



Helderberg Neighborhood Association Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 21, 2023
Sage College

Attendees:

- Violetta De Rosa (HNA Chair)
- Dannielle Carr (HNA Interim Treasurer)
- Julie Ruttan
- Shira Rosenhaft
- Jen Viggiani (HNA Secretary)
- Ann Kutter
- Anne McDonnell
- Mary Ann Awad
- Steve Abrookin
- Keith Irish
- Dan O'Connell
- Eva Geraghty
- Amanda Dyess
- Dash Chrisner
- Ellis Morgan
- Teresa Casey
- Amy Whitman
- Police Officer Leonard Gaspar, Interim Neighborhood Engagement Officer
- Naomi Clark, City of Albany
- Folake Oyedokun, Neighborhood Specialist, City of Albany
- Sergio Adams (City of Albany Ward 7 Common Council Member)
- Lynne Lekakis (District 8 Albany County Legislator)

Board & Neighborhood Introductions. Violetta De Rosa welcomed everyone and led introductions around the room.

Interim Neighborhood Engagement Officer Presentation: Police Officer Leonard Gaspar, City of Albany Police Department gave a recap and overview of the neighborhood crime status according to the City of Albany Police Department.

City of Albany Neighborhood Services Presentation: Naomi Clark and Folake Oyedokun, Neighborhood Specialists, gave an overview of the department and its programs and services available to communities throughout the city. The Neighborhood Specialists will be hosting open office hours at the public libraries throughout Albany. They are available to help residents, and to help with community cleanups or park cleanups.

A resident asked about CDTA bus stops and the need for winter shoveling, and this will be brought to CDTA's attention.

Residents can always call 434-CITY.

Violetta DeRosa noted that the Post Office is coming back thanks to advocacy from HNA, advocacy to Congressman Paul Tonko, and due to working collaboratively with other neighborhood associations. She offered a great big thank you to Hilary Papineau for her leadership as the former HNA President, and current Vice President.

Summer advocacy by HNA included trying to save 412 New Scotland Avenue from being demolished, as the neighborhood association recognizes the need for housing in the city that is currently in an affordable housing crisis. HNA led a petition, letter writing campaign, and testified at the City Planning Board meeting in July.

HNA is also advocating for a full time police beat officer, and will be submitting a letter to the Mayor and Chief of Police.

Violetta DeRosa led a recap of the Summer Events conducted by HNA.

The Helderberg Neighborhood Yard Sale was held Saturday, June 10. To participate in the yard sale, you needed to become a member or pay \$10 to be listed on the yard sale map/list. HNA placed an ad in the newspaper, and promoted the event, which is for self-guided yard sales held by individuals at their homes. The yard sale was a great incentive for a few more new members to join HNA.

Movie Night: Shira Rosenhaft reported on the HNA Movie Night held Friday, June 23 at the Sage College great lawn, off of New Scotland Avenue, in partnership with Love Albany Christ Church. There was a small but great crowd. There was a new screen, a bounce house, lawn games, and good fun outdoors, amidst overcast skies. HNA contributed \$550 for the movie licensing and screening, a significant investment for the neighborhood association.

HNA Membership: If you haven't yet become a member of HNA, please consider doing so, or please renew your membership.

Picnic: The HNA Picnic was held Tuesday, August 9, 2023 at Woodlawn Park, in partnership with the Albany Police Department, who grilled for the "block party" type of event. HNA had a neighborhood band play music at the picnic, thanks to Julie Ruttan. We're thinking of returning to Sage College or maybe a potluck type of picnic, and welcome ideas for reimagining the neighborhood picnic. Anyone interested in the neighborhood picnic could form a committee to lead the way.

Violetta DeRosa highlighted that HNA has a **new website** for the public to visit.

HNA is also considering a membership increase from \$5 to \$10. This will be announced in December.

Dannielle Carr, Interim Treasurer, gave a brief financial report, stating that HNA has about \$2,000 currently. She is working on combining accounts to streamline HNA financial operations.

Sergio Adams gave a city council report, highlighting the City Council's and Capitalize Albany's small business grants for up to \$25,000. He also noted the "Love Your Block" grants are available that could be a resource for HNA and other neighborhood associations.

Lynne Lekakis gave a county legislator report, highlighting the Mental Health Office Partnership with the City and CARES for staff to go out in the field and meet people where they are, for a program valued at \$1.8 million.

Amy Whitman, ACPAC, reported that a Cadet Program is available for youth ages 18 to 20.

Motion to adjourn was made by Julie Ruttan. Seconded by Ann Kutter. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.