

**Duke Park Neighborhood Association
Board Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, February 8, 2011, 7:30PM
1424 Acadia Street, Durham, NC 27701

Board members:

Present: Dan Read (president), Brian Green (treasurer), Danny Jones (vice president/secretary).
Members-at-large: Barry Ragin (president ex officio), Ian Kipp, John Strack, Ed Hubbell, Bill Dandridge

Others present: Bill Anderson

Quorum present: Yes.

Proceedings:

-Meeting called to order at 7:30PM by chair, Dan Read.

Consent Agenda:

1) Treasurer's Report

Our current account balance is \$2,376.

2) Bathhouse charette/update

Bill Dandridge will summarize the proceedings of the charette at the next DPNA meeting in March, and will speak with Andy Shull, an architect who lives in the neighborhood, about drawing up plans. Bill will get back to us in the next seven days or so.

3) Coffee with Council

Dan Read asked whether the Board felt we should focus our efforts on obtaining additional funding for the renovation of the bathhouse.

Bill Anderson emphasized the importance of pressing the city council to commit additional funds (\$450,000) to the bathhouse renovation. He noted that, while the city's position is that it will take \$1,000,000 to fully renovate the bathhouse, it may cost another \$1,000,000 over the following 20 years to maintain the bathhouse.

Barry Ragin said that he would check on the status of the Forest Hills Park club house, as it appears as though work is being done there.

4) Old North Durham Park – next steps

Dan Read spoke with Vivian from El Kilombo and invited the group to attend next month's DPNA meeting, at which the issue of supporting the Friends of OND Park will be revisited. Dan also notified the OND and Cleveland Holloway neighborhood associations about the meeting.

It was decided that there is no need to invite Durham's Parks and Recreation department to the meeting, as they have not expressed interest in these proceedings.

Ian Kipp will bring more information about the Friends of OND Park's plans to the meeting.

At the meeting, we will revisit the issue of whether or not to lend DPNA's support to the Friends of OND Park's renovation plans.

5) Newsletter

Ian Kipp sent information to advertisers and to potential advertisers about taking out ads in the DPNA newsletter. It appears likely that we will be able to add more advertising to the newsletter, especially from new businesses nearby like Fullsteam and Motorco. Esther Bent will write an article about the upcoming Preservation Durham home tour in Duke Park.

Dan Read recommended getting together some information about what is and is not recyclable, as there has been confusion about this issue.

John Strack noted that recycling information on Durham's city website is occasionally contradictory; he will seek clarification and report back. Barry will help compile an article on recycling for the newsletter.

Bill Dandridge will write up an update on the Neighborhood Energy Retrofit Program. So far, four houses have been accepted into the program.

Barry will put together an article about the upcoming "Marry Durham" event.

John will write a short article about upcoming plans to hold a bike workshop with Clean Energy Durham in June.

6) E. Markham Ave. remodel/bike lanes

Barry explained that the remodel of E. Markham near Mangum and Roxboro will improve walkability at this currently dangerous intersection. The same configuration will largely be intact, but the intersection will be slightly more squared off and will contain larger medians that neighborhood residents could landscape and maintain in much the same way as the traffic circle at W. Markham and Glendale.

Dan felt that bike lanes would be a good addition to this plan; there was a surprising amount of support for this from the listserv.

Barry cautioned against asking the city to do more (e.g., add bike lines) because it might mean that the project gets delayed.

John Strack and Bill Dandridge felt that a dedicated bike lane, while it would be a welcome addition, was not necessary.

Dan Read summarized the Board's position: In the short term, our top priority is that this remodel gets completed quickly, to improve safety and walkability. That said, we would encourage the addition of a bike lane, but not if it leads to delays in the completion of the project. The Board agreed with this position.

7) Dog issues on East Knox

Barry summarized the events that occurred last month at 311 E Knox. A woman who resides at this property shot one of her dogs after it bit her child. The dog was euthanized and was tested for rabies, while the woman was cited for cruelty to animals and for discharging a weapon.

