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Meeting Minutes:

January 8th 2025 530pm-7pm

Introductions and Roll Call:

- Joe initiated the meeting and conducted roll call.
- Joe McGee, Lisa Rockenbach, Jamie Ewing, Wiley Becker, Susan Lyons, Chuck Duffy, Josh Hughes, Ashley Hughes, Meghan Friday, David Dumas, Sarah Louis Saad
- Police Officers: LT Rivers (Team 2 Captain) and Officer Nathan

Police Officers' Report:

- Officers discussed crime trends, emphasizing the importance of locking vehicles and using security cameras.
- They addressed traffic issues and enforcement efforts.
- Moving forward they will try to come with more stats on types of crime and increase/decrease

Board Meeting Dates:

- Proposal to move board meetings to the first Tuesday of every month at 5:30 PM was approved.

Committee Reports:

Zoning and BAR Issues Discussed:

1. **115 Wentworth (Boba's):**
 - **Issue:** Boba's is petitioning the BCA for a parking variance. The current zoning allows for light commercial use, such as a restaurant, but the variance is needed because the property only has 4 parking spaces instead of the required 9.
 - **Board Opinion:** The board supported the variance, noting that the building is in disrepair and its renovation would be beneficial to the neighborhood.
2. **131 Wentworth (J&W Corner Store):**
 - **Issue:** Concerns were raised about the management of trash and the store's operating hours. The store has not been maintained properly, with issues such as trash bins being left out and not being cleaned up.
 - **Board Action:** The board plans to follow up with the city on these issues. Chuck Duffy is addressing the livability concerns, while Wiley is handling the zoning variance related to store hours.
3. **91 Montagu:**
 - **Issue:** A minor BAR submittal related to the addition of a dormer on a home built in 2000.
 - **Board Opinion:** The board considered this a minor issue and debated whether the association should be involved in such small matters.

Action Items:

- **115 Wentworth (Boba's):** Joe to follow up with the BCA, incorporating additional comments about the impact on the neighborhood and potential conditions on operating hours.
- **131 Wentworth (J&W Corner Store):** Wiley to continue monitoring the zoning variance and Chuck to address the livability concerns with the city.
- **91 Montague:** No specific action required, as it was deemed a minor issue.

Membership Committee Update:

1. **Committee Members:**
 - The Membership Committee includes Megan Friday (Chair), Sarah Louise Saad, Meg Waligor, Susan Lyons, and potentially one other person. The committee aims to engage with the community and increase membership.
2. **Goals and Brainstorming:**
 - The committee plans to meet next week to discuss goals and brainstorm ideas for increasing membership and engagement.
3. **Collaboration with Neighbor to Neighbor:**

- The committee is working on collaborating with the Neighbor to Neighbor program to align meeting schedules and avoid conflicts. This collaboration aims to enhance community engagement and participation.
4. **Communication and Social Media:**
 - The committee will work on improving communication with residents through social media and email blasts. This includes posting updates about street closures, events, and other relevant information.
 5. **Membership Drive:**
 - The committee is considering organizing events such as an oyster roast or a fundraiser to attract new members and engage the community.

Action Items:

- **Meeting Schedule:** Megan to schedule a committee meeting next week to discuss goals and brainstorm ideas.
- **Neighbor to Neighbor Collaboration:** Sync up with the Neighbor to Neighbor program to avoid meeting conflicts.
- **Social Media Updates:** Work on posting updates about street closures and other relevant information on social media.
- **Organize Events:** Plan and organize events such as an oyster roast or fundraiser to attract new members.

Parks Committee Update:

1. **Meetings and Coordination:**
 - **Charleston Parks Conservancy:** Ashley has reached out to Darla Leader, the Executive Director and CEO of Charleston Parks Conservancy, to schedule a meeting. The goal is to ensure coordination and collaboration between the Harleston Village Association, the Parks Conservancy, and city parks officials.
 - **City Parks Officials:** Efforts are underway to connect with the appropriate city parks officials to discuss maintenance and improvement projects for the parks in Harleston Village.

2. **Committee Members:**

The Parks Committee currently includes Ashley Crawford, Claire Baton, and Sherry Cressman, with two additional members pending confirmation. The committee aims to have a group of about 5-6 members.

3. **Key Events:**

- **Party for the Parks:** The committee will keep an eye on this major event to ensure it aligns with the goals of the Harleston Village Association.
- **Light the Lake Ceremony:** Following the controversy at the end of 2024, the committee will monitor this event to ensure it continues to benefit the community.

4. **Low Lift Items:**

- **Compost Program:** The committee aims to promote the compost program at Moultrie Park to encourage sustainable practices among residents.
- **Sustainable and Resilient Planting:** There are plans to partner with Master Gardeners to focus on sustainable and resilient planting, particularly in relation to the reworking of Colonial Lake.

5. **Park Inventory and Maintenance:**

- **Parks in Harleston Village:** There are six parks in Harleston Village: Colonial Lake Park, Moultrie Park, Logan Street Park, Cannon Park, and Lucas Park. The committee will assess the maintenance needs of these parks, with a particular focus on smaller parks like Logan Street Park.

Action Items:

- **Schedule Meetings:** Ashley to schedule meetings with Charleston Parks Conservancy and city parks officials to discuss collaboration and park improvements.
- **Promote Compost Program:** The committee to promote the compost program at Moultrie Park.
- **Sustainable Planting:** Partner with Master Gardeners for sustainable and resilient planting initiatives.
- **Park Maintenance Assessment:** Conduct an assessment of the maintenance needs of the six parks in Harleston Village.

Livability Committee Update:

1. **Committee Members:**

- The Livability Committee includes Chuck Duffy (Chair), Cleve Ham (Vice Chair), Mike Shepa, and John Moffett. The committee focuses on various aspects of livability in Harleston Village, including crime, traffic, noise, trash, recycling, and more.

