

Minutes of the Meeting  
PINE HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION  
November 17, 2011

**ATTENDEES:** Todd Hunsinger, Maryanne Schrank, John Hammer, Virginia Hammer, Harris Sarraf, Leah Golby, Gene Solan, Doug Bullock, M. Karen Noonan, Jonathan Duda, BAR, Dave Mankad, Tom Gebhardt, Noelle Kinsch, Mary Dugan Wilcox, Marissa Hirschbaum, Mike Donnelly, Steven Jones, Micaela Townsend, Joe Acquaviva, Karen Mink, J V Hammen, Nan Thomas

President Todd Hunsinger called the meeting to order at 7 p.m., welcomed everyone, especially newcomers, and went around the table for introductions.

**PROGRAM-**

**MICAELA TOWNSEND OF THE D.A.'S OFFICE INTRODUCED STEPHEN**, a student at U Albany. Stephen is completing community service a requirement of the court as a result of allowing loud noise at a party at his home in the Pine Hills and allegedly serving alcohol to minors (he denies this). He has performed some hours of service and described to us his survey of 5 neighbors where he asked each 3 open ended questions re their opinion of their quality of life as a result of living among students. Most believed the noise levels, disturbances, etc. had decreased recently and all but one indicated they would not leave Albany given the opportunity. We questioned Stephen about the effect this experience had on him. He concluded he learned from it and would not want to repeat it.

**AGENDA**

- October minutes approved
- Membership Committee: John Hammer – currently 117 paid members
- Finance Committee: John Hammer, Treasurer – Balance on Hand - \$2,567.02
- Communications Committee: Jonathan Duda, Chair; Next issue is about ready for printer. Jonathan asked for “fillers”. Printer is charging \$120 for 1,000 copies. Approved.
- Public Safety-Neighborhood Engagement Unit Officer Joe Acquaviva reported 37 criminal mischief (minor) incidents, most from cars; this total is fewer than last year; he also noted lots of traffic violations on Madison Av.; the NEU has found a new office in V.I.. Todd Hunsinger, Chair of Public Safety Committee reported on 10/25 public forum on Community Policing: among the results of a survey answered by Pine Hills residents 62% believe relations with APD have improved in 2011, 38% believe APD are serving their needs, 57% are aware of more police presence in the area since 1/11 and 48% believe the APD is trying to provide the service we need. Part II of the survey asked for the 3 main concerns of residents of the neighborhood. Pine Hills neighbors’ chief concerns were: (1) abandoned buildings; (2) speeding cars; and [tied for](3) drugs, loitering, garbage strewn about, noise and public urination. Other city neighborhoods reflected concerns in different orders, according to Todd.
- Zoning & Code Enforcement- Ric Chesser, Chair: Not present;
- CANA reps: Virginia Hammer, one of the PHNA’s representatives to the group, pointed out that EVERYONE is always welcome at the monthly CANA meetings, held at the main branch of the ALBANY PUBLIC LIBRARY, on the 1<sup>st</sup> [Wednesday](#) at 6:30 p.m.

**OLD BUSINESS**

- LaSalle School Beautification Day- in response to a request for help, Todd put them in touch with U Albany and the Court system and 16 volunteers participated. Todd read a letter of appreciation from Bill Wolfe of LaSalle.
- Fall Cleanup: Thanks to Evan Rontzoklis who stepped up to coordinate this event. It was wildly successful with over 200 volunteers, many from U Albany
- Board positions continue to be open-if anyone is interested in serving on board, on a committee or as an area representative, please contact Todd.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- Annual Tree Lighting – December 15 – at Division 1 – will replace December meeting. Maryanne Schrank volunteered to work on the lights.
- LaSalle School Christmas Food Drive- many brought food items to meeting but the drive will be ongoing through 12/18. Many of the students are from lower socio-economic homes; last year LaSalle School provided over 100 families’ breakfast and main meal for Christmas. Group voted to donate \$50 Price Chopper gift card to our Pine Hills neighbor.
- We discussed the matter of 472 Western Ave, the former rectory of St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church. The church wants to demolish the property since it is in total disrepair and prohibitive to keep up. They would let it “sit” for now and perhaps build a parking lot in the future. However, the property is on the historic register. Susan Holland of Historic Albany, St. Andrew’s, and others are trying to broker a deal trying to broker a deal in which the property would be restored and then rented but everything is very preliminary.
- Ideas for future meeting programs requested – contact Todd.

