

Fells Prospect, Inc.

Minutes of Meeting

September 8, 2010; 7:30 pm

Introduction: Victor Corbin, President, called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.  
Thanks to Cristo Rey for hosting us. This will be our new home from now on.

Butchers Hill Flea Market this Saturday. We will have two tables; raising money for alley gating and garden club.

Elections for Fells Prospect officers at the November meeting: email Victor if interested in running.

Concern about crime: will address later. Lack of communication between mayor, police, and community. Are working on it.

Committee Reports and Announcements

*(Due to the number of speakers, we will not have committee reports other than from the Crime Committee and Chubbies Bar)*

*Announcements will be made at the end of the meeting*

Treasurer's Report - *none*

Land Use Committee – *none*

Social Committee – *none*

Crime Committee – New Business

Traffic/ Parking Committee – *none*

Beautification Committee – *none*

Any other reports or announcements

· Raffle for \$25 at Arcos Restaurant (\$1.00 per chance)

Old Business

· Chubbies – Transfer of Ownership

New Owner will sign agreement with the Community. Fells Prospect has Hired Community Law Center to take our case.

New Business

· Crime Wave

Presentations

Alana Ridge ran the political forum.

Bill Ferguson – Running for office, State Senate 46<sup>th</sup> District

(15 mins w Q&A)—Honored to be here. Community is focus of his campaign. Wants to focus on people who do something. Used Cristo Rey as example of efforts to change and use opportunities. He has earned the *Baltimore Sun*'s endorsement. Gave background. Came to Baltimore as part of Teach for America. Taught in West Baltimore. Conditions were very bad: desks, textbooks, climate, and physical conditions. Is appalled by disparity of educational opportunities in the City. (More on background of

teaching experience. Creating a culture of excellence.) Asking residents to invest in their neighborhoods.

Q: Philosophy about spending?

A: Government and private sector each have roles.

Q: Appreciate dedication to teaching. Where do you stand on auditing public school system? What about mismanagement of funds?

A: Important question. Need to spend money well. He has worked with Dr. Alonzo and sees his priorities. Alonzo has decentralized the system and gave schools more power and more accountability. Good results. Auditing is working.

Q: What are the two things you want to accomplish at the state level that you can't achieve at the City level?

A: The City is very reliant on the state regarding what happens in the schools. Three areas of impact: What is a highly effective teacher? With No Child Left Behind, achievement was all quantitative based. Facilities funding: Need way to explain need and get severe needs met. Many schools have no air conditioning. Reaffirming Maryland charter law. Now is very weak, especially on charter schools and their funding. Must hold charter schools more accountable.

Delegate Pete Hammen – Running for re-election, Delegate 46<sup>th</sup> District (15 mins w Q&A)—Intro: Asked delegate: How be good one? A: read bills; argue points of law; be effective in district. Father told him to be sure to return phone calls and keep contacts. He chairs Fells Point Task Force, active in Friends of Patterson Park, working with watershed association on trash collection from Inner Harbor, brings schoolchildren to netting area after a storm so they can see what is in the Harbor. Serves on School Improvement Association for disadvantaged schools. Supports healthy neighborhood concept; can't spend lots of money on area that has no chance of improvement. Choose areas with promise of growth. Focus on bringing back middle class to area; then can lower taxes and keep services. Must fill vacant houses. Annapolis: he was youngest chairman of a committee. In past four years, wrote legislation for Medicaid to prevent money being spent on uninsured adults who use emergency care because they don't have health insurance. Worked to eliminate doughnut hole for seniors on Medicare without using money from general fund. Sees need to join substance abuse benefits and mental health benefits to prevent continuing crime. Has worked for people who were bankrupted by high medical bills. Q: He will be around after the meeting for questions, since he used his 15 minutes for remarks.

George Della - Running for re-election, State Senate 46<sup>th</sup> District (15 mins w Q&A)—He has been in the Senate since 1982. Served on Senate finance. Medical issues: Has listened to CEOs of Care First/Blue Shield when they want to go public. Realized that they are in it for profit. He deals with utility issues. Voted for deregulation. Wants to keep focus on “little person” rather than the “suits” at the conference table. Much of job is dealing with the thousands of pieces of legislation that come into the Senate. He has done this for 28 years and has listened to people and their problems. In favor of split tax rate to tax vacant houses in the City. The 46<sup>th</sup> District is large, but this area is blessed; doesn't have problems that other areas have. Difficult process of crafting legislation that protects neighborhoods and helps residents. Upset that Catholic school system is closing schools; supports charter schools. Proud of Patterson Park Charter School. Challenging times ahead. We need someone with experience, with working relationships with officials, City, and (somewhat) with the Mayor. He wants to continue to do the job he has held and completed for so long.

