

# Greensboro Neighborhood Congress (GNC)

## Meeting Notes

### Thursday, September 16, 2017

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GNC Co-Chairperson **Susan Taaffe** convened the **September 2017** GNC meeting at the Greensboro Public Library, beginning with our traditional introduction of all participants. This month's presentations share recent neighborhood success stories.

#### **Guest speakers:**

**Mindy Zachary** of the [Dunleath Neighborhood](#) described their June 4, 2017 first ever "**Dunleath Porchfest**" during which dozens of neighbors offered their front porches for casual mini-concerts presented by musician volunteers. Coordination involved neighbors, musicians, dancers, signage, food trucks, t-shirts, printing maps, port-a-potties, bottled water stations, sidewalk chalk, social media, and tip jars to thank performers. Hundreds of people attended from Dunleath and many other neighborhoods. This event helped publicize the neighborhood's recent name change from Historic Aycock to Dunleath. Success was ensured thanks to extensive volunteerism.

**Alemetta Tennie** of the **Washington Park Neighborhood** shared their neighborhood's successful 20+ year efforts to reduce benign neglect of homes and increased sense of community, especially through diligent communication with City of Greensboro Police, City management, and City Council. Neighbors discussed then targeted specific areas for improvement. The City responded providing additional stoplights, brighter street lights, and increased neighborhood policing. When social problems are observed, police are promptly called. Neighborhood leaders next plan to request funding for neighborhood street sign toppers. Mrs. Tennie reminds us that neighborhoods need to diligently "*work like ants*" to assure continuous improvement.

**Dan Curry** and **James Keith** of the [College Hill Neighborhood](#) reviewed how their historic neighborhood had destabilized in past decades yet began to rebound in the 1980's with historic district designation. New student housing projects of the 1990's and early 2000's doubled the number of student housing rentals, increased resident turnover, including increased numbers and speed of car traffic. Fortunately, in the 1980's, College Hill Historic District property owners approved a small Municipal Service District (MSD) self-tax so they now have financial resources toward creative solutions. Their August 1, 2017 National Night Out celebration introduced innovative traffic calming ideas. They hired "[Team Better Block](#)" consultants to study pedestrian and auto patterns and implement changes on Mendenhall Street. Creative "street art" -- painting on public parking spots and intersections, and even creating a temporary "mini park" by placing a broken sailboat with seats in a Mendenhall Street parking spot -- helps drivers focus on something novel, which slows driving speeds. They have experienced City Dept. of Transportation (GDOT) resistance to change, yet through the power of increased neighborhood communication and using positive, sometimes humorous traffic calming methods, they've proven successful outcomes, some of which they plan to implement long-term. City Planning staff continue to be very helpful, attending neighborhood meetings and printing informative door hangers for neighborhood distribution door-to-door. College Hill leaders recommend neighborhoods increase communications, create a neighborhood plan defining issues to be addressed, and maintain communication with City departments and City Council.

**Rebecca Medendorp** and **Adam Spivey** of the [Lindley Park Neighborhood](#) explained how they've recently targeted City of Greensboro 2017/2018 Participatory Budgeting grants to: 1- improve a cross-walk near Lindley Elementary School, 2- add a high visibility crosswalk and increase lighting near a busy intersection (Spring Garden at Howard street), and 3- install higher railings and improve lighting for walking/biking on the Walker Ave. bridge over Wendover Ave., which joins two parts of their larger neighborhood. Neighbors engaged in discussions which generated a neighborhood plan, highlighting existing neighborhood resources such as the Lindley Park pool and recreation center. They recommend focusing on positive existing and potential effects. Projects they've recently

implemented include a Pool-a-Palloza event at the Lindley pool, colorful kitted scarves decorating the Walker Ave. bridge, a pop-up dog park, valentines dance, spring fling, Easter egg hunt, chili cook off, July 4<sup>th</sup> parade, Saturday morning Farmer's Market, "The Columns" quarterly newsletter, quarterly neighborhood-wide meetings, and encouraging enjoyment of casual foods/drinks at any event, blending work with fun to attract younger neighbors.

**Kiara Coulman** of **Reading Connections** introduced [ReadingConnections.org](http://ReadingConnections.org) where they seek volunteer reading tutors 1-2 days/week for 2-3 hours. They offer monthly training, 8 hours, for tutor volunteers. They reach ~1,000 students/year, especially focusing on adult education and English as a Second Language (ESL) students.

### **Committee Reports:**

**Issues & Bylaws** – This committee meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month 6:00 p.m. at College Park Baptist Church. All GNC members are invited to participate.

**Membership** – All GNC participants are reminded to sign in at each GNC meeting, indicating your attendance and updating your contact information.

### **Announcements:**

- Attendees received the nonpartisan 2017 City Council Voter Guide produced by the League of Women Voters in cooperation with the Greensboro News & Record and Democracy NC. Thousands of copies are available, free of charge, at the [Beloved Community Center](http://BelovedCommunityCenter.org), 417 Arlington Street.
- The next GNC meeting is **Saturday, November 11, 2017, 9-11 a.m.** at the Central Public Library.
- The GNC hosts a **District City Council Candidate Forum Monday, October 16, 6:30 p.m.** at the Central Public Library.
- The GNC hosts an **At Large City Council Candidate Forum Tuesday, October 24, 6:30 p.m.** at the Central Public Library.
- Please submit your City Council Candidate Forum questions ahead of time to [gnc.gso.nc@gmail.com](mailto:gnc.gso.nc@gmail.com) with Subject line: Question for candidates.
- All neighborhoods and all neighbors are invited to all GNC monthly meetings and events, such as upcoming City Council Candidate Forums!

Visit the GNC website at [www.GreensboroNeighborhoodCongress.org](http://www.GreensboroNeighborhoodCongress.org) for information about the GNC, where you can always read notes from previous GNC monthly meetings.

Respectfully submitted by Ann Stringfield of the Fisher Park Neighborhood, September 18, 2017.