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Les Amis de Marigny

Helping to make Marigny a better place to live, work and play

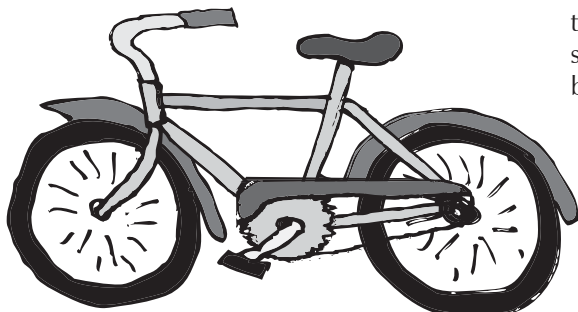
Easy, Rider (A Plagiarized Title)

By Donna Wakeman

In the almost six years since my return to New Orleans, the number of bicycles I see on the streets as I ride my own bike to work has increased substantially. The level, if bumpy, roads make riding easy and the more clement winters make the riding season long. But what I have also witnessed is the seeming unfamiliarity with road rules, mostly on the part of the cyclists.

Bicycles are considered vehicles just like cars, and have the same rules and responsibilities. I know many bike riders think they are safer riding so they can see on-coming traffic, but the reverse is true. Unfortunately many cyclists seem to break these laws almost as frequently as car drivers run red lights. Like many car drivers on one-way streets, I tend to only look in the direction of legal on-coming traffic. As a result, I have almost collided with another cyclist merrily riding against traffic and running a stop sign. I've also had many a scary incident when being passed by a car, only to have a fellow cyclist pedaling right at me going against traffic.

The following was recently published in the Times-Picayune. It is worthwhile for all of us to become familiar with these basic rules of the road involving bicycles.



Road Rules

For Bicycle Riders

- Ride with traffic: This puts the bike in an expected and visible location. This is particularly important on one-way streets, where drivers do not anticipate oncoming vehicles from the opposite direction.
- Obey traffic signals and signs: Come to a complete stop for red lights and stop signs. Yes, it's a momentum killer, but rules of the road apply.
- Raise your visibility: The law requires front and rear lights on a bicycle for nighttime riding, and hand signals for all turns, all the time.

For Automobile Drivers

- 3 feet to pass: Louisiana law mandates that you put at least 3 feet between your vehicle and a bicycle while passing.
- No tailgating: Bicycles are entitled to the same courtesy as any other vehicle on the road. Do not follow too closely behind one.
- Wait before you turn: Don't pass a bicyclist just before making a right-hand turn; it is too easy to misjudge the speed of a bicycle. Instead, slow down and let the bicyclist pass before turning.



Have you seen the new banners "hanging out" on Elysian Fields Avenue?



NO MORE BLIGHT

By Alexandre Vialou

Last month some good news came out of City Hall. On October 26, the City of New Orleans launched a \$52.3 million “soft-second mortgage” program that will provide financial assistance to families of modest means who qualify for first mortgages and have not owned a home for at least three years. Only families making less than the local median income (\$48,980 for a family of four) are eligible.

The program is part of a \$75 million statewide Hurricane Katrina recovery program, funded with money from a failed rental property rehabilitation program in 2008. The program will target areas north of the North Rampart Street and Saint Claude Avenue corridor and is expected to cover approximately 1,000 families. Almost one third of all our blighted properties are located along the North Rampart and St. Claude corridor.

While this program will not directly impact the Faubourg Marigny, it has the potential to strengthen home-ownership in our adjacent neighborhoods of the 7th ward and Faubourg Saint Roch. As suggested by the U.S. Census data, a significant number of residents who moved or stayed in the downtown neighborhoods after the 1950s were financially constrained which prevented them from maintaining their properties and the local economy surrounding them.

This “soft second mortgage” is an instrument that will allow some of these modest income families to remain where they have lived for generations. As the Faubourg Saint Roch and the 7th Ward neighborhoods set themselves on a path of inclusive economic growth, this is good news for our neighborhood.

It’s a Blast!

An email blast that is. FMIA sends out an email blast every Friday with important news about what’s happening in the Faubourg Marigny and surrounding area — news that you need to know!

To sign up for this service email news@foubourgmarigny.org to be put on the list.

IMPORTANT NOTE: You may need to change your email settings to allow news@faubourgmarignny as an approved sender.

ADVERTISING

Commercial Advertising

Rates Monthly

	Full Page	1/2 Page	1/4 Page	Business Card
FMIA Member	\$110	\$53	\$40	\$23
Non-Member	\$113	\$58	\$43	\$28

Full Year Rates (per month)

	Full Page	1/2 Page	1/4 Page	Business Card
FMIA Member	\$90	\$45	\$30	\$18
Non-Member	\$93	\$48	\$33	\$21

Ads should be photo ready, or in jpg, tif or pdf format.

All advertising must be received by the 15th of each month for publication in the next month’s issue. For information regarding advertising, contact the business manager at ads@faubourgmarigny.org.

Classifieds Now Available

The newsletter is now accepting classified ads. Personals, however, are not being accepted. Contact ads@faubourgmarigny.org. Classified Rates: \$5.00 per each 25 words.

About the Newsletter

Les Amis de Marigny is the newsletter of the Faubourg Marigny Improvement Association, a 501(c) non-profit, all-volunteer organization committed to the preservation of the unique architectural and cultural heritage of our historic district, and to improving the quality of life in our diverse community. Contents, editorials and opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the official views of the FMIA, its Board or its members. The FMIA does not warrant the legality of any business advertised in its newsletter. Contents of *Les Amis de Marigny* are copyrighted. Permission to reprint any of the newsletter, including photographs and original artwork, must be obtained from the editor and/or byline columnist.

Manuscripts, photographs and articles dealing with topics of interest to the Marigny neighborhood are encouraged. The editor reserves the right to reject submissions including editorial and advertising content. Submissions must be received by the 7th of the month for inclusion in the next month’s issue. Send contributions to: FMIA Newsletter, 2401 Burgundy St., Box 10, NOLA 70117 or editor@faubourgmarigny.org.

The newsletter is published each month except August and January. Back issues are available online at www.faubourgmarigny.org.



