative Saturday, Nov 28th from 8AM-Noon at Hoehn’s Bakery (400 S Conkling St) with a free tote bag, coffee, pastries, and a local shopping guide
			2. Holidays in Highlandtown Kick-off Celebration – Friday, Dec 4th at the intersection of Conkling St and Eastern Ave, the schedule includes: 5PM outdoor jazz performance and hot chocolate; 6PM tree lighting and visit from Santa; 6:30PM train garden opens; 7PM Merry Mixer bar and restaurant stroll
			3. Sunday Shopping Spectacular – Sunday Dec 6th from 11AM – 5PM – participating venues include: Merry Mart @ Creative Alliance (3134 Eastern Ave); Y:ART Gallery (3402 Gough St); Highlandtown Gallery (246 S Conkling St); Rust-N-Shine Vintage & Retro Market (3522 Bank St); BTQ Gallery & Studios (518 S Conkling St)
	13. Breathe of God Lutheran Church update on activities from Pastor Mark Parker –
		* Neighborhood Thanksgiving Eve Celebration - Wed, Nov 25th from 6:00PM – 8:30PM
		* Patterson Park Neighborhood Association – Wed, Nov 18th, to discuss the increase in crime in the area, they are hosting a special COP Walk at 7PM (leaving from the corner of Baltimore and Ellwood) followed by a conversation about community safety at 8PM at St. Elizabeth of Hungary (2638 E Baltimore St).
	14. The annual Highlandtown Basement Bar Tour was held on Nov 7th – Millicent Hoffman thanked all the hosts for opening their homes for another successful event
	15. Heather Grant Kelly – received a grant for an improvement project for a local high school – looking for volunteers to work on the project with her; it is a year-long commitment; speak to her after the meeting for more information
	16. Bayview Medical Center Community Update – holding a blood drive from Dec 15th - 17th ; the food pantry at the hospital is looking for non-perishable or canned donations; going forward, there will be a box for donations at the HCA meeting
4. **Guest Speakers**
	1. Development of former Stella’s Bridal property on Eastern Ave – a representative from the development company was not able to attend
		* Originally, seven row house properties were combined to make Stella’s; there were apartments on the upper floor
		* Developer would like to modify the ground level to make up to four commercial spaces
		* A variance for parking is needed as there is no space available for residents but there were not spaces for previous residents either; usually need rear yard so that would be another variance request
		* Kevin Bernhard asked to review design plans for the property before any comment is made on behalf of the HCA
		* The developer has asked the HCA for Letter of Support, Brian Sweeney asked that if anyone has concerns, please see him after the meeting
		* A suggestion was made that the developer should work with the nearby bank or the owners of the parking lot near Haussner’s for resident parking
	2. Sokol Baltimore update from Joseph Ehrenberger– located at 3218 Noble St; more information is available at sokolbaltimore.org, by calling 410-2769798 or by emailing info@sokolbaltimore.org
		* The gymnastics and fitness center is starting a winter session
		* Wednesdays there is a drop-in Zumba class
		* They are always looking for volunteers to lead group exercise classes
	3. Baltimore City Circuit Court Judges – six sitting judges for the Baltimore City Circuit court are up for re-election and asked to attend the meeting to introduce themselves and talk about what they do; more information on each can be found at baltimorecitysittingjudges.com
		* The sitting judges up for re-election include: Judge Shannon Avery, Judge Audrey Carrion, Judge Michael DiPietro, Judge Karen Friedman, Judge Wanda Keyes Heard, and Judge Cynthia Jones
	4. Update on the development of the Odd Fellow Lodge on Highland Ave – Tyler Banks and Nate Pretl from Charm City Builders presented plans and answered questions
		* Charm City Builders acquired the property in October; they have a history of work in Baltimore City and experience managing residential and warehouse property
		* There is a zoning hearing on Dec 15th where they will request a conversion from a vacant prop to multi-unit residential property
		* They are planning a smaller meeting with residents within 1 block of property
		* They are applying for an eight month construction permit; plan to begin construction in early Jan/Feb; expect occupancy Nov 2016
		* The property would be broken up into four units, each 2br/2bth
		* They would remove and replace exterior stairs
		* Will demolish the five garages at the rear of the property and turn them into parking pads
		* There are also garages on Gough St that they are planning to acquire and turn into additional parking pads
		* Current plan for rent is $2500 for 3rd floor apartment, decreasing $100 each floor down
		* Each apartment is approx. 1000 sq ft; except the ground floor which would be ADA compliant and approx. 900 sq ft

**Meeting Adjourned at 8:35PM**