

MINUTES
WCGN BUSINESS MEETING
October 26, 2022, 8:00 PM, on Zoom

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Marjorie Russell a little after 8:00. There were approximately 45 persons in attendance.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Marjorie announced the slate of officers:

Suzanne Ponsen, President

Luke Smith, 1st VP

Mike Ramos, 2nd VP

Connie Winters, Secretary

Johan de Jong, Treasurer

Before the vote was taken, Carla Willard raised objections to how the nomination/election process was handled and asked that the Bylaws be made more specific about this process.

A motion to adopt the slate was made by Bob Lane and seconded by Johan, and the slate was adopted by near-unanimous acclamation, with Carla abstaining.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

The minutes from the Memorial Day Meeting were approved.

TREASURY

Johan reported that the treasury balance is currently a little over \$11,000. Expenses were high because of lawyers' and other professional fees relating to WCGN's opposition to the Mosaic development at the train station. Funds were raised to cover these; there were about 40 donors.

He reported that our efforts to obtain 501(c)3 status from the IRS were stalled because our tax ID number had been deactivated, and he is still working on getting that corrected. We are required to apply for this status given the extent of our recent fundraising.

REPORT BY REZONING TASK FORCE

Suzanne recapped the group's process of researching properties and challenging the PCPC's proposed zoning map, and reported that their negotiations have been quite successful, with WCGN getting about 80% of the concessions it asked for. Meetings with Ian Hegarty, the city planner for our part of the city, are still taking place. Next steps include PCPC finalizing the wording for the legislation, Cindy Bass taking it to the Rules Committee, and then the bill going before City Council to be passed. The

Rules Committee meeting is a public meeting, so if there are parts WCGN still objects to, neighbors can appear in force to voice their objections.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

GREEN SPACE COMMITTEE

A new committee is forming with the goal of enhancing the green space in West Central.

ZONING AND LAND USE COMMITTEE – Bob Lane provided this update:

- 5700 Pulaski -- Mastery Charter School Athletic Field expansion/enhancement: The project did not get much support at the July 6 RCO meeting, partly because of its impact on the community garden there. WCGN leadership met with Mastery with recommended changes to their plan (changes designed by Massoud Mohadjeri, who is an architect experienced in this area), and Mastery agreed to change their plans to benefit the garden. Nonetheless, for some reason, the school requested a continuance at their October 19 ZBA hearing.

- 5900 Pulaski – The owner of this residential single-family attached dwelling, Dulcinea Williams, has requested the variance required to have the property used as an AirBnB that is not owner occupied. She did not get much support at the September 7 RCO meeting (6 supporting, 18 opposed, one abstention). ZBA hearing is December 14.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Roberta Moore expressed a need to have people volunteer to help her with the oral history project as well as with neighborhood potlucks and other events and with setting up a neighborhood on-line discussion group that could replace our old Yahoo users' group. The recent potlucks were very successful, but most of her help came from other Board members.

HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Russell Fulton announced that he intends to hold an organizational meeting some time before the holidays. He wants to identify structures that are at risk of overdevelopment or demolition so that we can work to save them, probably by getting them onto the local historic register. He hopes to get help from the Preservation Alliance and the Historical Commission to teach some of us how to write nominations ourselves so that we don't always have to pay an architectural historian for that service. In the meantime, we would need to pay those fees.

Connie Winters introduced a related topic which was discussed at length: whether there would be support for WCGN to use funds currently in its treasury for historic preservation and/or whether there would be support for WCGN to sponsor raising money for a fund specifically earmarked for

historic preservation in general. It was stressed that time is of the essence, since buildings are being lost even as the rezoning negotiations continue. A show of hands indicated wide support of the idea in general, although it was pointed out that using the funds currently in the treasury for that purpose risked understandable objections by people who have made donations thinking they were going to support the organization's operating budget and emergency fund. It was agreed that further discussion is required.

GARDEN COMMITTEE

Marjorie Russell summarized the history of the garden/orchard which WCGN maintains at the Tulpehocken Train Station, with the support of SEPTA and Philadelphia Orchard Project.

MOVING FORWARD

Both Marjorie and Suzanne urged people to express their ideas about WCGN in emails to the Board – whether about topics that came up during the meeting or ones that did not -- and to please consider volunteering to be on a committee.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20. The next regularly scheduled WCGN business meeting is the last Wed of January (the 25th), format and location to be announced.

Respectfully,
Marjorie Russell, for Russell Fulton, Secretary