2. **Key Issues:**

- **Garbage Can Placement:** The most common complaint in Harleston Village is the improper placement of garbage cans. The committee will address this issue by promoting the use of the Charleston Trash Tracker app and working with the city to improve compliance.
- **Sidewalks and Crosswalks:** The committee will survey the condition of sidewalks and crosswalks, identifying areas that need maintenance or repainting. This includes prioritizing crosswalks that are heavily used by students and residents.
- **Adopt A Storm Drain Program:** The committee will encourage residents to participate in the Adopt A Storm Drain program to help keep storm drains clear and reduce flooding.

3. **City Coordination:**

- Chuck met with Amy Sutherland, the new director of the Office of Livability and Tourism, and two code enforcement officers, Patrick McBurney and Alan Eddy. They discussed the priorities and challenges in Harleston Village and the importance of proactive measures to address common issues.

4. **Future Plans:**

- The committee plans to conduct a walking tour of the neighborhood to identify major potholes, sidewalk issues, and crosswalks that need attention. This information will be compiled and shared with Councilman Mike Seekings to advocate for necessary repairs and improvements.

5. **Parking Enforcement:**

- The committee will address concerns about the proposed changes to the parking permit system, which may impact residents' ability to identify and report illegally parked vehicles. This issue will be a top priority for the committee.

Action Items:

- **Promote Trash Tracker App:** Encourage residents to use the Charleston Trash Tracker app for better garbage can management.
- **Survey Sidewalks and Crosswalks:** Conduct a survey to identify areas needing maintenance or repainting.
- **Adopt A Storm Drain Program:** Promote participation in the Adopt A Storm Drain program among residents.
- **Walking Tour:** Organize a walking tour to identify potholes, sidewalk issues, and crosswalks needing attention.
- **Parking Permit System:** Address concerns about the proposed changes to the parking permit system and advocate for residents' ability to report illegally parked vehicles.

Flood Committee Update:

1. **Committee Members:**

- The Flood Committee, also referred to as the Resilience and Flooding Committee, includes Susan Lyons (Chair), John Moffett, Wiley Becker, David Cooper, Damon Black, Donna Hinson, Megan Friday, and potentially Whitney Powers.

2. **Key Focus Areas:**

- **Drainage and Storm Drains:** The committee will address issues related to drainage and the maintenance of storm drains. This includes encouraging residents to adopt storm drains and keep them clear of debris.
- **Street Closures and Communication:** The committee aims to improve communication regarding street closures and the availability of city garages during flooding events. This includes ensuring timely notifications to residents.

- **Flood Preparedness:** The committee will work on educating residents about flood preparedness, including promoting resources like the Preservation Society's guide for homeowners on flood management.
3. **City Legislation and Advocacy:**
 - The committee will monitor city legislation related to stormwater management and advocate for projects that impact Harleston Village. This includes staying informed about the comprehensive water plan and ensuring that the neighborhood's needs are addressed.
 4. **Public Forum and Community Engagement:**
 - The committee plans to create a public forum to present the comprehensive water plan to the community. This initiative aims to increase transparency and involve residents in discussions about flood management and resilience.
 5. **Upcoming Meeting:**
 - The committee will meet on Monday at Susan's house to develop an agenda and prioritize their goals for the year.

Action Items:

- **Adopt Storm Drains:** Encourage residents to adopt storm drains and keep them clear.
- **Improve Communication:** Work on improving communication regarding street closures and flood preparedness.
- **Monitor Legislation:** Keep track of city legislation related to stormwater management and advocate for Harleston Village's needs.
- **Public Forum:** Organize a public forum to present the comprehensive water plan to the community.
- **Committee Meeting:** Hold a committee meeting to develop an agenda and prioritize goals.

Technology Administration Update by Josh:

1. Google Workspace:

- The organization has set up Google Workspace to manage documents, communication, and meetings. This platform will help streamline operations and ensure a smooth transition when there is a turnover in officers and board members.

2. Payment Processing:

- Stripe has been implemented for payment processing, allowing members to pay their dues online. This system supports recurring payments and provides a digital record of transactions, making it easier to track membership dues.

3. Website:

- The website (harlestonvillageassociation.org) has been updated to facilitate membership sign-ups and payments. Members can join and pay their dues through the website using various payment methods, including credit cards, Apple Pay, and Google Pay.

4. Newsletters:

- A new system for sending newsletters has been established. This will help keep members informed about important updates, events, and issues affecting the neighborhood.

5. Membership Growth:

- Since implementing the new technology, the organization has seen an increase in membership. There have been 18 new members sign up, including the Ronald McDonald House, which joined under the business fee.

Action Items:

- **Promote Website:** Encourage members to use the website for sign-ups and payments.
- **Utilize Google Workspace:** Ensure all board members and committee chairs are familiar with Google Workspace for managing documents and communication.
- **Send Newsletters:** Regularly send newsletters to keep members informed about updates and events.
- **Track Membership Growth:** Monitor and report on membership growth to understand the impact of the new technology.

Public Comments:

- Concerns about parking enforcement and the new digital system were raised.

Action Items:

- **Zoning and BAR:** Wiley to follow up on the 131 Wentworth issue and form a policy for involving the association in large projects.
- **Membership:** Meghan to sync up with neighbor-to-neighbor on the calendar and plan a membership drive.
- **Parks:** Ashley to meet with Charleston Parks Conservancy and city officials to align priorities.
- **Livability:** Chuck to address the parking enforcement issue and work with Jamie on the new digital system.
- **Flooding/Resilience:** Susan to meet with the committee and develop an agenda for addressing flooding issues.