President's Report

By Alexandre Vialou

Bonjour,

I hope this newsletter finds you well. Since its beginnings in 1972, the FMIA found itself working on important issues that have been time-consuming for many of its volunteers. This year was no exception. Among the most significant projects that reached our association was the CVS proposal to demolish instead of re-use historic structures on St. Claude Avenue. The proposal also included a parking area that would have been adjacent to many neighbors' properties. The FMIA and a well-organized group of neighbors led by local artist Skylar Fein opposed the plan. Ultimately our councilmember Kristin Gisleson Palmer sided with us and opposed the proposal as well.

Healing Center

But 2011 was not an unwelcoming year for businesses in our neighborhood. Quite the contrary, we saw the opening of the Healing Center at 2372 Saint Claude Avenue. This community-oriented space hosts a myriad of small business in the heart of our business corridor: private and group classes, affordable healing arts, a small bookstore, a credit union, a restaurant, a performance space, and of course the New Orleans Food Cooperative which anyone can join as a member-owner.

St. Claude Activity

Certainly, developments on St. Claude have preceded the arrival of the Healing Center. In fact St. Claude Avenue has a growing number of small businesses tied to the artistic and cultural communities that thrive in our neighborhood. It is now common on the second Saturday of each month to see galleries such as Byrdie's, the Barrister Gallery and the UNO gallery full of visitors. Theater and performance places such as the Shadowbox Theater or the Theatre Marigny are all scheduling quality pieces and acts. Several music venues are also bringing to us many excellent musical programs: the Hi-Ho Lounge and Sweet Lorraine's which recently hosted our 'Meet the Neighbor' events, the All-Ways Lounge, and Siberia which recently opened and is one of the best places in town to catch alternative heavy metal and rock bands. The Healing Center nonetheless has the capacity to become an anchor to this vibrant creative community.

The renovation of the many blighted and abandoned buildings that constituted the Healing Center has spurred the renovation of many surrounding blighted properties. Yet with each new business in a mixed commercial/ residential neighborhood, special consideration needs to be taken into account to respect existing and future residents of the surrounding homes.

In 2011, the FMIA was asked to be a sponsor of a Community Benefit Agreement between Café Istanbul

— located on the North Rampart and St. Roch corner of the Healing Center — and neighbors. An agreement was recently reached which respects both the business and residents.

Riverfront and Parking

In 2012 other sections of our neighborhood are also expected to start metamorphosing. On the riverside area of the rectangle, we are anxious to see the progress of the Riverfront Park. With it, a whole new set of interests may arise in this area that is comprised of many unused large warehouses. More apartments and new businesses will certainly bring some urgency for us to start thinking pro-actively on how parking needs to be addressed. Should we start demanding that the parking lot owned by the French Market Corporation on Elysian Fields and Decatur be expanded vertically to accommodate new visitors? Already, every single space on the empty lots of Elysian Fields Avenue is filled with cars during special events with owners charging as much as \$20 per car.

Short Term Rentals

In the Triangle, the FMIA has been notified of an increase in the number of Short Term Rentals (which also affects the Rectangle). While the FMIA is supportive of the existing Bed and Breakfast regulations, an excessive and unregulated number of Short Term Rentals does not seem to fit our neighborhood fabric. For example, too many housing units transformed into such rentals between the R Bar and Frenchmen Street would lead to even more rentals that cater to tourists visiting and wanting to have a good time in our neighborhood. This would in turn lead to even fewer full-time residents in the Triangle and hurt local commerce that targets locals. The FMIA is working on enforcing existing laws so that a balance can be found.

These are some of the issues happening in the neighborhood that I wanted to share with you as we close this year. Please feel free to email me directly at president@faubourgmarigny.org and tell us what you think.

In preparation for a new year where we will celebrate our association's 40-year anniversary, *je vous souhaite un très Joyeux Noel, Kwanzaa, Hanukkah; et une très bonne année 2012!*

Orchids & Onions

ORCHIDS



Orchids to Crawford Malone of 2613 Royal Street for all of his efforts renovating his beautiful house, and all those in the Faubourg who work to improve their homes and the neighborhood.



Homer A. Plessy Community School Statement

The Homer A. Plessy Community School has been a grass roots community project from day one. We have never come from a position of great power or wealth, but we have always come with an impressive base of community support. Neighbors in the Marigny, St. Roch, Bywater and St. Claude neighborhoods have been staying abreast of the developments at the Colton building ever since Katrina in anticipation of the chance to create a school there that would serve the diversity of children who live in our neighborhoods.

Over the years, our vision for Colton has taken shape in the form of the Homer A. Plessy Community School — a school that develops students who achieve academically, think critically and act responsibly as citizens.

We have, from the beginning, been tied to the Colton building not because it was slated for renovation (indeed, it wasn't when we first started our work), but because it is in our back yards. And we knew from the start that this building represented a unique opportunity to build a high-performing school for the downtown neighborhoods that reflected the socio-economic and racial diversity that our children live in every day.

Look back at the UNOP neighborhood plans from 2007 where citizen voices memorialized their hopes for the future of our neighborhood, including educational options, and you find many of the core values of our school announced.

We want a school whose hallways don't look so different from our sidewalks. Our idea of equity involves offering kids from different backgrounds the chance to go to school together, just as they already play in our parks. We believe this would not only benefit our kids, but our entire city as well.

This is why it made so much sense when our work brought us to the Plessy and Ferguson Foundation. We knew right away that Homer Plessy would be a perfect namesake for our school. His arrest took place just blocks from the Colton building. We knew we wanted not just to honor his legacy, but work to carry it forward, by building a school with a committee of citizens that would take one more step towards ending "Separate but Equal" once and for all.

We do not believe there is one educational model that works for every child. We applaud KIPP's work with the four schools they are already operating in our neighborhoods. How controversial should it really



be to suggest that one school in the downtown neighborhoods be built on a different model? How controversial should it really be to have a neighborhood school built on the premise of academic excellence, diversity, citizenship and critical thinking?

If choice really is at the heart of the education reform movement, then the community has spoken: the Homer A. Plessy Community School belongs in the Colton building.

We thank Mr. White for recognizing the importance of our school, but we disagree with his recommendation for Colton. We firmly, but respectfully, request that Homer A. Plessy Community School be assigned to Colton and welcome the opportunity

to propose alternative, reasonable suggestions for the assignment of school programs to downtown buildings. Surely, given all of the resources dedicated to renovation and construction of schools in New Orleans, all programs can be accommodated.

