

Spruce Hill Community Association
Board Meeting March 8, 2016
257 South 45th Street
Minutes taken by Mary Ellen McCarty

Present: *Calkins, Monica; *McCarty, Mary Ellen; *Richman, Andrew; *Santoro, Eric; *Wagenveld, Mark; Alvarez, Veronica; Borkin, Pauline; Bosse, Alexa; Carr, Tyree; Grossbach, Barry; Halligan, Ed; Hamerman-Brown, Sylvia; Line, Laura; Liu, Roseann; McGarvey, Vicki; Moore, Richard; Nelson, Elaine; Potter, John; Rosof, Libby; Waiters, Jackie

Guests: Marc Aronson, Matt Persche

Absent: Bush, Julie; Feldman, Brett; Guffanti, Richard; Massey, Philip; Maier, Brennan; Santoro, Craig; Wagner, Elise

Introduction (Eric Santoro):

Eric reminded the board about the passing of Cindy Roberts. He honored her memory by talking about the many contributions that she made on the community. Mark Wagenveld added that flowers were sent in SHCA's name after she passed away.

Review and Approve Minutes from February meeting - All Approved

Guest Speaker

Patrick Grossi, Advocacy Director, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia

Eric introduced Patrick and asked for advice and options regarding historic preservation in Spruce Hill.

Patrick started off by saying the Spruce Hill is not alone. Many other neighborhoods are dealing with historic preservation issues.

Philadelphia is now in an urban renewal phase, which is privately, not publicly driven. The Preservation Alliance has a small staff of four people and Philadelphia's City Planning Commission has 5 staff people dedicated to historic preservation. Historic preservation is a challenging endeavor. In Spruce Hill, some properties are protected but not nearly enough.

There are a few things you can do:

Create a Historic District. There was a past effort to do this but it sat on the shelf. Examples are Washington Square West and Overbrook Farms. The historical commission has right to approve

development plans in the district. What makes it difficult is the need for support from the local city council person and property owners. Property owners may oppose because historic districts limit use of property and there may be concern over property values. The historical commission allows minor changes, can cause for strapped resources, and can sometimes have inconstant plan review.

To do it, a district or neighborhood needs to make an inventory of all properties in the district – contributing and non contributing.

Historic Districts offer the best prevention of demolition. But it is difficult because The Philadelphia City Planning Commission (PCPC) is not in a good position to add new district at this time.

Create a Conservation District. These are design guidelines for community organizations. PCPC is in the process of rezoning and district planning. Plans are just recommendations – not rules – this is a weakness.

Create a Temporary Demolition Moratorium. These have a sunset clause which prevents demolition until the adoption of either a Conservation District or Historic District. By doing this you show that you are moving towards an attainable goal and prevents unwanted demolitions in the meantime.

Other Options. Develop plans and guidelines for new development. If a developer is working with you, provide a model for what they can do and point them to other resources like the historic preservation tax credit and state and federal financing (must be eligible for national historic registry). Come up with intrinsic and economic benefits and sustainability plans.

Question and Answer Session:

Q: When Kenny was in council, he historic preservation bill introduced – any props on National registry should automatically added to philadelphia registry. Will he be enacting this in mayor's career?

A: Bill did 2 things. First, it doubled the budget of the historical commission, which on its face makes sense, but the problem is that many are registered by district but not individually. Therefore would not transfer, leaving individual properties not registered – only 150 properties city wide. Secondly, it created a fee structure to raise funding which creates more hurdles for owners.

Kenny will probably will not introduce it as mayor but will need to have a councilperson introduce it.

Q: What is involved with Temporary Demolition Moratorium?

A: You need to work with the councilperson in concert with planning commission.

Q: How fully formed would our plan need to be?

A: You may have a leg up because of your history of preservation.

Q: Student housing is a problem. With the demolition moratorium, is there an exemption for certain types of buildings?

A: Only habitable buildings

Q: Does the historical commission have a budget increase?

A: It will stand steady – not increasing \$450,000

Q: Conservation district should be something that we explore – what type of help is available for organization and what is the cost?

A: It would need to be facilitated through PCPC – Martine Decamp may be able to help. Ask for help – If it is a conservation district, PCPC is a little more helpful than a historic district.

Q: 5 years ago we went through RCO process – does that help in any form?

A: Yes it does help

Historic district is the best thing. You need to contact the commission but they are too strapped and with political challenges. Working with UC historical org is helpful.

Q: The Historical Review Committee does not meet at a consistent schedule. Will this change?

A: There is a new policy where they will meet quarterly. A new time table is set for reviews – so there will be more nominations reviewed.

Historic designation does not require owner consent.

In the case of Overbrook Farms, a historical review process is active – but this is odd situation – pending approval.

Q: Just to clarify - Subset nominations do not have to work through council?

A: No not in Philadelphia (sometimes you will see support or dissupport politically) The Goal may be to pressure the administration.

Can we use x town? Would have to look at member list

Thank yous all around.

Other business:

Nomination of Roseann Liu – new to Spruce Hill but lived in Philadelphia for 10 years - Voted in!

Donation Policy- Under 250 execs vote, above 250 needs a committee vote

Jessie Blitzheim – citizens planning institute flyer handed out

Committee Updates:

Education (Laura Line, Sylvia Hamerman-Brown):

PAS lottery not called for this year for kindergarten. Grades above - it is first come first serve.

