

**Clerk's Office**  
**Village of Westmont**

**MINUTES OF THE WESTMONT SPECIAL EVENTS BOARD MEETING HELD Monday, September 10, 2012.**

Emily Bandza called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

**TRUSTEE EMERY PERFORMED ROLL CALL:**

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Mayor Rahn	<u>A</u>	Clerk Szymiski	<u>P</u>
<b>TRUSTEES:</b>	Emery	<u>P</u>	Fleming	<u>P</u>
	Klebenow	<u>A</u>	Nero	<u>P</u>
	Scott	<u>P</u>	Senicka	<u>P</u>

**STAFF:**

<b>Ron Searl</b>	<u>P</u>	<b>Chief Mulhearn</b>	<u>P</u>	<b>Shannon Malik</b>	<u>P</u>
(Village Manager)		(Police Dept.)		(Acting Community Devl. Dir)	
<b>Larry McIntyre</b>	<u>P</u>	<b>Robin Gardner</b>	<u>P</u>	<b>Rob Mackert</b>	<u>P</u>
<b>Emily Bandza</b>	<u>P</u>	<b>Linda Sobotka</b>	<u>P</u>	<b>Dave Gullotto</b>	<u>P</u>
<b>Al Carson</b>	<u>P</u>	<b>Linda Liddle</b>	<u>P</u>	<b>Kelly Smith</b>	<u>P</u>
<b>Steve Wren</b>	<u>P</u>	<b>Kim Mackert</b>	<u>P</u>	<b>Bob Mackert</b>	<u>P</u>
<b>Nancy Tomany</b>	<u>P</u>	<b>Larry Forsberg</b>	<u>P</u>	<b>Martha Armstrong</b>	<u>P</u>
<b>Audrey Payne</b>	<u>P</u>	<b>Michelle Gardner</b>	<u>P</u>	<b>Rich Jones</b>	<u>P</u>
<b>Barbara Wren</b>	<u>P</u>	<b>Brad Alexander</b>	<u>P</u>	<b>Leslie Rough</b>	<u>P</u>
<b>Kristine Turano</b>	<u>P</u>				

**A QUORUM WAS PRESENT TO TRANSACT BUSINESS.**

**THOSE PRESENT RECITED THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.**



**Village Clerk's Office**

31 West Quincy Street • Westmont, Illinois 60559  
Tel: 630-981-6220 Fax: 630-829-4441

**REFER TO THE ATTACHED MINUTES PROVIDED BY THE WESTMONT SPECIAL  
EVENTS CORPORATION.**

## **Westmont Special Events Corporation**

**Monday, September 10, 2012**

**Meeting Called to Order 6:30pm**

**In Attendance:** Larry McIntyre, Robin Gardner, Rob Mackert, Emily Bandza, Linda Sobotka, Dave Gullotto, Al Carson, Linda Liddle, Karen Mackert, Kelly Smith, Steve Wren, Kim Mackert, Bob Mackert, Nancy Tomany, Larry Forsberg-Westmont Chamber, Trustee Sue Senicka, Village Clerk-Jinny Szymski, Village Manager-Ron Searl, Chief Mulhearn-Westmont Police Dept., Martha Armstrong, Audrey Payne-WRA, Michelle Gardner, Westmont Resident Rich Jones, Trustee Lee Fleming, Trustee Ellen Emery, Trustee Steve Nero, Community Development Director Shannon Malik, Trustee Bob Scott, Barbara Wren, Westmont resident Brad Alexander, Westmont resident Leslie Rough and Kristine Turano

**Emily, VP of Communications, chaired the meeting and introduced Trustee Emery for Village roll call.**

### **Pledge**

### **Introduction**

Emily welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves. The meeting attendees each introduced themselves. Emily shared her background with WSEC, that she is a college student and her experience working for an entertainment company in downtown Chicago.

The mission statement was read and Emily asked that everyone participate in the meeting with constructive comments and keeping in mind that everyone participating in the WSEC are volunteers that work hard for community events.

