

**Minutes of the General Monthly Meeting of SBIC
Tuesday, May 1, 2007
Olive Branch United Methodist Church**

The meeting was called to order by acting President Jim Salvucci at 7:35 PM.

BUSINESS MEETING

Secretary's Report (Jocelyn Rodgers) With no objections, the April minutes passed.

Treasurer's Report (Mike O'Hara) Mike was not present, but sent a report as follows:

<i>Payments</i>	May Newsletter postage	\$359.33
	April and May Newsletter Printing	\$1795.40
<i>Deposits</i>	Dues	\$55.00
	50/50 Raffle	\$38.00
	Park grant	\$225.00

SPEAKERS

City Councilman Kenneth Harris represents the 4th District and is running for City Council President. He is a life-long resident of Baltimore City and has been active in the community since he graduated from college, including the PTA and as president of his community association.

He described his work for programs for children. He created the Truancy Assessment Center to have a more holistic approach for dealing with the issue. 15,680 students are missing over 20 days during this year, and 6500 of them are under 16. Truancy officers, juvenile services, social services, and housing officials are all brought together, and counselors work to find the root causes for why the kids are not showing up at school, including homelessness and depression. He also mentioned negotiating with O'Malley to get \$3 million dollars for scholarships from downtown Hilton deal and getting \$9 million more from O'Malley this year for recreation centers.

Councilman Harris also discussed crime. He has talked with Commissioner Hamm about moving more officers from specialized units to patrolling. Councilman Harris would like to see at least 18 officers per sector (or 54 officers per district) rather than the current 5-6 officers per sector, in order to allow the officers to better do their jobs. He would also like the City to use the bicycle units better as well.

He has also worked hard to encourage economic development in his district. The Belvedere Square and Loch Raven Shopping Centers have been significantly revitalized.

Councilman Harris also stressed promoting fiscal responsibility and having City Council provide checks and balances.

His website is HarrisForBaltimore.com and his campaign motto is "Serious about Baltimore."

Questions:

- *How did the poker bill end up back in committee?* Harris and one other councilwoman were

very opposed to the bill. They applied pressure to push the bill back into committee.

- *How closely will the city work with Franchot to bolster their work?* The Mayor has brought up working with Franchot. Harris has been trying to be cost-conscious, looking at the balance of new taxes, the surplus in the current budget, and reasonable budgetary allocations. For example, the police department always asks for \$10 million, but every year they end up needing at least \$30 million.
- *What is your stance on the partnership between city and state for city schools?* Harris would like control of city schools, but before the city takes the control back, the city should get its house in order. We need an audit and accountability at North Ave.

Celeste Amato from the Initiative for a Cleaner Baltimore came to speak about trash. Her colleague, Valentina Ukwuoma, the new bureau chief of Solid Waste, was also there. She would like the community and the public sector to work together to make Baltimore cleaner. They have a three-pronged plan:

1. *Create awareness:* A lot of people not understand their responsibility for their house, sidewalk, and half of their rear alley. This will start as multimedia campaign asking that people treat Baltimore like their home, and include direct messages about rules for putting out trash for residents and business owners. The city would like community associations, business associations, and churches to be partners in this. The educational program will definitely extend to schools.
2. *Lead by example:* The City also needs to be doing the right thing in particular with their solid waste practices. The city's gateways need to have a higher level of cleanliness, as well as city property and mass transit. If you see trash anywhere or you see an overflowing trash can, call 311! They are also working with City Council to improve enforcement legislation and eviction chattel rules.
3. *Create economy, efficiency, and effectiveness:* Val Ukwuoma is working hard at this. Mayor Dixon challenged them to think beyond the standard way of doing things. There have been dramatic internal changes, including different pickup schedules, moving crews around, and consolidating sanitation enforcement with the cleaning and boarding group of the department of housing to have all inspectors in one office. They ask every community to think outside the box as well. The City wants feedback from the community on customer service. Solid waste collection workers interact more with residents than anyone else, and they have been emphasizing rules for service. If a crew is gone when a complaint is registered, then the supervisor and superintendent are sent out to fix the problem. Let the city know if a collection person ever asks for or takes money; this should NEVER happen.

Questions:

- *If there's a problem with citation enforcement, why not increase the fine, in particular for repeat offenders?* Changing the fines must be altered legislatively and this is one route being worked on. Also, environmental crimes can lead to higher fines; a more comprehensive approach aids in this.