Educations Sub Committee Meeting –

Monica has attended many meetings and described the whole selection process. SHCA is more about community level representation. Tomorrow night is 7pm community meeting. It is important for everyone to show up and you can sign up on facebook.

There is an opportunity to address the PAS lottery and make policy changes.

Ed suggested– Sheila had a difficult role – A formal letter of appreciation from SHCA would be a nice gesture. All voted and approved

Priorities list sent out today was read to committee.

Excerpt from principal search guidelines (SHCA) email:

As part of its commitment to making the Spruce Hill neighborhood a great place to live and work, SHCA supports public education of children and youth and advocates for the best public education for Spruce Hill families. Since the school's inception and founding, SHCA has been an engaged and ardent supporter of the Penn Alexander School (PAS) and its leadership in providing excellent public education in Spruce Hill. Over the past 12 years, PAS has played a critical role in the community as an anchor for growth and stability of the neighborhood.

Building on the current Principal's substantive contributions, we view the PAS Principal as a prominent steward for the community and key partner with community agencies and residents. As such, we prioritize the following qualities for candidates:

- Recognize and support the important role played by PAS in neighborhood children's social, cultural, intellectual and physical development both during and after school
- Promote PAS as a vital participant in community life
- Communicate with and solicit feedback from the community about matters that impact the community
- Complement the school's existing strengths by providing ample opportunities for the community to contribute to PAS intellectually and culturally
- Partner with community organizations
- Embrace and engage the rich diversity of the community

Assorted Questions for Search Committee

1. What input, if any, will the consultative committee play in:
 - a. job description
 - b. candidate criteria and evaluation of applicants

- c. interview questions/guide
 - d. Interview process
 - e. Final selection of new Principal
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- 2. Are there any limitations on the kind/type of information that can be shared external to the consultative committee? (e.g., with the board; when we seek community input)
 - 3. How will the key criteria for the search be defined? What is the methodology for determining this?
 - 4. What's the time frame for the hiring process?
 - 5. Will there be internal candidates?
 - 6. Do we have a policy or procedure regarding communicating with the press?
 - 7. What will the contract time period be? Will the consultative committee play a role in the evaluation?
 - 8. Was there any consideration given to SAC elected parent representatives on the committee?

May Fair (Mark Wagenveld / Ed Halligan):

Date set for May 7th

We need all hands on deck during the day and help with preparation.

There is a Google docs spreadsheet – please visit the spreadsheet which will be emailed. There are opportunities to help Pre-fair and during the fair.

Raffle prizes should be collected from local businesses and restaurants. – prize donations need ideas – we will have a standardized form and list of businesses soon.

BABA – Jon talked about leveraging this for donations in central location.

The health center will not be an option this year so porta potties will be acquired.

Mary Ellen volunteered to help with posters and graphics.

Zoning Committee (Barry Grossbach):

50 people attended the meeting to discuss 46th and spruce last night.

It is clear that residential and commercial project has major concerns – parking and density – nowhere near closure – general sentiment that the building should be developed.

Parking is always an issue in zoning matters, but this is a great area for public transportation.

Meeting to talk about portal project set for March 15th at 6:30. One person from Woodland Terrace opposes the project. SHC is an early and major supporter. We need people to attend to show support for the project.

There was a discussion about civility at zoning meetings, where there is much venting about problems and issues.

Spruce Hill's "Place Making Principles" document clearly shows that it is in support of urban density and transit oriented design.

Block Improvement Grants (Mary Ellen McCarty)

Committee formed first meeting was held on February 22nd.

Members: Mary McGettigan, Stephanie Chiorean, Carrie Waterman, Patty West

There was a brainstorm about ways to reignite the grant program.

There was talk about partnering with Cedar Park (their program is identical to ours) to pool information resources. This would include info on vendors and services and educational materials. Perhaps a shared application portal online that would allow people's information request to be funneled to the right neighborhood leader.

The committee wants to open up the program to physical infrastructure improvements like lighting and safety features as well as greening.

The committee wants to improve the branding and marketing materials with new graphics and flyers. We also talked about renaming the program.

We want to update our educational materials and application procedures but I have a few questions for you all...

What is the source of funding? Spruce Hill only?

Would it be possible to increase the grant amount?

How was the application process established? is it ok to streamline or simplify it?

There was support from the committee to rework the block grant program and any changes to the funding amounts or major changes should be proposed to the board for vote.

The committee wants to take the hassle away from applicants and gauge interest in the program by creating a simple web form that collects basic information (name, block, pick list of possible block improvements) - Then follow up with a site visit by one or two committee members to help facilitate the application process and brainstorm ideas. We would walk people through the process.

The committee wants to reach out to block captains, tree Philly, raincheck.

Time table – The committee wants to work with what they have but try to promote the program as is with the Listserv, facebook, fliers, etc.

Bird Sanctuary (Julie Bush) – Julie has created a fundraising flyer and will be emailing it to the friends of the Bird Sanctuary group. Julie has been in touch with the girl scouts about building a kiosk. She is waiting to find out if they want to take this on.

Crosstown Coalition (Monica and Barry): - march 21st is next meeting

Operations (Mark Wagenveld) - Nothing to report

Business Attraction Committee (Jon Potter) – no updates

New Business – Laura had a new idea to create an academic award in Cindy Robert's name – something to think about.

Meeting adjourned