



WAMM CIVIC ASSOCIATION QUARTERLY MEETING

September 10, 2024

Bering Church of Christ

MINUTES

Lane Llewellyn, President, called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

1. Introduction of Officers

Lane Llewellyn introduced the Board members present at the meeting, including: Lane Llewellyn, President; Mary Alice Carpenter, 1st Vice President, and Maria Morandi, Secretary.

2. Order of Business

2.a. Upcoming Greek Festival and Introduction of Speaker.

Lane Llewellyn indicated that the speaker for meeting was delayed due to heavy traffic. She moved forward in the agenda and introduced Mr. Gus Economides, Chairman of the Greek Festival sponsored by the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral.

Lane Llewellyn indicated that, as in past years, Mr. Economides brought entry tickets to share with our WAMM members, and asked him to inform the audience about Festival issues our neighborhood should be aware off. Mr. Economides indicated that, as in past years, there will be more traffic in local streets during the festival parking problems will likely arise. He indicated that the Annunciation Orthodox Cathedral has a special events permit form the City of Houston (COH), so the festival operates under the restrictions of this permit. Parking problems during the festival should be reported to the COH.

The meeting speaker arrived. Lane Llewellyn asked Mr. Economides whether there were any additional issues he would like to address. Mr. Economides responded that there were none. Lane told him that he was very welcome to stay for the rest of the meeting if he wished. Mr. Economides responded that, unfortunately, he had to leave.

Lane Llewellyn greeted and introduced the speaker: Mr. D.M. Allmer, FM, Senior Inspector at COH Public Works, Inspector Boarding and Lodging Facilities, Retired US. Navy Chief SEABEES. She explained that the SEABEES are the UNITED STATES NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALLION. Their motto is "Can Do". She further indicated that it is a good idea to have a trained and disciplined construction man as COH

inspector. She asked Mr. Allmer what the “FM” acronym stands for. Mr. Allmer responded that he holds Fire Marshall (FM) certification.

Lane Llewellyn asked the audience to hold questions, concerns, and advice requests until the end of Mr. Allmer’s presentation.

2.b. Presentation by Mr. Allmer.

Mr. Allmer excused himself for tardiness but he was held in traffic driving from Cypress. He brought several handouts that were distributed to the audience. They are also attached to these minutes.

Mr. Allmer gave a brief summary of his background. After 25 years of service in the military, he retired in 2020. Three months after retirement, he started to work for the COH as an investigator. Shortly after, he started monitoring 311 calls about construction infractions. He is now an inspection supervisor for all kinds of facilities in the city, with six investigators working under him.

There are different rules for residential or commercial units, and how to convert one to the other. He does not deal with neighborhood deed restrictions. Deed restrictions fall within the purview of the COH’s Legal Department.

Mr. Allmer described the type of business that may required (or not) an occupancy permit if run from a residential property. Business such as an office can be run without an occupancy permit. However, if the business engages in sales, pick up of items, or invoicing, it requires a live-work permit (a form of restricted occupancy permit). A live-work permit does not alter the classification of the property, i.e., it is still classified as residential. He described some egregious violations such as a residence with car parts strewn about the property yard. The occupant was a mechanic claiming he only fixed his car, but there were 16 cars on the property.

Problems with items left on yards fall under the purview of the Department of Neighborhoods and should be reported to 311. He is trying to make the 311 portal more user-friendly.

After an application for an occupancy permit is received, an inspector visits the premises with the goal of identifying any repairs or changes that are needed according to COH codes. The permit is awarded only after repairs and changes are verified to have been completed.

Lane Llewellyn asked him to described the steps in reporting a business that lacks an occupancy permit. Mr. Allmer responded to first report it to 311. Following the report, an inspector is called to perform an inspection of the premises. He gave the example of a hair salon in WAMM that did not meet plumbing requirements and needed upgrades were not done, so it was closed. This was a case in WAMM.

