

FGCAC
Meeting Wednesday, September 16, 2009

SPECIAL MEETING

ATTENDANCE:	REPRESENTING
Major Greg Elder	Superintendent Warren Riley
Carlyn Goodwin	Mayor Nagin's Office
Linda Landesberg	Councilmember Carter
Eric Holstrom	Fair Grounds Race Course
Tommy Lewis	Councilmember Midura
Austin Miller	Fair Grounds Race Course
Sandra Salmen	Fair Grounds Race Course
Rocky Seydel	Councilmember Midura
Enrico Sterling	Councilmember Midura
Bishop Ryan Warner	Councilmember Fielkow
Sherry Watters	Councilmember Midura

Meeting called to order 4:09pm by Bishop Warner

Introductions of new members: We had no new introductions.

Discussion of the Meeting held by the 3 Neighborhood Associations on September 10, 2010.

Enrico Sterling began the meeting with an overview of the meeting of the 3 Neighborhood Associations, which are the Desaix, Triangle and Faubourg St. John Neighborhood Association. Enrico did a head count at the meeting and counted approximately 50 attendees. The general consensus of those in attendance was that they were not in favor of addressing the hours of operation for slots and were not in favor of a July 4th celebration.

Rocky Seydel said it was hard for the group to keep the issues straight and seemed to have some difficulty separating the issue of slot operating hours from an Independence Day celebration.

Bishop Warner said the fourth of July event was to be more of a family event where the neighborhoods could get together, get to know each other better, and raise funds for each neighborhood association.

Enrico Sterling it was hard to keep the attendees from being negative about the issues.

Austin Miller spoke about the low turn out for the meeting and asked the neighborhood association representatives if, because of the low turnout they felt as though the neighbors in attendance truly reflected the voice of all of those that live in our area.

Several members commented that they felt the turnout was good.

Austin Miller commented that he received a flood of calls from customers that live in the area when they saw the story on the news or read about it in the paper. Those that called were excited that the issue was on the table because they do not like the fact that the slot operation closes at midnight and support a change.

Austin also asked how the neighbors were notified about the meeting to discuss slots. Sherry Waters indicated that she sends e-mail notifications and Linda Landesberg stated that she posts it on the association web site. Austin suggested that they consider a mail campaign for important meetings so that those without computers or email will have the opportunity to participate and we can get a more complete picture of the will of the people.

As suggested by the Committee at our last meeting, Fair Grounds conducted an informal poll of our slots customers and the initial results came back as follows: 317 people were asked what hours would you like to have the facility open:

- 71.9 % would like for it to be open 24 hours
- 9 % would like for it to be open until 2: 00 pm
- 10.5% would like to see it be open until 3:00 pm
- 8.6% would like to see it open until 4:00 pm

Sandra Salmen: stated that in the Zip Code of 70119 the statistics posted on the gnocdc.org listed 16,740 households receive mail.

Discussion followed about the possibility of engaging an outside firm to do a phone or mail survey to all of the houses that make up the Fair Grounds neighborhood district to ensure that we have a more complete picture of the wishes of our neighbors. All agreed that the wording of such questions was an important factor so that no leading questions were asked. No decision was made on what action to take.

Austin Miller asked what seemed to be driving the opposition to adjusting the slot hours, even slightly, to help accommodate the requests of the customer.

Tommy Lewis: members fear that a change would lead to a 24-hour slot operation vs. the original agreement of a midnight closing.

Enrico Sterling said the people who attend the meeting feel like if the Fair Grounds extends their hours until 2, 3 or 4am then they will next want 24 hours of operation. They are scared of increased traffic and it will turn a quiet neighborhood into a noisy one. He is constantly getting calls from neighbors about the noise of Jazz Fest, Voodoo Experience, Endymion and even noise from trains.

Austin Miller reminded everyone that these discussions came about because the customers were asking for it and that our talks did not revolve around a 24 hour operation – simply a small adjustment in the hours to better meet the demands of players. Unfortunately mis-information and inaccurate claims by some have led some neighbors to make some assumptions that simply are not true.

Rocky Seydel noted that at the meeting some residents said they do not even believe the mileage that is being reported on the patrol cars is accurate because they are often seen parked in the lot.

Major Elder and Austin Miller noted that it is important to remember that in addition to NOPD officers driving NOPD patrol cars to the Fair Grounds to begin their neighborhood patrol duties, the Fair Grounds also employs between 6 and 9 additional NOPD officers to work the racing detail. When those officers report to duty at the track they also may have a car parked in the parking lot. The neighborhood patrol cars can be identified by the Fair Grounds logo on the car.

Tommy Lewis believes that for the Fair Grounds to open any change in provisos that the City Council will ask how the 3 neighborhood associations and their members feel. He then stated that he believed the 3 association boards were against any change at this time.

Rocky Seydel believes this might not be the right time to bring the topic up because the people who live in the neighborhoods have been through, and are still dealing with many of their own issues including moving back to the area, Katrina recovery, and trying economic times.

Linda Landesburg would like to have a review of the provisos put on the agenda for every Citizens Advisory Committee meeting.

Sherry Waters suggested that a member of the Fair Grounds attend the 3 Associations board meetings.

Rocky Seydel suggested as a way to be more involved with the neighborhoods associations is to again do the Neighborhood day at the races.

No action or decision was made regarding next steps.

Major Elder passed out to the group a detail print out going back 2 years on crimes in the neighborhood.

Bishop Warner reminded everyone the next meeting will be Tuesday, November 10th at 4:00 pm

Motion to adjourn was presented by Enrico Sterling and seconded by Tommy Lewis.

Meeting adjourned at 5:35 pm