

COLUMBIA HEIGHTS CIVIC ASSOCIATION (CHCA) GENERAL MEETING,  
MARCH 21,2005  
Barkley Condominium  
Prepared by Sara Collins

[Note: full names will be given when first mentioned and first names thereafter]

President John Antonelli opened the meeting with an announcement that the representative from the Police Dept. had not arrived [and did not appear during the meeting].

Lana Lawrence moved to modify the agenda to create a new agenda, leadership as the first item followed by the by-law amendment, seconded by Linda Palmer, to continue the unfinished business of the Feb. 23 board meeting.

John asked if there were objections to this meeting being recorded and being on, Sara Collins turned the tape recorder on. Phyllis Call objected to Vice-President Sarah McKinley's letter sent to members and Sara Collins' subsequent letter regarding that board meeting saying the letters didn't include all the comments made, including hers and those of Peter Jones who said he had no issue with John's leadership. Sarah M. explained that these were NOT minutes and that the Peter who had spoken was Peter McAuliffe. Sara C. offered copies of her letter to anyone who might have received it.

Jill Lewis asked that board members present be identified: these were John Antonelli, Sarah McKinley, Ron Haddox, Peter McAuliffe and Valerie Emerson. Discussion followed about interpretations of the Feb. board meeting and letter to members. John objected to the minutes and was reminded that there were no minutes of the board meeting. Lana proposed that in lieu of any minutes that we accept that part of the meeting was taped and we should move on.

John questioned whether the motion should be addressed without the bylaw change (#4 on the agenda). A member asked for an explanation of why the bylaw was proposed. Sarah M. referred to Feb. board meeting and members who had presented objections, including the letter John had sent to the county board saying that CHCA voted to withdraw from the Form Based Code (FBC). She explained that the bylaw change had been submitted by members and by process this had to be voted on by CHCA membership to be accepted. The earlier-referenced Board meeting ended with a resolution that the executive committee not take any action until the leadership issue was solved. Lana tried to summarize the Feb. board meeting to answer the question posed by a member. She reported that about 80% of the membership in attendance were distressed about a number of actions. At this point John intervened with a warning "to

stick to the discussion" and Lana responded that the members needed an explanation, background information. Sarah M. proposed to move item 4, amending the agenda to discuss both leadership and the bylaw amendment, and Lana agreed to this amendment to her proposal. Lana asked who present were members of CHCA and these were identified as people who could vote at this meeting. Ron and Valerie were appointed to count votes.

John indicated he would vote against the amendment, as removal of an officer deserves a separate discussion. He claimed a right to defend himself against the "Lynch mob" of the board meeting and Jill Lewis objected to his use of the term, as she indicated it was not a lynch mob and asked John to stop his procrastination.

Joan Rineberg requested that the issues be separated and Pam Johnson Lee asked that the bylaw change be moved to first on agenda. Phyllis objected to a bylaw change directed to one board member and said all bylaws need to be revised.

At this time it was decided to designate someone to serve as secretary and John appointed Sara Collins to take minutes.

Sarah M. proposed to modify the agenda and add leadership issue to the top and informed that there was a need to list separately as a majority vote is needed for proceeding with the leadership discussion and a 2/3 vote need to pass a bylaw. Sarah called for a vote on the revised agenda: to move a new item, leadership issues, to top of agenda, along with amendment to bylaws (agenda item 4). A vote on this agenda change took place with Ron and Valerie counting votes. The agenda change passed with 22 approved, 2 opposed and 3 abstentions.

A discussion of leadership concerns followed. Robert Atkins (Bob) of the Arlington Civic Federation (ACF) was asked to serve as parliamentarian and he read the duties of officers from existing bylaws. John began the discussion of leadership by reading bylaws, explaining his opinions of the FBC, and defending his letter to the county board as supported by CHCA Board. Sarah explained why she voted as one of four board members in support for withdrawing from the code. When she realized her mistake she asked John not to send the letter as this was an issue that needed to be taken to the membership. Sarah apologized to the membership for her mistake in voting for this. John and Sarah disagreed about the sequence of the mailing; he claimed he had already written county board and has the e-mail traffic to support his claim. Pat Todd called for procedures and Bob stated that CHCA bylaws are inadequate for such a conflict and suggested another board member run the meeting. Peter McAuliffe agreed to do so.

Peter moderated the discussion that followed regarding the concerns about the leadership of CHCA: the unfinished business from the board meeting, the need to adopt best practices and define what kind of leadership is need (Reggie Nixon); the disregard for the work of many people on the FBC and ignorance of the code (Pam ); suggestion that the CHCA needs legal counsel in forming revised bylaws (C. Sinnette); referral to "Best Practices" document of the Civic Federation, and assistance/training from ACF (Atkins); necessity for "best practices and bylaw changes (Joan Rineberg); accusations that the whole board was at fault on leadership and not just John (Phil Bailey); the need to drop "lynch mob" activity and look at collective leadership, and the necessity for board to realign itself and settle the issue of who serves each office (Call); praise for Sarah M. for admitting her mistake and a request for her to answer concerns about legal issue when leader acts inappropriately, and the impact of "joint and several liability" on board members.

Sarah M. said there may be a need for a new board with new structure, members are free to vote her out if they so desire, and she offered to resign if that was what was needed to get good structure in place. She restated her unwillingness to subject herself to the legal and fiscal liability when serving on a board with John acting as President. She referred to e-mail threats from John to sue her and get her fired if she wrote a letter to members about her concerns. John claimed he did not and has e-mail traffic to support his opinion.

Phyllis proposed that the Executive Committee realign itself (choose its officers), craft new bylaws and report back to the membership in two months. Ron suggested that perhaps the whole board should resign. Lana asked what board members would continue to serve at least until there were new bylaws and restructuring of the board. John, Ron, Sarah, Peter agreed to stay through the process. Valerie said she wanted to resign immediately and Peter M. reported that Lisa McAuliffe did not wish to continue. Peter Jones had already resigned. June O'Connell expressed appreciation for the board and asked to close the discussion and get on with the agenda.