**Villa Park Civic Association Minutes**

**August 5, 2009: Draft**

The meeting was called to order by Marilyn King at 6:45 p.m.

1. Introductions: Marilyn introduced the executive committee and our police liaisons.
2. A motion was made by Racquel to approve the minutes of July 1, 2009; seconded by Lisa.
3. Treasurer’s Report:
   1. Checking account

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Balance from previous report | $ 954.37 |
| Interest (approx) | 0.41 |
| Check for water slide | * 200.00 |
| Sub total | $754.79 |
|  |  |

* 1. Petty Cash

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Balance from previous report | $21.50 |
| 50/50 | 10.25 |
| Donation | 10.25 |
| Sub total | $42.00 |

Total funds: $796.79

1. Detective Russo’s report: Detective Russo offered congratulations on National Night Out. There were 68 events in the city this year, compared to 52 last year. They had ordered additional food and giveaways, but used the extras for the additional events. There were also 6 more waterslides city-wide, for 2 in each district. Last year only the East District had water slides.

Detective Russo provided copies of the brochure with contact information for the TPD command staff, hot lines and tip lines, confidential complaint form, “10 Commandments of a Good Neighbor,” a list of all East District civic associations, curfew information, what makes a good neighborhood, and City of Trenton contact information.

Crime stats: On August 2 at 11:30 pm a robbery with weapon occurred in front of a house on the 800 block of Park Avenue. Three suspects initially approached an individual on Fairmount Ave., and, using a rusty shotgun, robbed him of his wallet, pants, and sneakers. No arrests have been made. Det. Russo notes that, when someone asks you for a cigarette, you’re probably about to be robbed. He also pointed out that we can try to prevent these occurrences by not being vulnerable (that is, being out alone or late at night). He also noted that a lot of immigrants are bring obbed, particularly if they are intoxicated, as they frequently carry cash.

An aggravated assault was reported to have occurred on Aug. 4 at 4:17 a.m. at S. Cook and Hamilton. Two juveniles claimed that someone in a white van shot at them with a BB gun. This was later found to be untrue, and the “victims” were charged with curfew violations. Detective Russo also discussed how curfew violations are being addressed.

A theft of a porch bench was reported from the 700 block of Hamilton Avenue. Detective Russo notes that it’s good to report issues such as this so that the police know where problems are occurring. He also discussed how quality of life violations, including panhandling, fights, prostitution, abandoned vehicles, public drunkenness, etc., need to be reported, as the elimination of these quality of life problems make for better neighborhoods. Panhandling by a couple of individuals at the post office was pointed out to him.

Det. Russo described an officer productivity sheet to make sure that issues are resolved as soon as possible. He also noted that the Villa Park is receiving extra attention through September 15, and Ardmore Ave. is receiving extra attention through September 30. These will be evaluated and may be extended, if necessary.

Questions were raised regarding curfew violations, disabled vehicles, cars without tags parked in yards (especially of rental properties), and possible overcrowding of rental properties. Det. Russo will work with the Department of Inspections for overcrowding. Residents should send information to Marilyn so that she can write letters on behalf of the VPCA to appropriate City officials. Issues with TPD dispatch were also described; Det. Russo told the individual how to file a complaint.

There was a 10 minute break to allow individuals to speak privately with Det. Russo.

**Old business:**

National Night Out: (NNO) Marilyn noted that we had a great turnout and thanked people who donated time, food and money, as well as thanks to the TPD. She will send pictures to Andrea for web posting. There were minor glitches with the electrical system. The few leftovers (hamburgers and rolls) were going to the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen. Detective Russo is going to be hosting a meeting in the near future with civic groups on how to make NNO better.

Membership Dues: VPCA dues are due this month. Dues are $15 per individual, $20 per household and $50 for businesses.

Basketball “courts”: Because of budget cutbacks, the city will not be having basketball at our park. Sam Frisbee will be in touch.

Questions were raised regarding the tennis court gates (locking and unlocking): the city is more comfortable with having a current or past VPCA executive committee member open and close the tennis courts. Charles has volunteered to take this responsibility.

For NNO, since the water and electric were both provided by a resident, would they accept a donation? Marilyn said that they would not. The corresponding secretary will draft a thank you letter.

**New business**:

Craft Show: The craft show will take place on Saturday, October 24 at St. Anthony’s Church hall. Marilyn asked for helpers. Racquel and Nancy volunteered. It was suggested that the VPCA have a table to sell items that might be donated to the organization. Planning and organizing needs to begin this month. Marilyn will check to see if there are other big craft fairs on the same day.

Neighborhood Watch: Marilyn has materials on neighborhood watch for people to take home and consider. She noted that to set up one for Villa Park would require a lot more people. Director Bradley would walk with the group on occasion. Members in attendance believed that a neighborhood watch is a good idea, so we will pursue this in the future.

Spring cleanup: Planning should take place beginning in November or December.

Halloween Parade: Sharon described how Halloween Parades were handled in the past. Members supported having one this year, and since the Craft Show in scheduled for 10/24, we would have the Halloween Parade on October 31. Racquel, Adrienne, Erica and Sharon volunteered to work on this committee.

Walking Club (for exercise): Marilyn would like to have one, commencing at either 6 a.m. or 7 p.m. (or both). She will send an e-mail out to all members to see if there is interest.

Speed bumps: Charles reviewed the history of the VPCA’s attempt to have speed bumps installed on Villa Park streets. Five years ago petitions were delivered to City Council. The fire chief and police director objected to them as being dangerous for emergency vehicles. There was no information provided to the community regarding discussion of this topic at a City Council meeting, where it was voted down. In order to re-start this process, petitions have to be done again. At least 25 signatures must be obtained for each street (except for Hamilton, Olden, Liberty and Chambers, which cannot have speed bumps). Signatures must be from resident owners. VPCA has a petition form and blank signature pages. If residents consider this a good idea, a coordinated effort should be made to get all petitions done at the same time and delivered to City Council. Charles suggests that we advise City Council ahead of time so that the petition discussion can go on its agenda.

Other new business:

Cook-off: Racquel and Charles discussed having a cook-off in the Spring, with area chefs as judges. It was proposed that maybe Bobby Flay could be invited.

With no further business to discuss, Nancy motioned to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Tom. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Kubiak