

Spruce Hill Community Association (SHCA) Board Meeting
September 8, 2020 - 7:30 pm

Board Attendance via Zoom and Teleconference

Present: Evan Johnstone; Leslie Medley; Veronica Alvarez; Vicki McGarvey; Laura Line; Libby Rosof; Andrew Richman; Chris Bole; Rebecca Geller-Pulchalsky; Monica Calkins; Richard Moore; Ken Steif; Eric Santoro; Sylvia Hamerman-Brown; Emily Dowdall; Alexa Bosse; Julie Bush; Barry Grossbach; Al Suh; Jon Potter; Tyree Carr II; Rich Guffanti; Sugirtha Stathis;

Absent: Abigail Su; Craig Santoro;

Guest: Lt. Nikki McCoy; Maureen Rush, Tom Lussenhop

Meeting Minutes

Maureen Rush, Vice President for Public Safety, University of Pennsylvania

Civil Unrest

- In answer to the question of why Penn Police responded to 52nd Street, given the western boundary ends at 43rd Street. Penn Safety has an MOU that permits them to work together
- Maureen reported that overall crime is down in University City (and in the city), though shooting incidents and homicides are both up, especially the 12th, 18th, and 19th precincts
- Civil protests have taken place since May 30, and has been used by anarchist groups and looters.
- Example of anarchists seizing the opportunity was on August 25, following a peaceful protest in Clark Park when a splinter group congregated on Baltimore Avenue and ended up destroying property by breaking windows at Clarkville, overturning planters on Osage, and graffiti in other parts of the neighborhood
- Per Maureen, the decision not to arrest was made to avoid escalating conflict between Penn Police and groups who were destroying property. She also noted that the disrupters on Aug. 25 were mostly white adults, dressed in black, wearing black masks
- Asked about what the community can do about repetitive targeting of certain businesses like Clarkville, Maureen agreed it is a concern but cautioned against confronting disrupters and advised that neighbors should call Philadelphia/Penn Police
- There is a new Block Watch program on the 4200 block of Pine Street which began in response to an uptick in break-ins, and for which there is a training offered by the police department. Other blocks interested in a block watch should contact Penn at 215-573-3333
- Ask whether Penn Police would consider extending its boundary further west to capture the sprawl of the university faculty and staff in the neighborhood, Maureen replied that this is not under consideration.

Community Hearings on Public Safety

- Penn Safety is conducting a Public Safety and Outreach Initiative that includes a series of virtual hearings to receive input from members of the Penn and West Philadelphia communities. Invited participants describe their experiences with the University of Pennsylvania's Division of Public Safety and offer their ideas and suggestions on ways to achieve the common vision of providing an environment in which every member of the Penn community can feel physically and emotionally safe, and experience a sense of equal belonging. The hearings are publicly available via livestream and recorded for future public access.
- Evan recently presented at one of the community hearings. During his talk, he emphasized the value of partnership with Penn Police, and the importance of de-escalation and specialized response to mental health

crises. Recordings of past hearings are available here: <https://www.law.upenn.edu/publicsafetyreview/view-online-hearings.php>. The next hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, September 15, 2020, 2 pm EDT

- Ongoing feedback from the community is welcome via the online survey: https://upenn.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bNHml6vo7BCT7p3

COVID Response at Penn

- Penn did not open dorms, and there is no in-class with the exception of clinical students
- Approximately 500 students moved into college houses, and some are in off-campus housing. Most in off-campus housing are in newer construction apartment buildings that more closely resemble dorm buildings
- Testing of students is happening on the Health Campus, and all students have received face masks.
- There have been parties in violation of Penn's strict rules about gathering in groups, and Penn responds to complaints about infractions as they are reported.
- Penn has also employed Health Ambassadors (many of them Penn sports coaches), who work with Penn Police to ensure no large parties. Parties should be reported if the number of attendees exceeds 15-20 or if there is excessive noise.

Exec. Update

- Board meeting minutes from June 2020 approved.

Board Nominations

- Within the board, there are two groups with staggered 2-year terms. Those whose terms are up in 2021 are: Chris Bole, Emily Dowdall, Rebecca Geller-Pulchalsky, Sugirtha Stathis, Abigail Su, Al Suh, Julie Bush, Barry Grossbach, Laura Line, Libby Rossof
- If everyone renews their Board membership, there will be no vacancies in the coming term

Annual Meeting

- Virtual meeting will be held, with attendee registration to avoid Zoom bombing

Halloween

- Due to COVID there will be no parade and no block party. The city is not issuing permits
- Suggestions for alternatives to the traditional celebration are:
 - Neighborhood house decorating (could be a contest or not)
 - Scavenger Hunt
 - Pre-filled goodie bags to be distributed at SHCA Center
 - Live cam for costumed kids
 - Pumpkin carving contest
 - Evan to send list of Board volunteers to Vicki to coordinate volunteer activities

Operations –SHCA Center Building

- 2nd Floor apartment is vacant, and renovation is needed and is being planned for
- Exterior needs a paint job – a quote received for \$3,980
- The 3rd floor apartment will be vacated in 2 weeks, and being advertised for rent
- Rich to post a sign on the front door notify everyone that the center is still closed to groups who used for regular meetings
- The center will serve a polling location for November 2020
- Evan to send out information for poll workers. A poll worker's shift is 6:30 am – 8:00 pm.

Quicken Account

- Motion to designate Andrew Richman as the official Quicken representation. Motion approved by full SHCA Board.

Education

- SAC has not activated at PAS

Bird Sanctuary

- There is seed at the center that needs transport to the sanctuary.
- Julie to meet with an arborist about a large maple tree in the sanctuary, about whether it needs to come down

Crosstown Coalition

- Recently held elections, and they have a new head from Mantua
- No meeting called yet

Zoning

- No meeting held yet. Barry looking for a suitable outdoor space to accommodate the group size.
- Zoning committee is receiving applications for rooming house status. A meeting will be held in the next couple of weeks.
- Mill Creek Tavern: applicant wants residential units with commercial on ground floor. There is a hold on the location for now.
- Barry noted that a number of community zoning boards have run into community opposition which is anti-development
- 43rd & Baltimore: Revised plans shown by the developer who hopes to break ground before the end of the year. The plan is still for residential with commercial all around ground floor, including Penn Vet. Barry received a call regarding the site's history which he provided. The caller responded that RCOs are required to be neutral.
- The building at 43rd & Chestnut is going up.

PAS Playground

- After an almost 4-year project, the playground at PAS has opened on the Locust Street side, to enthusiastic kids and is in full use.

Woodland Street Crossing

- SHCA sent a letter to Jannie Blackwell's office requesting action to improve safety at the Woodland Street crossing near the trolley portal.
- SHCA to re-visit the letter, and send to Jamie Gauthier's office with a request for traffic calming measures

Good News!

- **CONGRATULATIONS TO KEN STEIF ON THE BIRTH OF HIS NEW BABY!!**