Plessy applied for a charter through the OPSB as a Type 2 charter. The charters written about in the T-P were applying to be Type 5 charters under the RSD. Since the RSD schools are state-run schools, the first round of review is under BESE. BESE and OPSB both defer their recommendations to the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) which assembles a panel of its members from a national pool to review charter applicants' proposals.

NACSA sets a high bar and charters with the most resources tend to do the best under their rigorous criteria which is likely why the majority of the first-time applicants, such as the community groups mentioned in the T-P article, didn't make it through the process.

The OPSB will reveal recommendation of Plessy's NACSA review live during their committee meeting on the 15th and no sooner.

This begs the question, what will we do if NACSA recommends to deny our application? We plan to regroup and try again next year while starting up a desperately needed early childhood center in our neighborhood for children under 5 for the 2012-2013 school year. We plan to discuss possible partnerships with Abeona House which, like our charter, shares a deep commitment to socioeconomic and ethnic diversity while providing unsurpassed quality services.

We will not give up as the need for a type of school that meets the needs of all families in the neighborhoods becomes more acute as time passes.



IMPROVEMENT

ASSOCIATION

Happ'ns in the 'Hood

Lights/Camera

Frenchmen Street businesses are working on a crime camera initiative with some success. Crime cameras have dropped in price and can provide extended length monitoring, saved directly to a server. The initiative has been working with CCTV Wholesalers.

Colton School

A new concern has been raised on this project – the size of the school. Due to the impact of new federal regulations establishing minimum space-per-child rules for schools, McDonough 15 in the French Quarter will be closed. The footprint of Colton has increased substantially and the student population is now anticipated to reach 850. That could mean as many as 40-60 buses every morning. Parking for teachers and staff is virtually non-existent. The FMIA will attempt to work with RSD staff to mitigate this impact.

CVS

Due to pressure from neighbors, the FMIA and Councilperson Palmer, CVS has withdrawn its proposal for the corner of Franklin and St. Claude. Rumor has it that they (CVS) are now looking at more appropriate designs for a store at that location, rather than the suburban, one-design-fits-all proposal first submitted.

New Banners

Check out the new banners on Elysian Fields! The beautiful new banners, designed, produced and erected by neighborhood firm Helios, are proudly waiving up and down the avenue. Kudos to former board member Ken Caron, who was responsible for all the coordination on this project, as he was for the original banner project.

Hash House Harriers

The New Orleans Hash House Harriers, who sponsored the Red Dress Run from Washington Square Park the past two years, have made a large donation to the FMIA. We are very grateful to them for the donation, and plan to use the money towards further improvements in the park. Care and improvements of the park have been a special project for the FMIA since the storm.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DECEMBER

37th Annual Candlelight Caroling at Washington Square Park

December 11

Meet the Neighbors

December 13, 6:30 – 8:30 pm, Buffa's Lounge, 1001 Esplanade Ave

General Meeting

There is no General meeting in December

JANUARY 21012

Board Meeting

January 4, 7 pm, Who Dat Café, 2401 Burgundy Street

Meet the Neighbors

January 9, 6:30 – 8:30 pm, TBD

General Meeting

January 16, 6:30 Pot Luck, 7:15 Meeting St. Paul Lutheran Church, 2624 Burgundy Street

NONPAC MEETINGS

5th District — 2nd Wednesday,

7 pm, 901 Bartholomew Street

8th District — 2nd Thursday

5:30 pm, 1001 Toulouse Street

GREEN MARKETS

French Market

Wednesdays & Saturdays, 10 am - 5 pm

Sankofa Market

Saturdays, 10 am - 2 pm
Holy Angels Complex, 3500 St. Claude Avenue
(at the corner of Gallier Street and St Claude Avenue)

FREE FUN

St Claude Arts District

2nd Saturday: see www.scadnola.com

Chess Lessons

Thursdays, 5 pm, Alvar Library, 913 Alvar Street

If you have an event for the calendar please send it to Donna Wakeman at editor@faubourgmarigny.org



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Wrong Way Driving

November 23, 2011

Board of Directors, FMIA

As I was driving home I came to the intersection of St. Roch and N. Rampart and found a driver attempting to make an illegal right turn into my path on N. Rampart — the SUV had already turned partially onto N. Rampart and had to stop for me. N. Rampart is one way towards Bywater and the driver was trying to get into the Healing Center parking lot, with its driveway on N. Rampart. I stopped my car, rolled down my window and motioned to the driver and told her that the street was a one-way and that she had to go the other way. The driver (with a passenger), gave me double fistful middle finger salutes, then turned into my path anyway, nearly hitting my car. As she passed within inches of me, she rolled down her window and screamed "BITCH" at me, flipped me off again and continued into the Healing Center parking lot.

I went into the Food Co-op and asked see the manager immediately. Eventually, the manager, a woman, came out and asked what I needed and I told her one of their patrons had accosted me and cursed me on the street, that I was just trying to get home and didn't deserve for one of their patrons to treat me so rudely. I had her follow me to the parking lot where this woman's SUV was parked and a man was talking to her and her passenger through the window. The woman in the car started screaming at me again, saying that I was not the police and I had no right to try to block her from the parking lot. I again emphasized she was going down the street the wrong way, that she was breaking the law and that I lived in the neighborhood and had similar near accidents because people were doing this all the time to me and other neighbors. The driver left.

The man talking to the driver turned out to be one of the owners of Café Istanbul. He identified the driver as his wife. I had a discussion with him and the store manager. She said she had "no idea this was a problem" and that "this was the first time someone's complained about people coming up the street the wrong way." She said that they "obviously needed better signage." I suggested they move the drive way from N. Rampart to St. Roch. The Café Istanbul owner said that it's the way it is because the neighbors wanted it that way. As we were talking, another car entered the parking lot after making an illegal right turn onto N. Rampart and I pointed it out to both of them. They brushed it off saying there was no one coming. They asked me if I was going stand on the street all day blocking traffic. At that point I figured there would be no satisfactory resolution, no apology, no attempt to make this right.

If you've ever had a driver nearly hit you making an illegal turn onto N. Rampart to get into the parking lot or if you've ever just witnessed a patron making this wrong turn, please, PLEASE complain to the Food Co-op manager. She said she'd never heard any complaints.

