

## ECCO Monthly Meeting – May 19-2011

Police Report: Officer Allman

Virginia Bedford said she is trying to recruit Block Captains. She urged members to introduce themselves to residents of their block and make sure everyone know who's on the block. There have been no break-ins on Clark Street because residents know each other.

The NOMA Neighborhood Facebook page includes Cotton Town, Keenan Terrace, Hyatt Park and Earlewood.

Officer Allman said many criminals are getting out on small bonds. Watson was arrested for 27 burglaries but was only charged with 3 because of liberal judges.

Allman urged residents to prevent crime with good lighting and setting burglar alarms.

Roger Browning has been drunk, annoying and has been stealing. Call the police and let them intervene, don't do it yourself.

The house at 3015 Clark at Northwood is a rental that is housing a nuisance neighbor – a dog that runs loose and attacks, drug and prostitution activity. The home owner is Keith Norvall.

Sen. John Scott was the featured speaker. He discussed reapportionment, which occurs with every 10-year census, to keep districts equal despite population changes. The state population is 4.6 million. District 19's population has grown from 100,500 people to 105,577. Northeast Columbia's population is 372,000. Richland County has 11 House members.

This is week five of working on the state's budget. In 1994, South Carolina's population was 3.7 million, the budget was \$3.7 billion, and the state had 42,000 employees. In 2011, the state has 54,000 FTEs. We started the budget process with \$5.8 billion. The Highway Patrol and other agencies are underfunded. We lost 2,200 education jobs in K-12 last year, and 2,100 this year. This is the first time we have seen this kind of recession. Unemployment has dropped from 12.6 to 9.9. With this budget, we can send 3,000-plus teachers back to work. Richland One is budgeted to receive \$3.3 million, and Richland Two is to receive \$4.3 million. Local revenue sharing is to be cut 17 million. We had a \$7.4 billion budget seven years ago, and last year grew the budget by \$5 million plus stimulus funds. A budget of \$6.2-\$6.4 billion is a stable budget for us.

Amazon won't be discussed until after the budget. We want them to sweeten the pot with more jobs—2,000. Walmart will have 4,000 new employees over 25 new locations. Expect a filibuster because some don't believe in tax breaks.

Fred Monk presided over the general meeting at 7:00 p.m.

The Quality of Life Committee is developing the “Friends of Earlewood Park.” The first event of the “Friends” was the Easter Egg Hunt, which was a huge success with 200 people participating.

The next event at the Park will be “See Spot Run,” a Humane Society annual event. They didn’t like their previous event location, so they will try Earlewood Park. The walk/run starts at 7:30 a.m. Saturday, June 4 on George St. at the top of the NOMA Nature Trail. We urge our neighborhood to “cheer them on.”The event will include some dog-focused vendors in Earlewood Park. Dog owners can sign up for membership in the Bark Park that day. More than 400 runners are expected.

The seven-member Bark Park committee meets monthly, and membership is now at 190.

Virginia Bedford reported on the Community Garden, which includes 41 beds. The goal is to build 40 more next year. A fence, funded by a \$400 community development grant from Keep The Midlands Beautiful, is being constructed around the Garden.

Virginia also reported that the ECCO Executive Council voted to increase the membership fee from \$5 to \$10 per person, effective July. Kids under 18 are free

Virginia recognized Brian South for being named “Richland County Developer of the Year,” by the Richland County Community Development Department. The South Company most recently is involved in the Ridgewood Neighborhood Revitalization Project in North Columbia.

Brian South gave the Zoning Committee report. The City dropped the ball on permits for the carport at Northwood & Columbia. The owners provided false figures on lot coverage, and the city believed them without checking. The matter will go before the City Board of Zoning Variance (BOZA). Virginia and Fred met with the City Zoning administrator to request notification of homes in our neighborhood that come before them.

Fred announced that the New Parks and Recreation building is under construction at Earlewood Park. There is concern about the status of the playground construction. The new director will speak at the next meeting.

No other Committee Reports

The meeting was adjourned by Fred Monk.

Respectfully submitted by Cynthia South, Secretary