General Assembly Meeting: February 10, 2013

Disclaimer: Meeting minutes are not official until approved by the General Assembly. While every attempt is made to insure accuracy, minutes should not be considered a verbatim account of proceedings.

Agenda:
Opening of the Meeting: Meeting called to order at 7:00pm

1. Fight song and role call
2. Open Forum
   a. Alex Rachlin: Has it ever been brought up to extend the hours of Freeman?
   b. Zach Malter: There was a lot of pushback due to financial limitations. It has been advocated many times, though. We can try again.
   c. Nikki Softness: If you want to serve on the Freeman Committee, you can definitely get involved!
   d. Chase Knowles: Has there been a decision to change our meetings to every Sunday at 2:30pm?
      i. Chloe Murtagh: We would have to change the by-laws.
      ii. Andrew Trexler: It’s a little harder in terms of letting people get back to campus. We can discuss further.
   e. Scott Elias: Can we go back to the other room for GA meetings?
      i. Sam Usdan: Why not make the table formation in a square?
      ii. Andrew Trexler: There aren’t enough seats in the other room and people don’t feel included in the conversation. Both of these topics are definitely worth discussing.
   f. Zach Malter: Straw poll, who wants to have the meetings at 2:30pm or 7pm? This room or the other room?
      i. 2:30pm--11
      ii. 7pm--18
      iii. Usdan--10
      iv. 41 Wyllys--18
3. Minutes
   a. Minutes approved.
4. Committee Reports
   a. President
      i. Jesse Ross-Silverman: When’s the next board meeting? If there was something worth discussing, would we discuss at a previous GA meeting?
      ii. Zach Malter: March 2nd. And yes.
b. COCo
   i. Sam Ebb: Is there some sort of way to bring together Wesleyan sports teams and people in the Middletown community? Also, I still like the idea of a Middletown and Wesleyan battle of the bands.
   ii. Syed Ali: Our carnival idea would involve the community.
   iii. Nicole Brenner: Class of 2014 planned a huge dodgeball tournament that had great turnout.
   iv. Jacob Musinsky: Talk to Spirit and Events Committee about this sort of stuff!

c. AAC
   i. Jason Shatz: Can there be a resolution about Drop/Add, the length of the Drop/Add and transparency beforehand.
   ii. Sam Ebb: There was some work previously for profs putting their syllabi online, some had issues with intellectual property.
   iii. Mari Jarris: You can find that syllabus information online.
   iv. Arya Alizadeh: In terms of colleges, are they looking at expanding things modeled off of CSS and COL?
   v. Sam Ebb: That’s what we’re trying to figure out.

d. SAC
   i. Jason Shatz: I will be working heavily on the medical leave issue, so send info my way.
   ii. Sam Ebb: If Weshop ends up open over break, would you be able to use points carried over from the semester before?
   iii. Nicole Updegrove: Not sure, but it’s my hope they would carry over, but we haven’t even initiated conversations about it yet. Revenue has to be made, obviously, to keep the facilities running and staff paid.
   iv. Arya Alizadeh: For the break meal plans, most people are athletes and the athletic department gives them cash. Would those athletes be forced to switch over to the meal plan?
   v. Nicole Updegrove: I won’t let a meal plan be made that isn’t optional.

e. FiFac
   i. Scott Elias: What is the difference between Green Fund and Green Revolving Fund?
      1. Andrew Trexler: Hopefully more money from donors. Also, the savings from green projects would hopefully go back into the Green Revolving Fund. The Green Fund now gives to projects that don’t have a financial payback.
   ii. Sam Usdan: Help me out with solar panels!

f. OEAC
   i. ITC
ii. Martin Malabanan: Is the student government conference still happening?
iii. Christian Hosam: Yes, I’m meeting with SALD very soon. We’re still working on it.
iv. Christian Hosam: For the publicity form, it’s only for WSA committees, right?

v. Mari Jarris: Yes.

vi. Jason Shatz: I’m looking into the NESCAC student government conference. It’s slow going.

