



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

Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 12, 2023, 7:30pm

Meeting location: SHCA Center, 257 S 45th St or remote via Zoom at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9404207576?pwd=UEVRbmU2clpuTkjhYitxQWhORzErdz09>

Welcome and Introductions (Sylvia Hamerman-Brown)

Speakers

- **Sharon Fleming and Suzanna Barucco, Constant Springs Consultant:** Update on proposed Spruce Hill Historic District (see also attached slides)
 - Introduced the project team (slide 2)
 - Agenda for this meeting (slide 3)
 - Review work completed to date on nomination and inventory – presented draft in July to us, now 95% complete
 - Update on Philadelphia Historical Commission meeting this AM
 - Discuss next steps
 - Q&A
 - Scope of Work – current – Spruce Hill District, Southeast Quadrant = 616 properties (slide 4)
 - Nomination components considered (slide 5)
 - Physical description (slides 7-11)– primarily residential, discussed in more details in statement of significance, includes transportation, that’s where early development was, several patterns of development (see slides)
 - Statement of Significance (slide 6, 12-16)
 - we meet criterion a, c, d, e and j
 - SE Quadrant “plug-in” (slide 16) – what distinguishes this from the rest of Spruce Hill? Contains some of the earliest buildings in the district, highest concentration of properties already on register, includes two churches, development influenced by adjacency to the Woodlands and UPenn, especially evident in rehabs for multi-tenant occupancy and apartment buildings
 - Property Inventory (slide 17) – use an “app sheet” with one page for each property with current photos – have focused on this property by property inventory – viewed each property 3-4 times, can zoom in on the app, look for alterations/modifications. Reviewed this with the PHC this afternoon – seemed excited – app has both drop down menus and fill in’s.
 - Properties are categorized as follows, also consider architectural integrity (intact, altered, heavily altered) (slides 18 and 19):
 - Significant

- Contributing
 - Non-contributing (e.g., 1960's frat house, if altered beyond recognition)
 - Very few properties in this quadrant are outside of the contributing, rather many are contributing. PHC weighs in to ensure they are correctly classified
 - For architectural integrity, goal is to avoid heavily altered
- PHC meeting today (slide 20)
 - Discussed overview of nomination contents and format – PHC liked the app and want to use it going forward.
- Next Steps (slide 21):
 - Completion of draft nomination, next two weeks
 - Submission of draft to PHC on September 29/October 1st – submitting final draft
 - PHC staff review process – 1-2 staff people will review and comment, then this team makes revisions. Have to verify all the addresses, then minimum 60 days for public to be properly notified, then historical commission will coordinate a public meeting – nomination is put on PHC Designation Committee agenda – then nomination is put on PHC agenda for final determination
 - Q – what are best practices – step forward before any bad articles, important to have a positive spin, posting to our website. Discussed Inquirer article and SHCA/UCHS reply. Powelton Village Civic kept reaching out to their constituencies – an article in the paper is good, but its about connecting with your neighbors. UCHS is doing what they can, series in their newsletter, newsletter is on their website. UCHS can work. Will have SH House tour – November 4th.
 - Q – if you are not in the first quadrant – how much should we talk about it? Board discussed and agreed that we should send a letter to every house in the quadrant – invite to the November 4th house tour.
- Jenine – survey through list serve – one question survey – 95 responses: 75% support, 15% did not support, rest maybe need more info. People want more info on the renovations and their costs. Reminder that PHC helps with estimates, provides free advice, we need to remind people about this as well.
- **Dominique London, UC Green: Tree planting in West Philly**
 - UC Green formed in 1998, spearheaded by Penn UC Brite program – bring lighting to neighborhoods, treetenders program. UC Green has planted more than 5,000 trees in west and southwest
 - Two mass tree plantings – one in the fall (Saturday November 18th) and one in the spring. Each planting – unique engagement with different residents. Engaging with volunteers throughout the process.
 - Staff of 1!! (Dominique!) – everything that gets done is through volunteers. Plant 45-50 trees per season, 100-120 per year, well maintained. Pruning of planted trees, if pests, go in and replace trees.
 - Showed PHS data map. %age of owner occupied – folks want trees but if not the owner of the property where they live, can't get the trees. North of powelton, aiming to influence landlord to agree to trees.
 - Programming - many types – supporting UC Green supports all of these: Tree planting, pruning club, data collection, tree checkers, Nature Rx, Green Corps

- Many ways you can support UC Green – gloves, coffee/donuts.
<https://www.ucgreen.org/>

Committee Updates

- Executive Committee (Sylvia and Monica)
 - 2024 Board Elections – Nominations committee is Sylvia, Monica, Eric and Jamie Vann. if resigning from the board, please let committee know by Friday Sept 22nd.
 - Brainstorming for Annual Meeting Speaker Zoning – discussed that speaker(s) should be related to historic district nomination – Jenine and others to reach out. Perhaps neighbors from Powelton who have had work done since their designation – could speak to process
- Halloween Parade (Jamie Vann)
 - Lil Osage neighbors have been planning!
 - Request \$300 contribution from SHCA – not all exec members present, will vote via email
 - Jamie seeking contributions from local businesses – restaurant school, acme, others
 - Penn band will need transportation
 - Jamie to return to October board meeting to finalize details
- Bird Sanctuary
 - Karen Redrobe of committee not present, but nearby neighbors report several rat issues especially near the compost and some properties on Locust street where apparently there is a rat tunnel below the foundation. Currently not composting or feeding birds due to this.
 - Monica noted that more generally there is a significant rat problem on Melville Street (between locust and walnut) and up and down locust street (beginning @43rd, continuing up to 46th). Many rat sightings, other tunnels reported. Some have suggested this is contributed to by open trash containers/dumpsters, and the substantial construction occurring nearby (Walnut/Chestnut streets). All encouraged to use the city’s “Report a Rat” line 215-685-9000 to report any rat sightings.
 - SHCA supported contribution of \$1,000 [all I do not recall/did not record if this was a vote at this meeting, or a previous]
- Safe Streets & Commercial Corridors (Evan Johnstone) – no updates
- Community Engagement (Vicki McGarvey/Alexa Bosse) – no updates
- Education (Becca Geller-Puchalsky)
 - Traffic calming may be coming to 43rd and Spruce, 42nd and Locust
 - Conducted a safety walk with city leaders. New traffic safety staff member assigned to our region promised speed bumps. School administration been pushing for this for two plus years.
 - SAC meetings – no Lea or Robeson SAC meetings yet this year
- Spruce Up Committee (Laura Line) – no updates
- Zoning - 4330 Spruce Street – requesting 5 year extension on [did not catch] – ZBA considering; also 403 S 46th street – 6 unit multi-family – had been used as such, but that lapsed. Meeting next Tuesday

All Other Business

- New variety store coming on 42nd street

Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 10, 2023