

Buckingham Lake Neighborhood Association (BLNA)
Meeting Minutes
November 10, 2016

The meeting was held at the Albany Elks Lodge #49, 25 South Allen Street, Albany, New York on November 10, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was called to order by Dan Sleasman, President of the Buckingham Lake Neighborhood Association (BLNA), at 7:06 p.m.

D. Sleasman welcomed those in attendance and began the meeting with an introduction of Albany Chief of Police Brendan P. Cox.

Chief of Police Cox gave a State of the Albany Police Department update which included the following:

- In 2015 the President of the United States commissioned a task force to look at safety issues in cities nationwide. A prospectus was created from this review which we have been working with as we looked at the issues Albany has. Albany was recognized as one of the cities that is doing well regarding safety issues.
- In 2010 we started an initiative to reach out to local neighborhoods to work with communities. Our areas of focus, or the “pillars” of our community outreach program are the following:
 - Pillar I: Building trust and legitimacy - treating communities with respect and kindness.
 - Pillar II. Policy oversight – we are in the process of compiling the policies to publish them for transparency.
 - Pillar III. Technology and social media – we have created a social media platform to alter people about issues in their community. We have also instituted new technology such as the police body camera initiative, which we are currently researching. Once we have test piloted the cameras we will let the public know and we will begin using them.
 - Pillar IV: Training and education for officers – community engagement is an important part of this for all officers as soon as they become part of the police force.
 - Pillar V: Officer safety and wellness.

Following Chief Cox’s presentation, there was a discussion regarding neighborhood traffic and safety with the members in attendance.

Chief Cox stated that the police force is aware that there is a lot of traffic in the Buckingham Lake area and said that that the police have to carefully weigh any changes that are made to existing laws and traffic patterns so as to avoid making errors or making changes that would negatively impact the citizens. Chief Cox noted the recent change to one-way that was made to

Friebel off of Buckingham Drive, which helped the residents on Friebel but increased traffic on Tampa. Also, some of the neighbors did not know about the change, which caused concerns.

Dan Sleasman stated that there is definitely a traffic volume issue, and that the roads leading to Route 85 were never designed to handle the amount of traffic that is occurring daily, noting that Buckingham Drive has become the “path of least resistance for traffic in the city.” Dastop sign at Buckingham Drive and Friebel on a daily basis. Dan Sleasman asked Chief Cox why there isn’t consistent police coverage in the area. Chief Cox responded that there are people assigned to patrol the area, but there would need to be “seriously focused” enforcement by the police if we are to see a difference in traffic behavior. Chief Cox recommended speed cameras, which might work.

Dan Sleasman also asked Chief Cox to talk about the size of the enforcement department. Chief Cox said that it is not a large department, 7 or 8 officers, and in addition to traffic safety they also work on DWI arrests, protests and other events taking place in the city. Dan Sleasman noted that we now have a much larger traffic volume in the city, but no growth in the enforcement department.

Members of the neighborhood association also raised concerns about the number and type of delivery trucks coming down Buckingham Drive, even though signs are posted to keep them out. Chief Cox stated that it has been particularly challenging to keep trucks that are unauthorized from going down Buckingham because they ignore the posted signs.

Following the discussion with Chief Cox, Albany County Legislator Gary Domalewicz addressed the BLNA regarding the issue of delinquent properties and the land bank.

Mr. Domalewicz explained that the Albany County land bank takes properties that have been delinquent in their taxes for 4 years. Mr. Domalewicz stated that the land bank is limited in their resources, but that Albany gets repaid for the taxes within one year. A concern was raised by members of the BLNA that the land bank continually says it has no resources. Following a lengthy discussion, Mr. Domalewicz told the BLNA that there will be an upcoming meeting of the Board of the land bank on November 15, 2016 at 200 Henry Johnson Boulevard in Albany, and he encouraged any members of the BLNA who might want to attend to do so and ask the Board their questions. Dan Sleasman asked what steps can BLNA members take regarding delinquent properties on their street to ensure quick action, and Mr. Domalewicz responded that calling the Department of General Services for lawn issues and also going to the website “See, Click, Fix” would be good measures to take. Mr. Domalewicz also told the BLNA that the budget is currently being created, and that there will be \$250,000 allocated to the land bank.

Following Mr. Domalewicz’s presentation, Dan Sleasman noted under Old Business that there has been no payment made yet to the City of Albany by St. Peter’s Hospital. Dan Sleasman stated that the BLNA feels St. Peter’s Hospital does need to make this payment and recommended that the BLNA draft a letter to St. Peter’s Hospital about making the payment, or perhaps the letter should come from CANA. The members in attendance agreed a letter should be written and sent to St. Peter’s Hospital.

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Margie A. Sheehan, Secretary of the BLNA, 2016 term.