### **Review of 2012 events and survey results**

It was mentioned that each year we try to send out a survey to businesses, volunteers and community. It was stated that the WSEC then reviews the survey responses to be used for input on future event planning. Larry announced that we received 81 responses for the Taste of Westmont survey and he reviewed the summary for the meeting. The key points mentioned are included below:

- 1<sup>st</sup> question was regarding demographics of the respondent.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> question asked for details on which nights the respondent attended.
- Entertainment question rated the bands that performed in 2012. Seventh Heaven received very high ratings followed by Hi Infidelity. These were the headline acts for Friday and Saturday and we had a great turnout for both nights even though rain had threatened to ruin the evenings.
- Next entertainment question listed a variety of bands and we asked for bands that guests would like to see. American English, Ides of March and usual requests scored high, and there was a high rating for Led Zeppelin tribute as well. Larry mentioned that the board has extensive discussions for entertainment, many volunteers go out on field trips and review

bands before we book them, and there is a lot of work before final decisions are made.

- Overall feedback was positive on all of the publicity areas.
- On the Youth activities section any respondents didn't attend this area but those that did visited the Carnival and liked the Battle of the bands.
- Safety—great ratings, much greater presence at our events and people responded that they feel safe.
- How did you hear about the events? The yard signs and banner are most popular to give awareness. Last year we placed the yard signs out the Sunday before event. This year we created with dates so they could be put out earlier.
- Layout—positive ratings were received.
- Parking—mixed answers were received but this is just part of the logistics of having the event in the downtown area.
- Food vendors-very positive feedback on surveys. Karen worked very hard on getting a good selection. We have determined that 15 is a good number for variety but also keeps the total number of vendors low enough for vendors to make money at the event.
- Alcohol—This year there were some shortage on supplies and we will be looking at how to reduce lines for next year.
- Commercial vendor and craft area—The responses received were in the middle, but the craft tent that is an area to grow for next year.
- Bean bag—Positive responses were received.
- Overall Taste ratings--The great majority of the respondents rated the 2012 Taste as an 8,9 or 10.
- Two of the final questions were "Do you think the Taste of Westmont is positive for Westmont?" and "Do you think the Taste of Westmont should continue in 2013?" About 90 percent of the response was yes. A total of 4 people out of 81 responses said no.
- The final question was whether or not the Taste of Westmont should consider moving from the downtown area. While a few people were open minded to considering options, the great majority of people did not want to move the event and think that downtown is the best location.

### **Downtown Businesses, Location for Events, Ideas for 2013**

Emily mentioned that the next 3 items are open discussion items and asked that everyone contribute. The events require a collective cooperation between the local businesses, the residents and the Village. The floor was open for discussion on the events. Discussion on the Taste of Westmont took place with key comments listed below:

- Trustees said that some of the downtown businesses owners stated that their businesses were affected during the weekend of the Taste. One comment was made that they felt the consensus of the downtown businesses would be to move the event.
- It was stated that there was disappointment that the business owners do not submit their comments to WSEC or get involved more.

- It was stated that some of the food vendors that participated in the event felt there was a lack of follow up on how they did during the Taste, however, the food vendor committee chair noted that each food vendor was contacted many times throughout the Taste to check and see how things are going and they all gave positive feedback. Also, 11 out of 15 vendors have already signed up and paid for next year. It was mentioned that it has been offered for them to attend meetings and fill out surveys, too.
- Discussion took place on how other towns have similar issues with community events. It was stated that all towns have some businesses that do not like the events, some even close for the weekend.
- It was noted that when a new business approaches the Village of Westmont, the Village makes sure that they are aware of the downtown events and if they will have an issue with these events.
- It was mentioned that we have restaurants from other towns that request each year to be in the Taste, but the WSEC limits this to Westmont businesses to promote the town.
- It was noted that the economy is playing a big factor in both the revenue from the events and the overall revenue for the downtown businesses, and the stress of hard economic times plays a role in dissatisfaction with downtown events.
- A suggestion was made to move carnival away from restaurants at south end, and possibly re-locate the bingo tent, bean bag, craft tent to that area. It was noted that the Taste is quite an intricate puzzle and moving anything would affect the whole layout, so it would have to be carefully managed.
- Safety and police presence were discussed and complimented. The issue of containment of offenders in an open area like downtown was mentioned. Chief Mulhearn responded that with each new development of problems, they will evaluate and put steps in place to counteract the trouble, but be prepared for it to grow and continue because that has been the trend in surrounding areas. Chief also noted that the trouble makers are local and from surrounding areas, not from city or off the train. There are problems when the festival is not happening either, and we should anticipate that problems will arise at the BBQ and 4th events as well.
- It was suggested that more marketing to residents to make sure to call at anytime with anything suspicious would help to deter problem behavior at all times in our community.
- It was suggested that the event could have a roped off area for beer garden and music to deter some people from entering.
- It was mentioned that the carnival may attract people to hang out. It was also noted that the carnival is one of the big areas of revenue for the event and without it we could not be self-sufficient especially with increases in costs and changes to Village services costs.
- Ty Warner was suggested as an alternative location. Many at the meeting felt the purpose of these events was to bring people to town and moving it to Ty would not serve that purpose.
- It was stated that most people in the community love this event and part of that success is based on its current location.
- There has been considerable effort to work with the downtown businesses. Over the past

