

Bushy Branch Area Neighborhood Meeting
October 5, 2015

The group convened at 7:10 pm on October 5, 2015, at Western Boulevard Presbyterian Church Meeting Hall.

Community Engagement Specialist Jonathan Edwards, one of Raleigh's six community engagement specialists, described the benefits of establishing boundaries for a neighborhood and registering with the city's neighborhood registry. Neighborhoods that do so have access to an engagement specialist for help with issues and several other benefits: free use of popcorn and cotton candy machines for neighborhood events, matching funds for neighborhood projects, and opportunities to attend the Citizen Leadership Academy and the Neighborhood College (12-week classes that meet once weekly to educate citizens about leadership and neighborhoods). A neighborhood can be from 14 to 1,000 homes, and the average size is 145 homes. Each neighborhood can get annual free pick-up of bulky items for the neighborhood and inclusion on the Citizens Advisory Council neighborhood map, along with a free initial mailing to all homeowners within the neighborhood to elicit participation. Some registered neighborhoods request dues; others do not. Some have officers, and others do not. 5-6 neighborhood representatives are preferred on the paperwork with one contact person for the whole group. Contact information is kept confidential except for the one contact person, who is listed on the Neighborhood Registry.

After Jonathan's presentation, the group decided to register the neighborhood as described in the attached map. Discussion about a name for the neighborhood followed, with a show of hands for different combinations of names. The names introduced by residents present were Kentwood, Avent West, Bushy Branch, Lorimer, Fairway, as well as a variety of combinations of these. The top two names as voted on by those present were Bushy Branch and Kentwood. We discussed the history of the Kentwood community designation with historical details from Jeff Alford, who grew up in the neighborhood and has lived here for 46 years. The group decided to ask for a vote on the names suggested via the free initial neighborhood mailing.

Discussion of the annual pumpkin carving contest was tabled until a future meeting.

The Lorimer Road Facebook page was also discussed, with Don Munn volunteering to start an email group that offered more security and two moderators. Google and yahoo were two of the options mentioned. Examples of appropriate topics were given, such as neighborhood improvements, stormwater management, seasonal parties, yard sales, etc.

Erin Salmon summarized her most recent conversation with the city's chief of staff, Louis Buonopane, who has indicated that city staff will **not** be available for any future meetings about the Lorimer Road sidewalk and road improvement petition and resolution. The following apply:

- **Only one** meeting will be held when the design of this project is at 60 percent completion for community viewing. Minor details may be adjusted for, such as driveway entries and the like, after this point, and will occur between individual property owners and engineers, if desired.
- The city has guidelines that determine whether retaining walls or more than reseeding with grass will occur, including the degree of slope that results once the project is completed.

- Trees will be compensated for, if they have to be removed. A homeowner who decides to take a chance with whether a tree will live or not (due to root damage, for instance) and does not remove and replace it at the city's expense will bear the expense of removal and replacement if the tree dies later. Currie Mixon and Don Munn offered that a city arborist would determine during the construction phase which trees merit compensation to the homeowner.
- Financing for assessments will be available from the city at 6 percent interest for 10 years. Erin pointed out that someone who could not afford the assessment or the financing could have a lien put on their home.
- Two alternatives exist for community members who are unhappy with the council's resolution to fund the petition improvements and the nature of the improvements: submitting a citizens' petition request to address the city council to ask them to reconsider their ruling and to table the funding, **or** obtain a court order to stop the project.

The group decided to make a presentation to the city council at its November 3 meeting to ask the council to table their resolution until the neighborhood can reach some consensus on a sidewalk plan that has a smaller footprint and considers the environment. This action is being taken because some people who signed the petition did so thinking that two or three additional meetings would be held to work out the sidewalk details. This did not occur and will not occur.

Discussion also occurred regarding the impact on traffic and the stormwater management issues of individual property owners as well as the neighborhood as a whole watershed. Per Louis Buonopane, city staff will **not** be available to provide feedback to any of these questions or concerns, as the city has already approved funding for the current project.

Jesse McDaniel described his experience with waiting for 10 years for a sidewalk in Charlotte and the frustration that could happen with tabling the resolution. He also pointed out the amount of work required to present before the city council and to establish consensus. He cautioned that the group should be prepared.

Steve Grothmann raised his concern that tabling the project could still result in the project as is without any adjustments. Discussion followed around tabling the project versus ending this project and starting over. Erin McKenney proposed tabling the discussion for the next meeting as it was 9:00 pm.

Anyone who wishes their name removed from the petition needs to send an email or letter to the city council indicating that and any other concerns about the project. Nick Sadler, a city policy analyst, can also be written with questions or comments.

The group decided to meet again in two weeks.

The meeting closed at shortly after 9 pm.

Meeting attended by

Mike Salmon
Currie Mixon
Sharon Mixon
Don Munn
Michael Burford
Barbara Scott
Sarah Pearson
Erin McKenney
Kevin Jeffries
Galadriel Crosby
Ryan Barnum
Steve Grothmann
David Simonton
Carolyn Parker
Karen Rochford
Jeff Alford
Bruce Dillard
Jennifer White
Shannon Bellezza
Erin Salmon