

SPRUCE HILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

BOARD MEETING, February 14, 2012

Meeting called to order at 7:35 by Ed Halligan, President

**Present:** E. Halligan, J. Powers, A. Lochrie, M. Wagenveld, B. Behr, P. Borkon, M. Caulkins, B. Chesluk, A. Cole, M. Ferguson, A. Froeling, B. Grossbach, R. Guffanti, L. Huang, S. McCoubrey, E. Nelson, J. Waiters, M. Wolfe

Absent with notice: B. Feldman, J. Finin, J. Kaplan, M. McCullough

Absent without notice: D. Thut

Not Recorded: Madrid & Young

Minutes of January, 2012 unanimously accepted

**Speaker:** David Masur, E.D. of Penn Environment spoke on the project to get the Reading Viaduct transformed to green space, a potential of 300,000 sq. ft. public byway for the city. Destruction of the trestle estimated at \$50M; transformation estimated at \$37M. Additional benefit of transformation is in construction jobs, attraction for new businesses in the area and enhancement of surrounding real estate values.

### Committee Reports

**Zoning:** (reported by Barry Grossbach)

- Status of redevelopment of 40<sup>th</sup> and Pine Sts. (property owned by Penn, contracted to developer): Zoning committee unanimously agrees that demolition of the mansion currently on the property is the only way to make redevelopment for graduate housing (the developer's plan) that will be neighborhood-friendly (i.e. of mass and scale that fits the residential nature of that area) feasible. The zoning committee has made a public commitment to the building being no more than 5 stories.

The mansion has previously been designated an historic structure, and is now in serious, dangerous deterioration. Penn will have to seek a change in that designation if the building is to be taken down.

Peter Manugian, speaking as a resident of Woodland Terrace, presented the position that there may be options for the property that would involve restoring the mansion -- e.g. conversion to condominiums, Head Start, help for the Penn Alexander school overflow.

Committee seeks position of the board.

It was moved (A. Cole) and seconded (R. Guffanti) and passed unanimously that SHCA does not oppose the demolition of the mansion.

- The Law Institute parking issues have been resolved.
- A "popsicle shop" is going in on 44<sup>th</sup> St. between Honest Tom's Tacos and Tampopo.
- The take-out application for Subway (4500 block of Baltimore), originally denied by the city was reconsidered and approved.
- An update on the process of the Chinese Christian Church's application for use of the building at 45<sup>th</sup> and Walnut. SHCA supports this use and the Zoning Committee has worked hard to engage the surrounding community positively and to work provisos (e.g. about parking) into the application. City's zoning hearing is March 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Communications:** (Mark Young)

Mock up of newsletter presented a template for a newsletter, saying it is very easy for anyone to use. He suggests paying the additional expense to have it printed in color which would make it more appealing to readers and much more attractive to potential advertisers.

As has always been the case, getting content to the producer of the newsletter is the critical factor. Monica Caulkins suggested that each committee present a brief (3-4 sentences), bulleted summary, either sharing space over an annual cycle or in each letter.

**Education:** (Monica Caulkins)

- Kindergarten enrollment at Penn Alexander: 91 presented as of enrollment day (and preceding overnight); not known how many slots are available, and registering at another school not possible until August; this is additionally stressful as it leads to uncertainty about how much space will be available in First Grade for this group.
- Announcement just today that the old West Philly High (4700 block of Walnut) is for sale for \$6.5M.

**Operations:** (Mark Wangenveld passed)

**Safety:** (Ed Halligan)

- Noted that UCD had just sent out an email "blast" that presented map and data on security incidents over the last month. Ed will let other board members know how to get on list to receive this kind of communication.

Items for discussion and consideration:

- Unanimous approval to contribute \$500 (purchase a "brick") to the Center for Culinary Enterprise in their fundraising effort to complete the renovation of the building at 48<sup>th</sup> and Spruce.

**Announcements:**

- Finished office window banners, in color, now hanging. Much appreciation to Anne Froeling for her efforts in reworking the office "face." Pauline requested assurance that notices pertinent to the community, even if not SHCA events, will get full notice.
- Fairmount Park Commission/Parks and Recreation (which now manages Clark Park), has issued guidelines for large events that will impact how we do things for May Fair. In particular, no hanging of banners from trees (or anything else); 90 day lead time for application for an event will be waived for this year's May Fair as it was just posted.
- May Fair is Saturday, May 12.
- Barry requested that SHCA communicate concern to the Catholic Diocese over the eventual disposition of West Catholic High School building.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10.

Minutes taken by Judy Powers