

# Garden District Civic Association

## Baton Rouge

Minutes – GDCA Board Meeting – September 17, 2008

The meeting was held at the home of Sandi Lucas. Present were Tim Page, Sandi Lucas, Mike Schexnayder, Greta Corona, Ana Forbes, Carolyn Schwarzhoff, Ray Mack, Paul Miller, Ellen Alderman, Anna Hanks, and Mary Fontenot. Tim handed out copies of the minutes from the last board meeting. Sandi moved that they be approved. Ray seconded it. The minutes were approved. Mike asked that Mary put a date on them when they are sent to the board because he puts them on the website. Then he will know which one is the final version. Carolyn complimented Paul and Mike on the new website. Tim suggested that there be a regular website report. It was decided that it should follow the list serve report.

**Security Report:** There were two meetings last spring, a smaller one in advance of the larger one. While Ray had been assured by several people that they would be there, no one attended the small meeting. At the larger meeting twenty-five people signed up showing an interest on helping the security committee. Ray held another meeting where only five people came. Ray is discouraged. He thinks people aren't scared enough. Sandi commented that neighbors don't leave enough lights on at night. Carolyn suggested sending out a n e-mail to the neighborhood asking for more participation. Ellen said that she had signed that list, but was never notified about a meeting. Ray has five ideas:

1. A Neighborhood Watch program, which would be one year in the planning. Tim suggested that it could be an incremental process, starting in a small area and spreading. Carolyn said that some blocks know their neighbors very well while others don't know their neighbors.
2. Setting up a taxing district, which would be a two year affair.
3. Increase membership to better fund the patrols. Ray talked about the ebb and flow of crime. He suggested that a lack of membership shows a lack of interest.
4. A neighborhood garage sale where residents will bring there goods already priced, possibly to Ragusa's parking lot.
5. A protection training course could teach neighbors to be responsible for their own safety. This could e an ongoing program.

Ray added that he has no more trips planned so he will be better able to work on security. Mike said that we would like him to continue.

**Beautification:** Mike went through the alleys and took photographs. He sent an e-mail to Peter Newkirk, Director of the Dept. Of Public Works, and sent a copy to all the board members. In it he explained that the neighborhood is planning to clean the alleys, but would like the cooperation of DPW in removing large trees and wood that we are unable to move. Mike believes that individual homeowners should be responsible for branches that hang in the alley. Mike's plan is to have neighbors with utility trailers help by driving down the alley while others dump debris on the trailers. Then the debris will be hauled to the street. Mary added that Allied Waste has offered to cooperate with us and help in the effort. Mike said that one individual on Wisteria has lumber stored in the alley behind his house. Ray wondered if there isn't a city ordinance demanding that the alleys be kept travelable. Sandi believes we need to make sure we have trash pick up in the alleys. There is no place to put the trash cans in front of the houses because cars are parked there. Paul believes that educating the residents is the answer. There was a discussion as to how to do that. Putting information on the website and passing out a flyer about it were suggested. Paul thought a flyer titled "Alley" with the rules is necessary. Mike agreed. Ray thought putting the rules on their trash cans might work. Carolyn thought some people would miss it. Mike offered to organize the alley clean-up. Mary offered to be on the committee. Getting a newspaper article written about it was also suggested. Greta has a friend at the Advocate. There was a question as to whether the neighbors who volunteer to clean the alley are permitted to cut branches that come into the alley from other neigh-

bor's yards. Mary offered to ask DPW about that.

**Social Events:** Ellen said that the fall picnic will go on with the ice cream contest as part of it. Ray will ask Greg Edwards if his yard may be used. Ellen will give Ray possible dates. Having Jambalaya catered was discussed. Alex said that Kevin Black, who lives in the neighborhood, caters with Jambalaya. His company is called Main Course Productions. Sandi also suggested Opie's, on Government. Neighbors can bring side dishes. The ice cream contest will be for dessert. Paul asked if photos could be sent in to post on the web site.

