

**Buckingham Lake Neighborhood Association (BLNA)
Community Meeting
Sunday April 10, 2016**

Meeting Location: Bethany Reformed Church, 760 New Scotland Avenue, Albany, NY

The following BLNA Board of Directors were in attendance

- Dan Sleasman President, Laura Hopper Vice President, Margie Sheehan Secretary, Scott Jarzombek Treasurer, Shannon Lavigne

There were +/- 65 members of the community in attendance.

The meeting was called to order by Dan Sleasman (DS) at 4:12 p.m.

DS welcomed those in attendance, introduced the Board of Directors, made an introductory statement about the formation of the BLNA as a new option/different choice in neighborhood associations that will endeavor to help residents concerned about issues in the most positive way possible and thanked those in attendance for completing the survey.

The following questions/concerns/issues were raised and responses provided by DS:

1. What is the area boundary?
 - a. DS: Western Ave., S. Manning Blvd., New Scotland Ave., Krumkill Rd.
2. Is the BLNA incorporated?
 - a. DS: No.
3. Does the BLNA function like other neighborhood associations?
 - a. DS: Yes the BLNA will function like other NA in having an open membership, regular meetings and a goal is to become a member of the Council of Albany Neighborhood Associations CANA.
4. What are the top issues BLNA can address?
 - a. DS: public safety, traffic safety, zoning and code enforcement.
5. The City has been taking down trees in the neighborhood with no apparent plan or communication with residents. Can the BLNA address this?
 - a. DS: Yes we can work to improve communication.
6. Can we get our streets repaired on Cortland and Euclid? There are lots of pot holes and sewer issues with no help from the City in over a year.
 - a. DS: We will look into it.
7. Can we get more signage to stop speeding and help with traffic safety?
 - a. DS: The BLNA will work to address this as it is a major issue that affects all residents. Traffic Volume on New Scotland Avenue has tripled during the last 10 years. The increased volume and speed of traffic along with little to no enforcement is a huge problem.
 - b. DS introduced Officer Jim Brooks to talk about enforcement and challenges in a City the size of Albany. Officer Brooks spoke about the recent stop sign on Buckingham Drive as a positive change and the need for another stop sign as well as possibly speed bumps. Officer Brooks also encouraged residents to call him with concerns and stated that he regularly sends out advisories that residents can read about issues being brought to light and addressed.

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8. Could we get a bike lane and sidewalks on Berkshire Drive heading to the Buckingham Lake playground?
 - a. DS: Yes the BLNA will work to address this.
9. Street lights are out what is the best way to address this with the City? There are lights out on Rafts Way, Tampa from Krumkill to Greenway. We have been directed to call National Grid and they have not been helpful.
 - a. DS: Yes the BLNA will work to address this.
10. The Former President of the Pine Hills Neighborhood Association stated that the BLNA will be a very helpful organization for the residents of the neighborhood once Dan Sleasman builds a solid relationship with the City on behalf of the residents.
11. DS encouraged those in attendance to join the BLNA as members and emphasized the need for email addresses as email will be the primary channel for communicating between the BLNA and its members
12. Is New Scotland Avenue between South Manning and Euclid a one lane or two lane road? Many residents have been trying to get an answer to this from the City for over two years. Can this be determined and that road marked properly for motorists?
 - a. DS: Yes the BLNA will work to address this.
13. The new stop sign on Buckingham Drive has made it difficult for the people who live on Lenox Avenue. How will the BLNA work to solve complicated issues that affect many residents in different ways?
 - a. DS: stated that the BLNA community meetings are the forum for discussion on complicated issues and we will work hard to come to a consensus.
14. It is dangerous for pedestrians in many parts of the neighborhood and it needs to be addressed.
 - a. DS: Pedestrian safety is an issue throughout the neighborhood area that we will work to address.
15. Can BLNA reach out to Albany Medical Center, St. Peter's Hospital and other large employers to ask them to talk with their employees about the need to slow down while driving through neighborhoods/drive in a pedestrian-friendly way?
 - a. DS: Yes the idea of engaging AMC and others on this topic is on our radar screen.
 - b. DS asked Rachel McEneny to provide details on an idea that is on the table. Rachel stated that she has proposed a "Slow Down Albany" campaign idea modeled after the "Slow Down Irvington" program which raises awareness about the importance of driving slowly and responsibly through the City. Rachel said the idea is to pilot the program in the BLNA area and if successful roll it out city-wide.
16. Problems on most streets start on New Scotland Avenue. The new stop sign on Buckingham Drive is great, but drivers on New Scotland Avenue need to be slowed down and directed into correct lanes before they get to Buckingham Drive.
 - a. DS: Agreed.
17. DS encouraged residents to use the website www.seeclickfix.com as a starting point for reporting issues to the City of Albany.

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18. Can you call the Department of Transportation to look at the infrastructure and see what can be done?
19. Can we help to pressure the large non-profit organizations such as the hospitals to do payments in lieu of taxes?
20. Could the City establish a staggered egress for employees leaving work daily at the hospitals and other businesses?
21. What do recreation and communication mean on the survey?
 - a. DS: stated that recreation means access to recreation in the neighborhood and communication refers to communication from the City.
22. Can we have an update on Bethany Church/Family Promise and their mission to help the homeless?
 - a. DS introduced Pastor Peggy from the Bethany Reformed Church who provided an update on the relationship between BRC and Family Promise and the recent lawsuit brought by Joe Sullivan which contests the zoning decision to allow this use by Family Promise.
 - b. DS: By a show of hands how many people in the room support the activities of Family Promise at BRC? Almost everyone in the room raised their hands.
 - c. DS: By a show of hands how many people in the room want to see the BLNA write a letter of support to Family Promise regarding their activities at BRC? Almost everyone in the room raised their hands.
23. Can information with the City of Albany be updated so that BLNA is referenced instead of Buckingham Pond Crestwood/Joe Sullivan.
 - a. DS: The City of Albany is aware of the formation of the BLNA as an alternative to the Buckingham Pond Crestwood Neighborhood Association. We ask for a little bit of patience while the BLNA gets off the ground and becomes a member of CANA. At that time we will work to update information sources that BLNA is the representative for residents in this area.
24. Former Assemblyman Jack McEneny asked BLNA to amend its by-laws to include Avon Court off of Krumkill Road. He also emphasized that the neighborhood boundary is inclusive of both sides of the street i.e. S. Manning, Western Ave. and New Scotland Ave.
 - a. DS: I agree with including Avon Court the BLNA BOD will take this up at the next opportunity and agreed on the neighborhood boundary being inclusive.
25. Felton McLaughlin, BOD member of the Buckingham Pond Conservancy asked for an explanation of the difference between the BLNA and the Buckingham Pond Conservancy for those in attendance.
 - a. DS: BPC focuses on the Pond Water Management and the BLNA focuses on the neighborhoods surrounding the pond.
26. How frequent will the BLNA meetings be and will the minutes of the meetings be on the website? It was suggested that the meetings be monthly and or that the meetings be every other month.
 - a. DS: The BLNA Board of Directors will take this information into consideration and then determine meeting frequency and communicate the decision to all.

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27. Can there be an online list serve so the members can talk to one another?

a. DS: The BLNA will look into this.

28. DS stated the BLNA Board of Directors have discussed the possibility of having a neighborhood block party and asked if there are other events people would like to have. One citizen recommended a community wide garage sale and another said perhaps an outside movie night at Buckingham Pond.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Margie A. Sheehan, Secretary