Patricia Jessamy – Running for re-election, States Attorney for Baltimore City (15 mins w Q&A) She is States Attorney, and is running for re-election. Background: Has practiced law in four states. Has

been civil rights attorney, private attorney, assistant states attorney. Has tried all levels of cases and is experienced trial lawyer. Wanted to make sure MD was sending the right level of criminals to prison. Moved focus from low-level criminals to higher-level ones. Targeted gun criminals and established program to train other states to target gun crime. Looked at what could happen when cases could not be prosecuted. Problem of witness intimidation. Reacted to the “Stop Snitching” video and used it to leverage legislation to deal with getting witnesses to stay with cases. Ability to keep witnesses improved. Also looking at defendants on probation; how to control. Have taken in many violent criminals on parole who are in violation of restrictions: 1,800 criminals removed from the streets. At Central Booking, keep violent criminals on no-bail level to prevent them from being on the street. Population has declined by 9%, but crime has declined by 54%. You are more likely to be taken off the street for violent crime in Baltimore than anywhere else in MD. Also working on nuisance abatement to target drug houses and business that harbor crime. Working with communities and using liaisons to get involvement in getting criminals off the streets. Community service keeps offenders from repeating crimes in the areas of service. Trying to address the underlying causes of crime: juvenile services, mental health, drug addiction. Running a program focusing on prostitutes to divert these people from crime. Baltimore has the lowest homicide rate in 30 years. Highest conviction rate in the state.

Q: Is your office working on investigating rape reporting?

A: She has sex offense unit of eight officers. Team includes medical and police personnel to audit past cases to determine if charges should be made.

Q: You have stated that there should be tension between States Attorney’s office and police. How does this square with public safety?

A: Police make arrests on probable cause. Prosecution must rely on reliable evidence. Cannot present cases to juries if witnesses are suspect. What can we do? Ask detective to find more evidence. Follow leads, find other witnesses, and use community. States Attorney cannot rubber stamp all that comes from police; must make an independent judgment. Conviction rates can be misleading; must look at number of people who actually go to prison. Last year, 7,000 convictions, but cases can be pled down for time served. Zack Sowers’ case: argued to keep young man off street; attorney in court argued against. She does not take responsibility for what was decided. She can’t control the outcome.

Jason Filippou – Running for office, Delegate 46<sup>th</sup> District (15 mins w Q&A)—He is political outsider. Has not campaigned before. But has lots of community organization experience. Born and raised in Highlandtown. Worked in Business and Development in Maryland. Greektown CDC asked him to work for it. Developed passion for helping the neighborhood. COP walks, transit-oriented project for Red Line, did all aspects of community development. As delegate, wants to help wider area. Founded mentoring program for youth. Wants to address problem properties; takes too long to solve problems at these properties; wants faster response rate. Not just residences; businesses can ruin a neighborhood, too. Incentives for small businesses. Wants to address crime in neighborhoods and promote Main Street development. (He also wants to reduce taxes.) Need more police; City officers get paid 15% less than those in county. He is tune with local issues. Goes to zoning hearings, etc.

Q: What about keeping middle class in neighborhoods? What would you do to keep consumers?

A: His job in Greektown CDC was to do just that. Worked with Athena Square, but taxes are too high. Lower real estate taxes, and more residents will come.

Comment: Praise for suggesting lowering taxes.

Q: People want to more to Baltimore because it is cheaper than DC, but transportation prohibits the move. Where do you stand?

A: Has worked on studies for Red Line and sees how many residents it can attract.

Bill Romani: Running for House of Delegates, 46<sup>th</sup> District. Has been physical therapist, teacher, taught at U of Md Medical School. Was bothered by people who couldn't pay for medical help. Started clinic to serve those people and held hours in evenings. Founded breast cancer screening program. Expanded to outreach and translator programs to serve women who needed screening. Active in education: works with Franklin Park Boys and Girls Club that provides after school programs and activities. For four years was president of Catholic Community Schools, worked to provide parents with what they want for their children. Has worked with neighborhoods; is on board of One House At a Time, an organization trying to reclaim vacant houses in neighborhoods that can improve. Has been chairman of Federal Hill Main Street. This year, several businesses have failed because the financial atmosphere is tough. Loans are difficult. Federal Hill Main Street trying to get money into small businesses. Small loans from non-profits can help. Federal government is offering money to small businesses, but their definition of small is much larger than the ones in our neighborhoods. Want to help neighborhoods keep residents through schools, businesses, parks, and programs. Need to find funds to keep these resources open.

Announcement: Transfer of liquor license of Chubbies. New owner will sign agreement with Fells Prospect. Can protest transfer as individual, but Fells Prospect will not protest. Feel that agreement is binding enough.

Raffle taken: Winner of gift certificate announced.

Announcement: Fells Prospect Garden Club: Project. Wall on Boston Street across from Captain James. Will paint wall as gateway for neighborhood. Look for first weekend in October.

Adjourn at 9:18 pm