

NFB  
NEIGHBORS FIRST FOR BYWATER

General Meeting, August 6, 2014: Minutes (with some clarifications and additions regarding the CZO)

1) John Andrews, our Vice President and general zoning factotum, announced that the deadline for written comments on the proposed restaurant at Dauphine and Independence is September 18. These comments should be sent to CPCinfo@nola.gov for email. Actual letters should be sent to R.D. Rivers, Executive Director, City Planning Department, 1300 Perdido St., NOLA 70112 (all communications should be received by close-of-business that day). If you send an email, it would be helpful if you cc a copy to us at info@nfbywater.org. (Please indicate in subject line that it relates to the restaurant at Dauphine & Indy). The City Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for August 26, at 1:30pm in the City Council Chambers. All of you who are concerned about this proposal should make every effort to attend even if you have already written. Note: the Home page of our website (nfbywater.org) gives directions for finding the proposal, along with the building owners' NPP report and NFB's NPP report. The owners, Adam and Amy Farrington, were present at the meeting and Julie Jones announced that they would linger to take questions later.

Note: in view of the opinions voiced by near neighbors (within a block's radius) and other members of NFB at the June 4th NPP meeting, NFB will be sending a letter to the City Planning Commission voicing our objections to the change in zoning and the conditional use petition for this proposed restaurant.

2) John also gave information on the recently released, revised draft for the CZO (Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance). There will be three presentations of this latest draft, with opportunity for citizen input, all in the City Council Chambers: i) Tues, August 26, at 3pm; ii) Tues, September 2, at 6pm; and iii) Tues, September 9, at 3pm. The DEADLINE for submitting written comments is Monday, September 1, by 5pm. NOTE THAT THIS DEADLINE COMES AFTER ONLY ONE MEETING HAS BEEN HELD!!! Again, if you send an email, it would be helpful if you cc it to us at info@nfbywater.org (please indicate in subject line that it relates to the CZO). Note that these meetings are not just for our district, but for the entire city.

Areas of concern for us in Bywater include

a) a 25-foot height bonus on property on the river side of Chartres Street between Piety and Press Streets, bringing the total height in that area to 75 feet. The bonus depends on developers providing certain amenities for the public, but these amenities do not sound very meaningful.

b) the inclusion of "specialty restaurants" and "outdoor dining" in the list of business uses allowable on corner properties that meet certain requirements within the Residential Diversity Overlay (RDO). The terms are not clearly defined (would, say, a barbecue joint fall within the specialty restaurant category? How is outdoor dining to be limited?)

c) the conversion of certain block faces to HMC-1 (roughly the equivalent of B1A). This change in designation includes the 4200 block of Dauphine lakeside and the 4300 block of Burgundy, also lakeside, among various other blocks.

d) the lack of a minimum apartment size in buildings granted "conditional use" for multi-family dwellings

e) the elimination of required off-street parking spaces for all businesses falling below a certain size (I believe this is 2,100 square feet, but am not certain)

3) Captain Timothy McConnell from the New Orleans Fire Department, backed by a cohort of officers and fire fighters, addressed the group on fire prevention. He emphasized the importance of having smoke alarms. The good news is that the Fire Department will provide and install smoke alarms with 10-year batteries at no cost to any New Orleans resident that requests the service. Simply call 658-4714 to make an appointment. Many of us signed up last night.

Captain McConnell also pointed out that for a \$50 annual fee, the Fire Department will conduct a Commercial Occupancy Inspection to assure that a commercial building is safe. Call the same number to set up an appointment.

Captain McConnell said that every single fire hydrant is inspected twice a year. He added that the hydrants are color-coded to indicate the size of the main supplying water, so it's important not to get artistic with these hydrants. If a hydrant is broken, this should be reported to the Fire Department (again, same number: 658-4714).

Captain McConnell also emphasized that it's important to keep a fire extinguisher handy. The extinguishers should be checked every 5 years (extinguisher companies will do that). Generally speaking, if the gage is green it should work.

4) Blake VonderHaar—it was the conflagration at the Bark Market/New Orleans Conservation Guild that inspired our calling in the Firemen—gave an update on her business plans. She is currently in discussions with the owners of the Wiltz Gym (3000-block of N. Rampart) to lease the space for an art supply , a pet supply, with a groomer on site, a pay dog park in the large space behind the gym and, possibly, a dog day care center. None of this is settled yet.

5) Meghann McCracken gave us an update on her idea that the money taken in some time ago from supporters of a dog park should go to extending a small area in Markey Park, abutting the child area, and to—a gesture of good will—replacing the missing gate in the child area, which is a source of potential harm to the children playing there. She will be speaking with Lisanne Brown, president of the BNA and also Chair of BNA's parks committee, in the next few days (she's already broached the idea to Lisanne, who seemed receptive). Mark Gonzalez, who sits on the NORDC committee, mentioned the problem that it has never been really clear whether NORD or the BNA is in charge of taking care of the park.

6) Finally, Jen Buuck made a brief presentation (Rhonda Findley had prepared much of the material before going on vacation) on how to make your voice heard in City Hall. Most of the names and addresses are already on our website (NFBywater.org) under Resources, but we will soon be adding their additional information and their examples of letters to write and letters NOT to write (at least if you're hoping for good results).

Respectfully submitted,  
Julie Jones, President