

Minutes
West Central Germantown Neighbors
Memorial Day Potluck Picnic and Community Meeting, May 26, 2024
131 West Walnut Lane

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at about 5:15 PM, Suzanne Ponsen, President, presiding.

She introduced herself and all the other Board Members: Julie Stapleton Carroll, 1st VP and RCO Zoning Committee Chair, Mike Ramos, 2nd VP and History & Heritage Committee Chair, Lora Lewis, Secretary, Bob Lane, Treasurer, Roberta Moore, Community Engagement Committee all present. Phil Kane, Green Space Committee Chair was not present.

Suzanne thanked the Board for all their hard work and support over the past year.

Suzanne thanked all those present for attending this year's hastily planned "day before" Memorial Day Community Picnic/Meeting which was rescheduled due to storms forecasted for May 27th. She acknowledged that due to the day change, many people who normally attend could not but that in some cases others were able to attend. She thanked Luke Smith and Rama Assaf-Smith for the use of their beautiful yard.

Approximately 95 neighbors were in attendance.

State of WCGN and the WCGN Neighborhood

1. Suzanne summarized the extensive work done this year in the areas of our incorporation and writing of our new by-laws.

With the pro bono guidance of Morgen Cheshire and Susanne Wherry from Cheshire Law Group, a local (5275 Germantown Ave.) firm which specializes in non-profit organizations, WCGN worked tirelessly to accomplish what was needed. Suzanne, with the tremendous help of Mike Ramos, Julie Stapleton Carroll, and Johan DeJong (WCGN's most recent past Treasurer) have worked behind the scenes doing the tedious work that was involved. Suzanne thanked them all.

2. Suzanne explained the importance and status of the current Nationally Registered "Tulpehocken Station Historic District" and our work in the process of having it registered locally by the Philadelphia Historical Commission.

Under Mike Ramos's chairmanship of the History and Heritage Committee we had 2 informational meetings (the 1st on January 11 – for the WCGN Board and members of the History and Heritage Committee and the 2nd on March 27 – for our open Spring Community Meeting). Our guest speakers included Paul Stenke, Executive Director of the Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia and Kim Chantry, Historic Preservation Planner for the Philadelphia Historical Commission. They answered questions concerning the actual process of local designation as well as the responsibilities of property owners once an area is historically designated.

Suzanne explained her personal reason why she supports this local designation. She spoke of the danger of allowing the possibility of our stately pre-war apartment buildings being demolished – something we may not be able to prevent, even if the district is designated– and being replaced with “housing boxes” with no oversight for their design or impact on our neighborhood. More community meetings to discuss these topics are being planned for the fall. She urged those at the picnic to talk to their neighbors and encourage them to participate as well.

3. Suzanne requested that picnic attendees check out all the informational tables and sign up for the various committees/activities including:

- a. West Germantown Neighborhood Bikeways by taking the survey at bit.ly/Germantown-BW and voting for the implementation of pedestrian, bike, and auto safety preventive measures for McCallum, Harvey and Rittenhouse Streets.
- b. Neighborhood Book Club which is open to all neighbors and organized by Kimberly Clotman kimberly@clotman.name and Shana Kennedy shana@phillcircus.com
- c. Juneteenth Festival 6/15 needs help hosting WCGN table
- d. Communications Committee Helping us redesign/cleanup our website, manage our Mailchimp account effectively and get WCGN's message out via social media. suzanne.ponsen@gmail.com
- e. Green Space Committee by helping at our Tulpehocken Station Orchard, helping us plant more yard and street trees, and help us claim a city-owned property at 6100 Germantown as a green space shared with Wyck House and Garden. Contact Phil Kane carpentryandbenchwork@gmail.com
- f. Movie Nights Under the Stars help plan some family friendly movie nights in the side yard of Christ Church & St. Michael's Contact Craig Whitney whitney.craig@comcast.net

- g. History & Heritage Committee Be part of the conversation about the designation of the Tulpehocken Station Historic District and help organize community informational meetings to make it a reality.

Adjournment @ 6:15

Minutes submitted by Suzanne Ponsen for Lora Lewis (who graciously managed the sign-in table)