

# Stonewall Community Association Annual Meeting

## MINUTES

March 6, 2007

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### ***Welcome, Opening Remarks***

#### **Leah Atkinson, Stonewall Association President**

Leah Atkinson, who has served as Association President for the past year, opened the meeting by providing an overview of the evening's topics, and also recognized Association members for their contributions to the Stonewall Community.

Ms. Atkinson extended her appreciation to Delores Taormina for having the vision that ultimately led to formation of the Stonewall Community Association and her leadership related to the Reynolds Area plan.

Don and Margaret Starsinic not only put a lot of time and effort into the community newsletter, but they also play an integral role in greeting new Stonewall residents with the delivery of welcome baskets. Don is also working toward formalizing our neighborhood Safety Watch, which will be reviewed later in this meeting.

Mary Kay Gumberts, Joanne Bell, Carl Peter, and Delores Taormina have dedicated their time toward the development and ongoing maintenance of our new entrance on Cindy Blair Way.

Susan Schaefer has organized many community activities and events such as the annual Ice Cream Social, Independence Day parade, neighborhood garage sale, and most recently, the 2007 Winterfest held at the elementary school.

Ms. Atkinson also recognized the efforts of Bob and Caryl Pfeiffer and King and Rachel Richards to keep residents informed of the Bravington Development and related Planning Commission meetings.

Shirley Hughes, longtime resident and former Association Board member, recently lost her battle with ALS. She will be greatly missed.

Ms. Atkinson extended her appreciation to Connie Homan of the Lexington Herald-Leader for highlighting the Stonewall neighborhood in a recent issue of Homeseller, which positively portrayed the traits and character of our community.

As of the start of this meeting, there are 248 households with confirmed Association membership for 2007. Ms. Atkinson encouraged attendees who had not yet joined the Association to do so this evening. Also, a membership form is available on our [website](#) to join at any time.

### ***Stonewall Overlay Committee Update***

#### **Caryl Pfeiffer, Board Member; Committee Chair**

Caryl Pfeiffer provided a brief review of what an ND-1 (Neighborhood Design) Overlay designation is intended to accomplish. [For more information on ND-1 designation, refer to the brochure on our website as well as LFUCG's – [click here](#).] Residents began exploring the possibility of this formal designation in response to the proposed development on Bravington

Way, which has received preliminary approval from the Planning Commission to allow a developer to build 4 homes on a 1.26 acre lot. The primary concern of Overlay Committee members was to maintain the integrity of the Stonewall neighborhood and because of the average lot size, to ensure that no further subdividing could occur. The purpose would be to preserve the existing character of Stonewall and is intended to guide future development, not to impose restrictions on residents.

Ms. Pfeiffer explained that the Overlay Committee worked with the Division of Planning to first identify threats to Stonewall. Through this process, it was determined that most resident concerns were actually enforcement issues to existing city restrictions and guidelines. She provided a summary of the concerns reviewed by the Overlay Committee and associated results as follows:

- Street infrastructure (particularly widening) – Any changes to the street infrastructure are driven by the division of Streets and Roads and cannot be addressed by an ND-1 overlay.
- The potential that Bravington Way would be opened to Man O'War – There is an ordinance in place that would prohibit this from occurring. The ordinance has been challenged once by a developer and has been upheld. Should the area at the end of Bravington Way be developed in the future, the street must be turned into a cul de sac and cannot be connected to Man O'War.
- Prohibit Rezoning (particularly rezoning for Retail) – Any requests for rezoning would be addressed through the formal zoning process and could not be protected by an ND-1 overlay.
- Prohibit Snout Houses – “Snout Houses” are typically referred to as homes that have their garage as the primary focal point and have proliferated with newer developments in the Lexington area. However, these structures are currently prohibited in certain infill zones. By formal definition, an attached garage is prohibited from exceeding 4' from the primary structure. There are technically many ranch homes within Stonewall that have attached garages exceeding the maximum as the building codes and guidelines have been revised since original construction. Therefore, Stonewall should not be susceptible to future construction of snout houses.
- Privacy Fencing – The concerns raised were primarily related to privacy fencing in front yards and/or corner lots that could block the view of both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Privacy fencing in back yards has never been a concern. This particular issue could in fact be addressed with an ND-1 designation. However, it would only affect future construction of fencing, not existing.
- Driveway Construction – Examples of neighborhood concerns included the existence of gravel driveways or widening of existing driveways to the edge of adjacent property lines. Both of these instances are issues of enforcement to existing building code.
- Oversized Accessory Buildings – Examples of neighborhood concerns were related to the size of some accessory structures that are very large. Again, this would be an issue of enforcement to existing building code.

