

WEST END NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL MEETING
27 Feb 2014

Call to Order: President Dave Borton called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm at the meeting room at the United Methodist Church. A brief overview of agenda was presented as well as the importance of Neighborhood Associations in fostering a sense of community, providing interface with the city on urgent issues, and enhancing cohesiveness in times of disaster.

Review of 2013: We had our first, successful, National Night Out. Our Annual Picnic was well attended with ~ 200 people participating. We began developing our new website with online membership renewal, updated content, and more photos. There was support given to many residents regarding local issues with city planning, parking, and massage parlors.

Financial Report: We had a slight reduction of membership dues. Our picnic finances went well in part due to our successful raffle. We spent \$750.00 out of pocket. Our ending balance was \$1,040.82. We thank our merchants, all 20 – 25 of them, for supporting us. And thanks to Victoria DeWitt for her tireless efforts to provide fun, pertinent raffle prizes.

Election of Officers: Two Directors are resigning: Victoria DeWitt and Donny Sellenreik. This leaves Dave Borton as President, Greg Reel as Vice President, Ben Negrete as Treasurer, Vicki Fernandez as Secretary, and Directors Gordon MacDermott, Richard Cunningham, Chris Leinbach, and Anna Sellenreik. We are in need of one more Director and the call was made for anyone interested to contact Dave Borton after the meeting.

Program Speaker: Kate Colin, our newly elected San Rafael City Councilwoman. She has an MBA from Dartmouth, worked for Disney in Marketing, and lives in Sun Valley with her husband and two teenagers. She sees San Rafael as a little city with big city issues. She spoke to three current issues. **1. Sustainability:** She is working on the Mayor's subcommittee on this issue. Sea level rise preparedness, a plastic bag ban, and options for solar power are three of the projects they are addressing. **2. Resident Engagement and Gov't Transparency:** They are working to improve communication with residents to get issues out to the public in a timely manner so that they can have an impact on the process. There is a survey being drawn up which will help the city get feedback from residents regarding what needs improvement and what city policies are working well. They intend to hold Town Hall as well as online meetings to facilitate transparency. Use of Social Media will be improved as well. **3. Ms. Colin is chair of the Homeless Subcommittee.** She explained the "Homeless Spectrum" which makes it necessary to have more complex solutions to address the issue. The city has limited funding but has approved an action plan, which places the Chief of police and her officers in the first line of interaction. There is a Lieutenant coordinating a group named "H.O.M.E.", which consists of a Mental Health Practitioner on the street with the officers. This Practitioner is on a 3 yr. contract. There are ~ 45 people who cause most of the problems at this time. 15 people have been gotten off the street since Sept/Oct. There are 2 firefighters focusing on **encampments** that speak with the homeless

regarding available resources for them. **Yellow Shirts Downtown Street Teams** engages those homeless people who want to work in exchange for meal vouchers and housing. They are provided with resources and the goal is to get them working. There have been 26 people who have gone through the program. The city would like to enlist partners and Business Community members to help teach business skills to participants. San Rafael is the County Seat but should not bear the burden alone. Representatives from the various City Councils meet monthly to discuss the issues. Many of the Homeless have lived in the city for 15 years and she feels it is appropriate for the city to help them. There are ~1000 homeless people in Marin including those in shelters and temporary housing. About 45% are in San Rafael. The most visible are the men. However, there are many families with 350 children homeless in Novato. There are 8-9 shelters, which are mostly run by Homeward Bound. She also addressed the **Massage Parlor** situation. There are 60 registered parlors in San Rafael, half of which provide prostitution. As of 9/13 a \$100,000 one-year contract was approved to fund an outside team to work with this issue. The plan is to go after them with fines and fees. So far there have been over 100 inspections, 180 violations, bringing in \$50,000 in fees. Word is getting out about the crackdown and the hope is that if at least 2 can be shut down the others will get the message. She encouraged all to send pictures and information about violations when possible. The **Yardbirds** building remains empty. It has three owners and there are two years left on the lease. Home Depot will not let the lease go unless a national corporation bid for it. Community members should offer ideas for the site. She addressed **Pension Reform and City Funding**: The city has reduced its liability by \$1.3 million so far. New hires will receive fewer benefits. Existing cost agreements, were made 15 years ago. They are working with the Unions as well. None of the recently approved sales tax increase will be going to these unfunded liabilities, but rather to Public Works, etc. She responded to a question re **abandoned mattresses** by instructing the questioner to contact the City manager for advice.

2014 Initiatives:

Fire Prevention: Victoria DeWitt researched what is available for us to have another chipper day. The cost will be \$2000 for a full day, plus dump fees. The City will donate \$1500, as will Fire Safe of Marin. We hope to move forward with this plan in April/May. We will need volunteers from each section of the neighborhood to help coordinate the chipper trucks moving through. Victoria offered to look into coordination with the dump.

Planned Neighborhood Events:

National Night Out will be the first Tuesday in August, or 5 Aug.

Annual Picnic: Or Block Party, 14 Sept

Holiday Social: 7 December

Respectfully submitted,
Vicki Fernandez