

## **Spruce Hill Community Association**

Minutes February 9, 2010

Members: Bob Behr, Pauline Borkon, Ben Chesluk, Brett Feldman, David Fenske, Janet Finin, Anne Froehling, Barry Grossbach, Justin Kaplan, Richard King, Al Madrid, Bill Magill, Steve McCoubrey, Elaine Nelson, Mark Young

Officers: Mark Wagenveld, Ed Halligan, Marie McCullough, Judy Powers, Monica Ferguson

Excused: Judy Dawson-Jones, Laura Mazurkewicz, Dan Thut, Matt Wolfe

Absent, Jackie Waiters

Guests: Greg Heller, Enterprise Center Community Development Corporation (CDC); Brian Villa, a Spruce Hill resident; Mary Goldman, Education Committee Chair; Joe McNulty, University City District

The meeting began at 7:40 pm.

**Minutes.** The minutes from the January meeting were approved.

**Guest Speaker:** Mr. Heller spoke about the Enterprise Center in general and then more specifically about the Center for Culinary Enterprises (CCE) proposed on 48<sup>th</sup> Street between Pine and Spruce. The Enterprise Center, at 46<sup>th</sup> and Market, began in the 80's as a business incubator. It is now focused on supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs.

The CDC is one of two non-profits under the Enterprise Center. It was established in 2001 to make investments in West Philadelphia in order to improve the quality of living and empower the community. They received a Wachovia grant to work on a neighborhood plan for Walnut Hill and part of that plan was to deal with the former supermarket on 48<sup>th</sup> Street that has long been vacant. The goals of the project include providing jobs to low- and middle-income residents as well as community-based food, retail and business training.

The front of the building will include a café, a community market and a restaurant. The CCE will offer a program at the restaurant to provide training to neighborhood high school students. The back of the kitchen will include an eKitchen and three shared use community kitchens available for rent. The eKitchen will be an interactive classroom and demonstration kitchen. The CCE will provide individualized training in business skills to participants, workshops utilizing educators in the area looking for community venues, and classes on health and nutrition for the general public.

An additional component of the CCE will be the Walnut Hill Mini-Farm, located 8 blocks away. The model is the community producing food for the community. Produce will be available in the community market as well as the Farmer's Market in Clark Park.

Phase One of the construction will begin in April or May and is the retail space. Phase Two is the kitchens and is scheduled to begin in 2011. Work will begin on the Mini-Farm in March of this year. The project has a \$5.3 million budget and plans to be self-sustainable by Year 4.

**SHCA-owned "Garden."** Judy Powers reported that we are going to be billed for storm water runoff at the "garden" inside the block bounded by 45th, Locust, Melville and Spruce Streets. A discussion ensued about the use of the parcel of land that SHCA owns, formerly known as "the bird sanctuary," and whether it could be converted to a community garden. It was pointed out that there are a large number of trees on the land that would need to be cleared.

**Report on the Trust.** Barry Grossbach, President of the Spruce Hill Community Trust, reported on its annual meeting. He began with a bit of history on the Trust. It began in 2002 with an initial grant of \$55,000 from the Coleman Foundation. The initial focus was on addressing the Baltimore Avenue Corridor, a project that was subsequently turned over to UCD. In 2005, the Trust spearheaded a review of the 1995 Spruce Hill plan. This review was undertaken by a group of University of Pennsylvania students as a semester-long project. The Market Street Corridor project, which is currently underway, came about in part as a result of this review. The Trust is hoping to partner with Penn and the University of the Sciences for future planning in Spruce Hill.

Currently the Trust has roughly \$4,800 in cash (exact numbers were provided but not recorded), a \$17,700 CD earning 0.9% interest, and \$56,000 in SHCA-designated money: \$18,000 in the education fund, \$36,000 in proceeds from the May Fair, \$575 in block improvement grant money, and \$400 in performing arts money.

Barry presented the slate for the 2010 board of directors for the Trust as follows: President, Barry Grossbach; Vice President, Ed Halligan; Treasurer, Michelle Robinson; Secretary, Leslie Esdaile Banks; Members, Dan Garofalo, Mike Hardy, Steve McCoubrey, Greg Montanaro, Sue Pringle, and Essaul Sanchez.

The 2010 board of the Spruce Hill Community Trust was approved by the SHCA board in a unanimous voice vote.

### **Committee Reports**

Communications – Marie McCullough. Nothing to report.

Block Grants – Steve McCoubrey. Steve walked around Spruce Hill with Sue Pringle, from UC Green, to identify candidates for block grants and the TreeVitalize program. UC Green is going to encourage identified property owners to apply for these programs.

Membership/Block Representatives – Mark Young and Justin Kaplan. Pricing will be available for the new brochure soon and they should be printed by the next board meeting. Mark and Justin are also looking into the cost of placards for trees, decals, and printing additional advertising for the May Fair, such as flyers. Judy Powers added we need to have our annual membership phone drive and the date was set for 2/16, at 6:30pm for board members to come to the center with their cell phones to make these phone calls.

Education Committee – Mary Goldman. The committee received an additional \$10,000 towards the Wilson school playground. Another significant source of support is pending. Applications for three additional grants have been submitted. West Philadelphia High School has a \$6 million Labor Dept. grant, which started this year. As a result the school district is now trying to designate the school as a Renaissance school, which would mean it could then become a charter school, an innovation school, or taken over by an outside company. Under any of these scenarios the current principal, who Mary believes is making good progress with the school, would have to be replaced.

Safety – Ed Halligan. Resident expressed concerns at the recent Friends of Clark Park meeting about large unleashed dogs knocking over small children in Clark Park. If you know anyone with a large dog, please encourage them to keep their dog on a leash.

Operations – Mark Wagenveld. Mark provided a report on the \$10,000 the board had approved in June 2008 for improvements to the building and the apartments. That included a new boiler (\$4,250), electrical upgrades for the apartments and repainting some of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor when it was vacant. Counting \$975 spent on roof repair in 2009, there is \$1,400 left to upgrade the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor when the tenant, who has been there for 8 years, moves out. More is needed.

The board approved spending the \$1,400 and an additional \$1,000 for the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. (Since the meeting, the tenant has informed us he is staying on for a time.) .

Zoning – Barry Grossbach. A new gastro-pub on Baltimore Avenue is under discussion.

Old Business - None

New Business – Mr. Villa indicated he could suggest a low-risk, higher-yield investment vehicle for the money the Trust has in the CD. He also indicated the Friends of Schuylkill Park have addressed the unleashed dog issue and he suggested looking at their website. Finally, Mr. Villa is a tennis coach and would like to see the outdoor space at Penn Alexander School across from the CVS and other areas within Spruce Hill utilized for a tennis program for kids. He is hoping SHCA can assist him in this effort.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:22 pm

- Monica Ferguson, SHCA Secretary