**List Serve:** Carolyn said that the numbers on the list serve stay pretty steady. Some drop off and some are added.

**Website:** Carolyn complimented Paul and Mike on the website. She sees it as good for information and public relations. There is news on it right now, such as newspaper articles. She was wondering if there is enough manpower to keep that up and keep it current. Paul sees the possibility of making it vital so people will want to check it to see what is happening. He doesn't think that will be difficult because neighbors send in the articles and photos. He sees the website in the future as the glue holding the neighborhood together. Paul believes anyone on the board should be able to update it. He would like Mike to manage the website. There are pictures of homes on the website. As a courtesy he would like us to ask the owners for permission. Paul would like to see free classifieds on the website. Carolyn and others liked that idea. Tim suggested leaving a printed page with the photos and a note explaining our request at the houses that are pictured. Mary offered to ask owners if someone would figure out the addresses. Ana thought the fall picnic would be a good venue to show off the website.

**Tour of Homes:** Sandi will not be able to chair the committee because of time constraints. Ana suggested we just table the idea for now. Greta offered to be the "elder advisor" in the event that someone wants to do it in the future.

**Historic Preservation:** Martha was not present, but sent word that there might be funds for hurricane damage.

**Financial Report:** Sonya was not able to attend so there was no financial report.

**Newsletter:** Mary reported that Paul is going to make a template for her to put out a shorter newsletter. Ana said that Tara Pool would like to put in an ad and coupon in the spring.

**Park Blvd. Rezoning:** Alex and Lynn Lamia met with the ladies from Bernard Terrace. He will call a meeting of the committee in the next few weeks.

**Halloween Patrols:** There was a recent e-mail decision made by the board to approve Halloween patrols at the rate suggested by Sergeant Stone (\$45) and to hire the patrols from 6-10 p.m.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

**Mailing List:** It was decided to take up the discussion on the statement of policy concerning our mailing list via e-mail.

**Neighborhood survey:** Tim passed out two versions of possible surveys and asked the board to read them and discuss them over the e-mail.

**T-shirts:** Ellen will check prices for a small logo on the front and a big logo on the back as well as quotes for one color and two color graphics. Ellen is going to look at off white shirts with green and brown oak tree logos

for the two color and green with white for the one color. Ana suggested we make them marketable by keeping the price at \$15. Possible businesses to check were Key Graphics, Varsity, next to Varsity in Time Warp and someone Greta know on St. Rose. Paul offered to e-mail the graphics to the store, but Ellen said she would just put them on a thumb drive and take it with her.

**Tree trimming in the medians:** Sandi said she would ask Mr. D's (Mr. Decel) about it. He is on Steve Shurtz approved list. He is willing to come after hours to do it after the city approves. The biggest cost is getting his equipment there. If he does a street at a time it reduces the cost. Tim noted that we have some dangerous situations. Greta had a giant red oak that she had been trying to get trimmed for the past one and a half years, which blew down during Gustav. Ana noted that our post-storm issues are alleys and trees. Safety is preventive medicine.

**Camellia House:** Tim brought up that there have been problems associated with Camellia House. Ray was distressed over the lack of supervision. He remarked that it would be okay if it were well run, but none of them are. Ana said that Christy Nichols, who works for Gov. Jindal, lives at the end of Cherokee. Ana suggested the board have a special meeting with her. The Advocacy Center was quoted in the paper as saying that there was no real difference when the house is inspected between an electrical cover plate being missing and lack of supervision. All problems are rated the same. It was suggested that we talk to them about how to get a merit scale put in place. Ana said that different categories of children need places to stay. Ray commented that it is a for-profit business so they try to keep the costs down. Ana offered to call Christy and Sandra Hall. Carolyn was asked if she would talk with Sgt. Stone about getting police reports concerning the boys living there. Paul added that one of the boys had been arrested in his home. The boy told Paul that he had been beaten, when he had actually beaten the housemother over there.

**Forum:** Tim wanted to have someone videotape the Metro Council Candidate forum that was scheduled for the next night. He read the suggested questions. Ellen had a suggestion, "If faced with a voting issue that differs from constituents, would you vote the way you believe or follow the wishes of the constituents? Or "What mechanisms will you rely on or to what extent will you reach out to understand residents' concerns and to what extent will you consider them when voting?" Another question voiced was, "What forms of economic development would you like to see?" "What do you consider good vrs. bad?"

**Aging in Place:** There was not enough time to discuss this so Ray will start a dialog on the e-mail and send out a survey.

The meeting was adjourned at 9 p.m. by President Tim Page.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Fontenot, Secretary  
September 25, 2008