

Original City Association Minutes from the meeting
June 7, 2010 at 1617 Alaca Place

Those attending were Edward Guy, LaDonna Roberts, Robert Reynolds, Councilman Lee Garrison, John and Alice Sheffield, Lee Foster, John McLelland, Celeste Burnam, Robin-Anne Nelson, Kelly Horowitz, Kelly Fitts and Grant Cochran.

LaDonna called the meeting to order and presented the minutes from the May meeting which were approved as stated.

Councilman Garrison reported that there wasn't a lot of new business to discuss as many of the existing projects are still in progress. He stated that the City of Tuscaloosa is running a surplus and has seen three straight months of increases in sales tax revenue. He mentioned that the paving projects have been proceeding well and the alleys missed in the 12th – 14th street area are on the agenda for the near future.

Kelly Horowitz briefed the group on issues from the BOE. She reported that the Tier 1 schools didn't get funding but that Westlawn specifically will receive some funding although all details surrounding this are not fully known yet. The Tier III schools didn't get any funding but that was more a result of funds simply not being available.

She stated that Graduation coaches met with the Board during a three hour meeting and students helped by the Graduation coaches also came and spoke. There was also the unveiling of a new computer system that allows for real time monitoring of students progress. Finances are better than projected so no further cuts are expected at this time. The Board member who was quoted with racial segregation concerns toured the Tuscaloosa Magnet School and the visit went well. This Thursday the Board is going to discuss the possibility of schools uniforms and will review a report from the teachers' survey regarding the topic at that time. She stated that the attitude of the Board is positive with interest in working well together.

Edward Guy had a list of OCA membership which was distributed. Robert asked if the list could be grouped by neighborhood (not just District) so that the OCA representative could more easily see who was missing from the list and then canvas them for membership. Edward agreed to do so.

Grant Cochran from the SGA stated that there wasn't a lot to report at this time. The Stadium is on schedule to be done by the first game day. He said they are also working on a system where students are given tags for furniture to be placed out on the curb for pickup by Hannah Homes or some other such organization. They are also working on establishing drop off locations for students to place unwanted items. There will be a debate on Sept. 16 in Moody Music Hall for the top 2 Governor contenders. Information will be forthcoming on all the details.

John Sheffield had nothing new to report from the Zoning Board.

Robert reported for the Planning Commission and stated that there is a discussion underway for a master plan from the Strip to the Train Station to 15th St. to Shelby Park. It is to include beautiful landscape improvements. Staff has been reorganized due to changes within City Departments and it is Robert's opinion that this is a good thing as operations are streamlined. There is also a concept for the city where there are narrower streets with more generous sidewalks which slow the flow of traffic and allow for more green space. Following this concept is the development concept of dwellings per acre. Developers like this because their clearing costs are lower – no need to remove all trees and hills. Instead the developer works with existing land features yet are still able to build the same number of houses. He reported that there aren't many density issues right now and that the few that came before the Commission were denied. Councilman Garrison asked Robert if areas like Forest Lake with high ratios of student rentals to permanent residents have looked into projects like the duplexes and other new student developments around the University to make the student housing in their area more attractive. Robert pointed out that unlike the student areas that have been redone in the University area where the ability to walk to class is key the student areas at Forest Lake would not be able to promote that due to the high traffic areas students would have to cross. He also pointed out that there would have to be agreed upon buffer zones to separate any such student housing from permanent residents.

LaDonna raised the issue that the OCA doesn't have representation on the Zoning board and she is worried that issues may develop of which we would be unaware. She asked for someone to attend the Zoning board meetings to keep the OCA informed but the request was tabled due to no volunteers.

At the last meeting, Linda Ford raised the issue of real estate advertising with regard to the Historical District. Linda was unable to attend the meeting so Robert suggested the issue be held over until the next meeting when Linda could bring examples of her concerns and the group would make suggestions at that time.

The issue of game day house rentals was raised and Councilman Garrison stated that it was illegal and that the companies advertising such rentals were being contacted in addition to relevant local real estate agents. Robert stated that he and others bought a vacant lot in the area and had allowed a Gadsden group to rent the space (presumably on game days) but they have now decided to stop that practice and to plant trees and have it as a park.

Kelly Fitts sought clarification as to whether there must be a green placard in the window when house improvements were being made. Several in the group confirmed that the permit must be obtained and the placard displayed when work is being done. A stop order would be issued if work was being done without a permit and if a contractor continued to work in spite of the stop order their business license would be revoked.

Edward gave the financial report in which we have \$1,758.52 in checking and \$2,833.07 in savings. The meeting was adjourned with the announcement of no meeting in July.