

Spruce Hill Community Association
Annual Meeting Nov. 11, 2014
Griffith Hall, University of the Sciences
Minutes taken by Mary Ellen McCarty

Attendance: Spruce Hill Community Association members (no sign up sheet)

Guest Speakers

- Mary Kate McGinty, Director, Government & Community Affairs at University of the Sciences
- Matthew Bergheiser, Executive Director, University City District

Meeting began at 7:40.

Brief introductions by Monica Calkins.

Mary Kate McGinty, Director, Government & Community Affairs at University of the Sciences, addressed the members of the association and general public about UScience's pending acquisition of the former Wilson School. The procurement process is still pending and development plans are still underway, however the site will most likely be student housing with possible retail. The existing school building will be demolished to make way for a new structure. USciences is currently in the process of developing a campus master plan that will propose physical changes to the campus. The University will be seeking input from the community as the plan develops.

Monica Calkins, SHCA President, gave a general overview of Spruce Hill Community Association's purpose, geography, board and committee functions, events and programs. She listed the many organizations SHCA supports. Monica thanked retiring officers, Andy Cole, Marie McCullough & Judy Powers for committed service to the association by describing each person's unique contribution. She encouraged newcomers to get involved in SHCA by signing up for committees, attending monthly board meetings, joining the email list, liking SHCA on Facebook, and participating in annual events. She introduced committee chairs for updates to follow.

Judy Powers, SHCA Treasurer, discussed the association's financial balance sheets. The funds raised by SHCA are reserved in order to support community in times of need. The cost of liability insurance for 2 properties owned and event insurance is growing. She described the financial and taxation differences between the Spruce Hill Community Association and the Spruce Hill Community Trust.

Andy Cole, SHCA Vice President, lead the election which inducted the following unchallenged candidates, his motion was unanimously approved:

Executive Board:

- Monica Calkins stood for a second term as president.
- Eric Santoro, chair of the Education Committee, was nominated for executive vice president.
- Mary Ellen McCarty ran for secretary
- Andrew Richman ran for treasurer
- Mark Wagenveld ran for vice president (operations).

Board Seats:

- Julie Bush
- Pauline Borkon
- Brett Feldman
- Barry Grossbach
- Ed Halligan
- Laura Line
- Sue MacQueen
- Elaine Nelson
- Judy Powers
- Jackie Waiters

Stepped Down:

- Andy Cole, executive vice president
- Judy Powers, treasurer (to be a board member)
- Marie McCullough, secretary
- Michael Shashaty
- Pamala Williams
- Lee Gayle

Matthew Bergheiser, Executive Director, University City District, presented “The State of University City’s Development Boom”. The presentation covered many statistics cited in UCD’s recent publication “The State of University City” <http://universitycity.org/state-university-city>. University City has the highest office occupancy rate 96%, 82% of new office construction in the region is happening in University City, and over the last 5 years, 9.99 million square feet of new construction has been developed. University City is seeing growth in jobs, population, housing units, private real estate projects, pedestrian activity, and public transportation. UCD is aiming to mitigate some ongoing issues including barren and deserted streets by building vibrant civic infrastructure and plan for growth like the Porch.

The future 40th Street Trolley Portal plans were announced and displayed. The space include new social space with greening and a café. A community campaign is underway to help raise the remaining funds.

UCD provides core public safety services and public maintenance that have helped reduce serious crime in the district. UCD hosts improvement programs and community events such as the Baltimore Avenue Dollar Stroll, movie nights, Project Rehab, Dirt Factory and façade improvements. UCD is planning to focus on 40th and Market Street corridor for future improvements.

Mr. Bergheiser concluded by honoring the late Dexter Bryant, manager of UCD’s Public Space Maintenance and Operations.

Barry Grossbach, SHCA Zoning Committee Chair, presented an overview of the roll of the zoning committee and discussed successes and challenges. 4507 Kingsessing Avenue was a site redeveloped in conjunction with the association and neighboring residents. The work resulted in a single family house built in character with the surrounding buildings. The owner of 217 S. 42nd Street applied for permission to split the home into 3 units. SHCA is generally opposed to splitting single family homes. The application was rejected by the board.

Barry discussed examples of redevelopment under current zoning or 'As of Right', where developers are not required to apply for zoning change or community input. Developers who choose to go this route tend to build structures that do not fit in with the physical architecture of existing structures. He showed images of 45th Street from Kingsessing Ave to Woodland Ave. and 41st & Chester Ave as examples.

Eric Santoro, SHCA Education Committee Chair, talked about the education committee's commitment to support local schools.

The committee recently coordinated a neighborhood collaborative to raise funds to repair and maintain the playground at the Penn Alexander School (PAS). Partners include the Parent Infant Center, University City Arts, St. Mary's Nursery School, and H&S. The goal is to raise \$7,000 by the end of the year.

The committee also helped to support moving playground equipment from the former Wilson School to the Lea School.

The group advocates for public education in Spruce Hill vocally by writing letters to the Philadelphia School District. They support full enrollment of PAS and has a seat on its school advisory council.

Lee Huang, SHCA Business Attraction Committee Chair, discussed the importance of a vibrant retail scene in Spruce Hill. The results of the retail preference survey distributed a year ago are available on the website in report form and interactive maps.

Julie Bush, Bird Sanctuary Committee Chair, talked about the location and function of the bird sanctuary and presented before and after photographs. The bird sanctuary has not only been a resource for birds, but has served as an outdoor classroom and destination for school groups. In the last year the community response in volunteer efforts and fundraising has been great. Julie thanked Anne Froehling, stepping down from Bird Sanctuary, for her hard work and commitment to the sanctuary. She encouraged neighbors to get involved and talked about the need for more committee members.