

MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 23, 2024
SEWANEE COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING

The Community Council meeting was held in person in September with an option to also participate online via Zoom.

Members present: Rob Pearigen, Scott Wilson, June Weber, Sallie Green, Rhea Bowden, John Solomon, Michael Payne, Phil White, Evelyn Patton, Ben Tarhan, Laura Willis, Marilyn Phelps, Aidan Goulding, and Roger Speers

Members via Zoom:

Absent: Ben Beavers, Robert Benton, Bill Harper, Bruce Manuel, and Lynn Stubblefield

Minutes taken by: Carey Fulmer (attending via Zoom)

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

(1) Approval of the August Minutes

The minutes for the August 2024 Community Council were approved as circulated.

(2) Grants Committee- Weber

June Weber gave a brief update on the Grants Committee and reminded the Council that applications would be accepted until October 25. The budget has approximately \$20,000 to distribute and proposals can be completed for big or small projects for physical improvements or amenities in Sewanee that enhance the community or improve the quality of life. June directed interested parties to access the proposal application on the Lease Office website under "Community Council."

(3) Election Update- Tarhan

Ben Tarhan reminded the Council that there are four district seats and two at-large seats open for the upcoming Community Council election that will be held on November 5. Candidates need to complete the signature petition that includes ten signatures from their district for the district seats and at-large seats can obtain ten signatures from anyone within the 37375 zip code. Petitions to run can be picked up at the Sewanee Post Office or the Lease Office and must be turned in by October 14. Ben also requested volunteers to help work the polls and advised anyone unsure of their district to confirm their district before the election by contacting the Lease Office.

(4) Georgia Avenue Parking Lot- Beavers

In Ben Beavers' absence, Rev. Polly Robb, leaseholder at 722 Georgia Avenue addressed her concerns of the newly installed student parking lot across the road from their home to the Council. Citing a longstanding relationship with the University, long-term family roots, and community service on the Board of Trustees, The Reverend Polly Robb stated that the lack of timely notification was inconsiderate of the University administration. The emailed notification was sent the day before the parking lot installation began. Issues surrounding this new parking lot addressed by the Robb's included this action devaluing of their home and car lights shining into their bedroom windows at night. Questioning if the University was being neighborly and allegations that they have been told that the University can do what

they want, Scott Wilson explained to the Robb's and community of the last minute decision made in order to accommodate a larger than anticipated freshman class and the lot used to store FM equipment was the easiest course of action. Nicky Hamilton also addressed the Robb's complaint and further explained the dire parking situation and the need to accommodate the incoming student's needs. Rob Pearigen apologized to the Robb's and confirmed that his office was looking for other alternatives, and his administration does not operate in "the University can do whatever the University wants" mindset. Dr. Pearigen went on to thank the Reverend Polly Robb for her deep commitment and service to the University.

Councilwoman Evelyn Patton shared her concern that the University is not always as mindful as it should be about concerns in the St. Mark's community, including matters related to lighting.

(5) Announcements and/or Questions

Questions from the audience and Council discussed:

- What is the practice of letting community members know of plans that could impact them as leaseholders? Scott Wilson explained the various means of indirect and direct communication and how this information is consistently communicated through the Community Council.
- Question about the timeline of new crosswalks installation and painting schedule for existing crosswalks. Nicky Hamilton confirmed that as soon as the painting company was available, they would provide 24-48 hour notice.
- With Hamilton Hall reopening, will parking on Tennessee Avenue be identified as seminarian parking? It was confirmed that the parking areas on Tennessee Avenue are allocated for both School of Theology and University students.

Meeting adjourned at 7:41 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carey Fulmer