

East Forest Park Civic Association Minutes for April 12, 2006 Meeting

Attendance: Darlene and Dick Acchione, Rich Allen, Bernard Balise, Steve Berian, Kirsten Childs, David Choquette, Charlie Contant, James J. Ferrera, Jacque Forsman, Jeffrey Galarneau, Linda Gallagher, Jeanie March, Mary Martin, Bob O'Herron, David Panagore, Donald Pellerin, Nick Pietriniro, Angelo J. Puppolo Jr., Joan Reilly, Nancy Ritz, Frank Ryan, Ashley Schofield, Ellen Walmer, and David Wells

Charlie Contant, President, administered the meeting.

Special Guests

Charlie Contant introduced the three special guests:

- Angelo Puppolo – Springfield City Council and running for Massachusetts State House of Representatives
- Dave Panagore – Springfield Finance Control Board, Chief Development Officer
- Rich Allen – City of Springfield Office of Tax Assessment

Treasurer's Report

No Treasurer's report was given due to time. During the March 15th meeting, Elaine Wright reported that the EFPCA had \$2141.42 in the general fund.

General Business & Committee Reports

Mary Martin provided a report on Earth Day plans. Earth Day will be held on Saturday, April 29th. Volunteers should meet at Nathan Bill Park at 9:00am. Lunch will be provided by the Earth Day committee. While Nathan Bill is our priority, we will also send volunteers to General Edwards Bridge, Murray Park, and other suggested locations.

No action had been taken to contact Bay State Gas regarding the triangle between Allen and Sumner streets. Steve Barion volunteered to write the letter. It was requested that Al Chwalek, and Dave Panagore be carbon copied on the letter..

New Business and Volunteer Opportunities

Nancy Ritz with the Parent-Teacher Organization at Dryden Memorial School invited the members to Family Fun Night on Wednesday, April 26th at 6:00 at Memorial school. The theme of Family Fun Night is math skills and bully prevention. This event is in conjunction with Step-Up Springfield. Members are encouraged to attend whether they have children or not.

A new complaint was raised about the AutoZone store on Island Pond Road. The trash barrels have been filled to the brim. It was suggested that a letter be drafted to the location, but the Association decided to speak to the manager of the store first. Charlie Contant volunteered to make contact with the AutoZone manager.

Special Guest Presentations

Dave Panagore, Chief Development Officer for the Springfield Control Board, visited EFPCA to explain his vision for Springfield. Mr. Panagore's role is to be an "honest broker" of advice, and to provide a new perspective on city problems. As a member of the Control Board staff, Mr. Panagore coordinates between different departments within the Springfield civic

government. He takes a results-driven approach to solving problems, and wants to replicate his successes with the Chelsea receivership in the late 1990s and his work with the Urban Land Institute.

Mr. Panagore's philosophy is that healthy neighborhoods make a healthy city. In Springfield, that means that civic organizations like EFPCA contribute to a stronger future. He hopes to enlist our organization and others to help Springfield regain its former stature.

In the Q & A portion, Mr. Panagore was urged to help settle the school teacher's contract and fielded questions about property demolitions, and in particular, properties on Walnut Street.

Rich Allen, representing the Springfield Assessors Office, came to discuss the Springfield property tax bills. The fourth quarter tax bills were sent out and residents no longer have the opportunity to defer payments.

Mr. Allen also discussed the methods that his office takes to assess property values using models of current property market activity

There are also opportunities for tax relief. Mr. Allen suggested that it was possible to dispute valuation, as well as applications for personal exemptions. The most common personal exemptions were for veterans, widows, and homeowners over seventy years old. Forms for these exemptions are at

http://www.springfieldcityhall.com/COS/Services/dept_assessor.htm.

Submitted by David Wells