



BELLEVUE – OCHRE POINT NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

MINUTES ANNUAL MEETING August 9, 2016

Call to Order

James Moore, President, called the Annual Meeting of the Bellevue-Ochre Point Neighborhood Association to order at 5:38 pm.

Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Moore welcomed those in attendance.

Approval of Minutes

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the August 18, 2015 Annual Meeting were accepted as distributed.

Treasurer's Report

Thomas Goddard, Treasurer, reported the following:

Cash Balance

As of Oct. 1, 2015	\$51,384.03
Income	\$37,492.45
Change in Value/Schwab Acct.	\$282.70
Less: Expenses	(\$71,709.79)
Cash Balance – July 15, 2016	\$17,449.39

Donations

Annual Fund	\$3,910.00
Restricted Fund	\$33,578.70
Total as of July 15,2016	\$37,488,70

Mr. Goddard pointed out that the organization's year ends on Sept. 30 and therefore this is a 10 month report. He also said that there would be additions prior to year- end such as responses to the annual appeal and other pledges and gifts.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Treasurer's Report was approved as presented.

Report of Nominating Committee and Election of Directors

John Iverson reported that the Nominating Committee had selected the following slate of nominees for the next year:

David Brodsky, Mohamad Farzan, Ronald Fleming, Mary Gilbane, Thomas Goddard, John Iverson, Roger King, Bruce Leish, Harry McVickar, Ruth Orthwein, Linda Sawyer and Peter Warwick.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the slate of nominees was approved as presented.

BOPNA Accomplishments and Neighborhood Issues

Mr. Moore reported the following: “ Dear Friends, this will be the last time that I stand before you as BOPNA’s President. After 10 years on the job it is time for me to move on and make room for new leadership. Looking back I can remember clearly sitting down with Jay and Suzie Schochet as they convinced me that Tom Goddard and I were the right people to pick up Jay’s leadership role of the Association. He believed that new leadership would be best able to implement the newly developing relationship with both Salve Regina University and the Preservation Society.

Jay had led the Association through a tumultuous struggle which resulted in the construction of a beautiful wellness center which the University and Newport is so rightly proud. It wasn’t easy but it was the right thing to do. In retrospect that event also eventually led to the University taking a leadership role in adapting its historic properties to modern uses, developing a passion for preservation and the positive relationship that your Association has with the University and its management today. Jay for his part always said that he stood in the shoes of Ronnie Dick who in the 1980’s and 1990’s led the effort which resulted in the reconstruction of Bellevue Avenue, into the beautiful boulevard we use today.

As you are perhaps aware both Jay Schochet and Ronnie Dick passed away earlier this year after long and valiant struggles with illness. Throughout the past 10 years Jay was for me a constant source of encouragement and sage advice about our city and its people. He and Suzie gave your Board the example of leadership and service that I am sure will be carried on after my departure. It is hard to describe in words the vital role they have played on behalf of our neighborhood, but I know for sure that without their leadership I would not be standing here today and your Association would not be the strong organization it continues to be. Thank you, Jay and Suzie.

What we could not foresee in 2006 was that the cordial relationship with the Preservation Society would not prevent it from moving forward in November, 2012 with a plan for the Breakers welcome center and ultimately all of its house museums that if fully implemented would lead to a fundamental detrimental modification of our neighborhood. Since then with the strong support of our membership we successfully opposed that plan at the Historic District Commission and before the City Council but, of course, failed by one vote to be successful at the Zoning Commission.

This fall our appeal of Judge Gallo's initial decision to send the Breakers plan to the Zoning Commission and the Preservation Society's appeal of the City Council's decision to deny their museums food service licenses will be heard by the Supreme Court of Rhode Island. The Court has agreed to allow the Association to take on the important role of an intervenor on behalf of the City. The full five judge panel will hear the oral argument of these cases consecutively. The clear implication is that the Court also believes as we do that these cases have constitutional importance for all of Rhode Island. A final decision should be rendered by December, 2016. The briefs that have been filed on behalf of your Association can be found on our web site. While no one can predict with certainty the outcome of a Supreme Court case, we feel good about our prospects. I thank you again for the personal and financial support you have given your Board throughout this long and difficult process.

You may be wondering what you are looking at in the beautiful photo to my right. This is in fact what the garden walk of the Breakers looked like in 1914, just over 100 years ago. This photo of part of the serpentine walk was taken approximately where the welcome center is proposed to be constructed. What was once there can become so again, that is the beauty of gardens, for which Newport is justly famous. The potential is there to re-create these gardens, giving visitors a reason to return to the Breakers season after season whether they visit the house or not. Just as they do for the internationally famous Newport Garden Show each year in June. The combination of buildings and the landscapes that envelope them is what makes our wonderful neighborhood so unique. There is a compromise solution to the Preservation Society's desire to sell tickets at the Breakers which will allow for the re-creation of these amazingly beautiful gardens. We continue to be ready to work to achieve that compromise. Perhaps after the Supreme Court has rendered its verdict, if not before, such a compromise can be achieved. I believe that Linda Sawyer and her team can carry our organization forward in the positive manner that Tom Goddard and I were able to do 10 years ago.

