

**Spruce Hill Community Association**  
**Board Meeting June 9, 2015**  
**257 South 45th Street**  
Minutes taken by Andrew Richman

**MEETING MINUTES**

June 9, 2015

7:30pm

**Members in Attendance:** \*Calkins, Monica; \*Richman, Andrew; \*Wagenveld, Mark; Grossbach, Barry; Guffanti, Richard; Halligan, Ed; Hamerman-Brown, Sylvia; Line, Laura; Maier, Brennan; Nelson, Elaine; Santoro, Craig; Borkon, Pauline; Bush, Julie; Feldman, Brett; Waiters, Jackie

**Absent:** \*Santoro, Eric; Ferguson, Monica; Lee, Huang; Powers, Judy; Henderson, Haven; MacQueen, Susan

**Guests:** Andrew Meloney, Jack Conviser, Peter Zutter

**Welcome and Introductions** (Monica Calkins)

**Special Topics/Guest Speakers**

**Consideration of an Historic Conservation District:**

Andrew Meloney, Jack Conviser from Philadelphia City Planning Commission

Barry gave introduction, talked about 243 south 45th street tear down and highlights why a conservation district is important for the neighborhood; no guidelines and protection from certain development; invited City Planning Commission to talk more about conservation districts

Laura - Works for Planning Commission; provided handout (2 sided); difference between historic and conservation districts; historic districts - any work needs approval from PHC; conservation districts concentrate on visual appearance, does not stop demolitions; allows commission to weigh in on visual features of construction, setbacks; height, bay windows, porches; conservation districts are difficult for neighborhoods w/ lots of different architectural styles - - what common elements does the district share; has to be flexible to allow different architectural styles;

Andy - Both processes are community driven in putting together; an NCO has to be worked through the Planning Commission, the Planning Commission enforces the conservation standards through the permitting process; can take many years to put together like the Queen Village Conservation overlay;

Jack - When a project comes in for NCO review, the review tends to be binary; the commission doesn't have lots of latitude; the NCO plan has to be as detailed as possible

Barry - How are they set up?

Andy - They live in the zoning code; they work like an overlay and it is amendment to the zoning code done through City Council process;

Barry - How does a community go about organizing itself for this process?

Laura - It would be a similar process that you went through when you tried to get historical district set up b/c it affects property rights of all who owned land/property in the overlay;

Question: what area do you have to have to create the overlay?

Laura - There is a small minimum number of blocks that are required; max is 25 blocks; Planning doesn't want an area that big though; boundaries are hard to figure out; may pay to do several small overlays instead of one; the boundary should not have any holes; the overlay can't be based on architectural styles alone;

Q: How do you define a block?

- A square; Some variations not covered in the NCO are already covered in the zoning code

Q: In the Powelton process there has been talk of : "matching the rest of the block" as a standard.

- Planning has a lot of difficulty with this type of standard; Powelton is still a long ways away from how this works;
  - this type of standard is difficult to hold up on appeal

Q: How many are there?

- Andy - Three except overbrook doesn't have the guidelines
- Laura - Queen Village took almost 4 years to come up with their guidelines for the district; this is a big undertaking;

Q: Will overlay create loopholes for owners who own large numbers of properties? Is it a compromise from historic district?

- A - Laura - sorta of yes; NCO's do not regulate use at all. Use is dictated by the zoning code

Q: how do existing conditions get treated?

- A - Jack - the neighborhood first has to document all ext. conditions in the building; if they are doing major renovations which would require a permit, they would have to abide by the NCO; just a minor fix of something may not trigger the NCO

Q from Barry: In order to get something like this done --- would it make sense to start small on a couple of blocks where you will not face much opposition as sort of an example for the rest of neighborhood and then expand over time;

- A - Andy - yes, fi those blocks are good examples of spruce hill, but keep in mind that historic preservation is still the ultimate goal for this community; preservation and not just driving what new construction is; it is a good starting point, but it is not going to solve everything;
- Jack - keep in mind Historic Preservation District; conservation reviews are more blunt -- it either meets the conditions or doesn't'
- Andy - wishes that HPD is on the table; you guys should have one; Powelton should have one; Overbrook Farms should have one

Q: Can we right facade easements into our deeds? Is this another approach?

- Laura - yes. if you have a non-profit who will take the easement; it is a tool that some property owners have used; Preservation Alliance has taken some easements; usually a cash donation goes with it as part of the transaction; there are administrative costs; properties don't need to be income producing properties to give the easement; finding someone to take the easement is a challenge;

Q: Who started conservation districts?

- Councilman DiCicco

Q: What is Janie's thought on conservation districts?

- Don't know

Q: Does it apply to the rear of house?

- Jack - applies to anything that is visible on a public right of way (a public street)

Q: Odds that something like this could be approved in Spruce Hill?

- Andy - if you have support of council person, it is feasible; the design elements are there in the neighborhood; this would be something that commission staff would recommend for approval;
- Laura - the devil is in the details; it depends on the wording and the elements; there is a difference/tension between what they would like them to do vs. what they can do;
- Barry - before we got into this, we would need to discuss with Janie what we were thinking of to make sure she would be receptive to this idea going forward;

Q: How would it affect seniors?