Barry noted his concerns regarding the safety of the area surrounding this property, as other dogs are kept at the house and are known to escape on occasion. It is likely that at least some of the dogs at this property are not registered or vaccinated, posing an

additional danger to the area. Animal Control has been reluctant to answer questions because of the ongoing criminal investigation.

Barry also noted that the owner of this property resides in Santa Barbara, California, and may be unaware of the events that took place last month. He proposed that the Board send a letter to the property owner detailing the events as well as our concerns about the property and its residents, at least one of whom has a criminal record.

Barry will send a copy of the letter to the Board, and an e-vote will be held to determine whether or not the Board supports sending this letter.

Finally, Barry emphasized that this event speaks to a larger problem in the neighborhood: the prevalence of absentee landlords. He noted that a landlord/property manager registry would greatly assist in getting issues like this taken care of, because this information can be extremely difficult to obtain. It is not always clear whom should be contacted when there are problems at a property and the property owner lives tens or even thousands of miles away.

The Board decided to support Barry in bringing up this idea at the Coffee with Council meeting next month.

8) Preservation Durham Home Tour in Duke Park

Barry recommended that we take advantage of the opportunity to bring in revenue and to increase awareness of DPNA at this event. He reserved the pavilion at Duke Park so DPNA can sell t-shirts, or perhaps even barbecue sandwiches (and Ed graciously offered to make as many sandwiches as necessary – thanks Ed!).

9) Other issues/wrap up

Barry asked for volunteers to help him set up forums on the DPNA web site.

This could help to take some personal (and occasionally inflammatory) discussions off of the listserv, as these types of messages detract from the credibility of our organization.

Adjournment:

-Meeting adjourned at 8:30PM.

-Minutes taken by secretary, Danny Jones.

February 11, 2011 Addendum:

Barry Ragin e-mailed the Board a draft of the letter to the property owner of 311 E. Knox.

The Board conducted an e-vote and unanimously lent its support to the letter, which reads as follows:

9 February 2011

Mr. Wayne Jonas
Mrs Judy Jonas
2466 Calle Almonte

Santa Barbara, CA 93109

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Jonas,

Enclosed in this packet are reprints of various news and discussion articles concerning recent events at 311 E. Knox St., Durham, NC. According to Durham County tax office records, you are the owners of this property. If these records are somehow incorrect, please disregard this correspondence. However, if this property is indeed yours, please be aware that many of the circumstances described in this articles are of great concern to the neighbors of 311 E. Knox St., and we hope that you will consider taking steps to address these concerns.

As described in the various articles, the tenant at 311 E. Knox is in the habit of keeping multiple dogs on the property. It would appear that these dogs are often chained, in violation of current Durham County law. (Article III; Section 4-62; Paragraph 6 Durham County Code of Ordinances). It would additionally appear that the dog in question was not properly registered with the County, based on the owner's claim that it had only been in her possession for one month, and was "being kept for a friend." This raises questions about whether or not any of the other dogs on the property were also registered with the County, as well as the question as to whether any of these dogs were vaccinated against rabies, as required by law. News articles about this case indicated that the dog which was shot was euthanized, and then had its head removed in order to test for rabies. This would indicate that no proof of vaccination was available. Neighbors of 311 E. Knox are concerned by this apparent lack of awareness by the resident of the dangers this presents, as numerous neighbors have seen these dogs off-premises, and not under any direct supervision.

Neighbors are also concerned by what appears to be the presence of loaded weapons at the property, as well as a willingness to fire these weapons within city limits, which is a violation of Article II Section 46-21 of the Durham city Code of Ordinances.

It is not our place to advise you on your course of action. We do, however, wish to make sure you are aware of these circumstances, and sense of unease and insecurity which these incidents have created within the surrounding blocks of your property. We would hope that you will consider what steps you, as a responsible landlord, can take to ensure the safety of your tenants and your neighbors.