

Whitewater Meadows Citizens' Association Meeting Minutes

Exec members present:

Devon Thawe- President
Jesenia Menzies- Assistant PRO
Karim Sewell -PRO
Kimberly Moore- Assistant Secretary

Exec Members Absent:

Peter Hutchinson

Date: February 4, 2024

Agenda

Opening Remarks

Opening prayer

Recap of last general meeting

Financial update

Update on wall project

Security matters- Camera system installation and maintenance

New business: Hartlands Drive entrance to toll highway

Road patching

Community park upkeep

Closing remarks

Meeting was convened by Devon Thawe at 4:37pm

NB: Monetary values recorded are quoted in Jamaican dollars (JMD)

Opening remarks

- Devon highlighted his desire to keep the meeting within the two-hour timeframe to address the necessary issues quickly and efficiently.
- The last general meeting that took place with the team from M&M Engineers in October 2023 was mentioned to have been too long, much to the annoyance of the company representatives and it was concluded that such a meeting will not be held in such a fashion again.
- Members of the community were reminded of the available positions on the WWMCA executive body and encouraged to contact anyone on the Exec team to communicate their interest to serve in any of the positions.

Recap of last meeting

- Kimberly relayed that for the most part one of the main things that came out of that meeting the last time with the project oversight team for the irrigation project was concern of community impact from the construction work. The contractor from M&M Engineering provided assurances that the relevant protocols and procedures would be followed and any concerns can be taken to the point person or utilize a contact number that was given. Persons were also advised of possible employment opportunities with the project oversight team.
- The issue of the sewage and the smell emanating from it was also a major issue and pinpointing who was responsible for address the issue of the emanating stench. It was identified that Cancara was responsible for that matter. Community members expressed concerns about keeping the storm drains clear and clearing when needed.
- Community members were split on the matter of the erection of the wall at Sydenham/Stanhope.

Matter of damage to the Camera at the scheme entrance

Devon relayed to the residents that the damage to the camera at the entrance has affected the other two cameras at the 1st right turn and that to date, not much has taken place in the way of restoration.

Devon and Peter have been in communication with the project team, and it has been observed that the project has slowed significantly. Devon indicated however that, after the project's completion, the sidewalk needs to be restored and the area behind Jacaranda that is being used as a foot path needs to be blocked off so that persons are not walking from behind Jacaranda into the scheme.

Devon also highlighted that a bigger concern is the filling up of the canal because of the stagnant water that is accumulating which breed mosquitoes.

Karim added that she observed that there is not much activity going on and she thought they would have been wrapping up. To which Devon responded that it was the laying of pipes which caused the delay and citing that other construction work had to be done to carry water under the bridge, to lay the pipes because of issues with space and the infrastructure accommodating the laying of the pipes. He stated that the primary work has been done and so there has to be a push for completion so damages incurred can be restored.

Financial update

- Devon provided the financial update in Peter's absence, citing that the with no one to fill the vacancies on the Exec team for the citizens' association, the team's capacity to properly deliver is significantly reduced.
- Devon reiterated the need for persons to serve in the various Exec capacities to drive results and uphold one another especially in the instances of absences.
- Devon indicated that the latest financial figures show that the association is in possession of \$383,000 JMD up to the end of January. \$235,000 of the total are restricted funds designated only for the wall project. He pointed out that there was \$148,000 in the general pool of funds, with \$50,000 used for the Stanhope project for the park . Leaving the Association with only \$100,000 in the general pool by December 2023 to run the community.
- Devon highlighted that \$100,000 is not sufficient to cover the costs associated with the operations of the community. Which causes inconsistencies in aesthetic maintenance efforts such as cutting the entrance, upkeep of the community and general maintenance, etc. He also gave residents examples of maintenance costs, citing that clean up along the entrance way in the Christmas season saw the Association spending \$97,000. The president pointed out that the association cannot cut the green areas more frequently if the funds collected are inadequate.
- The matter of the increase in dues to 1500 was touched. Devon stated that a decision was taken to increase the dues from \$500 to \$1500 as \$500 if collected from every resident would be sufficient for maintenance. The decision was justified based on prior collections which saw persons contributing \$1500 for dues and the wall project. It was also stated that the wall project had been paused, because of the current conflict. Future updates were promised, as it was articulated that it would not be fair to collect funds for the project and not action any work.
- He also added that while Whitewater Meadows is a large community with 700+ houses, it does not equate to there being a contribution from every home. Lack of

contributions can be due to families not having enough to give or even unoccupied homes.

- Devon continues to impress on residents the need for maintenance and upkeep at the entrance way, citing that contributions are not mandatory which puts much of the efforts of the Association in jeopardy.
- Residents expressed desires to continue collections for the wall project, to set these funds aside until the project resumes.
- Other residents expressed a need for the green areas at the entranceway to be cut and maintained on a regular basis- every two months for aesthetics. Devon took the opportunity to advise residents that we cannot cut the green areas more frequently if more persons don't pay their dues consistently
- Ideas of creating a sidewalk and its practicality while maintaining the green space beside the Jacaranda wall and planting shrubs on Chedwin side were floated and discussed. No decisions were taken, however one resident agreed to research the technical considerations of constructing a sidewalk.