- Andy - depends on the design of the district; the rules have to be amendable to all parties and reasonable;
- Jack -- have to look at the priorities of the District but not go too far;
- Laura - PHC has a financial hardship in their standards; there is no such process in NCO's; appeals go to a public hearing before planning commission;

Q: What if the boundaries cross neighborhood districts:

- A- those type of boundaries are irrelevant; NCO's can't overlap but can run up against one another;
- Barry - may make sense for U City Historical to look at blocks and recommend blocks;

**Information about Crosstown Coalition** <http://www.philacrosstown.org/> (regarding invitation to join):  
Peter Zutter, South Broad Street Neighbors and the Crosstown Coalition

Spruce Hill Community Association is invited to join in the Crosstown Coalition;

- Peter - handout on selling points on the crosstown coalition; Steve Huntingdon is the chair
  - Reason to join: greater voice, brings lots of bright thinkers with political connections together; shared experiences
  - First brought together to review the new zoning code; they were able to have some things changed in the final code; took some stuff out of hands of developers and rebalanced the power;
  - AVI - the group found lots of problems with it and helped put brakes on it; helped in putting homestead exemption and LOOP program in places
  - There are dues to join - based on your budget;
  - Voting: delegates are appointed from each civic; there is a delegate and an alternate; these are the only two people who can vote; each group has one vote; if a group doesn't support something from the coalition -- if there is opposition the letter will mention the civic that does not support it; there is e-mail voting; the exec board meets quarterly;
  - The crosstown does have DNO insurance;
  - There are committees; each group is asked to participate in at least one committee; there is a tax and city finance committee, an education committee
  - Current issues - ANTI SLAPP issues and legislation; a cabinet office of Planning and Development, non-partisan remapping of voting districts; parking for electric charging stations; institutionalizing the Inspector General's Office; SCRUB - billboard legislation; Job Growth Initiative -- Center City District
  - Has helped their civic in dealing with issues with other city professionals and lawyers

## Committee Updates

- **Review and Approve Minutes from May meeting**
  - Monica passed around copies to review
  
- **May Fair Report** (Mark Wagenveld/Andrew Richman)
  - review of financial report - - attached
  - overall income of \$3,845.91
  - Monica - going to try and get rid of remaining books via fall book/sale open house
  - Laura - is there a better way to maximize donations to raffle in the future?
  
- **Crosstown Coalition**
  - Monica - went to one of the meetings; it makes sense to have a seat at the table;
  - Thoughts from the group? many think it is a good idea;
  - Barry - What are their standards for letting in groups?
  - Monica - Dues are not that much, it is not a huge number
  - Motion to join coalition --- Laura
  - Barry recommended that we join for year
  - Altered motion to join for one year - Monica
    - all in favor
  
- **Executive** (Monica Calkins)
  - Election: Jon Potter -- all in favor; voted onto the Board
  - Outreach requests:
    - UCD Portal- executive recommended \$1K;
      - Barry moved; mark second; all in favor
    - Greening Lea - executive recommended \$1K donation for bricks;
      - Monica talked about history of Lea and past support efforts from SHCA; exec recommended \$1K donation; Barry moved and Mark second; all in favor, the money will come out of the Trust
  
- Draft of Minutes - make corrections and send back to Mary Ellen and she will take care of all revisions and send back out
  
- **Zoning** (Barry Grossbach)
  - No decision on 4224
  - Have had discussions with owner of neighboring property, is willing to consider our recommendations;
  - 243 will be demolished;
  - Barry is going to recommend extending our RCO boundaries -- we go right down Market Street right now, there is a major development in print now for the North Side of Market Street -- we are not currently involved in it; have spoken w/ West Powelton and Saunders Park -- having trouble getting things done over there; W. Powelton already is involved on South side of Market; Barry passed out redrawn RCO map; Barry has been in touch with City Planning; City Planning came up with this map change; the map change would take us along Filbert;
  - Craig - do we have to amend our bylaws? A- Barry - No. this only affects our RCO boundaries, City Planning would approve this change;

- o Monica made motion to recommend the expansion of the Spruce Hill Community Association's RCO boundaries as detailed in attached map that was distributed; Mark - second; All in Favor

**NCO discussion** - It makes sense for Historical to look at neighborhood and look at what might the NCO boundaries/blocks may be; councilwoman is resistant to changes in the zoning code; we have a difficult political road ahead; could make more sense if multiple community organizations boundaries are involved;

**Education** (Sylvia Hammerman-Brown/Laura Line)

- Repairs in process on PAS playground; found someone is going to paint the fence this weekend; want to have celebration at playground inviting those who have donated and to plant seeds for Phase II
- Thank you letter will go out to the Coleman Foundation

**Operations** (Mark Wagenveld)

- no updates

**Greening Block Grants** (Sue MacQueen)

- no updates

**Bird Sanctuary** (Julie Bush)

- In maintenance mode

**Business Attraction Committee** (Lee Huang)

- John Potter -- met with Lee to get updates
  - o there was a meeting yesterday between USP and 46th Street and SH business survey came up
  - o will be chair of this committee in September

**Communications** (Rich Guffanti)

- no notable changes

**New business**

- Judy has moved
- Monica Fergusson is stepping off the Board - moving to California; think of new Board members; needs -- Membership, Communications;
- Halloween - is the next big event coming up
- Barry - think of some special acknowledgment for Judy for her invaluable contributions she made; start thinking

**Announcements**

*Next scheduled board meeting: \*\*\*Tuesday, September 8, 2015, 7:30 PM\*\*\**