few years, the WSEC has given up the core areas of the events, such as the Burlington lot, which used to be the hub of the carnival for the Taste and the hub of Cruisin' Nights. Other considerations that have been approved include sidewalk tables at the events, passing out of materials at the events, free tents and more. Though some of these items may sound simple on the surface it came with a lot of work on our volunteers. Only a few businesses have taken advantage of these options.

- A resident attending the meeting thanked all of the volunteers who put on these events and was impressed with the dialogue of the engaged participants.

Discussion on the Westmont Cruisin' Nights and Fresh Market took place with key comments below:

- It was offered that it takes time for any event to gain momentum. The market vendors were wonderful, but this event needs more time to grow and need to look at how to add foot traffic.
- It was stated that Cruisin' Nights need to take place in the Cass Burlington lot to be successful. Many agreed. And it was mentioned that the feedback from 100% of car owners is that you need that lot back.
- It was stated that bakery did well on Cruisin' Nights and that there should be consideration for the parking lot to be opened back up to the classic cars for the event if that's what it takes to grow the success of the event.
- Some of the trustees agreed that having the event be successful would affect Westmont in a positive way, especially for attracting other businesses to downtown.
- A suggestion to have events every other week and make them bigger and better was shared. The comments received were that this would be more confusing to keep track of and might deter people from attending.
- It was suggested to close Cass Avenue to make the event more of a street fair, but people felt that this might not be received well, especially the downtown businesses.

Emily thanked everyone for feedback and touched on some final items. She mentioned that the goal of our budget is to be self sufficient and have enough to cover expenses for one full year of events in surplus. It was announced that for the events to be successful we need to continue to build the relationship between the Village, WSEC, residents and the businesses. Everyone was invited to attend our WSEC regular board meetings on the 2nd Monday of every month.

### **Home Rule**

Ron mentioned that WSEC may sponsor one of the home rule presentations on Sept 24. Village officials are not allowed to either promote or disagree with the home rule status. Ron passed out a handout. Home rule has to be put on ballot since we fell behind the 25,000 count in census.

Larry asked if home rule ceases to exist how might it effect community events. It was discussed that home rule ceasing would impact budget since the Village may lose \$2MM in revenue and the Village board would have to work on re-evaluating budget or new revenue sources.

Ron discussed that home rule concept was developed in the 1800s. Towns are creatures of the state and cannot have powers other than what state gives them. In revised statutes, it was decided that if you surpass 25,000 people you can then become home ruled. Handout was passed out explaining some general information.

Larry mentioned that some people are passing out material that is not factual. By law, the Village must make sure that all information they post is factual so refer to the Village website for more information.

Village will have informational q & a for residents to get informed on home rule.

Motion made to adjourn the meeting.

Motion by Robin

Second by Linda S.

All in Favor: 11

Opposed: 0

Abstain: 0

The Village also approved adjourning by roll call vote.

**Meeting adjourned at 8:36pm.**



**Village Clerk's Office**

31 West Quincy Street • Westmont, Illinois 60559  
Tel: 630-981-6220 Fax: 630-829-4441

**ADJOURNMENT:** Motion by Robin Gardner to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Linda Sobitka and the motion passed.

**VOTE ON MOTION**           Ayes: Eleven (11).  
                                      Nays: None.

**MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:36 PM**

**ATTEST:**

**APPROVED:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Virginia Szynski, Village Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
William H. Rahn, Mayor

Dated this 15th day of October 2012.