I am sharing my experience with you all for your benefit and consideration. This same near accident has happened to me before but just not with the ugliness and abuse from the driver. This was the last straw. If members and leadership of FMIA, City Counsel representatives or anyone can do ANYTHING to change this entitlement it would bring peace and order back to our neighborhood. I am outraged and have to speak out this time. Great way to start Thanksgiving holiday.

Best and sincerely,
Carol Gniady

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Jim O'Neil



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Responses to this letter see page 7>>>



November 28, 2011
Board of Directors, FMIA

Mark Huber, manager of the Healing Center, called to let me know that the city will send a traffic engineer to the place. And the city will also look at the possibility of adding an entrance to the parking lot on St. Roch. According to Mark Huber this would remove three spaces that exist in the current configuration of the lot. Apparently the Healing Center has already fewer off-street parking spaces than what is needed for this zoning. The HC proposal is being allowed to go forward because the place was a business before.

As I see it, it may:

- (+) reduce slightly the number of people parking in the area and thus reduce slightly night-goer traffic that would go to Café Istanbul by car.
- (-) worsen the situation if people insist in going further into North Rampart to go to the larger parking lot.

Alexandre Vialou, President, FMIA

November 28, 2011
Secretary, FMIA

I am in receipt of your email regarding the traffic issues; specifically motorist making illegal turns at N. Rampart and St. Claude. I have received complaints in the past concerning this particular intersection and have forwarded the traffic complaint to the Fifth District's Traffic Unit for review and action.

On Saturday (11-26-11), I personally went to the area to survey the issue and discovered that taking traffic enforcement action may help reduce and correct the behavior of violators who are attempting to park in the open-air parking lot at the aforesaid intersection and commit the violation as a matter of convenience, thus causing a hazard as explained in your email. However, this may not be a permanent fix and over time more violations may resurface as new motorists frequenting the area may attempt to take the same advantage of this illegal turn as a matter convenience to traverse into the parking area.

As I look for a more sustainable outcome to correct and prevent this behavior the Fifth District's Traffic officers will monitor this area and continue to take action to resolve issue.

Additionally, the Fifth District's Quality of Life officer, Matthew Alsina, will be contacting the appropriate city agencies (i.e. Traffic Engineer, Building Permits, etc.) to determine if the parking area located on that corner needs to be re-evaluated for ingress/egress purposes and/or if more signage is required. The dynamics of the parking lot's entrance/exit point maybe the primary reason for the illegal turning violations and correcting this problem may solve illegal turning situation at the intersection creating a sustainable resolution for this issue.

Thank you for your support.

Commander Christopher Goodly
Fifth Police District

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- For comments — email info@faubourgmarigny.org

Supporting your neighborhood is a great way to help make the Marigny a great place to live, work and play.

NONPAC Meetings

5th District Report *By John Luckett*

The Meeting opened at 7 pm with Commander Goodly reporting that an arrest in the District has lowered the incidents of armed robberies in the area. But he said that the District's biggest problem is homicides, with 47 this year versus 38 last year. There has been a 22% reduction in violent crimes this year; and the 5th District made 10 gun arrests last month, resulting in 20 guns off the street.

The Quality of Life Officer made his report on the issues since the last meeting.

Commander Goodly stressed that the most important thing citizens can do is call in suspicious activity; if it an emergency to 911, otherwise to 821-2222. The police cannot react if they do not know what is happening.

8th District Report

With the 8th District assuming responsibility for the majority of the Marigny, it is more urgent than ever that someone volunteer to attend and report on its NONPAC meetings. Anyone interested please contact editor@faubourgmarigny.org.



Keep the Streetcar On Track

By Vann Joines

On Tuesday, November 8, Councilwoman Kristin Palmer held a public meeting with Executive Director of the RTA, Justin Augustine, and Vice President of AECOM, Max Nassar (who is performing the design and engineering work for the streetcar extension from Canal St. to Elysian Fields on Rampart and St Claude Streets), concerning the City of New Orleans' \$90 million Tiger 3 Grant Application to connect the St Charles and Loyola Ave Streetcar lines along Howard Ave, and to extend the streetcar line on St Claude from Elysian Fields all the way to Poland Ave.

After bidding out the Loyola Ave Streetcar line, the Construction cost for building the streetcar track was much higher than anticipated. The \$75 million bond deal that the RTA secured to build the streetcar on Rampart and St. Claude Streets will only be enough to build the streetcar to Elysian Fields. As such, it is vital that the City's Tiger 3 Grant application gets accepted by the Federal Department of Transportation.

City and federal officials have been working closely with the Federal Department of Transportation to overcome the issue of crossing the Norfolk Southern train tracks on Press. In fact, the RTA took a group of DOT representatives from Washington DC on an RTA bus to the Press Street tracks. The individuals from DOT were appalled by lack of safety measures and the way in which pedestrian and vehicular traffic is blocked for unspecified periods of time along a major state highway!

The Tiger 3 is a very competitive grant process, and because hundreds of cities throughout the United States will be applying for a portion of this \$527 million grant, it is imperative that we contact our Washington Legislators and tell them how important this project is to our community.

Please contact the following individuals and tell them how much running a Streetcar on St Claude Ave., all the way to Poland Ave, would mean to our community.

Senator Mary Landrieu

DC Office: (202) 224-5824

New Orleans Office: (504) 589-2427

www.landrieu.senate.gov/about/contact.cfm

Senator David Vitter

DC Office: (202) 224-4623

Baton Rouge Office: (225) 383-0331

www.vitter.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Contact.ContactForm

Congressman Cedric Richmond

DC Office: (202) 225-6636

New Orleans Office: (504) 288-3777

www.richmond.house.gov/contact-me/email-me

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Meet the Neighbors



The November Meet the Neighbors at the **Hi-Ho Lounge** on St. Claude was a delightful surprise.

The guest performer, Patrick Weathers, gave a swinging concert of his original guitar and vocal roots-rock stylings. Members enjoyed the menu of unique Asian food supplied by the adjacent kitchen, and we were pleased to discover the bar was completely smoke-free and well ventilated on that particular night. The manager assured us that they can be smoke-free any night by special request for a party or gathering. Parking was easy, and the funky venue was comfortable and welcoming. Look for other St. Claude Avenue locations in the months to come.

