

MINUTES
WCGN GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING
March 30, 2022, 7:00 PM, on Zoom

In attendance: Marjorie Russell, Luke Smith, Suzanne Ponsen, Russell Fulton, Johan de Jong, Bob Lane, Massoud Mohadjeri, Roberta Moore, Luke Russell, Eve Gentieu, Jenny Anne Horst-Martz, Andrew Kirkpatrick, Mike Ramos, Loree Schuster, Joanne Sharpless, Tom Sharpless, Sherry Tatro

Marjorie called the meeting to order at 7:05. She welcomed everyone, and announced that the next General Business Meeting would be at our Memorial Day Picnic, Covid permitting. Although Luke Smith's family expects to be out of town that weekend, they have generously offered their back yard at 131 W Walnut Lane for the event.

MINUTES: The minutes from the last Business Meeting were approved.

TREASURY: Johan reported that the bank balance is still \$11,600. Although our lawyer's fees for the Mosaic case were considerable, we raised enough money for that specific purpose to cover them. This means we still have an emergency fund to cover us in case anything similar comes up in the future.

BYLAWS: Next, Johan presented a draft of our Bylaws revised, in particular, to accommodate our imminent application for 501(c)3 status from the IRS.

With the marked-up document shared on the screen, Johan went through the changes, which – in addition to the changes required by the IRS -- include correcting a few errors, making some minor clarifications, and making a few adjustments to align the Bylaws more closely to our actual practices, e.g. voting by acclamation rather than ballot when appropriate, and relaxing requirements on the size of the nominating committee and on term limits of officers. The revised draft also requires the Treasurer to adhere to certain protocols spelled out in a separate document that may be revised from time to time. Johan pointed out that one of the controls required by the IRS is to prohibit significant expenditure of funds on lobbying (as of now, we have not spent money on this, only time). We also shouldn't have candidates for office campaigning at our meetings, unless we have a forum inviting all candidates running for a particular office.

To be approved, any changes in the Bylaws must be presented at two consecutive meetings, receiving a 2/3 majority vote at the second meeting. Johan will present these again at the May meeting, which – if approved -- should allow them to be in place by September 30, our deadline for the IRS application.

APRIL 14 MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT: Marjorie announced that there will be a Succession Planning Meeting [scheduled for Thursday, April 14, 7:00 pm, on

Zoom] – a brainstorming session intended to help WCGN find candidates to run for office in October. In particular, we need people to fill the posts of President and Secretary, and we are hoping to inspire some younger volunteers. We are looking for a fuller social media presence and for new ideas! The Board encourages everyone who cares about the future of the neighborhood to attend this meeting.

Questions arose about whether having the meeting coincide with the day before Passover and Maundy Thursday might be a problem, and it was decided that we could include in the announcement our awareness of this potential conflict, and our hope that anyone unable to attend for either of those reasons could catch up afterwards with a Board member or someone else who attended the meeting.

ZONING AND LAND USE: Bob reviewed the two RCO meetings that took place this month.

The first was March 2 and regarded 131 W Walnut Lane. 56 registrants, 41 attending (these numbers are not precise). Results were 13 in support, 16 opposed, 0 non-opposed; it will be decided how and when we will make our report at the next Zoning Committee meeting April 6. [As of this writing the applicant, Luke Smith, has requested a second RCO meeting to consider a revised design.]

The second was March 9 and regarded 200-202 W Walnut Lane. 225 registrants, 243 participants (those numbers not precise either). Results were 70 in support, 69 opposed, 7 non-opposed. There was a delay in voting, but Helios works well, and the process should go more smoothly next time.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE: Roberta reminded us that this Saturday is Philly Spring Cleanup. We're registered with the City, who will pick up the trash on the corners of the streets we have signed up for. Meeting at Greene and Harvey at 9am.

Roberta also mentioned the Book Club that is starting up. Its first meeting is Friday, April 8; more information in the last newsletter [also on the web].

Her committee is looking for new volunteers.

Christ Church & St Michael's is interested in partnering with us again for a yard sale – probably in the fall.

HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMITTEE: Russell Fulton discussed the goals he envisions for this committee that is just beginning to get off the ground.

- In general, preserve the history and the stately and quiet character of this neighborhood. Philadelphia has been called the “most historic and least protected city in America.” In 2018 the Historical Commission came up with the idea of identifying all the properties in the city worthy of preservation. He wants to do that for our neighborhood, and then submit this list.
- Identify “sitting ducks” – the properties most likely to be sold to a developer, then demolished.
- Actively work with city agencies -- the Historical Commission and the Preservation Alliance -- to help them think about how to make it less onerous for owners to do repairs to designated properties.
- Look into getting neighborhood people trained to write nominations so that we don't always have to pay to have them done (e.g. by the Keeping Society). Eve has already been exploring this with the Historical Commission.
- Explore how zoning can help this preservation process, e.g. “conservation overlay”. Or getting a district on the local register. If either/both of these, which blocks? Or else thematic?
- Update and expand the history of the neighborhood pages on the web site.
- Work with Regina Robinson on her story-recording project.

Joanne mentioned parking lots as also being sitting ducks. She asked whether the house-by-house work on the neighborhood would be a start for Russell's committee. Russell: once in place, the re-zoning legislation can offer some protection. Question of where that stands: currently on Cindy Bass's desk.

GARDEN COMMITTEE: Marjorie thinks we won't need to mulch again until fall, but we will need to have weeding sessions -- will call on volunteers. Shout out to Anastasia Alexandrin for her passion for learning about and planting local wildflowers, and for her commitment to the garden.

NEW BUSINESS:

(1) Jenny Anne reported on a project still in the planning stage to improve crosswalks on Germantown Avenue. Most are in Mt Airy, but one is at Germantown and Tulpehocken. At the behest of the Board, Jenny Anne attended a meeting presenting the plans and saw that at this intersection there was only one crosswalk proposed to have the painted stripes – the one connecting the New Bethel AME church with the new development on the SMS corner. She met with the chief consultant Thomas Domincki urging them to put stripes in every

direction. If painting stripes in all four directions will mean adding more curb cuts, we may have to push. In that case we can ask the church and the developer to weigh in. What RCO(s) represent(s) the corner the church is on? She will follow up. And Russell will draft a letter.

(2) Suzanne announced that she is leading a group to recruit more young people, people of color, to get involved with the association. For instance, she has delivered fliers for the Spring Cleanup to the Price-Knox blocks and Rittenhouse St. She asks for volunteers to help her with this.

There was more discussion on the topic of dangerous intersections, especially on Walnut Lane.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned about 8:10.