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD-**

- Congratulations to Noelle Kinsch on election to Albany County Legislature;
- Tom Gebhardt, [Director of Personal Safety & Off-Campus Affairs](#) - at U Albany- reported [that he and the other colleges’ representatives receive](#) a report weekly from the APD detailing arrests of persons [\(as well as victims of crimes\) between 17 and 26 years of age in beats 12, 14, 15 and 16](#). Since the semester began [\(mid-August\)](#) there have been 255 arrests of which 37% or 94 were U Albany students. Most offenses are- quality of life issues. The university is dealing with them thus: a letter to the parents, a meeting with the -student, (at some of which the parents are present). [Sanctions by UAlbany](#) will range from warning to suspension [or dismissal](#), according to the seriousness of the offense. [UAlbany is also keeping](#) a data base so it will become clear if 2nd offenses occur. Tom also noted that e-

mails have gone out to all [UAlbany](#) off-campus students reminding them of the upcoming [Thanksgiving Recess](#) and [the potential for an increase in burglaries](#) to keep apartments secure, arrange for mail and newspapers not to pile up, as well as the [link to the APD website about their "Vacation Check Program" \(APD giving extra attention to these vacant apartments\)](#). Students need to fill out [a form \(available on the APD website\)](#) to give police their contact information in order to have their apartments on the watch list and notify police if they return early. This cooperative effort between U Albany and the APD is having the desired effect: [the APD has been getting fewer reports of burglaries](#)

- Doug Bullock: 556 Washington Av. received only one bid but the bidder was not in a position to properly remediate the pollution; County funds have been transferred from Bank of America to M&T; there will be a hearing about the 2% tax cap on property taxes 11/29 at 7 p.m.; the nursing home will be built.
- Leah Golby: Albany Common Council will vote on the city budget Monday, 11/21/2011; Leah also mentioned having just come from a meeting with the St. Rose journalism students ([thepinehillsblog@gmail.com](mailto:thepinehillsblog@gmail.com)) who are looking for interesting neighborhood stories to write, especially about neighborhood "characters".
- Some student senators from U Albany, Marissa Hirschbaum, Mike Donnelly, and Greg Albert introduced themselves and indicated they hope to become an integrated part of the neighborhood and the association.
- Virginia announced the [HISTORIC ALBANY FOUNDATION'S 8TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY HOUSE TOUR. Tickets Now on Sale!](#) December 11-, [2011 Sunday 12-4pm.](#)

[This year's tour promises to be bigger and better than ever with never-before-seen venues, from row houses, to colonial revivals, to condo conversions, and a "new" historic home built in the 50's. A unique architect-designed former warehouse is just one of the highlights at this must see event. All proceeds benefit HAF's programs and technical services. So, don't wait. Get your tickets now! For additional details and for online ticket purchase, visit HAF's website at \[www.historic-albany.org\]\(http://www.historic-albany.org\)](#)

[Tickets: Presale thru Wednesday, Dec. 7th: \\$19 for HAF members \\$24 for general public](#)

[Thursday, Dec. 8th thru day of tour, Sunday, Dec. 11th: \\$24 for HAF members \\$29 for general public. Presale ticket locations: Albany Heritage Area Visitors Center, Quackenbush Square, Clinton Ave. & Broadway. Capital Wine, corner of Lark & State Streets. Historic Albany Foundation \(only location for credit cards\). 89 Lexington Ave.](#)

[Online: \[www.historic-albany.org\]\(http://www.historic-albany.org\) and for more information.](#)

[All ticket pick-ups will be on day of tour, Sunday, December 11, 2011 from 11 AM to 3 PM at Opalka Gallery, 140 New Scotland Avenue \(Sage Campus\).](#)

[Questions? Call Genny Faist at 518-465-0876 ext. 10 or \[gfaist@historic-albany.org\]\(mailto:gfaist@historic-albany.org\)](#)

**ADJOURNMENT** – 8:55 P.M.

Next Meeting: Thursday, January 19, 2012, Hanner Cultural Center

Respectfully submitted

Maryanne Schrank  
Secretary