g. SBC

5. Discussion/Vote on the Zoning Resolution

a. Andrew Trexler: There’s been some significant changes to go over. I have a statement from Gabriela De Golia, a student who works in Middletown politics. I will read this on stack.

b. Nicole Updegrove: Sam made a great point that “we all fight to speak last.” I hope we will all endeavor to not re-make our points just to have gotten the last word. You do not have to speak out against every comment someone makes against your side.

c. Scott Elias: Motion to consider unfriendly amendments (sustained). I want the planning/zoning commission to be conscientious of all community persons when make decisions. If the let this zoning plan goes through, I want everyone involved in what goes in the zone.

d. Nicki Softness: I support Scott’s changes because it gets us more involved in the discussions. We don’t need to aggressively tell people to do their job. Think about what you want to accomplish personally and what we have the chance to pass.

e. Mansoor Alam: This current proposal recognizes our right to be in the conversation not only because we’re students but also because many students are from the area. To be honest, I think Scott’s points might be taken as “we’re proposing you do your job”.

f. Jake Blumenthal: I agree with Mansoor. With all due respect to Scott, we’re better just withdrawing the resolution if we go with his amendments to the resolution.

g. Jesse Ross-Silverman: I think we have the right to make any kind of resolution we want.

h. Andrew Trexler: Gabriella wrote a letter urging you to remember that this development will affect the community for years to come. “We have a responsibility to write this resolution. The WSA has the right to comment, and Middletown residents will not find us pushy or out of place. Pushing for non-involvement is not helping Middletown-university relations. As WSA representatives, you have the right to decide on affairs for the student body. The Middletown government is excited to see Wesleyan students taking interest in this issues.”
i. Scott Elias: I do think it’s important to note that this development will affect students. I think we should take my stance on the issue. I think we should remind those delegates to do their job based on our expressed concerns. I don’t want another commercial site outside of Wesleyan, but it’s not our authority to tell them, NO!!” Most people were concerned about safety and content concerns as opposed to the actual building of the development.

j. Mari Jarris: Centerplan was asking about how it should be done, but most people were just saying it should not be done. I think the force of this resolution needs to have the opinions when we go to the zoning commission.

k. Scott Elias: I think my amendments will be useful to the zoning commission. I understand your sentiment, but the reality is that I’m not comfortable as the WSA sending this opinion out there. We just can’t take a stance because we don’t all agree.

l. Nicole Updegrove: There’s never been 100% consensus in the student body. We’re not telling anyone how to do his or her job. We’re not commanding them. We’re just telling them that a certain group feels a certain way.

m. Zach Malter: I want to echo Nicole’s point. I think our role is to send a signal as a constituency of “is this good or bad”? If we don’t do this, we’re restraining our own power. We need to assume it’s going to be the worst possible scenario for this development. We have no guarantees. There are a lot of risks we take not putting our full force behind an opposition.

n. Syed Ali: We have a Middletown Relations Committee. We should feel invested in this cause. It’s our responsibility as constituents. We are still residents, even it’s for only a few years.

o. Nicole Brenner: I’ve been pretty split on the issue for a while. We can’t just sit here when something is coming that we can have a say in. The negatives that would come from this development outweigh the potential positives.

p. Maggie Maselli: It’s important to think about the zone change and the development are two different things. This development changes everything. That’s something to think about.

q. Jason Shatz: First, with regards to Maggie’s point, this is a completely different animal. They’re trying to consolidate the campus and get rid of other properties that may not be safe and may be costly. Second, I’m interested in hearing the counter-arguments for the developments. Mayor Drew is in support. He’s loves jobs. And some people’s job are at stake. They could employ many people in Middletown, including students at Wesleyan. I’m just playing devil’s advocate.

r. Andrew Trexler: Mayor Drew’s statement about jobs is highly questionable. The zoning issue affects the entire area, and it’s permanent. Scott’s amendments neuter the resolution.
s. Sam Ebb: I don’t think you can completely detach this issue from selling Wesleyan properties. These properties being sold can change everything, not just housing. It changes the entire area.