Mr. Allmer further explained that the owner of the business can be other than the owner of the property. A renter can run a business from the premise, but he or she is required to have an affidavit from the owner to the effect that he has agreed to allow a business in his property. This affidavit is one of the most falsified documents he sees.

Deborah Quintero asked about requirements for a business such as a laundromat run from a garage (a case in WAMM). There are several vans dropping and picking up laundry from multiple short-term rentals (STRs), frequently blocking the sidewalks and taking multiple parking spaces along the street. Mr. Allmer responded that any issues outside the property is the purview of the Department of Neighborhoods. Mr. Allmer is familiar with this business, which has applied for a permit and has to submit a commercial parking plan. Lane thanked and praised Mr. Allmer for the good work.

Deborah Quintero explained that when she called the COH early-on, it seemed to be already too late as this business was already operating (without a permit). She said that bags of trash are frequently left on the sidewalk. Mr. Allmer said that the garbage is a Department of Neighborhoods issue. Deborah Quintero continued saying that much of the activity occurs in the morning, so that when an inspector comes, the operators of the laundromat have already left. Mr. Allmer responded that she should ask for the inspector to come first thing in the morning. He also advice to report the incidents through the 311 mobile app.

Lane Llewellyn asked about the wedding venue in WAMM. The owner has submitted plans for compliance with the permit requirements and a conversion of the property to commercial use. The owner already has 3 citations for not addressing issues that had to be fixed. Phillip Nicumm indicated that he was not bothered by this venue. Mr. Allmer explained a comparable situation with a STR 2 doors from his home in Cypress, which he managed to get closed. Persistence is what works in this type of situation.

Mr. Allmer warned that there is a new ordinance being written for recovery homes (specifically for addicts) to promote integration in neighborhoods. They will be allowed in residences and they are considered to be family homes. The owner(s) of the property is not eligible to operate the recovery home and cannot be certified to run it. A renter can run the recovery home. There are no specific requirements as they are considered residential, except the property has to be a single-family home.

Mary Alice Carpenter asked about an apartment complex near her home that has several occupants in recovery. There were a lot of issues with the property, including some of the apartments clearly had too many occupants. Mr. Allmer indicated that this falls within "his turf" and that the property is an unregulated facility.

Chris Sokol-White indicated his concern about problem properties in WAMM seem to be setting a precedent and it could be difficult to stop others in the future.

Deborah Quintero indicated that the occupancy per bedroom is 3 adults. Mr. Allmer responded that this is not correct. The requirement is 200 sq. ft, per person, independent of the number of bedrooms. For recovery homes it will be no more than 3

people per residence. He also told the audience that regulation of STRs by the COH is in the works. He has a list of all STRs in the city. Lane asked why the city does not apply the COH 1998 Hotel Ordinance. Mr. Allmer responded that he was not familiar with it. Maria Morandi will email him a copy.

Maria Morandi asked whether there is a requirement of community input during the process of permitting. Mr. Allmer responded that there is not.

3. New Business

Lane Llewellyn presented other business, including:

- Reminded the audience about National Night Out at the Southern Yankee.
- Explained that the rubbish, construction debris, and homeless camping problems at the Lovett Triangle were reported several times but the issues persist because there is no address to give 311 when calling to report and the COH has responded but could not locate the site. Deborah Quintero is working with District C and other COH departments to get a location identifier.
- STRs within the COH and WAMM continue to cause nothing but headaches for residential homeowners. Krista Comer and she (Lane) spent 3 hours waiting for their turn to speak at City Hall for 2 minutes each. WAMM made it clear that regulating STRs is the law, not politics. She advice to read the newsletter for the details.
- Elections for the new slate of WAMM Board officers is scheduled for the December quarterly meeting, and to send nominations or step up to volunteer. See details in the newsletter.
- She distributed Greek Festival tickets to all attendees that requested them.

Lane asked for any additional new business. Hearing none, she called the meeting adjourned at 7:50pm.