



The Residents of Old Wilmington, Inc.
Neighborhood Messenger

June, 2009

NEXT MEMBER MEETING

When: Sept. 9, 2009

Where: Tileston School

Time: 7:00 PM

In this issue: GOOD NEIGHBOR AWARD, ANN ST BICYCLE PATH, PICNIC, CFCC & OLD POLICE BUILDING, PLANNING COMMISSION VACANCY, ABC BOARD, BDKT, TREE DONATIONS, ROWS LIST

GOOD NEIGHBOR AWARD

Every year The Residents of Old Wilmington give a Good Neighbor Award. As the name implies, this award is given to a member because of his outstanding acts of kindness to a neighbor or neighbors. This year's recipient is no exception.

Last year one of our very elderly neighbors was robbed, assaulted, and beaten so badly that she lost the sight in one of her eyes. Understandably, she became very frightened, withdrawn, and suspicious of all individuals. She has no relatives in Wilmington, and her only living relative is a niece in St. Louis.

The lady knew and trusted our award recipient. Our member took charge of this situation. Our member scheduled meals to be brought to their home which were later taken to our elderly neighbor. Doctor appointments were made for our elderly neighbor. The neighbor was driven to all her appointments as she could no longer drive. Every need of this elderly neighbor was attended to by our award recipient.

In our book, this defines a good neighbor. Congratulations to the well deserved recipients Alice and Tom Mitchell!

ANN STREET MEDIAN/BICYCLE PATH

ROW received notification from Josh Mello, associate transportation planner, that the funding for the Ann Street median and bicycle path has been recommended and the project should be starting July of this year. Without the initiation and persistence of ROW members, it is doubtful that this project would ever have been given life. ROW has pledged up to \$6,500 upon completion of this project. Congratulations to ROW for its persistence and hard work.

PICNIC

Our annual picnic held June 13, 2009 was a huge success. It is estimated that approximately 65 people attended. As usual, there was a wide assortment of delicious food and desserts. Various assortments of beers and a container of baked beans were generously provided by The Front Street Brewery. It was a good time to mingle and visit with friends and neighbors as this activity is limited at our annual meetings. In attendance were Tom Harris owner of the Front Street Brewery and City Council Woman Margaret Haynes.

CFCC & OLD POLICE BUILDING

Last fall President Eric McKeithan of CFCC came to a meeting of the Residents of Old Wilmington to plead his case for support of their current bond issue. It is important to remember that the college lost its last bond referendum after its much publicized threatened “take over” of Pat Delair’s home and business property on 3rd St. After that defeat, apparently, the college decided to send its president on a “good will” tour of the residents to gain their faith and support in its latest bond effort.

At our meeting, we were told that the college was going to save the old Police building on Red Cross St. and had in fact spent \$80K to replace the roof and to remove the asbestos. Once the bond issue was passed, the building (claims the college) is suddenly no longer workable and has to come down. They even have an engineer’s report that the building might collapse in the event of an earthquake. The Historic Wilmington Foundation has since placed this building #1 on the most threatened list.

The Trustees have wasted no time in voting to demolish this historic contributing structure. It does not fit into its general scheme of things for their plans for a new building on that corner. According to our city ordinances, there is no way to stop this. They can get a permit to demolish and within 90 days it is a done deal regardless of the impact on the historic structure of the community or the voices of our citizens.

Some ROW members made know their displeasure of this issue and expressed the opinion that we were “duped”. Since then, ROW has been contacted by David Hardin, Public Information Officer. He would like to make a presentation to ROW about the Union Station project that will occupy the site of the old police building ---if we think it would make a difference. The Board will consider his request.

PLANNING COMMISSION VACANCY

A position on the planning commission has become vacant do to a member moving out of the community. This commission is vitally important to the future development of Wilmington as it approves or denies all applications for development in our city and sends the information on to the City Council for its consideration. It meets once per month. Members are appointed by a committee of City Council members. To be considered for this position, fill out an application obtained at the following web site:

www.wilmingtonnc.gov/Portals/0/appointment_app.pdf

ABC BOARD

Richard Hansen, one of the 3 members on the ABC board is up for re-appointment **June 22, 2009**. Members of this board are appointed by the County Commissioners. Other ABC commissioners are Stephen Culbreth whose appointment expires June 30, 2010 and Charles C. Wells whose appointment expires June 30, 2011.

Mr. Hansen was a voting participant when the ABC Board quietly spent \$2.3 million purchasing 11 houses around their facility at Castle and 17 Streets. The Board approved demolishing these houses and the removal of eight trees that were over 24” in diameter. All of this was done after the Board learned of the neighborhood’s inclusion in the National Registry of Historic places, and after public outcry over the possible demolition of these historically significant homes. In addition, prior to cutting down these trees the Board previously was instructed by the city not to cut down three of them. Three of them were cut down anyway. The Board was fined \$3,000. All of this was done because ABC wants to expand their facility there and wants to get the properties rezoned commercial.

