

MINUTES FOR 2020 WINTER POTLUCK BUSINESS MEETING
SUNDAY, JANUARY 26
154 WEST TULPEHOCKEN ST

Marjorie Russell called the meeting to order about 5pm.

She welcomed newcomers and encouraged them to keep abreast of neighborhood concerns and activities by visiting WCGN's web site (wcgnonline.org), by signing up for the monthly newsletter, and by joining the neighborhood discussion group called NextDoor West Central Germantown at <https://nextdoor.com/neighborhood/westcentralgermantown--philadelphia--pa/>.

She thanked the people who have recently helped WCGN raise the funds required to cover the lawyer's fee for the Greene and Cheltenham case (see Zoning, below).

She mentioned that Russell Fulton had been recently hospitalized and was currently at a rehab center. We hope for a speedy recovery!

She announced that thanks to the efforts of residents of the Wayne Co-op as well as Jenny Anne Horst-Martz, traffic lights are in the process of being installed. This announcement elicited great whoops and cheers! (Jenny Anne had brought cupcakes dressed up as traffic lights for the dessert table!)

MINUTES

Standing in for Secretary Russell Fulton, Marjorie Russell obtained approval of the minutes of the October business meeting.

TREASURY

Treasurer Johan de Jong reported that because we now have a fund of \$5,000 reserved for legal matters, WCGN was able to go ahead and pay the lawyer representing us and other neighborhood organizations in the Greene and Cheltenham case. As a result of our fundraising campaign in the fall, we have raised nearly all we need to replenish that fund.

He reported that our treasury, including that reserve fund, stands at about \$6,500.

Our operating budget is about \$2,000, so we are in need of donations to support that.

The easiest way to donate is by PayPal via the web site. Questions about the treasury may be directed to Johan by emailing the board.

ZONING AND LAND USE

Luke Smith, Chair of the Zoning Committee, thanked Johan for the many productive hours he has put into his job since taking office as Treasurer, including making multiple frustrating calls to the IRS to—finally—get our tax identification number reactivated. Luke also thanked people who have contributed recently to WCGN's legal fund, namely to replenish it after paying Steve Masters (see below). Then he reported on the following three properties:

Chelten and Greene

Last year the owner of the building at **101-105 West Chelten Ave** (at the intersection with Greene St) applied for a zoning variance, wishing to rent most of it out as a personal care home. After meetings with neighbors and neighboring organizations resulted in a decision to oppose him in this, his request denied by the ZBA.

The owner has now appealed that decision, which means that there will be a hearing before the Court of Common Pleas sometime this year. Since the only way to be heard at the Common Pleas level is to have legal representation, WCGN led an effort to find an attorney to represent its own constituents as well as two other co-intervenors, GLEC and SoLo. Thanks to contributions from them as well as from GUCDC and several individuals we have hired Steve Masters, a reputable zoning attorney, to represent us.

The city is behind in completing the first step in this process, which is to publish a record of the original ZBA hearing. But once that report is made public, it will trigger a timetable for the attorneys and then the Common Pleas Court hearing.

If that hearing does not go in our favor, we have an opportunity to appeal. Again, a good reason to have our legal fund in place. Following through on a case like this gives us credibility and can deter developers in the future from thinking they can do whatever they want in our neighborhood without being accountable to residents' wishes.

Tulpehocken Place (Wooded Area Next to Train Station)

In response to hearing the desires of the neighborhood, the developer Mosaic—the group planning to build next to the Tulpehocken Station parking lot—has changed its plans quite radically. Its original plan, to construct about 100 rental units, is now to build a greatly reduced number of condo units. We expect them to show us some plans soon.

154 West Walnut Lane

There will be an RCO meeting Wednesday, February 5, 6 pm, at Germantown Community Presbyterian Church (corner of Greene and Tulpehocken) to consider Connie Winters's request for a zoning waiver for an already existing use of her home. [The meeting has since taken place and Connie's appeal was unanimously approved.]

In reply to a question regarding the status of Emanuel Freeman/Germantown Settlement Luke Smith said he believes that the City Redevelopment Authority is now trying to figure out what to do with all the derelict properties.

