

WCGN Winter General Membership Meeting
January 28, 2018
154 W Tulpehocken St

The meeting was called to order at 5:00pm by President Rama Assaf-Smith who offered greetings and thanks to all attending. An official head count was not taken, but an estimated fifty to sixty members were present.

The treasurer was absent owing to illness, but it was reported that the organization has roughly \$3,000 on hand, including \$900 in dues and donations recently collected. Members were urged to keep their dues current. The fiscal year runs from July 1st to June 30th.

Beth Emmott reported that the newly revised and much-improved website is up and running. It may be accessed at www.wcgnonline.org and is designed to function as the public face of WCGN and of the neighborhood. Members can contact Beth through the board at wcnboard@gmail.com in order to have an item posted. They should put "Web site" in the Subject line. Marjorie Russell suggested a round of applause for the hard work and many hours Beth expended in getting the site ready for its debut.

Report from the Garden Committee: Lauren Griffin delivered a brief description of the garden and spoke about recent accomplishments, including the purchase and installation of two new Tulpehocken (*aka* Fallawater) apple trees; the upcoming winter pruning of the fruit trees; and the annual spring workday (date uncertain) when members are encouraged to come out in force to clear off winter detritus, weed, edge, and mulch. Mention was also made of WCGN's intention to pursue with SEPTA the installation of water and sewer lines at the station building. Sign-ups for the spring work day and summer watering will be **on the agenda for the end-of-March meeting (see below)**.

Luke Smith, Vice President and Zoning Committee chairman, reported on the progress of the Zoning Protocols Task Force, which was established in October of 2017 in response to increasing demands for development in the area (often requiring zoning variances) and a perceived lack of clear procedures for the conduct of business at Recognized Community Organization (RCO) meetings. He noted that this is of particular importance when development proposals occur in areas where more than one RCO claims jurisdiction. In coming weeks, a draft of the new protocols will be circulated for comment, and it is hoped that they may be fully discussed and finalized at the WCGN **meeting in late March**. He further stated that, in response to increased activity requiring its attention, the Zoning Committee will henceforth convene on the first Wednesday of every month to entertain submissions requiring RCO approval and to conduct other business as necessary.

This gave rise to a brief discussion of a forthcoming WCGN "Vision Statement" designed to celebrate the community's accomplishments in preserving the historic heritage of the neighborhood and to offer guidelines to those contemplating future development opportunities. This, too, will be circulated in draft form in the near future with hopes that it may be ratified **at the March meeting**.

Marjorie Russell interjected that WCGN is currently operating under outdated By-Laws from 2005 and 2009 which need updating before the organization can be re-certified as an RCO in June of this year. These will be drafted soon and circulated for comment. She further stated that, in order to maintain our status as a functioning RCO, we are required to have a fourth meeting every year (in addition to the traditional three Potluck Suppers with business meetings to follow). **This meeting will take place annually on the last Wednesday of March (March 28th this year)**.

Members were encouraged to attend the Philadelphia Planning Commission's "Philadelphia 2035" meeting the following evening at the Lutheran Seminary in Chestnut Hill or to participate online. Luke Smith emphasized its importance for potential zoning remapping decisions and other matters. Luke Russell interjected that this is an opportunity for the community to make its feelings heard in issues such as the proposed 100-unit apartment/condominium building on the grounds adjacent to the train station. More information about this important initiative will follow and may be placed on the **March meeting agenda**.

Luke Smith drew attention to an upcoming exhibit at the Maxwell Mansion. Entitled "Victoriana Reimagined", the exhibit features artwork by contemporary Philadelphia artists and runs through September 1st. The opening reception (free of charge) will take place on Saturday, March 24th. Details are available on Maxwell's website.

There was a brief discussion concerning: (1) a possible membership drive to reach out to neighbors in the surrounding community (i.e. beyond the borders of the Tulpehocken Station Historic District) who seem so far to be under-represented in WCGN affairs; and (2) the possibility/advisability of listing properties on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, thus affording more protection for our precious heritage in the face of growing pressure for development. A committee to consider these issues is contemplated. **More about this at the March meeting.**

Connie Winters encouraged members to show up at a meeting at the Coleman Library the following evening regarding the historic Germantown Boys and Girls Club building in the Penn-Knox neighborhood, currently targeted for demolition in order to make way for an ice hockey rink.

Eve Gentieu offered to lead an effort to rid the area of litter. A committee will be established to develop an implementation plan. Volunteers may contact her through wcnboard@gmail.com. Just put "Litter" in the subject line. **This will be further addressed at the March 28 meeting.**

Attention turned next to parking and traffic problems in the area and the urgent need to petition the city for a full-blown traffic study. Jenny Anne Horst-Martz mentioned the success of the recently installed pedestrian crosswalk (there was enthusiastic applause for her efforts) at the intersection of Wayne Avenue and Tulpehocken Street but lamented the fact that the sign keeps getting broken or displaced. She asked for vigilance on the part of near neighbors. Bernard Lambert volunteered to chair a committee to agree on how to approach the traffic study, suggesting that the concept of having "block captains" might be revived for this purpose. Those interested in helping may contact him through wcnboard@gmail.com. Just put "Traffic" in the Subject line. **This will be on the agenda for the late-March meeting as well.**

At this juncture Luke Smith introduced Pat Edouard, our liaison to the office of Senator Art Haywood of the Fourth Senatorial District of Pennsylvania. Mr. Edouard outlined which areas/issues fall under the Senator's jurisdiction and which do not. For example city trash collection does not, city streets do not, but state and county roads do. He emphasized the need to "start a paper trail" (via email, rather than phone) when calling problems to his attention. Also the advisability of using the city hotline at 3-1-1 for complaints about city services. He may be contacted at patrick.edouard@pasenate.com. The senator's website is www.SenatorHaywood.com.

Just before adjournment, Jill Saul called the group's attention to the now up-and-running Germantown radio station, 92.9 FM on the dial. Members were urged to tune in. For more information see their web site: www.gtownradio.com.

The meeting was adjourned by President Assaf-Smith at approximately 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
--Russell Fulton, Secretary