



222 Main Street • Suite 335 • Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Annapolis Business Association
General Membership Meeting
March 20, 2007
Harry Browne's**

Minutes

Ann Widener called meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

Introductions.

Rusty spoke about the article in *The Capital* addressing the need for a “seat” on the City Council. Business/Property owners that are not residents of the City do not have a voice. He was concerned that the Mayor and council members got the wrong impression. We appreciate the support that Dick Israel and others have shown to the organization. Issues faced by business owners and residents are sometimes in conflict. We need a collective voice to address the issues that affect us all... crime, competition from other shopping areas, parking.

Rusty addressed infrastructure issues for the ABA. Let's make a budget... how much can we generate? How do we spend it? Advertising and marketing... TV, *Capital*, WRNR, magazines... How much can we afford to spend on flowers? We must create a realistic operating budget and live with it. We need to invite people back to Annapolis... both locals and visitors. Shops, restaurants, bars... will all lose business if we don't become aggressive.

The question was asked... where are the board members? Where are the members? There is little participation from our members. We recognize that we became known as a garden club... the better part of the past 18 months we have put ourselves under a microscope and have tried to change that. We have asked for new faces and voices to step up but that too has been a challenge. There is a great deal of burn out among the board members.

Eric Smith wrote a very smug article responding to the article Katie wrote.

If we are to continue as an organization, we must hire the Executive Assistant, so we can have a regular presence at City Council meetings, we must select a slate of presidential candidates. We need a new mission statement.

We have not made our commitment to Homestead Gardens for 2007. Ann asked Mike where we stand on this year's donation. Ann is to write a letter asking for the City to up



222 Main Street • Suite 335 • Annapolis, Maryland 21401

their participation... we'd like to secure matching funds from them. The ABA underwrites the beautification program, annually we invest \$65,000+ in the summer flowers and Christmas decorations.

Terri, Cecilia and Lori were discouraged by the lack of attendance at the sprinkler meeting in City Hall last night.

Mike suggested we give the candidates a list of our challenges and ask that they prepare a written proposal. We'll follow up with a face to face interview.

We must fill the board with some new members. Terri and Lori have volunteered to join the Board. Currently we need a President and a Vice President, and at least six Board members. Our current makeup includes Scott Gardiner, Treasurer... Judy Buddensick, Secretary... Board: Ann Widener, Steve Samaras, Rusty Romo, George Nassif, Bobbi Hobsen, Tim Hamilton, Bruce Chance, Chance Walgran, Erin Brunst, Larry Kownacki, Pam Finlay (resigning to be President of the West Street Marketing Group).

PLEASE don't allow this group to dissolve. We've done tremendous things over the years and we can do so much more. Please donate your time and energy to keep the ABA alive and defend all that we have built... your customers will be lured away by Annapolis Town Center and the new Westfield unless you take a stand.