



PENN KNOX NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Julie Baranauskas, chair Melissa Fisher, vice-chair CJ Hazell, treas. Georgette Bartell, sec.

September 14, 2015 • Pennsylvania School for the Deaf • 161 W. Coulter St. • 7-9 PM

Present: Approx. 32 total including PKNA residents and Inez Love (RCO Faith Community Assoc), Betty Turner (RCO Germantown Community Connection), Walter and Sue Moyer with son and daughter, Cindy Bass, Patrick Jones, Emaleigh Doley, Clare McGuire, and more

Announcements:

1. Tieshka Smith lives at 114 W. Queen. In response to the brutal attack on a 14 year old girl by police in Texas, she hung a banner protesting police brutality. She documented people coming by and signing. On July 4 the banner was torn. In response to this, Tieshka is launching the Peace Zones project partially funded by a grant from the GUCDC. This is an iteration of the project started over the summer. The community will be engaged in this new art project: a community space, a green space, where people can get together. It will be conflict free, no arguing, no drinking. Designated people will be peace zone ambassadors to monitor and facilitate. The ambassador will also take pictures as well as Tieshka documenting the art making process. Tieshka is inviting suggestions as to where this green space could be. Ideally it should also be easy to get. She will email the group and put the info on the facebook page.
2. Saturday, September 19th Coleman Library reopening reception, 11 AM – 2 PM Books & free memberships to the Friends Group!
3. From the Streets Dept: On a Citywide basis, trash and recycling collections will be cancelled on Friday, September 25 and Monday, September 28. Residents must hold their collections until the following week. Holding collections means keeping trash and recycling on-premises for one additional week.

Old Business

Boys and Girls Club: In response to a query from Sue Patterson on their progress, Lisabeth Marziello wrote:

I would love it if you'd like to report to the Penn Knox Community meeting that we are strategically working to address everyone's concerns at the last meeting. We are following up with potential partners so that we can come back to Penn Knox in the future with a plan that shows – we are listening, and that we value the community's input. We are also holding off on tours and another community meeting until our revised plans are in place.

Lordan will be heard at the Zoning Board at 3 pm. Hairpin fences are Victorian and later. Historic photos have wood fences.

New Business

ZONING: RCO COMMUNITY MEETING

107 W. School House Lane: request for support for proposed zoning variance to allow operation as a Guest House/Bed and Breakfast & commercial offices in a RSA-3 category .

Mr. Moyer gave background on the property. In Jan 2014 they bought the house for \$80,000. They tried to sell it. Asbestos was removed, trees were removed "a lot of the trees were diseased". They met with historical commission. In June, they had a meeting with a zoning attorney, they decided to make it a Guest House.

The James Matthews House was built in 1750s, in the 1800s an extension was added. There are 9 rooms, 5.5 bathrooms and they plan to rent 7 of the rooms, some with private bathrooms. There is a 2 car garage in the back. They put in windows in the kitchen which had been boarded up, there is an open space for meetings and conferences. The house came with some first edition books.

Their plan is for Visitor Accommodations: no visitor can stay more than 30 days, they will serve a cold breakfast. Mr. Moyer says that guests mostly will be there on weekends and their plan was for them to be there alone. They also will have 2 offices there: one for the Guest House and the other for Mr. Moyer's business as an accountant. He says he will be there every day. He also has an office in Center City.

Mr. Moyer said that the variance doesn't require parking if fewer than 10 bedrooms and that there are 3 parking spaces along the driveway and 3 in the back. Later he said there was room for 3 cars on each side of the driveway + 3 cars in the back.

Security: There will be Xfinity security and motion detector lights on the outside.

Comments and Concerns:

1. **Parking already a problem for doctors' offices:** Dr. Pamela Hoffman, pediatrician, is concerned because her patients already have a hard time parking. See above for Mr. Moyer's remedy.
2. **Germantown has its fill of transient housing.** Cindy Bass: "We shouldn't take a risk. Taking Germantown to the next level is a constant battle as there are plenty of rooming houses, substance abuse houses, etc. "You don't live in the neighborhood. We need homeowners in this neighborhood. We would be hard pressed to support this project. What if you want to get out of the B&B business and it's already there. We don't need transient housing."
3. **Moving away from a residential neighborhood.** Sue Gilfillan: the point of PKNA is to maintain the neighborhood as residential. If you're not going to live there, it's a commercial conversion. We do not need any more conversions to commercial. (By the end of the meeting, the Moyers said that they would have someone live there.)
4. **Too late now, even if they didn't open the Guest House they couldn't sell it as single family.** Several people said that no one wants a house with 7 bedrooms.
5. **It won't make it.** With construction loans, mortgage and property taxes, the cost may be more than they can take in. (No plan for this possibility was presented.)

PKNA will send a letter, neutral as "non-opposition". Anyone can send a letter in support or non-support.

PKNA vote: 6 for, 7 opposed, 4 abstain

General vote: (addresses for voters not taken, at least one lives on Walnut)
11 for, 7 opposed, 5 abstain

*Appeal to be heard by the Zoning **BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT** on 10/14/2015 ·
4:00 PM, 1515 Arch Street, 18th Floor

Next PKNA meeting October 12th, Patrick Grossi, Preservation Alliance