Of the above listed concerns, only snout houses and privacy fencing could potentially be addressed under an ND-1 Neighborhood Overlay Designation. Regarding concerns that existing property owners with oversized lots could potentially further subdivide, a preliminary analysis yielded less than 1% of available lot space would be at risk.

With the additional considerations of snout houses and privacy fencing, it was determined that a public education campaign would be a better Return on Investment for the Stonewall Neighborhood. To proceed with an ND-1 designation, a full database of all specifications for every lot and existing home in the neighborhood would need to be developed. The cost would far outweigh any benefit to further pursuing this designation.

Ms. Pfeiffer also provided an update regarding the 916 Bravington Way property. The original request of the developer to divide the 1.26 acres into five lots was reduced to four. The developer also recently obtained permission from the Planning Commission to redirect the stormwater from

Bravington Way to the rear of the property, behind the homes on Witthuhn Way. However, no progress has been made on this development and residents that have followed all proceedings closely are still hopeful that the construction of the cul-de-sac itself may be cost prohibitive. This would be the first step necessary to proceeding with further development of this lot.

## **Q&A**

Q: How many lots within Stonewall could be subject to development such as the 916 Bravington Way property?

A: Approximately 12 lots within Stonewall (of 1020 total).

## ***Councilman Report***

### **Jay McChord, 9<sup>th</sup> District Council Member**

Mr. McChord opened by stating that the next four years will be the most exciting for the city of Lexington and could define a generation. This is largely due to the 2010 World Equestrian Games that are expected to attract over 600,000 visitors to Lexington on an international scale. This affects Stonewall in a positive manner as the city is focusing more attention to funds and resources at the neighborhood level, including street improvements for example.

Regarding the Environmental Protection Agency's lawsuit over water quality standards, the city will be conducting a full inventory of every impervious area within Lexington over the next year. The current cost estimate to complete this phase represents \$500,000 of infrastructure funds.

The 2007 budget is set at \$400 million. Of this, \$260 million represents general funds (80% for payroll taxes; occupational licenses, etc.). With a focus on jobs and retention, 73% is to be allocated to personnel. Overall, there have been fundamental changes in our city government with a different mood and a spirit of collaboration.

The Planning Commission recently voted not to expand the urban service boundary. The challenge with this decision is that it includes an enhanced focus on infill and redevelopment. Stonewall is ahead of the curve in this area as many neighborhoods will need to evaluate ways to protect and preserve their character with potential infill. Overall, development will become denser and a focus remains on revitalization of our downtown area.

Old Frankfort Pike is currently one of the most blighted areas. With the new street construction, the plan is to turn this into one of the most valuable areas in Lexington. We should work to drive good infill plans, not just accept infill development for the sake of necessity.

Regarding the construction efforts along Clays Mill Road, residents should be aware that we are currently in the phase of utility movement only. While the disruption to traffic will continue for some time to support this utility work, by the end of 2007, the road itself will look the same. Actual road construction begins in 2008. Mr. McChord asked residents to recall the disruption involved while building the new overpass at Reynolds Road near Fayette Mall. It took some time to complete, but the end result is outstanding so we need to be flexible throughout the process of the Clays Mill Road widening project.

Paving for the new HealthWay trail system begins soon, with Shillito Park. This district becomes the lead for a trail system that will eventually connect the Kentucky Horse Park, downtown Lexington, and Kentucky River areas. With approximately 22 miles of trails to be located within Fayette County, connections will also be made to the surrounding counties of Scott, Garrard, and Jessamine. This movement will create more recreational opportunities as well as support the Aging in Place initiative (see the Fayette County Neighborhood Council's [website](#) for more information).

## **Questions**

Q: Do you support a stormwater utility fee?

A: This is likely the direction that will have to be taken to address the necessary infrastructure improvements. There is no way around this and we are all in it together.

Q: What are considered impervious surfaces?

A: Parking lots and rooftops are examples. Any surface that is impenetrable by water (therefore requiring it to be directed into nearby drainage systems) is considered impervious. There is also pervious concrete and asphalt that can be used in future developments and we are looking into ways to incorporate this technology as much as possible.