Next Meet the Neighbors:

Tuesday, December 13, 2011
Buffa's Lounge, 1001 Esplanade Avenue
– in the smoke-free back room



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The Rebirth of 718 Mandeville Street

By Arin Clark Adkins

Originally built as the Hope Hook and Ladder Company in the 1870s, the property located at 718 Mandeville Street offered the Marigny and surrounding neighborhoods fire-service subscriptions. Operating much like insurance, the fire department responded in emergencies with little or no additional charge to members of the service. The fire department also responded to non-member neighbors, but with more associated cost.

The original wooden fire station was damaged in the hurricane of 1915, which was said to have knocked down every steeple on every church in the city. Historical New Orleans architect, E. A. Christy designed the fashionable Tudor Revival structure which was rebuilt and completed in 1916.

The Marigny had a new, stylish, horse-drawn fire department ready to provide assistance to the neighborhood. Five brass poles allowed the fire fighters to get down from their upstairs dormitory quickly. Today, vestiges of the horse-drawn days are evident in the rein-rings embedded in the brick walls of what is for the first time beautiful new private office spaces.

The building served as a fire station until 1947 when it was turned over to the New Orleans Recreation Department. The poles were removed and a stage was built in the downstairs central area. From that time through the sixties, the property operated as a community center. Basketball was played and plays were performed. Looking at the outdoor and open interior spaces, one can sense the people who would have spent time there. In 1950s the community center offered neighbors a juke box, poodle skirts and dancing; to those in the 1960s, a pool table, more music and dancing.

During the 1980s, the New Orleans Ballet Association took over and used the space for formal dance training. The upstairs former firemen's dormitory was then lined with



mirrors and bars along the walls for practice. The building was used by NOBA until a few years before Hurricane Katrina. After Katrina the building was left abandoned until Michelle Benoit and Glenn Pitre of Côte Blanche Productions purchased it in 2009.

Michelle and Glenn found the second story still lined with mirrors and bars, along with a hole Katrina left in the roof. Old glass windows and transoms reflected generous natural light that allowed for fern growth.

Michelle and Glenn were familiar with the property as their home and office are located beyond the brick wall at rear of the Mandeville property. By early 2012 their office will have moved through the newly built gate in the wall, to their suite in the new office and creative space.

Filmmakers by trade, Michelle and Glenn have been in the film industry for over thirty years. Both Louisiana natives, they have traveled far afield in their careers. Glenn has a degree from Harvard and Michelle has a degree from the American University in Paris. Having called New Orleans home for many years, after Hurricane Katrina they decided to make New Orleans their primary base and focus their efforts on Louisiana projects.

Beyond the state of extreme disrepair, Michelle and Glenn saw beauty and potential. They were delighted and amazed to realize that outside under the growth and earthen ground, the back patio was actually paved with a concrete floor in good condition.

Their vision is now being realized and brings an exciting new nexus to the neighborhood. Most of the build-out is complete. The transoms are refinished and standing atop similarly beautiful matching doors, ready to retake their places in this historic property. The walls are strong and fresh and the space is calling to be inhabited by voices and people once more.



Continued on page 11

Rebirth of 718 Mandeville continued from page 10

Michelle and Glenn will use a suite of the offices for their film company. The rest of the building is available for professional and creative rental space. There are three private offices upstairs and three downstairs. There is also a beautiful spacious area that opens directly onto Mandeville that would make for excellent retail space.

The upstairs former dormitory/ballet studio will be an open-office with six to eight desks/workstations available for shared office space. This type of central office is a growing trend that offers flexibility and community for those in need of a professional location base. All areas are wired as necessary for everything current and modern. Common indoor and outdoor spaces, conference room and break room are included in all office space rentals.

Michelle and Glenn want the nature of the Marigny evident in this historic and relevant space. They recognize the benefit and natural evolution this property offers residents who will find themselves able to walk and bike to their extraordinary workplace.

To learn more about the Old Firehouse on Mandeville Street, call 504-948-3635, email oldfirehouse@hotmail.com, or visit the website at <https://sites.google.com/site/oldfirehousemandeville>. Visit www.CôteBlanche.com for more information on Marigny residents and business owners Michelle and Glenn, and their many feature films, documentaries and museum projects.

Marigny Green

By Deborah Oppenheim

Dear Santa,

Marigny Green is a volunteer committee of the FMIA that provides information and resources on living green in the Faubourg Marigny and the current focus is on recycling. Marigny Green has many volunteers educating Marigny residents on how to participate in the City's Weekly Curbside Recycling Program.



Thanks to Marigny Green's volunteers and all the residents who are recycling and contributing to our goal of 100% participation in the City's Recycle Program. Marigny Green only has one big wish and that is for all the residents to sign up for recycling.

As you deliver presents, please direct them to the website: www.marignygreen.org for information or tell them to come to Washington Square Park on December 11 during the Walking Tour and Caroling to sign up.



Happy Holidays,
Marigny Green

P.S. Your cookies are in the recyclable container

Paper, Get Your Paper Here!

Or not. Are you interested in saving trees? Don't like filling your recycle bin with this monthly missive? Just plain paper-phobic? The FMIA can help.



Members now have the opportunity to have the newsletter delivered to their **Inbox** or their **Mailbox**. A win-win for everyone! So keep an eye on your Email Inbox as the FMIA newsletter enters the digital age.

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IMPROVEMENT

ASSOCIATION

FMIA General Meeting Minutes November 21, 2011

Type of Meeting: (X) Monthly () Special
Date of Meeting: November 21, 2011
Location of Meeting: St. Paul's Lutheran Church
Meeting Called to Order (Time): 7:15 P.M.

WELCOME / INTRODUCTION

The meeting was called to order by FMIA President Alex Vialou who welcomed all to the meeting.

Alex recapped a great November Meet the Neighbors event which took place at the Hi-Ho Lounge and featured an excellent band . Everyone had a great time and a big thank you goes to the Hi-Ho for hosting the event.

