

**East Allentown Rittersville
Neighborhood Association**

MINUTES

President Dennis Pearson called the regular monthly meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. on November 17, 2014 at St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Present: Three officers (Dennis Pearson, Bob Jacoby, and Dave Schell) and ten other neighbors were present at the meeting. Captain Tony Alsleben of the Allentown Police Department was also present as was Phyllis Alexander, Allentown's Neighborhood Coordinator, and Mr. Neville Tomlinson from KidsPeace.

Secretary Dave Schell handed out copies of the minutes of the meeting of October 20, 2014. It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes as corrected, and the motion carried.

Treasurer Bob Jacoby gave his report. The current balance is \$426.03, the same as last month. It was moved and seconded to approve the report as read and the motion passed.

President Pearson reported that the PPL lift truck will come next Monday to put the display on the flagpole. This will be the twenty-first year. The entire structure on the pole is new except for the lights since the components were erroneously tossed out by the city this summer. Bob Jacoby reported that we replaced about over 250 lights and some sockets. Last year vandals pulled down the display and stomped on the light bulbs after the season was over.

Pearson reported that Dieruff has indicated that we will get help from the basketball team, JROTC, Key Club, and SADD members in the installation of the light display.

Captain Alsleben was asked if he had any report. He indicated that he had reported progress to Secretary Schell during the month and had nothing further to add, but was present to hear of any recent difficulties or reports from the neighborhood.

Schell noted that the items raised at the previous month's meeting had been dealt with. The street lights in the 500 block of East Walnut Street turned out to be a power problem. PPL has fixed the problem and the lights are on. The graffiti on the house on N. Jerome Street has been removed. The police have cited numerous drivers for going through the stop signs at E. Tilghman and N. Jerome Streets, and the properties with the garbage and car repair without a license mentioned at last month's meeting have been cited. Phyllis Alexander noted that the graffiti buster machine cannot be used once the temperature gets too cold, so it was good that was caught before the temperature dropped.

Two new dumping problems were cited. The property at 3 S. Jerome Street is becoming a major dumping area late Saturday nights and numerous tires have been left along N. Bradford Street. Another neighbor noted that there is a drag racing problem in the 1100 block of E. Cedar Street, with the dragsters heading westbound towards N. Irving St.

Dennis Pearson said city has plans to fix the stone walls and stairs and walls at Irving Park. These were put in as a WPA project during the Great Depression, and the problem is presently being studied on the best way to do the job. The city may also be putting new grass down in some areas of the park. He reported that some schools do not want to have athletic events in the park due to dangerous

conditions in the surface such as holes in the field. This repair might necessitate not using the field for a time after the grass and other improvements are completed.

Neville Tomlinson, a supervisor from the KidsPeace facility at the corner of E. Green Street and N. Halstead Street spoke to the group, and handed out literature on their operation. They currently have over 400 clients. In response to a question, he noted that some clients are referred to them and some are walk-ins. Many of their services are covered by insurance.

Pearson and Schell spoke of the question that we had raised last month about the possible mailing of a newsletter to households on the east side. Presently Pearson distributes our newsletter through the neighborhoods on foot. Schell contacted Phyllis Alexander as to what assistance the city could render for us in this matter.

He reported that the city is willing to pay for the mailing of one newsletter to east side residents, although she is not sure if the city would pay postage for repeat mailings. The city will, however, continue to do our printing of EARN materials for us. Depending on whether Midway Manor is included in the mailing and whether we mail to owner-occupied properties or all east side addresses the total number that would be mailed would be between approximately 3800 and 7,000 pieces. The city would send out the mailings in #10 envelopes with the city's return address on them.

The group discussed the matter. We will contact Midway Manor to see if they would like to join with us in the mailing. This might involve a slight delay in the mailing as the Midway Manor group is presently in the process of finding a new meeting location. There was no objection from those present for our going forward with this and so Pearson, Alexander, and Schell will coordinate with the city and with Midway Manor on the writing, production, and distribution of the mailing, the major purpose of which will be to introduce ourselves to the neighbors on the east side, announce our schedule of meetings, and note both what our association can do for the neighbors and what they can do for the association.

Pearson noted that there is an opening on the Allentown City Council, caused by the resignation of Peter Schweyer upon his election to the Pennsylvania General Assembly in the new 22nd District. Interested parties—who must be members of the same party as the former councilman (Democratic)—have until November 20th to submit their name for consideration.

The floor was opened for the election of Association officers. Last month Pearson had put the current three officers into nomination. The floor was opened for the nomination of anyone to the open office of Vice President or any further nominees for President, Secretary, or Treasurer. Robert Pandaleon indicated that he would be willing to serve as vice president, and was duly nominated. There were no other nominees. Thus, it was moved, seconded, and approved to close nominations and the group elected the 2014-2015 officers by acclamation as follows:

President Dennis Pearson
Vice President Robert Pandaleon
Secretary David A. Schell
Treasurer Robert Jacoby

A neighbor raised the question of where east side voting stations were located. The two districts of Ward 14 vote at Keck Park. The four districts of Ward 15 vote at the East Side Youth Center, Dieruff HS, St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church, and the Faith Fellowship Church.

It was noted that the long-requested sign prohibiting trucks from turning at E. Turner and N. Maxwell Streets has finally been installed. Sign is finally up at Turner and Maxwell

Phyllis Alexander noted that she will get in touch with Schell as to where our proposed mailed newsletter should be sent. She then asked if we had any further problems to take back to various city agencies from tonight's meeting. There were none.

She then had several questions for the membership. First, what do we think of the Downtown changes? A neighbor asked who is watching the east side when the large numbers of police are downtown for events. Captain Alsleben noted that it is the same police personnel as usual. No personnel are drawn from patrol to increase the presence downtown—those are additional officers. He noted that there is a continuing auto theft problem both in the city and other areas, which generally appear to be taking place between midnight and 4 a.m. City crime numbers down 30% overall—crime being driven out of the city, and indeed crime has gone down every year over the past eight years, although people may not have that perception. Alexander noted that the police have a very high tech data collection process showing them the location, time, and nature of criminal activities. Alsleben reported that they have a meeting every Monday morning on crime over the past week. Alexander noted that next Monday (November 24th) will be the final public meeting for comments on recommendations for further changes to the Downtown areas. The meeting will take place at the Lehigh County Government Center on S. 7th Street at 6:30 p.m.

She noted also that we at EARN are one of 20+ neighborhood groups. The city is planning a summit to bring together the groups and the planning committee would like feedback on what learning we want to have at the summit. She handed out surveys, which those present completed and returned to her.

A neighbor asked about what the situation was with gang activity. This is again a matter of perception vs. reality. Gangs exist in the city but are not running wild in the area. The police gang unit is monitoring graffiti, etc. Membership in a gang, Captain Alsleben noted, does not automatically make one a criminal, but when crimes are committed the police go after the criminal activity.

President Pearson asked if anyone is interested in being our second member on the Crime Watch council, which meets on the third Thursday of each month. Bob Jacoby noted that anyone who is willing and able to help with the lights in the part should come to the Irving Park [which the secretary will probably eventually start calling Andre Reed Park] at 3 p.m. on next Monday, November 24th.

There being no further business, adjournment was moved and seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

Respectfully,

David A. Schell, Secretary