In reply to a concern regarding so much recent development, Luke S replied by mentioning three specific sites: Washington Lane at Cherokee, and E Haines St, (both developed by Stamm Development, a local firm); and one on Gtown Ave. Since these buildings fall within the current zoning code, the developers aren't required to seek neighborhood approval. Nevertheless, Stamm did hold a courtesy meeting to listen to neighbors' concerns.

Marjorie pointed out that there may be a chance for neighbors to be heard in regard to some of these zoning assignments on February 19, 6:30pm. **WCGN will host Ian Hegarty of the PCPC** who will inform us of the Commission's tentative ideas **for re-zoning West Central Germantown**. At that meeting, we will have an opportunity to voice our concerns and our desires before the rezoning bill for WCGN is drafted during March.

Meanwhile, on Monday, February 3, 6 pm at Greene St Friends, there will be a public information session covering several things, including redesign of Maplewood Mall, redesign of the bus stop at Cheltenham and Greene, and sidewalk cleaning along the commercial corridor. [This meeting has taken place, and Jeff Smith has posted a report on NextDoor WCG.]

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Roberta Moore encouraged people to attend upcoming meetings and to join NextDoor West Central Germantown to get announcements of meetings. She explained you can post to just WCG (900 members) or WCG and near neighbors (more like 8000 members) which includes E Falls and part of Mt Airy as well. And she encouraged people to sign up for WCGN's newsletter. She also reminded people we still count on donations.

On February 27 WCGN will host a city-sponsored **recycling workshop** at 6:30 at Germantown Community Presbyterian Church (Greene & Tulpehocken). The workshop lasts about 20 minutes and recycling bins will be available for participants.

March 25 is our next **business meeting**, 6:60 at the church.

City-wide cleanup: no date yet, but she would like to formally register this year so we are linked in and so we get materials.

Yard sale tentatively set for May 2, or possibly May 9 since May 2 is Mt Airy Day. This year we will start earlier, e.g. 7 or 8, and finish around noon instead of 3:00. People can donate items or hold their own yard sale and have it advertised by WCGN for a small donation. We need volunteers to work that day but also ahead of time to sort and price. Please email the board if you're willing to help.

Roberta would like to formalize **trash pickup**—maybe once a month at a given time. Would like also to research why don't we have leaf pick-up or city-sponsored neighborhood cleanup.

GARDEN COMMITTEE

Marjorie gave a brief background for newcomers. She will announce a date for spring cleanup and on Memorial Day will get volunteers to help weed and water during the growing season.

OLD BUSINESS

Germantown High/Fulton Elementary Campus

Roz Sutkowski reported that developers did go to ZBA and were denied. after a number of meetings between Germantown residents and the owner of the **Germantown High School/Fulton School** property, the coalition is now working on a proposal for a CBA (Community Benefits Agreement). The plan is for 219 apartments in both buildings including some affordable housing., perhaps an educational facility but that's still sketchy. The neighbors have hired a lawyer from Regional Housing Legal Services. There will be a zoning meeting on April 15. The group needs help with communications: contact Emaleigh Doley from GUCDC. There are problems at the facility with dumping and graffiti: they could use help with that too.

Lingelbach School Playground

Jeff Smith reported that Lingelbach Elementary School has been fundraising to build a playground. It will be used by the school on school days, but will be open to the community the rest of the time. They have plans and budget. Linda Corsover pointed out that the Public Lands Trust has chosen Lingelbach as its school of the year to help with this project.

Corner of Tulpehocken and Germantown Ave

The previous pizza parlor is owned by the same developer that is building the multi-unit building next door to it.

The Women's Y

Yvonne Haskins involved in trying to get Councilwoman Cindy Bass to work on finding a new developer for this building to break the gridlock.

Other concerns discussed included safety, parking congestion, and a desire for financial support from neighborhood businesses.

The meeting was adjourned at about 6:05.

Respectfully submitted,
Marjorie Russell, for Russell Fulton, Secretary