

Greensboro Neighborhood Congress (GNC)
Meeting Notes
Saturday, March 9, 2013



GNC Co-Chairperson Susan Taaffe convened the **March 2013** GNC meeting at the Central Public Library beginning with our traditional introduction of all participants and presentations by guest speakers.

Guest speakers:

Walter Salinger spoke as a member of the League of Women Voters (LWV) supporting public financing of political campaigns instead of allowing wealthy organizations/corporations to raise unlimited funds to support political campaigns. In the 2012 Presidential campaign, 32 wealthy corporations donated to political campaigns an equivalent amount as did 3.7 million individual campaign donors. In NC, 90% of campaign contributions come from 1% of the population -- wealthy individuals and organizations/corporations. Public financing of elections intends to even the opportunity for political candidates running, independent of wealth. For more information about the League of Women Voters (LWV) visit <http://www.lwvpt.org/> or call 336-274-0202.

Jerry Anthony spoke as a member of the LWV in support of "voter-owned elections". Specifically they request citizens encourage state and national legislators to amend the U.S. Constitution so that corporations no longer have the right to spend unlimited amounts of money supporting or opposing political candidates. One outcome would require 24-hour electronic disclosure of campaign contribution reports at state and federal levels, allowing citizens to follow political campaign donation money trails. If interested, visit www.citizen.org or call 202-588-1000 or communicate with the LWV.

Sandy Neerman, Assistant City Manager, spoke of the City of Greensboro's Human Relations Commission's current efforts to ensure our City meets the missions of city and city-wide human relations organizations. "The mission of the Human Relations Commission is to improve the quality of life for Greensboro residents by encouraging fair treatment and promoting mutual understanding and respect among all people." The Commission acts through many special-focus committees including Human Services, Montgomery/Wells Housing, Education, Employment, Fair Housing, International, and Complaint Review committees. All Greensboro citizens are invited to apply to join these committees or provide input, including submitting human services complaints that require City attention. GNC members are asked to submit suggestions for improvement or expansion of Human Relations Commission activities. Visit <http://www.greensboro-nc.gov/index.aspx?page=724> or call 373-CITY.

Committee Reports:

Treasurer – Jack Zimmerman reported GNC checking and savings accounts combined total \$830.93. The GNC is a 501c3 tax exempt organization and accepts donations. GNC member neighborhoods are eligible to join and use Greensboro Municipal Credit Union services.

Membership - All participants please **sign in** when attending GNC meetings to ensure GNC voting eligibility.

Issues & Bylaws –**Marsh Praus** overviewed recent years of this committee's efforts to improve housing standards in Greensboro. Recently the City Office of Budget & Evaluation studied City housing code enforcement and produced a City Code Compliance Benchmark Study. The GNC Executive Committee recommended and today the GNC voted to support recommendations of that Benchmark Study including better enforcement of existing City housing codes, hiring one additional housing inspector, faster turn-around, and requiring the City to provide 6-month reports on improvement. See the study at <http://www.greensboro-nc.gov/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=18285> and participate in a March 18th meeting in City Council Chambers. Details are available from Michael Pendergraft at mrp_mlp@bellsouth.net.

Praus also reported that a City Council subcommittee continues work to improve the City Tree Ordinance recommending shorter pruning cycles, reduced trimming easement distances, and improved communications by Duke Energy. To learn more visit <http://www.greensboro-nc.gov/index.aspx?page=3947> and attend the next meeting March 21, 3:30 p.m. in City Council Chambers.

Announcements –

- **Lechelle Yates**, City staff managing Better Buildings Greensboro, promotes local energy efficiency initiatives (energy inspections, rebates and low-cost financing) for Greensboro homeowners at significant financial savings. Offerings include: 1- a thorough energy assessment for \$50, 2- a 50% rebate on **basic** energy saver upgrades (air and duct sealing and insulation), 3- a 20% rebate on **advanced** energy saver upgrades (major appliances, vapor barriers, HVAC systems, water heaters), and 4- low 3.99% interest rate loans for household energy upgrades. To qualify, projected energy savings must be $\geq 15\%$ of current energy costs and rebates are capped at \$3,000. For details visit www.betterbuildingsgreensboro.org or contact Ms. Yates at 336-580-8987 or lechelle.yates@greensboro-nc.gov. This local energy savings program is funded by a \$5 million grant from the federal **2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act**.
- Keep up with the City's **Entertainment Facility Use Ordinance Review Committee** which includes regulation of bars/nightclubs which effect neighborhoods at <http://www.greensboro-nc.gov/index.aspx?page=3883>
- **Deep Roots Co-Op Market** opens March 20th at 600 North Eugene Street in downtown Greensboro.
- **Bottom Line Radio Show** call-in for community issues is Tuesday March 12, 90.1 FM. <http://tunein.com/program/?ProgramId=392464&StationId=21347>
- **City Council District budget meetings** invite public input. Visit <http://www.greensboro-nc.gov/index.aspx?recordid=3971&page=36> or call 373-CITY for dates/times/locations.
- Our **GNC 10th anniversary celebration** may be held at our regular monthly meeting on Saturday, May 11th at our regular meeting place, Nussbaum room of the Central Public Library.

Our next GNC meeting is **Thursday, April 11, 2013, 7-9 p.m. at the Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro, 330 South Greene Street**. Park in the back lot and enter through the rear handicap ramp door.

Respectfully submitted by Ann Stringfield of the Fisher Park Neighborhood, March 10, 2013.