New Faces/Members:

There were no new neighbors/members in attendance at November's meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS / SPEAKERS

- 1) - All members who are not receiving the FMIA e-mail news updates ("blasts") are reminded to sign up with their current addresses in order to get both the newsletters and e-mail blasts.
- 2) The annual rendezvous of the Dearly Departed Society at the St. Louis Cemetery was well attended and provided an entertaining time for both participants and tourists to the cemetery alike. It was a lot of fun and everyone was encouraged to attend next year's event.
- 3) Brooks Young of Sader Power Solar Energy ("Sader") introduced FMIA members to their company's solar products and current projects. Sader is the construction company responsible for installation of the solar components for Brad Pitt's "Make it Right" project in the lower Ninth Ward. This is reportedly the largest concentration of solar powered green houses in the country. The company's goal is not only to make green housing affordable but also to educate and train people in green construction. After performing a free energy analysis on a home (to determine the potential savings, best placement, etc.) Sader will install a solar panel system for no up-front costs. It requires a 15 year maintenance agreement that costs \$75.00 per month (\$68.50/mo. if direct debit). Electricity generated by

the solar panels reduces the electricity consumption from the municipal supplier. If the amount of electricity saved by using the solar panels is greater than \$75 (or \$68.50), the homeowner saves money – and is using clean energy. Sader makes its profit by taking advantage of state and federal tax incentives which the homeowner agrees to give in exchange for the panels, installation costs, and permitting. Sader has already installed at least two systems in the Bywater and many in the lower 9th Ward.

There was some discussion regarding the HDLC's position on solar panels but it appears that long as the positioning of the panels (location/visibility) doesn't violate HDLC regulations installation should be possible.

Tax incentives expire on December 31, 2011, but Sader will honor commitments made before that date. For further information: go to www.Saderpower.com

4) Krewe du Vieux: Joseph Thompson of the Broadmoor Neighborhood Association and Vice-Captain of the Krewe du Vieux announced details of this year's festivities. The site of this year's ball will be at Habitat Restore with activities to be centered on Press St., away from most residential areas. The parade route is as yet undetermined. For non-members, tickets to the ball will be available on Saturdays at the Den of Muses (behind Mardi Gras Zone) where the floats are being constructed. As usual, it promises to be one of the Marigny's most fun events.

5) It was reported and generally agreed that this year's Fringe Fest was an outstanding collection of talent and performances. The impressive array of talent should help convince those who didn't participate this year that next year's Fringe Fest should not be missed.

UPDATES / COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committees:

Security Committee: Neighbor Al Schnur heads this project but was out of town for the general meeting. The focus is on establishing or increasing neighborhood patrols. It is important that the Faubourg Marigny work together with the Faubourg St. Roch on the issue of crime which affects both sides of St. Claude Avenue. There is a new 8th District police sub-station in the New Orleans Healing Center. A monthly meeting at the sub-station with residents of both Marigny and Faubourg St. Roch is planned where ideas for addressing the crime problems of the neighborhood will be discussed.

Blight Committee: Two blighted Marigny properties are going to Sheriff's sale this month. Both 2501 and 2816-18 St. Claude Ave. will be up for sale in the lobby of the Civil District Courthouse located at 421 Loyola Avenue on 12/6/11. President Alex Vialou emphasized the importance of community effort in bringing these properties to sale after years of neglect and the fact that perseverance can make a difference. Renovation of the St. Roch Market is scheduled for this spring. The Faubourg St. Roch neighborhood has been instrumental in the development of the Art Walk, behind the Market and we can all look forward to a general improvement to this part of St. Claude in the near future.

Marigny Green: This committee, chaired by Deborah Oppenheim, addresses issues such as recycling in the Marigny, street lighting, alternative transportation, tree planting, etc. No report this month.

Newsletter: Donna Wakeman has found a new assistant to help with the monthly newsletter. A volunteer to solicit advertisement is still needed. Donna emphasized the need for volunteers and encouraged all members to become involved. All members were encouraged to submit articles or items of interest for the newsletter.

Banners: Ken Caron circulated a copy of the new banner design which should be installed within the next two weeks.

Membership: Gary DeLaumont reminded members that membership fees are due by January 1, 2012.

Continued on page 13

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FMIA General Meeting Minutes November 21, 2011 — *continued*

Washington Square: Walking Tour/Caroling: On December 11, 2011, Christmas caroling will begin at 6:00 p.m. From 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. there will be walking tours, a children’s activity area, and an art market. Volunteers are needed for park preparation and members were encouraged to volunteer for at least one task. A general announcement was made reminding FMIA members that there are too few workers to accomplish the various neighborhood projects. Without additional volunteers, the nine board members cannot perform all the work that needs to be done.

MEMBER DISCUSSION / TOPICS

Topics

- a. **Riverfront Development:** Gene Cizek announced a project that he is working on with Tulane architecture students for future development of the riverfront – for areas which were not included in the original development plans. The focus is the large amount of vacant land along the levee and along Chartres Street, on the periphery of the neighborhoods. These will be mixed use areas and it is a wonderful opportunity for residents’ input on what is wanted and needed in the neighborhood. The challenge will be to successfully blend these projects into the neighborhood. Gene plans to start in Spring 2012 and is looking for neighborhood residents who would be interested in the project to join the group. Interested people should contact Gene Cizek.
- b. **Frenchmen Street:** Jason Patterson reported on a crime camera initiative in the Frenchmen St. district. Jason reported that crime cameras have become relatively inexpensive and now provide extended length monitoring or surveillance, saved directly to a server. Jason worked with Brian LaGarde of CCTV wholesalers and has already had some success in capturing a theft on video. Jason also suggested contacting ProjectNOLA, a non-profit group working with police. The new camera systems offer the possibility of “co-op” camera recordings which can be used by both individuals and police. In addition, access to the video can be granted to others via password.

The server can even be accessed via I-phone. If interested, contact Brian LaGarde at CCTV at 736-9187, ext. 104. or ProjectNola.com.