t. Adam Brudnick (?): Program houses and senior houses are going to be phased out with 20-30 years. Any conversation about houses should be put in the context of delaying the inevitable.

u. Jake Blumenthal: Trexler, is there a reason you did not speak more to the program/senior housing issue?

v. Andrew Trexler: Nope. That’s a friendly amendment, write a blurb up.

w. Sam Usdan: It should be noted that due to its location and parking design, I think that this is not a direct substitute for a property on Main Street. There’s a lot of traffic on I-66 during rush hour, and those are the types of people who would be more likely to stop somewhere with a parking lot than Main Street. Second, I don’t think this development will steal jobs from Main Street. Third, this development could have positive effects on rents in the area and other tenants.

x. Alton Wang: I’ve been split on this issue for forever. Personally, I’m against the development, but I don’t think we need to support everything when there’s no concrete proof. There’s never been enough evidence for me to feel either way. I don’t know if we can really say, “This is a super bad idea.” I’m still more confused on the issue in general.

y. Maggie Masselli: If you walk up Washington Street, you can see a lot of empty space and rundown spots. That area is commercially zoned. The thing is, a lot of that land is not developed. The things that would be built along Washington Street would draw away Wesleyan student from Main Street. We’re trying to draw Wes students away.

z. Jesse Ross-Silberman: Anyone who disagrees with whatever we say is free to go to the planning/zoning committee meeting and say they don’t support the WSA resolution. I’m fine with adding parts of Scott’s clause. In response to what Adam said, we don’t know how that would be phased out. We need to think about what re-zoning in general could mean.

aa. Adam Brudnick (?): The zoning has big effects on Wesleyan’s future housing responsibilities. Why don’t we not make this language as harsh? Why don’t we just use facts?

bb. Christian Hosam: Question to Adam, isn’t it more environmentally sustainable to restructure a house than to create a new development?

cc. Adam Brudnick: Depends on your time frame.

dd. Christian Hosam: This argument is more about how this should go to the zoning commission with the resolution as opposed to how much support we have in this room. We need to bring data into this resolution.
Sam Usdan: In response to your point about why they wouldn’t necessarily build these things in unrented parts, this is the advantage of being in a dense residential area and being in walking distance to the school. The people frequenting the area would be students. The reason why many things on Washington Street are vacant is that those spots don’t have a need and the wants are not transferrable.

Syed Ali: The location is not an accident. This is why we need a combative tone. We’re a core constituent; our voices need to be heard.

Zach Malter: First, Christian brought up the WSA’s relationship with the community. One of the issues is that we don’t advocate on behalf of the students vigorously enough. Keep that in mind. We need to be goal-oriented as an assembly in terms of stuff we should get done. We need to be as effective as possible.

Lily Donahue: In terms of conveying our opinions to the zoning board, I’m pretty sure they’re already aware of our disapproval of the development. I think we have to look at what we need to go forward. I don’t think taking a stand either way will be well-received. I think we have to go into a “what’s our place going to be in the process?” sort of idea. We don’t need to create animosity.

Christian Hosam: Why can’t we put this resolution in the form of a letter?

Andrew Trexler: We are a legislative body not a literary society.

Chloe Murtagh: Don’t be afraid to give an opinion to your governing representative.

Scott Elias: I’m just worried about us saying no but seeming ignorant. We don’t need to tell the zoning commission we should do one thing or another thing. We can’t just make demands without enough research or “political capital”. Centerplan is also open to more talks with students.

Mansoor Alam: This was brought up a few times. It’s the basic idea of entitlement. We seem to think we’re more entitled than Middletown residents, but Wesleyan students have an endowment of political capital. We have the right to go down to city hall and demand specific things. Also in terms of time frame, the easiest thing to do is to look at the other people involved in this in Middletown. One of the issues I faced was whether or not I’m acting as a member of the Middletown community or as a Wesleyan student, and I think it really doesn’t matter.

