

Center Square Association General Membership Meeting Minutes for November 21, 2013

- I. Meeting called to order at 7: 05 P.M.
- II. Introductions: President Jackie Ring has everyone introduce themselves , position within the Association and relative location of where they live.
- III. Open Floor, Police Report, Reports of Officers

Police Report:

Police not present

President Ring:

President Ring summarizes the brainstorming session that took place at her house. It was a sharing of ideas and goals for the association. There were many great suggestions and ideas but one of the greatest outcomes was Center Square's movement to the social media and digital age. Michelle Bruck, who is the Social Media Guru / web communicator, has helped the association greatly by creating a website for the association (centersquarealbany.com) as well as increasing the Facebook traffic. Michelle is the new Corresponding Secretary. Ms. Bruck explains that the website is significantly different from the original, check it out! There will be a gallery section, if you have any photos that you would like to see on the website, let me know. Ms. Bruck also goes into explaining about Facebook, and if you "like" us, you are part of the group and its open, so you can post area events/activities news etc. If you want something for the website you can email Ms. Bruck and it can be added to the website as well. And as of yesterday, it is official; Ms. Bruck announces that one can pay dues online through our website. Ms. Bruck also mentions the list service, if you are not a member, go to yahoo groups and join the Center Square Group. The list serve is a great tool, please use it! President Ring states there will be printed flyers distributed as well but she hopes that CSA can make the move to the digital age.

President Ring also suggests that there are some business meetings, such as this one and then there are some meetings that take place at local restaurants. It is a way to get things moving, people talking etc. It might be at a restaurant within Center Square or in the surrounding Albany areas. More information will be coming soon. President Ring states that she spoke with a restaurant owner on Washington Ave and she seemed very excited, more details on dates and locations will be announced soon once they are solidified. President Ring also states that they will not be family friendly, due to them still being meetings as well due to the time of the meeting. Ms. Quinn states the Clean up Day, National Night Out, and Holiday Party are family friendly.

President Ring also mentions that there are a few office equipment that have been handed down through the chairs of the Center Square Association. She does not have the room and is seeking permission by the association to donate a couple of the pieces. Homes have been found such as the Historic Albany Foundation and other local non-profit organizations. She would like to propose a motion to donate said items. MOTIONS TO PASS. SECONDED. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

President Ring outlined the precedent for giving Center Square's historic documents (anything more than 5 years old) to the Albany Institute of History and Art, a process begun in 1995 by Harold Rubin. She requested a vote of the membership, granting her authority to give documents now in her possession. President Ring emphasizes the importance of reaching out to people in the area and forming friendships and spreading the knowledge about the association. MOTIONS TO PASS. SECONDED. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

President Ring also mentions that Chris Burke will be stepping into one of the vacant Block Captain for Upper Lancaster Street. She welcomes Mr. Burke. Please also let President Ring know if they know anyone on lower State that would be interested in being Block Captain. Pastor Francis Rosen Allen volunteers, that is where she lives.

Membership Report: Jenny Quinn, Demi McGuire

Chairman of the Membership Committee, Jenny Quinn reports that she is working diligently on organizing membership lists and encouraging people to register with the Association. She is currently working on organizing people listed on the list serve as well as registered people with membership who are not part of the list serve. Ms. Quinn also mentions that she is working on part of a welcome package for the people when they are new to the neighborhood. A small with info package that would make people excited about moving to the area. She feels that people don't often know about the area when they move- or at least not enough! President Ring states that maybe even a few coupons to local restaurants would be good.

Ms. Demi McGuire is the Chair of the Tenant Outreach Committee. Her job is to assure tenants for this area that they are informed about the on goings and association itself. It would be a great area for renters to talk to people in the other, who could also be renters. It is also good for the renters if something happens with their Landlord to know that they have a voice and can be heard. Ms. McGuire hopes to grab a few young people and welcome them to one of our meetings. If you know of any renters who would like to be informed about the Center Square Association, let her know!

Beautification Chair/ Secretary:

Secretary Therese Daly reports that she only has around 500 tulips left and to please let her know if you want any, you can email at theresedaly23@gmail.com. As Beautification Chair, Ms. Daly is also working on the Garden

Tour/ House Tour. Secretary Daly understands that it is hard to lock up Garden Tour but is pursuing it. Updates will come next meeting. President Ring iterates the difficulty of finding houses and finding new people to participate.

Finances: Treasurer John Quinn

Treasurer Quinn states that they are re-doing the membership fee. They are raising the suggested fee to \$25.00 and not having a separation between tenants and owners. There is no reason for difference between renters and owners because there is no difference otherwise and as Mr. Quinn states, the money difference could rub people the wrong way. So to avoid any future issues, everyone will be suggested to give \$25.00 or whatever they deem appropriate/can afford. Originally it was \$20.00 for Owners and \$5.00 for Renters, now it will be more evened out and fair, which is preferable. Mr. Quinn states that this year's proposed reflect accurately given the expenses for the last two years, etc. He would like the association to be aware that the spending has been increasing and the profits for a few events were less than anticipated. It is important have documentation and careful use of the Association's funds.

MOTION TO PASS BUDGET. SECONDED. BUDGET PASSED

County Representative Chris Higgins:

Representative Higgins states that he has been faithfully updating his website; it has news updates and interesting news articles. Last week the Legislature passed a bill that Representative Higgins initiated on banning Styrofoam products to be used from restaurants in Albany. He is very happy about this! Earlier this week as well the County Legislature finalized the Budget review. They made many changes and took away a few non necessary increases of salaries. Will keep you updated.

Open Floor

LAX: Richard Berkley, President of Hudson Park Association talks about the LAX Bar and Lounge that took the place of Elda's. There has been much talk of the Bar requesting to stay open to early morning hours. Mr. Berkley states that our biggest concern is that the City will or will be defending itself against Article 78 which LAX is pursuing. It is suggested among the committee that a letter be written. This is perceived as a great idea and letter written by the Hudson Park Neighborhood Association and will be signed by Center Square Neighborhood Association as well. Mr. Berkley also mentions reaching out to the Mayor about this issue. Basically, the owner of LAX, Mr. Berkley is saying, has dropped a great deal of his requests, color of building etc. and is mainly focusing on the hours of operation of is lounge/bar. Mr. Berkley will keep us updated on the ongoing.

Applications: Ms. Yates states that See Click Fix is a great app that all Center Square Residents should have. It is an application that helps citizens report non-emergency problems. See Click Fix Albany has been a success and residents and tenants have found success with the application. Another great app is the Graffiti App created by our own Tim Varney caked the Graffiti Buster. It is where passersby can take photos of the graffiti and report it to the Office for General Services. Ms. Yates states that if anyone needs help with either apps Tim is present in the audience. President Ring states that along with the aps it is up to us a lot of the time to be the eyes and ears of the organization.

Closing Remarks:

President Ring states that next meeting will be January 16th, 2014 please email President Ring if you have anything that needs to be added to the agenda to discuss topics.