- c. **Colton School:** Discussion started with the impact of new federal regulations establishing minimum space-per-child rules for schools. (Most schools in New Orleans do not meet the new regulations and McDonough 15 in the French Quarter will be closed.) The footprint of Colton has increased substantially and the student population is now anticipated to reach 850. That could mean as many as 40-60 buses every morning. Parking for teachers and staff is virtually non-existent. A grass roots effort to use the Colton school for a community based school (“Homer Plessy” school) which had widespread local support was dismissed by the RSD. Colton, a KIPP school, ordinarily would be a welcome addition to the neighborhood but input from and impact on the neighbors has been completely ignored. The school district has been unresponsive to neighbors’ concerns.
- d. **CVS:** CVS’s proposal was withdrawn under pressure from Councilperson Palmer who consulted with the neighbors and the FMIA. All recognize the need for development of that stretch of St. Claude which has now become a high crime area. Discussion centered on the desire to have new development replace blighted property yet oppose projects that would be inappropriate in scope, type of business, or architecture. It was suggested that the St. Claude Main street coalition might be helpful in finding a developer. Creative or artistic based business would be a welcome addition. Examples of national chain stores which have modified their standard building designs for historic neighborhoods were cited. Interestingly, CVS is now looking at alternative, more appropriate designs.
- e. **Graffiti** is becoming a bigger problem in the Faubourg Marigny.
- f. **Laura Brenner**, who works for community benefit non-profit “LINC New Orleans” announced a dinner/auction at St. Paul’s church on Saturday, Dec. 3. While St. Paul’s is a private school, 70% of students are on free or reduced lunch plans and many rely on scholarships. Tickets are \$25 for the dinner and donations can be made any time. For more information, contact either Laura Brenner or Chuck Schuler, the program administrator, at St. Paul’s.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.



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FMIA Board Meeting Minutes November 2, 2011

Type of Meeting: Monthly

Date of Meeting: November 2, 2011

Location of Meeting: Café Who Dat

Members Present: Chris Costello, Gretchen Bomboy, Alex Vialou, Donna Wakeman, Miles Swanson, Marshall Gries

Members Absent: Gene Cizek, Jim Farr, Jason Patterson

Guests: Organization:

1) Carrie Altemus, Resident

2) Lisa Suarez, Resident

3) Nick Suarez, Resident

Meeting called to order (time): 7:06 p.m.

By: Alex Vialou

Previous Meeting Minutes: Read? No, distributed by e-mail Approved? Yes

Motion to Approve: Chris Costello Second: Miles Swanson Vote: Unanimous Approval

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

COMMUNITY REQUESTS/PRESENTATIONS

1. CARRIE ALTEMUS (Resident)

Ms. Altemus introduced herself and gave a brief summary of her professional background including a history of home renovation. She currently lives in Austin but has purchased two properties in the Marigny, one on the corner of Dauphine and St. Ferdinand and the other at 2318 Chartres. She owns a vacation rental business in Austin and would like to start a similar business in New Orleans, where demand is strong. She would like a B&B license for her two properties but the present guidelines don't allow it. She questioned New Orleans' traditional B&B model in light of the high demand by people who would like to stay in a home with a full kitchen – more like a full home rental. She would like to see the current rules, which include one kitchen, homestead exemption, etc., less restrictive. Her properties are multi-unit properties and that don't fit the current B&B guidelines. Following a brief discussion on the impact of short-term rental in the Vieux Carré and in general, Ms. Altemus expressed an interest in working with us and the city to make the necessary changes. Because the FMIA is currently reassessing the B&B rules as part of the CZO process, it was deemed premature to make any recommendations.

2. LISA SUAREZ (Resident)

Ms. Suarez requested that the minutes of September 7, 2011, Board Meeting be corrected to reflect that she had been working with councilperson Palmer's assistant to retain the existing mature trees along her property line with the 511 Marigny project. The FMIA had requested that all provisos of the 2005 ordinance be retained, with the exception of changing the parking from 36 to 48 spaces. Councilperson Palmer called Ms. Suarez on Wednesday, August 30 at 4:30 in the afternoon, before the council meeting of the following day, to let her know that the amendment would not include retention of the trees. Ms. Suarez reported that Ms. Palmer told her that she needed to get it off her agenda.

Ms. Suarez is very concerned about several issues related to the development at 511 Marigny. She wanted to know how the FMIA will address the plans submitted by 511 Marigny with respect to the number of cars that will fit in the proposed parking lot. Currently, 48 spaces are required. Ensuing discussion focused on the inadequacy of available space. Further, the developer is considering eliminating 4 of the existing spaces to accommodate bicycle parking. Additionally, there appears to be no handicap parking places which will require even more space. She noted that there will be a meeting with builder Brian Gibbs, 10:00 a.m. Monday, November 7, 2011 and asked if an FMIA officer could attend.

Additional concerns were voiced about how storm runoff from the 511 Marigny, property would be addressed and the potential impact on the surrounding properties. Ms. Suarez also questioned the wood and masonry fence next to 2320 Chartres which, under the current plan, would create a dead end space and a potential hiding place for criminals. She emphasized her enthusiasm about the project but wanted to ensure that the outstanding issues which could negatively affect the neighbors were resolved.

ADMINISTRATION

1. REVIEW/RENEW COMMITTEES:

President Alex Vialou spoke about the need for more volunteers to staff the various Committees. Currently, the lack of involvement and large amount of work make many projects problematic. We will need to concentrate our efforts on

fewer endeavors and consolidate activities where possible. During the following discussion it was suggested that having one overall Event Committee could eliminate several individual committees. It was felt that membership wasn't being adequately recruited for volunteers and the Membership Committee should include a volunteer recruitment component.

Caroling: Caroling will take place December 11. As it stands, daytime events will be scheduled from 10:00 am until 4:00 pm and will include music (Jason), artist booths (Gretchen), a walking tour (Bill Hyland), and an FMIA booth with merchandise. Caroling will start at 6:00 pm, led by the Pfister Sisters. A children's area and refreshments are also planned. Gretchen Bomboy is to circulate a "Task List" for the event and all Board members are to sign up for at least one event activity. Marshall to bring easel to General Meeting with tasks for volunteers to sign up.

Motions Made: None

2. APPROVALS BY E-MAIL:

Minutes of the June 20, 2011, General Meeting and August 11, and September 7, 2011 Board Meetings were approved.

