

**East Allentown Rittersville
Neighborhood Association**

MINUTES

President Dennis Pearson called the regular monthly meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. on March 21, 2016 at St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Present: Four officers (President Dennis Pearson, Vice President Robert Pandaleon, Treasurer Bob Jacoby, and Secretary Dave Schell) and five other neighbors were present at the meeting as were Captain Dan Weidemann and Officer Mike Beidelman of the Allentown Police, and Ce-Ce Gerlach, Allentown School Director.

Secretary Dave Schell handed out copies of the minutes of the meeting of January 18, 2015. [There was no meeting in February due to inclement weather.] It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes as distributed. The motion carried.

Treasurer Bob Jacoby gave his report. The balance remains \$527.03. It was moved and seconded to approve the report as read. The motion carried.

President Pearson noted that the guest we were to have last month, dealing with a clinic for sexual offenders that had been opened on E. Pennsylvania Street, was not with us this month. It was an approved use in its block so no notice had been given to neighbors. According to Captain Wiedemann, most of their clientele are in drug rehabilitation although there are a few sex offenders being handled at that address. He suggested that we keep an eye on the situation as the weather gets warmer and the clients may be spending more time outdoors at the location.

Captain Wiedemann brought along some applications to the Citizen's Police Academy. The deadline for application is this coming Friday. Officer Beidelman reported on recent speed checks on the east side. They are clocking up to 58-61mph on American Parkway. They are also getting higher speeds on Jerome Street, among others.

President Pearson reported that the Leonard Buck banquet will take place on Thursday April 21st, sponsored by the Allentown Crime Watch. The cost is \$28—exactly what the Fearless Fire Company is charging the Crime Watch.

President Pearson reported that the school board is considering full-day kindergarten. There was some talk about having one of these locations at Midway Manor School, but it was feared that the Newcomer Academy (for non-English speakers) would be displaced. There is also a possibility if using Ritter School, but this would impact some of the students who are already there and the playground area. Current students would possibly be moved out of the main building and into the trailers that would be added in the back. This might also provide security issues. Director Gerlach noted that the Newcomer program is functioning very well

Allentown Police Chief Keith Morris showed up at this time from another meeting. He spoke about his vision for the police department and city. He praised the officers and said that he would like them to be out in the neighborhoods meeting the neighbors whom they are serving and protecting. They want to be proactive in community relations, and do whatever it takes within their budget to improve the quality of life of Allentown residents.

They are in the high schools putting on presentations on drug use and other issues. He feels that they have in the past missed an opportunity in the middle schools, and wants to have a greater helping presence at that age level as well. They need to be present in those schools and have started a pilot program in South Mountain MS.

They have added some technology. They have in-car and are adding body cameras as well. These will play a role in both training, evidence, and operations. They are seeing a major heroin overdose problem in the area and have issued overdose medications to the officers in hope of saving lives. They have also added a larger presence on social media.

President Pearson mentioned the murder that we had in the area of N. Godfrey Street and E. Tilghman Streets. He and Secretary Schell were present at a meeting at the Overlook Park community building on February 26th concerning the matter. Schell reported briefly on the meeting. Captain Weidemann reiterated the caution that police give when people claiming to represent city departments or utilities ask to come into homes. All city employees or utility workers should show their ID card. If there is any question, call the police or 9-1-1.

School Director Gerlach noted that the public is invited to a community meeting with the school directors on April 29th from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Building 21, which is located at the intersection of Lehigh Street and M L King Drive. She noted that the school board has new officers who want to get the public's feeling for the direction that the board is taking the district. There will possibly be other meetings besides this one, but the additional meetings are not certain—this one is. They want the public to be part of their decision-making and at present the only input that they get is in three-minute increments from public comments at school board meetings.

President Pearson noted that the holiday decorations are off the flagpole and building at Andre Reed (Irving) Park and are stored in the bathhouse. We will have to get a storage area for the items before the swimming season starts. There will probably be nothing on the flagpole next year as the flagpole is tilting significantly.

Secretary Schell handed out a flyer from Allentown Pothole Hotline. Potholes can be reported by calling the hotline 24/7 at 610-437-8775 or by sending an email via the city's website, allentownpa.gov. An icon on the homepage links directly to the pothole page of the Public Works Department.

Schell also noted that he sent an email to Streets Superintendent Mark Shahda on January 24th concerning truck use of N. Kiowa Street between Union Boulevard and Hanover Avenue and the 1000 and 1100 blocks of E. Tilghman Street. We received no response to this, and may try contacting him again.

Finally, Schell noted that he had gotten information from the city about the Great Allentown Cleanup, which will take place this year on Saturday, April 23rd.

President Pearson advised that attendees at local baseball games should always be aware of what is going on on the field. His first umpiring assignment of the season—between Freedom and Notre Dame/Green Pond resulted in a ball hitting the pitcher in the head and knocking him out.

There being no further business, adjournment was moved and seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully,

David A. Schell, Secretary