Nicole Updegrove: We’ve passed some pretty combative language. The word “urge” is fine. Tell me what seems combative in this resolution.

Scott Elias: I don’t think it’s as combative but “urge” with the lines that follow seems too specific.

Nicole Updegrove: We have the right to urge democratic bodies to do as we wish. The students urge us to do things all the time.
Scott Elias: I’m opposed to the idea of telling the zoning commission what to do as opposed to telling them to do their job.

Nicole Brenner: Motion to table discussion until Chelsea Greene from Concert Committee talks (sustained).

**Concert Committee Discussion—Resolution Temporarily Tabled**

Chelsie Green: We’ve spent all the money we were allocated and I was a little concerned. We’ve been pushing to make people send things to concert committee.

Jesse Ross-Silverman: Was there any change to how much money you got from SBC?

Chelsie Green: We only got an extra $1,000 for the whole year-long budget.

Zach Malter: Can you describe what concert committee does?

Chelsie Green: We get about $82,000 to book concerts on campus. People put in requests and they give us their pitch. We will follow up with them and help them throughout the process if we accept their proposals.

Chelsie Green: We were going to have a panel about this, but we ran out of money so fast. Aural Wes has a link to show you how to book shows.

Syed Ali: Could you have an info session just to let people know how quickly money can run out so people can get ahead?

Chelsie Green: Def down to do that.

**Back to Zoning Resolution Discussion**

Sam Ebb: “Urging” is not “demanding”. This is good language. We explain our reasons. We don’t sound combative. We need to send a message to the Middletown community as well as the zoning committee.

Jake Blumenthal: I think Scott’s changes don’t have the same effect as the current resolution. They only make things slightly more confusing.

Andrew Trexler: To Sam Usdan’s point a while ago, do we really want a highway coffee stop to be sitting right on the entrance of our campus? To Lily Donahue’s point, you can’t really plan on the zoning committee members to have read everything online. To Alton Wang’s point about permanence, this zoning change is permanent and it affects more areas than just this one area. A developer with a better idea could approach later on and request a zoning change that we could support sometime in the future. To Scott’s point about Centerplan continuing talks, I don’t really believe them.

Glenn Cantave: Is there anyone who is strongly for this development having? Can we hear the long-term developments that can be available?

Sam Usdan: The long-term advantage is it could potentially raise rents in the area which could increase tax revenue for the town.

Christian Hosam: My only point is that we should be able to write letters. We’re wasting our time saying, “We should be strong! No, we should be less strong!”
Ellen Paik: I’ve been on the fence for forever. I would be in favor of the development because I’d love something like a Starbucks close to me. But since most students are against the development, I will vote for them. I also think the point of a resolution is an urging. This resolution is a strong recommendation.

Alton Wang: Can we add in somewhere the statistics we gathered from the student body? Those statistics clear things up.

Jake Blumenthal: Point of inquiry for Scott, is “encourages” a slightly better word?

Scott Elias: I don’t care about the word. I care about the meaning.

Andrew Trexler: For the sake of avoiding semantic arguments, I will take anything that changes “Urges” as unfriendly.

### Vote on the Zoning Resolution

1. Voting on Scott’s unfriendly amendments
   1. Who is in favor of Scott’s #1 amendment?
      a. Does not pass.
   2. Who is in favor of Scott’s #2?
      a. Add Scott’s #2 to Andrew’s amendment.
2. All in favor of voting on each clause separately?
   1. Voting on each amendment clause.
3. All in favor of a role call vote?
   1. Does not pass.
4. Voting on Clauses Separately
   1. Voting on the Preambulatory Clauses
      a. Y 24 N 2 A 9
   2. Voting on Operative Clause #1
      a. Y 24 N 5 A 6
   3. Voting on Operative Clause #2
      a. Y 17 N 9 A 7
   4. Voting on Operative Clause #3
      a. Y 27 N 0 A 7
5. Resolution passes in full.

6. New Business and Announcements

Meeting Adjourned: 09:30pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Lily Herman ‘16