

Spruce Hill Community Association Board Meeting, Tuesday 9/11/12

Meeting started at 7:45 pm by Ed Halligan

Attendance-Officers:

Ed Halligan-Y Andy Lochrie-Y Marie McCullough-N Judy Powers-Y
Mark Wagenveld-Y

Attendance-Directors:

Bob Behr-N Pauline Borkon-N Monica Calkins-Y Andy Cole-Y
Brett Feldman-N Monica Ferguson-N Ann Froehling-Y Barry Grossbach-Y
Rich Guffanti-Y Lee Huang-Y Justin Kaplan-N Al Madrid-N
Steve McCoubrey-N Elaine Nelson-Y Dan Thut-N Jackie Waiters-Y
Matt Wolfe-Y Mark Young-N: Present = 13 [Quorum = 12]

Guests:

Sharon Shneyer, Erica Cheslock, P/O Stacey Livingston

June 2012 minutes were approved

Guests--Erica Cheslock (echeslock@hmsschool.org, 215-222-2566 X205)

HMS School for Children with Cerebral Palsy- hosting a pancake breakfast fundraiser (\$15 for adults, \$5 for children under 12) on Saturday, Oct. 13 from 10-noon in the school's backyard at 45th and Chester Ave. There will also be a raffle for all those who purchase tickets for prizes from local businesses.

Purpose of breakfast is to raise awareness of HMS in the community and share the message and mission of the school with those who don't know us well. Many are aware of HMS building and presence next to Clark Park, but we would like more people to get to know our students and work we are doing.

HMS's biggest challenges right now are enrollment (especially with our residence) and also funding. It is becoming more challenging to make agreements with sending school districts to admit students to HMS when they determine that they are unable to meet the special education needs of the student.

Barry & Mark suggested HMS advertise their fund raiser at the Clark Park Farmer's market and in the West Philly Local online newspaper.

Committee Reports

Communications--Richard Guffanti

Website: The one or more pages of our six page website gets updated at least once a month. Slide shows and forms have been added. Due to the forms 3 members per month have joined. Our website continues to draw a stable 7 visits/day.

Email: The list has 63% members, and 37% nonmembers. Since April 23, 4 people per month have joined. Our automated email (SHCA@yahoo.com) is 73% of all email addresses. My personal list has the remaining 27%.

Membership Database: 102 expired memberships have been removed and 1 reinstated to the database. There are 8 new members, likely the result of the May Fair, for a total of 271.

Education--Monica Calkins

1. School District Undergoing major internal reorganization –
 - a. Hiring of new Superintendent William Hite
 - b. No more assistant superintendent's in regional offices – but by administrators working out of Office of School Performance Management - principals more autonomy
 - c. Schools organized into clusters known as Principal Learning Teams – schools from given geographic area, including the neighborhood HS and its feeder schools – expected to work together
 - d. Ongoing budget woes
2. Local
 - a. School Closure/New West Philly School Catchments
 - i. Drew closed, so catchments re-drawn
 - ii. Powel, Wilson, Locke's catchments changed (PAS unchanged)
 - iii. Lea taking kids from Drew but catchment unchanged
 - iv. School District may close 40 more schools this year.
 - b. Penn Alexander School
 - i. Kindergarten – apparently there has been little movement on the wait list
 - ii. Grades 1-8 registration – was scheduled to begin Monday August 13th, 2012
 1. Line began to form Saturday morning before – grew to approximately 25 people
 2. Per reports from individuals in line – no one in line successfully gained admission – all were placed on wait list
 3. There was some confusion regarding whether wait lists from previous years carried forward to this year – placement on the wait list of those in line suggests that wait lists are carried forward.
 - iii. Relationship to Lea
 1. Apparently, if a parent has a child on the PAS waitlist and would like to request Lea or another PSD school, the parent must first complete a transfer form, wait for school assignment by PSD, and if not assigned to school of choice, go to principal of preferred school to request admission.
 2. Lea may not have enough space to accommodate PAS overflow – as of 8/17/12, kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grades were reportedly at or close to capacity (Note: enrollment numbers continually change as children do or do not attend assigned schools, so enrollment numbers are not considered stable until sometime after the school year begins).
 3. Board member Lee Huang shared his experience of attempting to register his son at PAS for kindergarten – details here: <http://leehuang.blogspot.com/2012/09/registering-my-son-for-kindergarten-in.html>
 4. ****Update – 9/14/12 – West Philly Coalition for Neighborhood Schools announces that due to increased enrollment and demand, Lea has added an additional kindergarten and 1st grade for this year. Registration and enrollment begins Wednesday, September 19th at 8:30 a.m. at the school.
 - iv. Continuing to try to establish Communications Sub-Committee of the Home and School Association.
 - c. Board proposed holding a panel on the state of education in Spruce Hill at the November membership meeting.
 - d. Board seeking prospective board members to assist with education committee.

Operations--Mark Wagenfeld

We have good tenants and an electrician, Lee Garner, has been called to fix the fans & lights in the center.

Zoning--Barry Groshach

- a] 400 S. 40th Street (Azalea Gardens) development proposal for a 5 story student housing structure was supported by Spruce Hill zoning and the SHCA board of directors and is now before the city's Zoning Board of Adjustment. The August 29 hearing on the case was continued until October 24th.
- b] 215-17 S. 45th Street--location for a proposed restaurant in need of a take out certificate---is on hold due to financial difficulties of the proposed tenants. The space is very large, and much work has been done on the interior. We are not certain what will happen with this, but we will keep all posted.
- c] The proposed state store at 43rd and Chestnut, approved by the ZBA, is now under appeal. We will keep all informed of this as well.
- d] 4224 Spruce Street---proposal for development of a 4 unit building in the house adjoining the Arts League---was opposed by Spruce Hill before the ZBA many months ago. The ZBA voted against Spruce Hill and we appealed the decision to Common Pleas Court. We lost that appeal. We reached agreement with the applicant on issues of concern to immediate neighbors with the understanding that such agreement would keep us from a further appeal to Commonwealth Court. That has been done.
- e] The committee will next meet jointly with Walnut Hill zoning to consider an application for multi-family zoning on S. 46th street, a common border for both community groups.

University City District

- a] State of University City review will be offered on Monday, October 1st, from 4:00 to 6:00pm at World Café Live
- b] Wednesday, September 19th, from 1:00-2:30, will see the dedication of the reconfigured island at a42nd and Woodland. It is one of two such "islands" that UCD received funding for from the city. The dedication will feature local political figures including the Mayor.
- c] UCD is working on a plan to reshape and replant the trolley portal at 40th and Baltimore. A committee has been at work over the past year plus, consisting of community representatives and city and Septa officials. Drawings have been shared with Woodland Terrace residents and arrangements are in the works to make a presentation to Spruce Hill. UCD is putting up some funds from its reserve to jump start the project.

New Business--Need for a Nominating Committee. Rich Guffanti will send the board a list of member names for nominating.

Announcements: Next Meeting Tue, Oct 9, 7:30 pm, at the SHCA Center.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 pm.