



**UNIQUE
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AFFORDABLE**

University Heights Collaborative
5 W. Northrup Place
Buffalo, NY 14214
www.ourheights.org

October 13, 2015

UHC General Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order at 7:10PM

1. Comptroller of Buffalo – Mark Schroeder

- Fourth year in the position
- Visiting every neighborhood in Buffalo
- Learning from every community
- Has worked with Buffalo public students
- Considers neighborhood association phenomenal
- Comes from private sector and the NYS Assembly
- Didn't vote for Sheldon Silver
- Increased number of accountants from one to nine
- The City of Buffalo is required to have a Popular Annual Financial Report
- Buffalo is feeling good about downtown, but the progress is focused on the wealthy
- The neighborhood's asking – what about us?
- Why is it that every town has a chamber of commerce?
- Who is supposed to implement neighborhood ideas?
- We need a Buffalo Chamber of Commerce for UH concerns
- We need to consider a Buffalo Chamber of Commerce for Eastern, Western, and Northern parts of city.
- There needs to be a comprehensive plan
- Grant, Elmwood, Amherst, Hertle are the only ones alive
- Neighborhoods deserve help
- Chamber of Commerce is essential to neighborhood growth
- Councilmembers and Mayor are in charge of funding
- When in Erie County Legislation, would take staff person and have them run the Chamber, became the Chair of the Chamber
- Elected officials should put a person in charge of this
- Chamber functions now without money being given to it
 - o Jim R.:
 - 1.2 million dollars was spent. How do we know how councilman is spending money?
- Open Book Buffalo: published information on tax # is being spent. This will be launching in 2 weeks
- Transparency in the website
- Influenced by Project Slumlord

- 4 years ago: standards were put in place: councilmembers must use
 - o Fred B.:
 - Could we use information to have a say in councilmember's action?
- Only standards with funding can put in place, but councilmembers have discretion (must be 501(c)3)
- Has withheld funding before
- Mission Statement: Everyone is having an influence

2. Closing Bars @ 2 am in Erie County

- Karen Brady:
 - o From the Westside
 - o Buffalo State students pre-party and get drunk in neighborhood at 12 am
 - o If students leave earlier, they would wake up citizens less
- Peter Savage:
 - o Closure idea floated
 - o Believes public should be heard
 - o Needs to hear from public, not just those at community meetings
 - o No session since news conference
 - o Mixed reviews from colleagues
 - o Went to school in Brockport, in and out of bars earlier
 - o Some police have been saying that there might be emptying all at once instead of trickling
 - o No staff member is there to help with Chamber of Commerce
 - o Local bar owner looking for community meeting
 - o Few people speaking publically
 - o Timeframe: the next session is in a week (22nd)
 - o Resolution will probably not be rushed (still needs to get feedback)
 - o Bars want a level playing field with no exceptions
 - o There needs to be facts and figures dealing with history of the law
 - o New law would require 14 day holding period with pawn shops in Erie County
 - o Also looking at drug issues in Erie County –often drug offenders are suburban kids

3. Bussing in the Heights

- Mickey Vertino:
 - o There is a working relationship with UB and the UHC concerning the bussing issue
 - o How do we manage these crowds?
- Dan Ryan:
 - o There will be a conference call with the bussing committee and Dennis Black on Monday October 18
 - o The court cases are moving quickly through student court
 - o 1 expulsion so far
 - o Violations will continue to be addressed
 - o School of Education and Social Work will be moving to South Campus
 - o Net increase of grad students in neighborhood – no time table yet

- Getting stats from February to compare bus usage with high frequency months
- Aaron Krolkowski:
 - There needs to be more data besides February to get a clear picture – should be a year’s worth of data
- Dan Ryan:
 - February will be a baseline
 - Will look into increasing data set

4. Housing Inspections Outcomes:

- Dan Ryan:
 - Conditions are better than 4 years ago
 - Most units did have violations but a lot work is being done
 - There was an illegal residence found
 - 47 Merrimac has infrastructure issues
 - Still having stonewall – though most students let inspectors in
 - Rental Registry Law allows for the entering of housing for inspection
 - There are both good and bad landlords in the Heights
 - Dan Ryan went with Chief Menza to visit the houses where there had been arrests
 - Nine houses were visited, each with the same property owner
 - UB needs to educate students on housing options
 - We want caring students in housing
 - Within two weeks there will be an announcement concerning mortgage funds and money available for professors moving in the neighborhood - \$7500 used for home improvement needs

5. Rails to Trails:

- There is lighting every 50 feet
- Cars have been illegally driving in park
- When trail is complete, auto traffic will be blocked
- Expected to be finished this season

6. Farmer’s Market:

- University Heights Farmer’s Market is going into hiatus
- Leftover tools and resources will be going to Tool Library
- The UHC webpage will continue to have information about the market
- Email UHC if you are interested in starting it again

7. Capen Garden Walk:

- Requesting funding
- Christine Brooks Memorial fund still intending to distribute gardener grants

8. Tool Library:

- November 7th is Re-Tree the District. Learn more at www.ourheights.org/retree
- 150 trees will be planted in Heights district
- Will be working with UB Academies and Honors students for planting
- 50 graffiti markings have been removed and tags are being mapped

9. CoLab:

- Valu Home Center Winterization class had about 20 participants
- PUSH Green Winterization class and Lead Paint Prevention and Awareness class in October
- Looking for any preference in class options and suggestions on how to increase student numbers
- Housing Opportunities Made Equal (H.O.M.E) coming on November 18th at 6 pm to speak about tenant and landlord rights

10. Tyler Street Community Garden:

- Workday scheduled for October 27th
- Build to Grow Workshop coming up

11. University Heights Arts Association

- Seed exchange happening at end of October

12. Main Street Business Association:

- Mickey Vertino:
 - o Working on community Impact Team
 - o Working on cleaning up Main Street
 - o Currently getting proposal together for team
 - o Eddie's Chop House caught on fire but is opening again after a brief closing

13. UDCDA Programs

- Darren Cotton:
 - o Bailey Avenue construction at Uptown Theater should be done by December
 - o Parkside Candies getting rehabbed thanks to grant from Better Buffalo Fund
 - o Working with consultant and Bailey Avenue Business Association to apply for next round of Better Buffalo Funds for Bailey

14. Other business:

- Jim Rozanski:
 - o College Laundry Shoppe owner is being celebrated for continuing to run business as a 100 year old person
 - o Felminia Rotundo honored and profiled by WGRZ

- Mickey Vertino:
 - o On October 15, 2015 there will be a public meeting at 995 Kensington Avenue by the Councilman so there can be feedback on the Business District

15. Dash Storage Development:

- Community member:
 - o There was not enough transparency with the community and Dash did not meet with the community enough.
 - o There are many questions left unanswered.
 - o Who was involved in the original variance? The community was shut out.
 - o No one is listening and we are disenfranchised.
- Mickey Vertino:
 - o What could Mr. Dash do?
 - o Mr. Dash is ready to make up with community and is offering community development project funding
 - o There will be no outside storage at the facility site
 - o \$15,000 may be offered to UHC to use for neighborhood
 - o There will be no sponsorship with money donation
 - o Look at funding ideas – Dash is open to them
 - o No cars will be stored at site
 - o We need to continue to our best at building better relationships in the Heights neighborhood

Please visit our website <http://www.ourheights.org/> for updates on agendas and minutes from previous meetings and well as news and events from the community.

The next general UHC meeting will be Tuesday, November 10, 2015 at 7:00pm