



CENTRAL GARDENS ASSOCIATION  
Annual Meeting Minutes  
May 14, 2018

The Annual Meeting of the Central Gardens Association was held on May 14, 2018 in the new location of Ballet Memphis at 2144 Madison Avenue in Overton Square.

Board Members Present: Carla Balch, Sarah Blackburn, Tara Burton, Ned Dannenberg, Kathy Ferguson, Mark Fleischer, Leslie Goodwin, Eddie Hutchison, Leigh Martin, Anne McCarthy, Sheila Noone, Peter Pace, Dan Reid, Sharon Shipley, Barrie Simpson, Barbara Sysak, Ginny Taylor, Jenna Thompson, Ellen Whitten, Nancy Willis

Board Members Absent: Tara Burton, Michael Cristoff, Charles Lawing, Jana Larson, Bert Smythe, Amy Sterling Worrell, Jack Stimac, Randy Thompson

President Kathy Ferguson called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. Ferguson welcomed Mayor Jim Strickland, Reginald Milton, and David Lenoir to the meeting. The meeting began with an introduction to Dorothy Gunther Pugh, who founded Ballet Memphis, and an appreciation from the Board for the hospitality and support extended to the Central Gardens Association.

Ferguson continued the meeting with an overview of the Strategic Plan developed by the CGA Board in 2017, which allows the Board to focus on what the membership deemed most important.

After several years of successful fundraising, we have made significant investments in the neighborhood. She also introduced Nancy Knight, the new program manager and first part time employee of the Board, and explained her background in grant writing, fundraising and communication.

Ferguson gave an overview of the Pillars, and their accomplishments

**Pillar Reports:**

**Green Space and Infrastructure:**

**Medians:** Belvedere medians received an investment of \$10,000 to remove dead and dying trees, York Ave will be assessed shortly, and Cleveland has had dead trees replaced.

**Sidewalks:** We've made progress towards increasing the walkability of our sidewalks. After an assessment of the neighborhood, 60% needed immediate repair. We developed a group pricing structure, and 20 homes participated in a bundling program using the same vendor.

**Wreaths:** This year we were able to purchase new bows, thanks to grant monies from the cities. We were also able to hire a company to take the wreaths down this year, which required fewer volunteers.

**Perimeter Signage:** We have gotten a quote to repair all damaged signs so that the borders of the neighborhood have signs in good shape.

**Arboretum:** We will be evaluated for re-accreditation for our Level III Arboretum status, which we must do every 5 years. The committee has already begun identifying trees that need to be replaced and/or identified.

### **Midtown Relationships:**

CGA has worked with nearby neighborhoods. We provided guidance to Lea's Woods who were protesting an apartment community that was not in keeping with their Architectural Guidelines; we consulted with the Evergreen Association on Landmark issues, and helped Cooper Young with their own efforts securing Landmark District status.

In our own neighborhood, we had some success on a few issues: The developers of a condo complex on the edge of Central Gardens, near the University Club, are using the Central Gardens Architectural guidelines to inform their construction. The home at 1876 Central was threatened by a developer, but the Landmarks Committee helped the neighbors organize and protest, and as a result the plan was voted down. The proposed Pinnacle Bank on Union also required some compromises to meet the standards of the Midtown Overlay.

We have introduced Quarterly Clinics to help residents navigate the CGA Architectural Guidelines. We have had two so far, and they were met with enthusiasm from our residents, as well as residents of other landmarked neighborhoods.

Other initiatives of the Midtown Relationships' team include working with the city on the repaving of Peabody, working with Explore Bike Share program, a rewrite of the CGA Architectural Guidelines, and consulting with the Cooper Young group that installed security cameras throughout their neighborhood.

### **Community Relationships:**

Our Community Relationships Pillar is our group that reaches out to the community via social gatherings, events and fundraisers. This year's highlights include:

**Firehouse fundraiser:** Over the summer, a local fire station had been robbed, and we held a fundraiser in Overton Park to raise money to replace their stolen items. Donors replaced a stolen laptop, and a mountain bike.

**Home Tour:** This year's Home & Garden Tour was a great success, with 7 homes and institutions on the tour. We added an art show and sale, in addition to historic tours. Roughly 1,400 attended and we netted more than \$21,000 from this great fundraiser.