Motion made by: Donna Wakeman; Seconded: Gene Cizek; Votes For: 7
Votes Against: 0

3) PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

President Alex Vialou briefed the Board on the three meetings he attended on behalf of the FMIA. The first meeting was to be with the VCPORA who had wanted to meet to discuss the Governor Nichols wharf plans. Unfortunately, the meeting had to be postponed and the issue is ongoing. Alex also attended a meeting about the new sound ordinance which was attended by various interests, primarily from the Vieux Carré. Alex highlighted the difficulty of enforcement of a sound ordinance, even with training. The dynamics of sound varies greatly from location to location and is affected by many factors including surfaces, angles, muffling influences, and many other variables. The issue is a work-in-progress. There will be a meeting at the Sound Café on Saturday, November, 12, from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. regarding the new ordinance where local musicians will participate in a round-table discussion. Lastly, Alex reported on his meeting with the neighbors and owners of Café Istanbul concerning the Community Benefit Agreement (CBA) where the previous drafts were discussed. Gretchen Bomboy is to attend the November 3, 2011, City Council meeting where the CBA is on the agenda. Although close, there is no final agreement at this time and the FMIA is not inclined to make any further concessions.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT:

Treasurer Chris Costello gave his report and distributed: 1) the profit and loss statement, 2) balance sheet, and 3) deposit and check detail sheet. The reports showed both October and year-to-date figures. He explained the inter-connection of the three reports and their importance in keeping an accurate picture of FMIA's finances. There was discussion about posting all reports on the FMIA website. Chris also anticipates drafting a standard expense form to be used when purchases are made for the FMIA. He suggested eliminating the credit card machine we currently use as it is seldom used, relatively expensive, and there are more reasonable alternatives on the market. He volunteered to look into the options. Chris reminded all board members that the list of authorized signatories needs to be updated to reflect the new officers. Gretchen Bomboy is to write the appropriate letter to the Whitney Bank.

The Board authorized payments of four checks: \$250 donation to GoodChildren parade for Fringe Fest, \$23.91 to Donna Wakeman for Newsletter related expenses, \$64.00 to Gretchen Bomboy for FMIA business related expenses, and \$531.29 to Documart for newsletter printing expenses.

Motions Made: 1) Motion to pay above checks. Made by: Chris Costello

Seconded: Donna Wakeman Votes For: Unanimously Approved

Action to be Taken: Chris to issue checks.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

a) **Newsletter:** General discussion about the high costs of printing and mailing the newsletter and the feasibility of making the newsletter solely online. A complete transition to electronic format may not be possible at this time but economies could be made for certain subscribers.

Orchids/Onions: Orchids to Crawford Malone of 2613 Royal Street for all of his efforts renovating his beautiful house, and all those in the Faubourg who work to improve their homes and the neighborhood.

b) **Marigny Green:** President Alex Vialou forwarded a message from Deborah Oppenheimer encouraging all those who volunteered to canvass their blocks for recycling to return their clipboards with the names of those who signed up for the service. Deborah also asks that we post some positive information about the Marigny Green project which has been the target of negative attacks on some local blogs.

c) **Blight:** Update on the Friendly Touch Bar. The new manager is looking to renew the bar's liquor license after it lapsed. The new manager would like to bring the bar up to code though some neighbors are skeptical because of the owner's previous track record. Neighbors are not against the bar reopening



IMPROVEMENT

ASSOCIATION

FMIA Board Meeting Minutes November 2, 2011 — *continued*

per se but they want it to be up to code and in compliance with HDLC and other City regulations.

d) **Security:** Alex Vialou presented for Al Schnur. Al continues to investigate various options for additional patrols in the Marigny. Al will be trying to coordinate with the Faubourg St. Roch whose residents would also benefit from increased patrols. The desirability of a special taxing district was discussed and all expressed their gratitude for Al's efforts.

OLD BUSINESS

PROJECTS:

a) **Parking Permits:** Nothing new since last meeting.

b) **Café Istanbul CBA:** There was a general review of the ongoing negotiation process. The difference between arbitration vs. legal action and the advantages/disadvantages of each was discussed. Only one resident adamantly opposed the extra "floating" late night, which was left in the agreement. All were reminded that renegotiation could take place after one year. Alex's most recent draft, which keeps the possibility of legal action if violations become excessive, was discussed and approved. There are few outstanding issues. It was decided that if no further movement on the remaining issues is possible, the FMIA would suggest that both sides meet with Councilmember Palmer. The issue is on the City Council agenda for November 3, 2011. Gretchen Bomboy to attend.

CANO/Sts. Peter & Paul: Gene Cizek not present to give update.

Colton School: A public relations representative from the construction group that is rebuilding the school would like to meet with the FMIA. It appears that they are not interested in meeting with the neighbors. Questions were raised about the apparent expansion of the original plan, i.e., the footprint of the building has grown. A consensus was reached regarding any meetings. The construction company should arrange any meetings and neighbors are not to be excluded.

Sound Ordinance: Discussed above.

Replacement Banners: Donna Wakeman reported on behalf of Ken Caron who could not be present. Two proposals for replacement banners were presented: the first was a single banner like those currently installed; the second was a double design with a banner on both sides of the pole. The double banner design was cost prohibitive and it was decided to go forward with the single banner replacement.

Motions Made: Approve single banner design for replacement banners.

Made by: Chris Costello; Seconded: Alex Vialou; Votes For: Unanimous; Votes Against: None

Bicycle Safety PSA (what to do with the \$500): Miles Swanson reported on the option of using the money to purchase a good quality high-end bicycle rack to be placed by Washington Park, but all members balked at the \$350 price tag. Miles suggested the possibility of obtaining headlamps, tail lights, reflectors, etc. Alex proposed coordinating efforts with the owners of the bicycle tours that meet at the park, with the idea of sharing the expense. Miles will investigate the possibility of a lower cost bike rack and address any placement (right-of-way) issues.

Lloyd Sensat Donations: Donations total \$650.

NEW BUSINESS

PROJECTS:

Caroling: Discussed above.

B & B Text Changes: Request by Carrie Alteman and Lisa Fury was considered. Following a general discussion it was agreed that a systemic change of the current B & B regulations to a system more akin to a vacation-rental model would not be supported by the neighborhood.

Master Plan CZO: The differences between land use (what land can be used for in general) and zoning ordinances (specific regulations, e.g., height) was discussed. A letter from the FMIA requesting a correction of the zoning back to the original HMR-2 status has been received by the CPC. Otherwise, there is nothing new to report.

Events: Meet the Neighbors. Organizers requested to reschedule the Meet the Neighbors night due to a conflict with a meeting re: USPS. Based on prior experience with changing the MTN dates it was decided to leave the date as scheduled. Changing the date creates confusion and there will always be people who will not be able to attend due to conflicts.

Unresolved Issues: Not discussed.

Meeting Adjourned (Time): 9:52 p.m.

Membership Form

Membership Status New Renewal

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