

HIGHLANDS CIVIC ASSOCIATION (HCA)

- To strengthen the sense of community, responsibility, and livability in the Highlands for all residents.
- To protect, preserve, and further the residential quality of the Highlands area.
- To maintain an open line of communication among the Highlands neighborhood, the Borough of State College, the University community, and other Borough neighborhoods and agencies.
- To facilitate the exchange of information among HCA residents.

AGENDA Tuesday, June 6, 2023 6:00pm at E Fairmount Park

Meeting convened at 6:00 pm

1. **Introductions:** Mark Huncik, Eric White, Josh Portney, Margaret Sebastianelli, Cindy Adams, Nina White, Dave Stone, Tom Gesell, Vinnie Scanlon, Paul Scanlon, Jim Shincovich, Susan Shincovich
2. **Treasury Report:** \$1,629.67
3. **Open Conversation with Officer Dean Woodring, SCPD Community Relations:** TBR (to be rescheduled)
4. **Borough Updates:**
 - Sister City (Nizhyn, Ukraine): the recent concert held at the Grace Lutheran Church to benefit war-torn Ukraine netted an estimated \$10,000 in donations; a heart-felt thanks to the community of musicians who volunteered their time and talents
 - Mobility Connection Study: all public transportation in- and out-of-town is under study; based on calendar changes to ridership CATA micro buses, CATA buses, and Penn State's sponsored LYFT activities will be assessed to better serve students, community and visitors
 - Short-Term Rentals (STR) activity: out of an estimated 300 residential rentals in the Borough, 180 are considered active of which 80 are officially registered as STRs; most STRs are located in College Heights with 12 identified as homes in the Highlands; residents in College Heights have requested a review of the limited number of parking spaces required per residence; John Wilson in the Planning Department reviews all applications; it is believed that many more STRs are in operation lacking the required review and approval; residents are encouraged to report STR activity in their vicinity (if you see something, say something) by calling 814-234-7100

- Police Department: 5 of the 62 budgeted officer positions are vacant; PSU has an auxiliary force of 230+ officers
- 2022 Budget: reported a year-end excess of \$2 million
- Staffing: Borough Planning Department as well as other key areas report significant staff shortages; all department heads are required to live in the Borough while other staff members do not work under the same residency requirement
- HARB (Historical Architectural Review Board): the fraternity at the corner of E. Fairmount Ave. and Garner Street began rebuilding an exterior terrace along the Garner Street edifice without a permit or HARB review; clearly defined guidelines for fraternity houses in the historical neighborhoods may need to be reviewed and more definitive regarding historical renovations; not known at this time if newly elected Council members will support the work of HARB as those members are no longer serving
- Real Estate Taxes: The Penn Stater and The Nittany Lion Inn land leases will be taxed at the same rate as other local hospitality entities (e.g., Hyatt and Scholar Hotels)
- Speeding Litigation: cases are on the rise due to traffic detours around Atherton Street construction and similar restricted traffic zones; police speed traps are being used to help minimize the inherent dangers to neighborhoods and common areas near traffic disruption sites

5. Other items and open discussion:

- E. Fairmount Avenue Park: concerns were expressed about the rampant weed growth along the perimeter of the park; the question of who is responsible to oversee the project of attending to the seed growth before it becomes out of control has not been addressed (Spain uses goats very effectively to control overgrown areas.).

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm

Minutes submitted by Margaret Sebastianelli, June 2023