## ***Stonewall Safety Watch Report***

**Officer Mays, Division of Police**

***General Information for Stonewall***

Officer Mays advised those in attendance that prior to this meeting, he conducted a crime analysis report for the Stonewall neighborhood. In the past 3 months, police have responded to 70 calls originating from this area. This should not be considered an alarming number as some streets in Lexington originate the same amount in a matter of days. Also, we should consider the types of calls that are placed. Of the 70 calls, a majority were false alarms and others were to report speeding or stop sign violations. Only a couple of the calls were to report vehicle break ins.

Residents can check reports in their area at any time by searching the LFUCG Division of Police's Crime Watch database [also accessible from [www.stonewallinfo.com/links](http://www.stonewallinfo.com/links) and [www.stonewallinfo.com/safety](http://www.stonewallinfo.com/safety) web pages]. While a breakdown of types of crime in the area is shown, we should keep in mind that all reports must fall into one of the available categories of the database. For example, an assault report may be related to a domestic issue and not necessarily reflective of a community threat. This is where a Neighborhood Safety Watch becomes effective.

Officer Mays stated that patrols spend a majority of time in problem sectors, so we may not see consistent police presence in our area as Stonewall does not generate many reports. However, residents are encouraged to contact the Division of Police when any suspicious activities are observed.

## **Questions**

Q: Have you worked with Safety Watch programs before?

A: Yes. A Safety Watch program is one of the most powerful things that a community can do to protect against crime. I caution that some programs tend to fizzle out, so ongoing diligence and dedication is critical to a program's ongoing success. This is one of the largest turnouts of any neighborhood association meeting I have witnessed, so that is encouraging.

Q: What can we do to keep our Safety Watch program active?

A: Have a defined structure in place and keep it up to date. This includes designating block captains and communications protocol. It would also be a good idea to invite an officer that regularly patrols this area now and then to speak to the community about the reality of types of reported crimes as reports and statistics are so generalized.

Q: Do the reports and statistics also include area businesses?

A: Yes, and there is no pattern of theft or vandalism of businesses in this area.

**Don Starsinic, Board Member; Committee Chair**  
***Progress of Stonewall Safety Watch***

Mr. Starsinic advised that Officer Towery spoke at our last annual meeting regarding a Safety Watch program for Stonewall. We solicited volunteers at this meeting and also held a neighborhood kickoff meeting in July, 2006. Officer Towery had also noted that he had never seen a neighborhood of this size organize a formal Safety Watch program.

Over the next few months following the July meeting, the Safety Committee divided Stonewall into sub-areas in order to assign block captains to specific residences. The original goal was to divide into 40 areas, due to the number of residences each block captain would need to support. However, we have ended up with 30 and of those, 26 have been assigned. Mr. Starsinic urged anyone interested in volunteering to serve as a block captain to see him after the meeting as we still need support for the 4 unassigned areas.

We are currently working to create an alert system that will rely on a communications network for each block of residences and led by the designated block captain. Each block captain will be contacting each resident within his/her assigned area to determine interest in participation (which is strictly voluntary) and the resident's preferred method of contact (phone or e-mail). Wherever possible, e-mail contact is encouraged as this will allow block captains to notify many people at once. However, it is understood that not everyone has access to e-mail and/or may prefer phone notification. This system should be set up within the next month.

The system would work as follows: A resident contacts his/her designated block captain to report any suspicious activity. In turn, the block captain notifies all assigned residents for awareness. This process could be used not only to support suspicious activity, but also could be used as a multipurpose "helpline" for the neighborhood as it evolves. Overall, the system to alert other residents of crime or suspicious activity is not to take the place of law enforcement. Always contact the police to report safety issues and follow up with your designated block captain to notify others.

***Higbee Mill & Wellington Park Improvements***

**Joe Howell, Parks & Recreation**

Mr. Howell displayed a visual representation of the preliminary plan for the Higbee Mill Park project. In providing a review of the plan, Mr. Howell explained that current improvements include an 8' wide trail approximately .5 mile in length, a small playground, and a parking area. To date, a survey of the planned parking area has been completed and contact has been made with vendors for the development of the playground area related to design and input.

A Steering Committee consisting of residents has been working with Parks and Recreation to arrive at these planned improvements.

Also, funds to develop a parking area for Wellington Park have been received and the current plan is approximately 40 spaces. Because this has been designated a passive park, there will be few additional improvements to this area.

**Questions**

Q: How many total parking spaces are in this plan?

A: The total is 20.

Q: Why an 8' wide trail?

A: To accommodate multipurpose use; walking, biking, etc.

