

Spruce Hill Community Association
Board Meeting Jan. 14, 2014

Minutes taken by Marie McCullough, secretary

Attendance:

Present (72%) :

Borkon, Pauline; Cole, Andy; Feldman, Brett; Grossbach, Barry; Guffanti, Richard; Halligan, Ed; Hamerman-Brown, Sylvia; Henderson, Haven; Huang, Lee; MacQueen, Susan; Maier, Brennan; McCarty, Mary Ellen; McCullough, Marie; McDaniel, Justin ; Powers, Judy; Richman, Andrew; Santoro, Eric; Wagenveld, Mark

Absent (28%) :

Calkins, Monica; Ferguson, Monica; Gayle, Lee; Nelson, Elaine; Shashaty, Michael; Waiters, Jackie; Williams, Pamala

Guest Speaker: Anne Froehling gave an update on the Bird Sanctuary. She asked the board to increase its annual stipend from \$500 to \$600 to cover bird food and related costs. She also asked for an \$850 grant to add trees, remove concrete and do other landscaping.

At Marie **McCullough's** suggestion, Sue MacQueen moved, and Pauline Borkon seconded, that Anne work with Sue on a block grant application for the grant money. Passed unanimously by the board

Zoning: Barry Grossbach said the latest plan for 40th and Pine St. would preserve the building and build a 5-story addition to it. As it has every other proposals, the Woodland Terrance homeowners group is opposing and litigating the existing proposal that was passed earlier. Barry asked the board to consider giving the zoning committee authority to seek some intervention from the councilwoman's office in order to move the process forward with the new proposal and to use its judgment on suggesting some legislative option. This would be the only way to stop the neighbors from blocking all redevelopment indefinitely. The board voted unanimously to give the zoning committee discretion to seek an ordinance from Blackwell if it deems necessary.

Barry reported that Watusi II is reopened. Rumor has it that the previous owner is working with a new one to resurrect the nuisance bar. Barry said the PLCB is not opposing a transfer of license, but will not approve one without careful consideration of the new potential owner and consultation with Spruce Hill. He also said the DA's nuisance task force has been "useless" in the fight to shut down this bar permanently.

Business Attraction: Lee Huang said 500 responses to the survey have been received and the committee is sifting through them to compile a report.

Education: Eric Santoro said the committee met last month and developed a new mission statement that prioritizes SHCA's support in 2014 as follows:

1. Penn Alexander Elementary

2. 3 elementary schools, including Powell, whose catchment areas include parts of Spruce Hill
3. Lea Elementary, even though it is not in Spruce Hill
4. Middle schools and high schools servicing Spruce Hill

Eric said the committee drafted a letter and sent it to the school district superintendent, Dr Hite, by both email and snail mail. It demands a meeting to discuss the resumption of the Penn Alexander lottery, which the district has announced will be renewed for the coming school year.

New Business: Andy Cole asked Judy to prepare a rough “budget” based on previous year’s spending so that the board has estimates of what it can spend in various categories, such as block grants and donations to community organization. Judy agreed to do so.

Public Safety: Ed Halligan said he will keep tabs on safety issues, attend meetings with Penn police and city police in the district, and report back to the board. Penn police officer L. Prince, in attendance at the meeting, said she will also provide safety reports at future meetings

Communications:

Website: Website Payment was started in Oct 2012 and is used by 13% of our members. The usage has grown slowly at 2.5 per month. Only 8 board members have used online payment. Google retired Checkout, so Rich Guffanti replaced it with PayPal.

In 2013 the visits change wildly; depending on school and zoning publicity ($340 \pm 160\%$ visits a month).

Automated Email List: Rich Guffanti no longer uses his personal SHCA email list and relies solely on the automated list which has 60% of our members are on it. 54% of the list is non-members. The automated list grew slowly (9% in 2013 and averaged $390 \pm 13\%$). Only one board member is not on it: Haven Henderson.

Membership: Our recruiting methods include email, snail mail, and phone call reminders, and a hand delivered annual report. They have kept the membership stable in 2013, at $378 \pm 4\%$. Currently 5% have expired memberships.

Facebook: Facebook likes have grown rapidly--up 10/mo or 78% in 2013