Update on the Wall project.

- Devon provided an update on the wall project, stating that the project had been paused to address the issue of its partial destruction by another resident, who when confronted refused to take responsibility. Restorative Justice was a suggested solution to recover money for the damage. Devon requested that persons versed in legal matters provide advice. JPs were suggested.
- It was indicated that the wall will have no gate and this was the final decision and that although the progress may be slow it is very much alive but because of the inability to deal with the vandalism through litigation another route has been sought to go through the courts and so would take a longer time.

Security matters- Camera system,

- Residents raised concerns about safety and property security. One resident relayed how his car stolen from the scheme and many others had reported similar incidents. Devon took the opportunity to relay that WWM is becoming an easy target for robbers and other criminals because of a lack of security. He reiterated that a proper camera system should be put in place especially at the park, but the indolence and disunity among community members is a major stumbling block to proper community security.
- M&M damaged the camera at the front. The team is currently awaiting re-compensation from the company to restore maintenance and upkeep of the system.

- It was suggested that persons who currently have camera systems be given access to the feed.

Association filings

- The community was updated on the Association filings where the annual returns are being filed, which are underway at the time of meeting. Devon also informed the residents that the company certificate for the Association's status as charity has expired and to obtain a new one requires an audit, which attracts a high cost.
- Devon assured the residents that the updated certificate can be obtained because the financial records /accounts are up to date and accurate. He articulated the benefits of an audit but reminded the residents that an audit is not currently being sought, though required to get back charity status, there will be no audit at this time.

New business

Highway entrance

- Devon encouraged residents to call the relevant authorities regarding matters of illegal burning. He reiterated that the laws have empowered persons to call the relevant authorities to have the laws governing illegal burning enforced against perpetrators.
- Devon encouraged members to attend meetings being held about the highway entrance from Hartlands Drive between Orchard and the mayor and voice their opinions and concerns regarding matters of increased traffic, noise etc. Citing that speaking among themselves is not effective. It would be effective to make their voices heard and see what plans have been developed. The meeting was slated for February 7,2024.
- Residents gave their views on the highway entrance stating the benefits of reducing traffic bottleneck at the intersection of Hartlands and Old Harbour Road. While others suggested that there be an alternate route be cut and road constructed to access the highway.
- Another view relayed that the new entrance to the highway may cause a hindrance for persons coming out of the various schemes, and the privacy and serenity would be disturbed by the traffic.
- Views on the matter of erecting a stop sign and a reverse mirror was raised , with persons expressing frustration with not being able to see oncoming vehicles. Devon attributed the frustration to shrub overgrowth to the invisibility of oncoming vehicles. He assured the residents the shrubs would be cut lower to increase visibility.
- Devon assured the residents that he would dialogue with the other citizens associations for other affected communities to see how best the pros and cons can be addressed.

Road Patching

- Devon indicated that the last work was done from Nov. 2023. Plans have been made to patch the pot holes on Stanhope. Want to use cement and marl, donations are welcome and appreciated but the Association needs money to pay persons to do the labour. It was further impressed upon residents the need for monetary resources community upkeep and maintenance.
- Residents raised the question of approaching the MP /parish council for assistance. Karim indicated that parish council is responsible for road fixing and resources are allocated based on political motivation.
- Residents encouraged persons to be registered for voting to strengthen the community voice. Some rebutted that road fixing should not be political, but others reiterated that political motivations are what cause political figures to take action and other strategic partnerships with other community organisations should be considered to have a voice that would bring attention to the matter of the roads in WWM.

The Community park

- Devon provided an update on the park. Relaying that a play area was erected in partnership with the Kiwanis Club, but it is still under construction, stating there are to be benches and a table erected. At which point, Devon reiterated the need for donations to the finishing plans of installation a reality.
- Kiwanis wants to fence the area for security – will be done at a later date.
- Need help with watering plants- Called for volunteers. Online. No response
- Devon responded with reiterating that if one cannot volunteer then payment should be made for the benefit of upkeep and maintenance.
- Residents were challenged on their apathy for failing to participate in beneficial community actions such as dues collection. Devon stated that it is unrealistic to have activities only executed by a willing few, who, if they don't show up, plans are cancelled. For example, dues collection is postponed because the willing members are unavailable . One resident raised a concern that notices requesting volunteers are sent too close to the date of the activity and so must be circulated earlier. Devon responded that the date of the activity e.g. dues collection is on the 1st Saturday of every month, with such knowledge , making a plan to volunteer is achievable. Residents requested that a reminder be sent out close to the time. Jesenya reiterated the need to monitor the WhatsApp group for messages and notices for volunteer opportunities.

Closing remarks

- Devon made a final call for volunteers, emphasising the benefits of coming together for the good of the community.

Meeting adjourned at 6:36 pm.