## **Comments**

Concerns were raised that based on the minutes from our Higbee Mill Park improvement meeting, \$40,000 of the available \$75,000 funds will be allocated to parking. We will be hard-pressed to develop both a playground and a trail with the remaining \$35,000.

A resident adjacent to the park noted that 20-30 cars could be parked at any given time for soccer practice and there is concern that if not provided enough spaces, overflow parking to Longwood Road could affect safety.

Another resident stated that this number of cars was present during games, not practices.

It was suggested that we provide 10 paved spaces and 10 gravel to preserve some funding. Also, these cars are parking on grass today so they should still be allowed to overflow into this area. Mr. Howell noted that there is also a consideration of a certain number of spaces to be ADA compliant.

LYSA is the primary group that practices in Higbee Mill Park and there is currently a plan for an 8 field soccer park to be located across from Cardinal Park. This may alleviate some of the strain on parking requirements for Higbee Mill in the future.

## ***Trees in Stonewall***

### ***Introduction: Joanne Bell***

Ms. Bell, a longtime resident of Stonewall and current Board member, expressed that the mature trees located throughout our neighborhood serve to define and characterize Stonewall. Specifically, because the pin oak, silver maple, and water maple species have an average life span of 50-60 years, many are fast approaching end of life considering the age of original development of this neighborhood. Therefore, our beautiful tree canopy is at risk and we must begin planning now for the next 10-15 years.

Ms. Bell urged residents to consider where they live and the trees that currently exist. We should begin planting similar species now so that they will be well-established as the older trees reach end of life and must be removed. Tim Query will provide more information and guidance as to how this initiative can be accomplished.

### **Tim Query, LFUCG Urban Forester**

Mr. Query introduced himself as a fellow Stonewall resident that chose to move here largely due to the tree canopy. Many established neighborhoods are losing their mature trees which not only serve to beautify the area but also to combat storm water runoff. The national standard for tree canopies to provide this protection should be at 40%. Mr. Query also added that the local tree planting campaigns such as Reforest the Bluegrass and Wellington Park are beginning to show results. The Stonewall neighborhood should also develop a plan to preserve the natural integrity of the area.

One species in particular to stay away from would be the Bradford Pears due to recent blight and over planting. Refer to the Harrods Hill area as an example as there are few street trees remaining. The Bradford Pear represented 27% of all street trees used in newer developments and due to the loss corresponding with blight, the Planning Commission voted to remove all towering pears from the approved street tree list.

A current initiative that Mr. Query is involved in is underway with medians along Tates Creek Road. These medians are overgrown with invasive bush honeysuckle which they are in the process of removing. A planned 130 trees will be planted in this area.

#### Questions

Q: What types of trees are recommended?

A: Large shade trees should be considered (most lots in Stonewall have at least 2) that were part of the original development. Specifically, white oak, red oak, and sugar maple are examples of approved/recommended types. Residents can also refer to the planting manual for a full approved species list.

*[NOTE: should be available at <http://www.lfucg.com/plandiv/planning4.2/plantingmanual.asp> however, this link is not currently working at the time of publication and is maintained by LFUCG.]*

Q: Can under planting be done?

A: If the new tree is shade tolerant, it can be. Typically, you cannot under plant with the same species.

## ***Report on Election of Officers, Closing Remarks***

### **Leah Atkinson, Stonewall Association President**

Ms. Atkinson announced the results of the recent election and introduced the following Stonewall Association Board Members for 2007.

#### Re-elected Board Members:

Joanne Bell, Kevin Burford, Fred Copeland, Carl Peter

#### Newly Elected Board Member:

Sheila Carmack (former President)

#### Officers & Board Members:

Leah Atkinson, President; Barry Bingham, Vice President; Mark Fox, Treasurer; Rachel Richards, Secretary; Harold O'Donnell, Jeff Perkins, Susan Schaefer, Don Starsinic, Delores Taormina, Mary Kay Gumberts, Brenda Johnson, Lee Meyer, Cameron Peck, and Caryl Pfeiffer.

Ms. Atkinson thanked all residents for attending and extended her appreciation for continued interest and support in our community. Because this meeting was held in the gymnasium rather than the cafeteria of Stonewall Elementary, Ms. Atkinson asked which location residents preferred. The majority of attendees considered the gymnasium to be a better location though suggestions were to have microphones available within the audience in order to better hear questions and comments, as well as concerns regarding the length of the walk for some who may find it difficult. Ms. Atkinson welcomed the feedback and will consider these items for the next meeting. Feel free to contact her with any additional suggestions.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:40 p.m.

*Rachel Richards, Secretary*