

Minutes from November 12, 2019 Meeting of Penn Knox Neighbor Association 143 W. Coulter Street

Present: Sue Patterson, Brandi Levine, Margaret Manzer, Pekka Lampela, Martha Savery, Grace Flisser, Tim Brown, Tina LeCoff, Georgette Bartell, Meredith Myers, Adam Kaufman, Liuda Sudaris, Orrin Thomas, Laura Smith, Peter Winslow, Darisha Parker, Terese Vekteris

1. Welcome and Introductions.

2. Sue P announced that the Committee on Historical Designation would be meeting the following day, November 13, 2019, at 1515 Arch Street to discuss the Germantown High School lot and associated properties; it was expected to be a good discussion since historical architects would be present.

3. Philadelphia Public Bank:

Tim Brown of Philadelphia Neighbor Networks and his colleagues (names?) made a presentation concerning the Philadelphia Public Bank Coalition, beginning with showing a video. A discussion followed, concerning such issues as what a local public bank could accomplish, what sorts of ways could help improve the city and its neighborhoods, why it makes sense to have a public rather than a private bank, and so on. Afterwards, a question-and-answer period ensued, concerning issues such as how to protect a local public bank from corruption, who its Board of Directors would consist of, whether it would be viable. As presented, the purpose of the bank is to provide greater democratic accountability for - and community residents' input into - how our local tax monies would be used.

A four-month study has been approved and funded by the city regarding its governance, the best ways to set it up to save the most money, and so on. Helen Gym, Kendra Brooks, and Derek Green favor the establishment of a public bank while other Council members such as Cindy Bass say they are studying the idea. Chris Rabb and other Pennsylvania State Representatives also approve of it.

The presenters hoped that we as a neighborhood would support this initiative and join the Philadelphia Public Bank Coalition, which consists of about eight neighborhood groups right now. Sue P said that we could poll the PKNA members. As individuals or as PKNA members (were we to support the Public Bank), we could show up at meetings, talk to our City Council Reps and State Reps. Georgette and others pointed out that a website, a newsletter about updates and actions would be very helpful. Generally, the PKNA members present seemed to welcome this initiative.

4. Zoning

Brandi L updated us about the eleven-member zoning committee who, when they recently met, reviewed a document of zoning rules that had come from the West Central Germantown RCO which provided us with a model so that we could draft guidelines of our own for the PKNA. These guidelines would serve as a general statement of the PKNA zoning preferences. The committee has a first draft of guidelines and will have a new iteration of the draft by the time of

their next meeting, which is set at the **3rd Tuesday of every month, at 150 W. Queen Lane from 6:30 - 8:00**. Meetings are open, but attendees can't vote on guidelines unless the larger PKNA has already appointed them to the committee. Tina L stated that we have more pressure from developers in our neighborhood than does the West Central Germantown neighborhood. Brandi noted that PKNA has several large institutions in our neighborhood, citing Germantown Friends School as an example. The committee is mindful of the concerns associated with these entities, and the ways that they will help to shape the bylaws that they craft.

Sue will once again send out documents concerning zoning that PKNA has recently discussed or reviewed.

5. By-Laws

The committee of three, Tina L, Adam K, and Georgette B have been reviewing some boiler plate as well as previously drafted (?) by-laws for RCO's, and their inclination is to make the new by-laws less forbidding and off-putting by stating them in less formal language and perhaps in bullet format rather than through a narrative. The by-laws, they felt, should be "community-friendly." In our discussion, we touched upon striking a balance between being a welcoming community while not completely relaxing any process or guidelines for the way we run ourselves; in fact, certain issues must be addressed in by-laws in order for us to be officially approved by the city (?) as an RCO. For example, we're required to include such statements as what sort of group we propose to be (such as focusing on zoning or land use, and so on); a process for providing leadership and specifying how these guidelines will be adapted to specific situations, such as whether individuals or households vote, whether we can vote by proxy; how or if we verify people's residence in PKNA; whether or not we provide for voting "categories" such as "near neighbor" when we vote on particular cases of building development or zoning, and so on. The West Central Germantown group can provide us with their by-laws as a reference point. Sue P suggested particular RCO people who might be able to help us in constructing our own version: Jonathan Goings, for example, has expertise and could give us feedback so that our by-laws will be approved. They also must be posted on our website ultimately, laid out intelligibly, it's hoped. The draft is officially due by January so that our PKNA RCO will be approved.

6. Treasurer's Report

Our treasurer, Russell, could not be present, so we will be updated next month. Sue P. reminded us that we still haven't cleared up what we do or do not owe our lawyers for the Boys and Girls Club preservation issue from last year - there has been some confusing kerfuffle around our fees.

7. Elections

Sue P announced the election of new officers. Brandi Levine, as Vice-Chair, ran the election. The slate of candidates for PKNA officer positions introduced themselves as follows, with Brandi L speaking for Irving Vaughn, who was absent due to illness:
Brandi Levine, Chair;
Irving Vaughn, Vice Chair;
Margaret Manzer, Treasurer;

Terese Vekteris, Communications Secretary;
Grace Flisser, Recording Secretary

Tina L made the motion to accept the slate of officers. Georgette B seconded the motion. The vote was taken by a show of hands and verbal acclamation. All attendees were in favor.

8. New Committee to Form on Historical Preservation

Sue P announced that we need a new committee to work on prioritizing properties for historical designation in our Penn-Knox area. Several architects, such as Oscar Beisert (whose Keeping Society, dedicated to supporting historic preservation one can donate to online) and Aaron Wunch of the University of Pennsylvania are working property by property on this project so that the entire neighborhood, which has a national historic registration, can be described, and dated to enable us to receive a **local historic designation**. Prospective members could help with filing, updating photography, doing research at the Germantown Historical Society, and doing other tasks. Architecture students have been helping thus far. Look out for the formation of this new committee since they could use help with this enormous task.

9. Newsletter help

Brandi L noted that an editor is needed for our quarterly print newsletter and Terese Vekteris volunteered. Darisha Parker and Adam Kaufman will help with distributing packs to the block distributors.

8. Garden Kiosk/Key

Sue P. said that we would like to keep our kiosk at the Penn/Green intersection updated with pertinent information and announcements, for example, with Renew, Repair flyers or newsletters. Sue needs to get her kiosk key back, and will make several more copies so that volunteers can help with this effort. Several present said they would help.

Submitted with hope and respect,
Grace Flisser