Other events that got neighbors together included the July 4<sup>th</sup> Parade, National Night Out, St. Jude Marathon, and block parties around the neighborhood.

**Membership Update:** We currently have 512 members, which represents 32% of the neighborhood.

### **In Appreciation:**

Ferguson thanked our Annual Meeting Volunteers Carla Balch, Sharon Shipley, Sarah Blackburn and Nancy Knight.

Ferguson thanked our Preservation Sponsor Renasant Bank, Arts Sponsor Ballet Memphis, and **2017 Home Tour Sponsors:** Dr. Allison Stiles, M.D., B.P. Painting, Buzz Free Mosquito, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Christopher Cooley, DDS, Commercial Bank & Trust Company, Eclectic Eye, Grace-St. Luke's Episcopal School, Jim Keras Subaru Memphis, Lexus of Memphis, Methodist LeBonheur Healthcare, Open Door Memphis, LLC, Robinson Tree Service, Sowell I& Company Realtors

Ferguson thanked the following Board Members and Community Volunteers:

Midtown Relationships: Barbara Sysak & Mark Fleischer -  
Cynthia Sengel, Bev & Terry Trojan, Josh Hardison, Emma Childers  
CGA Safety Committee  
Community Relationships Committee  
Home Tour Committee  
Holly Renken & Shantih Smythe, July 4<sup>th</sup> Committee

Sarah Blackburn & Carla Balch  
Ellen Whitten, Database & Membership Chair  
The CGA Communications Committee  
Outgoing Board Members: Alan Kleiman, Jack Stimac  
Past Presidents from 1975 to present day  
Executive Committee:  
Kathy Ferguson – President  
Eddie Hutchison – Vice President  
Sheila Noone – Secretary  
Dan Reid – Treasurer  
Leslie Goodwin - Community Building & Events  
Mark Fleischer – Midtown Relationships  
Peter Pace - Green Spaces & Infrastructure  
Barbara Sysak– Ex Officio  
And Eddie Ferguson, who won a special Jr Board Member Award

**Keynote:** Mayor Jim Strickland spoke with fondness for Central Gardens and shared that he met his wife in the neighborhood and got married at Immaculate Conception. He began his report with population loss, which has been steady for 50 years. His goal is re-investing in Memphis, to build up not out. He addressed some of what is working well: Friday emails, improving the 911 response time, MAS live release rate of 90%, Library attendance, staffing of city parks for the summer, and Pre-K for every child in Memphis. After touching on some of the challenges, the Mayor stressed that he is optimistic about the city. He then took several questions from the audience.

**Treasurer's Report:**

Total assets grew 14.4% year over year. Expenses increased with additional investments like median maintenance and other beautification projects. While Home Tour revenue decreased by 22%, our expenses also decreased by 52%. Overall, net income was down, which can be attributed to investments in the neighborhood.

**Election of Officers and Board Members: the following were voted in:**

**OFFICERS** Eddie Hutchison (President) Mark Fleischer (Vice President) Dan Reid (Treasurer) Sheila Noone (Secretary)

**DISTRICT 1 (North of Peabody)** Sara Blackburn, Nancy Willis, Jenna Thompson, Amy Worrell Sterling, Charles Lawing, Leigh Martin

**DISTRICT 2 (Peabody South to Harbert)** Leslie Goodwin, Anne McCarthy, Carla Balch, Philip Pontius, Ellen Whitten, Mike Cristoff

**DISTRICT 3 (South of Harbert)** Kaleb Brown, Sharon Shipley, Peter Pace, Tara Burton, Jana Larson, Ginny Taylor

**AT LARGE** Barrie Simpson, Ginger Collier, Margot Patrick

**EX OFFICIO** Kathy Ferguson, Barbara Sysak

**Incoming President:** Eddie Hutchison discussed his goals for the upcoming year: Alley cleanup & maintenance, facilitate sidewalk improvements, median improvements, enhance security (Phelps & cameras), increase membership by 20%, continue to build community relationships, and track all volunteer hours.

He asked the assembled neighbors to take some of these steps: join the CGA if they were not members, get involved (committee openings in Safety, Communications, Arboretum, July 4<sup>th</sup>, Home Tour, Holiday wreath hanging, Midtown Relationships), Host block parties (CGA tool kit available on website), and sign up for the monthly E-News letter.

Meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.