- *Lately the calls SBIC makes after monthly cleanups to report properties hav resulted in re-sponses. We commend you for the change. Val strongly believes in neighborhood involvement. E-mail her if there are any downturns in response.*
- *What if paper recycling gets left out at an odd time and gets left for 2 weeks? Call 311 to let them know to pick it up.*
- *What about doing a youth outreach at the Rec Center? Val will set up a recycling center there within the week.*
- *Trash cans requested for some corners have arrived, but they are the lighter, open weave cans. Can these locations be put on a list for the enclosed and harder to move cans? Currently only the wire mesh cans are in the warehouse, and the city buys them slowly since they are expensive (\$500). They will take a look. Sponsorships for affixed cans is also a possibility.*
- *What about increasing signs at gutters and sewers to discourage dumping into the Bay (and the Harbor)? This is being considered.*
- *Anti-litter education outreach campaigns haven't been seen in 20 years. It is needed! Students are one of the big focus groups.*
- *SBIC is happy to use their newsletter to spread Cleanliness information. They are currently working on consistent, easy to print-out info sheets on various problem topics.*

ELECTIONS Jim Salvucci was elected President. Patrick Mutch was elected Vice-President. Their terms last until October elections.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Sanitation & Beautification (Amy Mutch) There have already been big changes with the new commitment to a clean city. During the two April cleanups, 2 huge dumpsters were filled. Amy received chartreuse stickers from Glen Seward at the Examiner to show delivery people that you don't want the Examiner.

Parking (Donnie Fair) No update. Donnie is still working on several Area 30 petitions.

Police/Community Relations (Sharron McCulloch) There are COP walks on Tuesday 5/8 and Wednesday 5/30, meeting at 7 PM at the Riverside gazebo. From 4/1 through 4/24, there were 2 burglaries, 2 aggravated assaults, 1 stolen auto, and 1 larceny from auto. Continue keeping items out of sight in your cars! The next 3rd Thursday is 5/17; it's Law and Order night.

The esummons newsletter is a great tool. You receive 1-3 e-mails per month.

There have been 5 major drug arrests in the neighborhood recently as well. The NICE subcommittee meets one evening a month and offers an opportunity for neighbors to keep each other in the loop about concerns such as crime and grime.

Sharron thanked Officer Adam Long and his partner for being present at the meeting. Officer Long introduced himself and encourage people to talk with him about concerns. Audience members shared concerns about nuisance crimes and drunken driving at bar closing time and also general speeding on many of the streets.

Newsletter Editor/Business Liaison (Julie Tice) Everyone received the May newsletter. Distribution has been outsourced, leading to imprinted addresses and also 5 cents cheaper postage. Please pay your dues. The submission date is the 15th for events or residents' articles. A lot of long vacant properties may not be in the mailing system; e-mail Julie your address if you're not getting the newsletter to add it to the database.

Social (Ugur Erickson) No report.

Youth Council (Marie Sennett) Meetings are Thursdays; this Thursday is a special trip so get there early. Job-shadowing was fabulous; it motivated some kids to look at college.

Design Review Committee (Steve Zaleskiwicz) The Vine got DRC approval. Outside seating was submitted as a zoning matter also. The project still needs to go to the Liquor Board. 1612 Patapsco is planning a 3 story addition.

Liquor Advisory Committee (Al Evans) LAC is working with other committees to implement the contract with Rayzors. Approval was given for Vespa and the Vine. The proposed SBIC amendment for the video poker bill has made a difference.

OLD BUSINESS Sitting Park: Plans are currently on hold while looking for a volunteer to take the lead. Julie said the original concept was a community garden; since the community garden is popular at Riverside, maybe the sitting park could be offered up as an expansion site. We also are looking for volunteers for the Fort Ave corridor greening.

NEW BUSINESS Neighborhood Mediation (Marie Sennett): The Community Conferencing Center (CCC) is doing mediation. Everyone gets involved and has a chance to talk. It's an opportunity to share new ideas, set goals, and discuss issues. She will let us know the date in June. You can check out the CCC at communityconferencing.org. The meeting will be in the evening at the Rec Center (or some other public location).

Comcast Grant Program: Jim was forwarded an e-mail by Jayson Gordneer about \$1000 grants to neighborhoods to hold events like big block parties, etc. If you're interested, let him know. For now thru December, the deadline is June 1st.

Bocce Ball court: Steve implored users to help keep it clean.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:07

Respectfully submitted,

Jocelyn Rodgers
Secretary