

CHCA Meeting Minutes

February 3, 2022

7:30pm

4 board members in attendance

13 members in attendance

I. Welcome

- a. Next meeting will be in April
 - i. Elections
 - 1. Anyone interested in running should email Elena
- b. February membership drive
- c. Committees looking for members
 - i. Membership outreach
 - ii. By-laws
 - iii. Civic Affairs
- d. Graffiti Issue
 - i. Building department will discuss with owner about installing cameras

II. Committee reports

- a. Treasurer
 - i. Opening balance: \$5,783.12
 - ii. Income: \$2,025.22
 - 1. \$160 for scholarship
 - iii. Expenses: \$1,747.00 (Halloween and Tree Lighting)
 - iv. Closing Balance: \$6,061.34
 - v. Last year (2021) we had 140 members including 6 businesses
- b. Welcoming committee
 - i. 2 new neighbors
- c. Beautification Committee
 - i. Holiday decorations put up in gazebo
- d. Events
 - i. Halloween party was a big hit
 - ii. No softball this year
 - iii. Tag sale
 - iv. Tree lighting
 - v. Upcoming
 - 1. Trivia night
 - a. Trying to figure out when and where this will take place, likely Gordy's
- e. Scholarship Committee
 - i. Application being updated
 - ii. All seniors in neighborhood will get a gift bag

- f. Business Committee
 - i. Maybe we can get stickers for the stores to display in their windows?
- g. Civic Affairs Committee
 - i. Signage:
 - 1. The town has had some correspondence with the CHCA regarding signage in the area and did follow up on those complaints. However, for complex legal reasons they are not currently able to enforce the existing Sign Law (for those interested in legal matters, see my rudimentary translation of the issues below*). Nevertheless, they are in the process of preparing a new sign law which should be adopted soon (within the next few months). Therefore, the building department cannot presently issue violations for signs, but just has to appeal to the good nature of business owners – and that’s only sometimes successful. They have still been approaching various businesses and many have removed offending signs as requested. Once the new sign law is passed, they will begin a concerted enforcement effort.
- h. Specific properties:
 - i. 505 New Rochelle Road (CVS) and 495 New Rochelle Road (Mixed Use Building):
 - 1. Graffiti: On two different occasions the town received complaints about graffiti on the walls of the garage area adjacent to the CVS parking lot. Based on the complaint, the town assumed the graffiti was on CVS property. They contacted CVS who responded very quickly and painted over the graffiti. Unfortunately a few weeks later the graffiti magically reappeared. At that time, the town realized the building actually belonged to 495 New Rochelle Road and not CVS.
 - ii. The property manager for 495 New Rochelle road responded very quickly as well and painted over the graffiti again. They applied an “anti-graffiti” paint (which really does exist), but no guarantees on how effective that will be. The EPD has increased patrols in the area and is on the lookout for the perpetrator.
 - iii. The town recommended that both CVS and 495 New Rochelle Road install cameras and warning signs to try to discourage the individual from doing it again (but the town doesn’t have the authority to require that).
 - iv. CVS Parking Lot: Periodically, they still receive complaints about residents tossing dog waste and sometimes other trash into the CVS parking lot.

1. Cameras and signage would potentially be helpful in this case as well.
 - v. CVS Building: The town is not aware of any potential tenants for the CVS building at this time. They are still providing Covid testing at certain times by appointment, but no complaints have been received.
- 490 New Rochelle Rd:
1. The Flowerbake by Angela bakery received a Certificate of Compliance (CC) on 10/4/2021 for the interior renovations (meaning all construction work is complete and has passed all inspections). The building dept. issued a building permit for façade improvements for the entire building on 10/4/2021. They are not aware of a proposed tenant for the remaining vacant space at the corner of the building (at Alta and NR Road).
- vi. 480 New Rochelle Rd:
 1. The Golden Century Spa received a CC on 3/22/2021 and is open for business. There was a complaint about a banner on the façade, and it was later removed.
- vii. 493 New Rochelle Road (former Chase Bank):
 1. Coffee Lab Roasters received a building permit for interior renovations for a coffee shop on 6/22/2021 and construction is still underway.
 - a. Note: it will NOT be a drive-through coffee shop (drive-through food service businesses are not permitted).
- viii. 497 New Rochelle Road (Amoco station):
 1. A sign permit was issued on 5/3/21 to install (legalize) new signage. The owner is still investigating constructing a canopy over the pumps, but has not yet submitted an application to do so. The canopy would require ARB and Planning Board approval and would be subject to public hearings.
- ix. 502 New Rochelle Road:
 1. The former ANC Store has been occupied by Smokeville. The Civic Affairs Comm submitted complaints about signage & product displays at this location as well. The building inspector reports that some window signs were removed/brought into compliance. There haven't been any complaints about business operations at the site (i.e., with regard to products sold). However, that's the purview of the EPD who does monitor the business operations

- i. Signage issue:
 - i. Sign Laws in general can be problematic because they often, inadvertently, violate free speech – and the Town’s current sign law has been challenged in that regard.
 - ii. For example, our current law has different restrictions/regulations related to the permitted size and number of particular types of signs (e.g. real-estate signs vs. grand opening signs vs. permanent store front signs, vs. campaign signs vs. general advertisement signs, etc.). The existing law also prohibits certain information from being included on certain signs (e.g., a phone number is not permitted on a permanent wall mounted storefront sign).
 - iii. The most recent case law allows municipalities to regulate the size, number and placement of signs, but they must all be treated equally regardless of content. For example: we currently allow just one real-estate sign on a property whereas we permit two campaign signs on a property; we allow a large banner advertising a grand opening but not a large banner indicating eggs are on sale. The new sign law will limit the number and size of permitted signs, regardless of the purpose or content of the sign.
 - iv. When a draft of the sign law is complete, it will be subject to a Public Hearing before the Town Board and there will be an opportunity for community input. At that time, the Land Use and Zoning Attorney the town is working with will be able to provide a much more coherent explanation. The proposed Sign Law will be introduced at a Town Board meeting at the end of February or in March.
 - v. Nevertheless, the town is still reaching out to store owners when their facades/windows do look too cluttered, and the town still requires review and approval for all permanent signs (e.g., wall mounted store front signs, monument signs, etc.) Also, the new sign law will still strongly focus on the overall aesthetics in the Town – to try to avoid excessive signage and clutter. The town is permitted to limit sign size, the overall number of, and location of signs and can limit the number of colors allowed in one sign. They are also permitted to prohibit certain types of signs – e.g., feather flag signs, box signs, pylon signs, digital signs, etc. The key is that the town can’t have different standards based on the type or content of the sign (e.g. real estate vs. grand opening). As a result, the new sign law will be easier to interpret and enforce fairly and consistently.

III. Comments

- a. Dog waste still an issue
- b. Fire House
 - i. Will be quite a while; new floor is being installed
- c. Meg Florio and Eileen Doherty volunteered to drop off notices for dues

Meeting adjourned 8:10pm

Minutes Submitted by:
Ashley McCarrick