



Spruce Hill Community Association  
257 South 45th Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19104

## SHCA Board Meeting Minutes May 10, 2022

**Attendees:** Richard Moore, Monica Calkins, Craig Santoro, Libby Rosof, Chris Bole, Anne Thomford-Thompson, Sylvia Hamerman-Brown, Barry Grossbach, Eric Santoro, Laura Line, Rebecca Geller-Puchalsky

**Guests:** Kaitlyn Dhanaliwala, Cathy Davis

**Hybrid Meeting Site:** Chapter House of Woodland Presbyterian Church (401 S. 42<sup>nd</sup> St., SE corner of 42<sup>nd</sup> & Pine) and VIA ZOOM

### Welcome and Introductions (Richard Moore)

**Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes (April 2022)** – motion to approve, seconded. Minutes approved.

### Guest Speaker:

*Cathy Davis, Hosts for Hospitals*

HOSTS for HOSPITALS 215 687 1022. Or [Cathy.davis@hostsforhospitals.org](mailto:Cathy.davis@hostsforhospitals.org).

- SHCA has been very supportive of the program. They have participated in many May Fairs
- Ms. Davis provided an overview of the program, and immediate needs, and how everyone can help.
- Non-profit org that allows families and patients to stay at volunteer host homes while they are coming to the hospital for specialized needs. Started 21 years ago. Only local in this area. Like to be within 45 minutes of the medical facilities. Mike Aichenbaum is the Director and a co-founder, had personal experience with extensive medical care costs. Heard of a program similar in Boston. In 2000, started and since have hosted over 3800 patient families.
- Works like Ronald McDonald house, they collaborate. Different programs work better for different needs. Ronald McDonald for pediatric – age cut-off of 21. Gift of Life, Hope Lodge – need to have a caregiver. Different programs for different reasons.
- Their program is flexible. Hosts are not responsible for meals or transportation. Easiest type of volunteering. People come and can prepare their own meals – hosts are not responsible. Can volunteer whenever you want. Listings include information to help decide if suitable potential host for those participants. Typical model she used is to host out of her house – all they require

is that the person has a private bedroom with door that closes. Can share the bathroom, kitchen etc.

- COVID created challenges - moved to private lodging model. Now that people are vaccinated, use both models. Private lodging can be a couple different things – can be a third floor with a private entrance, a cottage house, an in-law suite, and so on. They are in need of private lodging right now.
- Several of our board members have been hosts currently or in past. Current need is for cases coming into Penn. Spruce Hill is perfect for Penn and CHOP. Penn doing clinical trials for aphasia, for example. There is a couple coming from Long Island, initial eval at HUP and then will return – host does not have to commit to the multiple visits. They have two aphasia cases coming.
- Ways to help
  - Always need hosts. If you think you have one extra bedroom to host. For private lodging can also be when someone goes away – e.g., for the summer.
  - But also can be just as helpful – be a conduit, tell others about the need, many of us are involved with other groups, tell others about it.
  - Join their list serve. Post it and re-post it. Forward it on your social network. Connect Cathy with your place of worship, other community organizations. Where you work – have had a couple different companies that offered their corporate apartments that were not being used. Connect with your employing organizations/corporations. Even if not ready now, might be some other time down the road.
- Questions –
  - Richard – if someone is going to go away for a month – and can host – but need someone to feed their cat – can the cat be fed? A: Yes, they can offer that. Would clear it first with the participant to make sure that there is no one allergic, and that it is ok with them. Note - can also do air-BNB – if you have one, you could offer it for specific times during the week.
  - Have you spoken with campus Apartments? A: Have discussed with them, have not jumped up to offer. Connected with another large organization. Have not stepped up. Been in touch with hotels – some have offered. Their option is always more affordable than discount hotels.
  - How quickly do you process new hosts? As soon as she can get out to house, you can become a host. Intake, meeting you, how many steps are in the house, what types of bed, how close to public transportation. A couple pictures.
  - Is there a fee for the participants? Not when program first started, but in the past 8 years, yes – participants pay \$20/night to Hosts for Hospitals for the lodging.
  - Q – pediatric patients? Yes, available for any medical need whatsoever. Does not need to be the patient themselves, can be family. Anybody connected with a medical need.
  - Q – what about hotels or apartments setting aside one room/unit for the program? Student housing? Have not been successful. Need to try again. If anyone has contacts in the community like this they could recommend to Cathy, please let her know.

### **Committee Updates**

- Executive Committee (Richard Moore)
  - thanks for all the hard work Evan and Monica and May Fair Committee ☺
  - Thanks Julie for all of her care and attention at the Bird Sanctuary. Torch passed on to Karen Redrobe and xxxx. Already sensitively handled mental health situation that arose there.