"To preserve the quiet, historic, residential character of the neighborhood, so that people can continue to live there for generations" was the overwhelming sentiment of the 43 members who replied to the BOPNA survey this past June, strongly reaffirming the Board most important goal. The survey also made it clear that our members believe that "what is most important about Newport" is its combination of living history and physical beauty together with a range of cultural and waterfront activities. When combined with fine dining, music festivals, sailing - all easily accessible from our safe, quiet neighborhood- the result is a unique urban environment.

It is in that spirit that the Association will continue to work closely with the members of the City Council, the Cliff Walk commission and ALN and has reached an informal agreement with the Newport Tree Society to support its concept of a Newport Arboretum. So please let me introduce to you Helen Papp, executive director of the society. Thank You"

The Newport Arboretum:

Helen Papp, executive director of the Newport Tree Society reported on the past, present and future of the Newport Arboretum. She displayed photographs of current and past “tree-scapes” in Newport. She described the role of Newporters of the past such as Mr. Redwood, Dr. Waterhouse and others. She pointed out how the British had essentially “burned everything” during their occupation. She showed nine trees currently considered “endangered” in Rhode Island. She closed by urging support for an endowment to support a full time Horticulturist in Newport.

Salve Regina University Report

Sister Jane Gerety, President and CEO of SRU reported on the University’s support for the work of the Newport Arboretum and the school’s own arboretum. She reported on the status of construction on the O’Hare Academic Center and some of the issues of phasing into the new building. She spoke of success of the School of Nursing which is also available to nurses at Newport Hospital. She reported that this year SRU had 1100 applicants for 85 openings in the Nursing School. She said they had exceeded their enrollment goal this year but continued to maintain a target of 2000 undergraduates. She spoke about SRU’s programs in the areas of student aid, activism on campus, race relations on campus and awareness and sensitivity to sexual assault and harassment. She urged residents of Newport to take advantage of SRU programs such as those offered at the Pell Center.

Questions and Comments

There was a discussion about traffic problems on Annandale Ave, the narrowness of the street and the presence of buses.

Special Non Agenda Item

Mr. Goddard made the following remarks regarding Mr. Moore’s tenure as President of BOPNA.

“Ron Fleming had hoped to be here to say some words of thanks regarding Jim’s work and as you may know, Ron is incapacitated having been taken to the hospital on Friday where he remains. I’ve talked to him by phone and his biggest complaint is that “It will be a while before they let me out of here”. He did provide me with some warm thoughts for me to say to Jim at this time.

Jim started on the BOPNA board in the spring of 2006 and while some may think that BOPNA’s work is limited to the Breakers matter. It is and has been, in fact, wide ranging. In August of 2006 BOPNA and others signed the Vision Statement, a project that was some years in the making and sponsored by none other than Ron Fleming. Jim was instrumental in seeing to it that the last details were completed and the document signed.

· In 2007, with significant help from Salve students, he also led us in creating our website.

· In September in 2007 Jim negotiated a merger with Friends of Bellevue giving BOPNA its

501(3)(c) status.

· In 2008 BOPNA joined ALN and therefore became much more involved in city issues.

· In 2009 BOPNA worked with Salve regarding the design and construction of what was to become the wonderful Robert A. M. Stern designed chapel.

· In 2010 BOPNA was instrumental in exposing the total failure of the Bellevue Avenue repair project. BOPNA has been instrumental in pushing the immediate repair of that important neighborhood and tourist route.

· We also worked with Salve regarding the reconstruction of the Pell Center parking lot.

· In 2011 BOPNA worked with great help from Salve and the Newport Preservation Society on the preservation of the iconic RIPTA trolleys. RIPTA had planned to replace them with massive city buses. We have avoided the big buses, but some think we now have smaller city buses disguised as trolleys.

· In 2012 we worked with Salve Regina and the Bienvenue Condo Association regarding the reconstruction of Miley Hall.

· In 2013 we worked on the issue of the 40 Steps toilets, and

· In 2014 we cooperated with Salve regarding the reconstruction of the O'Hare Academic Building. During the course of these many projects and initiatives BOPNA has been very fortunate to have Jim's leadership and his extreme professionalism to guide us. He has been steadfast in his efforts to develop fact-based responses to issues of interest and to always be thinking as to what is best for the neighborhood. Moreover, he has consistently put himself to the task of seeing these initiatives through. This has required him to really dig in deep, despite many challenges. We are immensely grateful for your service, Jim".

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:29 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

John Iverson

Acting Secretary