This is the same board that issues liquor licenses to all the bars and restaurants in the County, even in instances when the City Council has tried to limit the number of bars in downtown Wilmington.

Some feel that this board has acted with fiscal and community irresponsibility, with blatant disregard for an historic neighborhood’s homes and trees, with ignoring citizens expressed concerns, and with in-your-face disregard for the city’s planning and re-zoning process.

If you would like to express your thoughts about this issue, you can do so by contacting the County Commissioners listed below and members of the. **Remember to get your email in before the 22 as that is the day that the re-appointment will be made.**

Bill Caster---bcaster@nhcgov.com

Bobby Greer-bgreer@nhcgov.com

Ted Davis ----tdavus@nhcgov.com

Johathon Barfield---jbarfield@nhcgov.com

Jason Thompson---jthompson@nhcgov.com

City Council---council@wilmingtonnc.gov

BDKT

Plans for the BDKT are progressing nicely. We already have two sponsors for the event and need many more. It was decided that pre-tour tickets would sell for \$15.00. On the day of the tour, the price of the ticket will be \$20.00. The committee has contracted with 12 businesses to sell the tickets prior to the tour. A mobile phone has been loaned to the committee so that potential guests can call and buy group tickets and get information about the tour. This phone number will be listed on publicity information. Randy Shackelford has volunteered to sit in front of the Front Street Brewery and sell tickets Friday before the tour and Saturday morning of the tour. It is hopeful that all members would participate in some way with the tour as this is our only money maker and the event that allows us to be so generous with our community. Plus, it is really a fun event for members and guests that tour the homes.

Membership Committee

The wording for our door hangers has been completed and is as follows:

ROW WANTS YOU!

The Residents of Old Wilmington is a neighborhood organization of residents living in the area bordered by 8th, Queen, Red Cross, and Water Streets. We keep abreast of all the things that are relevant to us and keep our members informed. We sponsor the annual Back Door Kitchen Tour, and we pour all the proceeds from this event back into our community.

Our two socials each year are the spring picnic and our Dec. Holiday party. We meet on the second Wednesday of each month (except June, July, Aug.

and Dec.) at 7:00 PM at Tileston School, 412 Ann St. *Come join us!* Meet new friends. Socialize. Participate as much or as little as you like. Make your voice heard. www.rowilmington.org

These will be printed next month and hung on door knobs in our membership area. The committee will meet next month to determine how many volunteers will be needed to distribute these. The plan is to ask one member to take one street on the north or south sides of our area. It should take about sixty minutes to walk the area and put the door hangers on the door. The success of this effort will depend on the members' willingness to distribute the door hangers.

Final decisions on the gift to our new neighbors are being made and will be announced at a later date. The committee is looking into obtaining gift certificates from downtown merchants to also give to our new neighbors. Ninety eight letters were sent to old members who had not renewed their memberships. These letters were mailed in time so that the former members could attend our picnic and renew their membership.

After the membership voted to give the city money to plant trees, to give money to Cape Fear Museum, and presented our report on the repair of our brick streets, letters were sent to our mayor and City Council members, among others, stating our accomplishments. Following is a letter received from Mayor Pro-tem James Quinn:

Ms. Sherry Demas, Mayor
Residents of Old Wilmington
P.O. Box 1862
Wilmington, NC 28402

Dear Ms. Demas:

Thank you for your letter outlining the most recent gifts to the City. Once again, your organization has stepped up to help out our city when it needs it most. Over the past months, ROW has donated the time of its members, funds for various projects, and sweat from the brows of the members. Yours is one of the finest examples of how citizens can come together, take the initiative and make a difference in the quality of life for themselves and their neighbors.

Thank you and the members of ROW for this most recent donation of cash which will make it possible to plant trees in the downtown area and at the museum. Please keep me posted on the results of your survey of the brick streets. At one time the city had a crew that was trained in the repair and restoration of brick paved streets.

Sincerely,
James Quinn, Mayor Pro-tern
cc: Wilmington City Council
Wilmington City Manager, Sterling Cheatham

ROWS LIST

The final format for ROWS list has been completed and will be available for ROW members in September. Members may submit provider information to Bill Massey at wmassey3@ec.rr.com. Give the service category (painter, plumber, etc), the provider's name, address, your name and telephone number, date that you used the provider, and a rating of the provider. Rate the provider using one to five stars, five being the highest. It is the desire of the Board to keep all of this information positive by not providing negative comments about the provider. A one star rating will tell the story.

Dates to Remember

BDKT Committee will meet on July 12 at the home of Sherry Demas, 305 S. 3rd St., at 3:00 PM.