- Survey for food trust – to understand food insecurity – do we know about resources that exist? Monica has some knowledge in this area through her work, Richard will forward her the survey.
- SEPTA has asked that we appoint a person to the trolley advisory. What is the commitment? First meeting is June 6<sup>th</sup>. Would meet quarterly. Safe streets and commercial committee – Evan and Eric are part of this committee, and have volunteered (well Eric did) to potentially be part of this committee. Richard will forward Eric the information.
- Outreach report - Supporting a couple of endeavors –
  - Cinespeak in Clark Park – looking for a brick and mortar in West Philly - \$250
  - PAS 5K - \$250
- Conflict policy for the board – Richard is working on this
- Historical Preservation Committee (Jenine Sanzari/Jennifer Lousteau) –
  - Met last month, spoke about the application, have a general recommendation for the board to potentially endorse. A few areas looking for additional help.
  - Recommending to seek district application v. smaller individual applications. One point – strategically – how much new construction should be limited? Given all the development on Chestnut street, suggesting to limit the application to the north side of Sansom – leave chestnut street to the developers.
  - Two areas where gaps were identified. One is administrative and very labor intensive – familiarized self with software, lots of descriptive text. A large haul. One potential student who could take photographs of all of the blocks. Craig can help with connecting students. He has a pot of \$ through WHY? to pay HS students to do such projects. They would need a mentor from SHCA (Craig could potentially do?) they would need supervision. Will take that offline to discuss. What are the requirements and hours needed over the summer. Eric volunteered Brady ☺. Barry - The photos have to be impeccable so there is no push back from the Historical Commission. Someone should view the first batch of photos and ensure they are high quality.
  - Eric – could also consider omitting Walnut Street. Monica – appreciate the need to be conciliatory, but Chestnut Street and Walnut street do have some beautiful old homes of architectural significance, and over on the north side of Spruce Hill, we feel like we are under siege with all the development happening. Others noted that we have to be strategic and not stir up too much ire from developers.
  - Craig – many people’s property taxes doubled with the new property assessments, and so especially now, people are likely to be concerned about what the historic district would mean for their property taxed. Monica – since yesterday’s release of the assessments there has been lots of discussion concerned about the increases online.
  - UCHS – going to move ahead next Wednesday. Maybe going to fund Kathy Dowdall’s son to do a piece of the project.
  - Can we vote on this? we need a map of the proposed borders and more details about what exactly is being proposed– a written statement. What does it mean?
  - By when do we need this? Barry notes we have been at this a long time. We are behind the times. No other area in the city has waited longer.
  - Jenine – will circulate the proposal and a map to the board. Will allow people to weigh in. E-mail vote to be considered given the desire to push forward.
- Education (Rebecca Geller-Puchalsky) –
  - Paul Robeson had a rally for air conditioning. Becca identified a point person for future contacts. The school community was trying to push COO to install AC, and it was

- successful. Becca has asked that whatever community activism they are doing, we be kept in the loop. Also worked on traffic safety issues with them, but that was a minority.
- PAS – new high school application process – SAC – every middle schooler except one student got into one of top 4 choice schools. Need volunteers for career day for middle school - May 9-10<sup>th</sup> – 10 minute presentation. If you can do this, please let Becca or PAS know. Wait list – only 8 kindergartners on the list, so fewer than last year.
  - Lea – Sugirtha (not present at the meeting) attending SAC meeting– a lot of dialogue about the MOA with Lea – get in touch with Becca if you want more.
  - Operations (Chris Bole)
    - 3<sup>rd</sup> floor lease is up – tenant has stopped paying rent. We have their security deposit. They have not been communicating. A couple of potential tenants have expressed interest. We have some work to do – have to do painting due to roof leak. Some internal damage. Chris will keep us up to date. And hopefully we will have another tenant lined up. Current tenant should be paying 1050 a month, the real estate agent thinks we can get 1100. Are the current tenants disgruntled? Don't believe so. Chris chatted with them about the leak situation – they have not said anything. Tone was fine. Monica observed mail being tossed outside the door (not sure by whom exactly).
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> floor – don't have to worry about. They are paying and their lease is not up until August 28<sup>th</sup>.
    - Will contact Alexa or Ari – one of the issues that the roofer pointed out: there is a tree growing into the building, so we have to do some trim work there. Will identify a contractor.
  - Community Engagement (Vicki McGarvey/Alexa Bosse) – not present to report
  - Neighborhood Beautification (Laura Line) – not going to call themselves this anymore – want to reduce the perceived barriers to getting engaged in improving blocks. Proposed name: Spruce Up Committee.
    - “Block improvement grants” (also may not call it this anymore). Were thinking to do something at May Fair to discuss the planning with community members but of course May Fair was cancelled so they will think of another way to reach out. There has always been a sweat equity component, but there may be people who don't have that capacity, and so may offer not to have that requirement. Maybe bring in some of the community resources (fraternities, and others) to help match effort. Grant amount - nothing less than \$1000 is worth it. Tool Library source. Get Girl Scouts involved. Also, application on our website wasn't very user friendly. Al did a revision, will send that to board. Committee can propose a budget amount– there is money in the Trust. Barry will get a breakdown from Michelle about the money that is holding for this. \$2000?
    - Bird Sanctuary – did talk to them about a budget amount of \$500 for the year. Andrew – aligned with what we have had in the past.
    - Trash committee – were also planning to do something at the May Fair, but could not.
    - Kaitlyn put together a resource list that committee will put on the website.
    - SHCA window front isn't that inviting, could be great opportunity to dress up. Barry – this topic comes up once a decade. Great idea! Should be done. Eric says it is time to do this! Give them \$ and go do the window!
    - Andrew will circulate the budget templates to all committee chairs, they can run in the next fiscal year.
    - Next meeting is the 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:30-8:30pm via zoom – let Laura know if you would like to attend

- Safe Streets & Commercial Corridors (Eric Santoro) – joined the SEPTA trolley committee!
- May Fair (Monica Calkins)
  - Alas, had to cancel due to severe weather, for only the second time in recent memory (other than 2020).
  - Financial loss not as bad as it could be given fewer deposits/full fees paid.
  - In the process of surveying vendors on how they would like to receive 50% refund of vendor fee v. donating the remainder (a fair amount have opted for this), Andrew has the list so far.
  - Have also been receiving contributions as a result of the annual appeal. Will need to write thank you notes for these (I believe Jenine signed up, we can provide template). People also dropping off raffle tickets which were included in the letter.
  - Raffle will close May 22<sup>nd</sup>, then will need to fill in the raffle tickets for anyone who purchased online, then do drawing. Everyone please encourage family and friends to go online to purchase tickets – see the photos of the baskets online. Richard and other committee members purchased a lot of great items from our local business, and some businesses insisted on donating as well, and then wrapped them up beautifully. Check out the baskets and buy raffle tickets at <https://www.sprucehillca.org/> Discussed perhaps doing livestream drawing with MC Craig. Will let people know.
- Crosstown Coalition (Barry/Eric/Monica) –
  - Helen Gym – want to come up with Air Quality map by the health department.
  - CCC Dues are due in June
  - Zoning – going to ask council for – 1) ZBA will publish decisions on the internet. 2) (check with Eric) and 3) closing the parking loophole in CMX zoning. Passed (Eric abstained).
  - Competent government for basic civic services. Next mayor election. They want to represent residents. Cleanliness, public safety, economic posterity. Harming neighborhoods. Bill of rights – 6 things (see list from Eric – will email it to me). An issue in the 2023 primary. They will come back to see if we want to support it.
  - RCO's issues – were raised – head of the RCO should live in the neighborhood, overlapping RCO's, and other issues like that.
  - Elections in June – Drew Murray current president – well liked and competent. Running for city council. By-laws would require him to step down. Want to change the by-laws to accommodate his continuing as president. Barry, Eric and Monica corresponded about conflict of interest this
  - Crosstown retreat coming up.
- Zoning (Barry Grossbach)
  - There is a zoning meeting – taking up 3440 chestnut street – cancelled last minute. Continuance. Interesting case. Neighbors contacting Barry. Will be an entertaining meeting.
  - Still dealing with presentation on campus apartments. That is not going away, dreading how that is going to play out. Will play out by end of June. Keep hearing back from him, checking in. barry will have to get back to him. Situation where they want to build on existing lot. They can do it. Want to extend into lots that extend into two RSA5 buildings. Want us to change the zoning so that can incorporate this. These are decisions that will have to be made. Will come down to our level of purity on this. [See minutes from last meeting for more details]. Looking for a formula that can come up with. Walking a very tight rope with the development community. One final note –

crosstown worked on the revision of the ZBA to make it more professional. Inquirer had an editorial today recommended that the reform of the zoning board be voted down

- Eric – GCCA 48<sup>th</sup> & Spruce – 13 story building. Becomes the character of the neighborhood. Meeting tomorrow night. WPL note.  
<http://www.westphillylocal.com/2022/05/09/civic-design-review-meeting-scheduled-for-13-story-apartment-building-proposed-on-4700-block-of-spruce/>
- Barry – Cedar Park development – 48<sup>th</sup> & Chester – had 40% affordable housing. But was opposed by councilwoman. ZBA approved. Problem that we have with development – a lot of stuff going up, but no sense that strategic thinking or that there is any formula that people are working within.

#### **All Other Business**

- Not too early to start thinking about executive committee for next time!
- Motion to adjourn – meeting adjourned 9:23pm

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, June 12, 2022**