

**Penn Knox Neighborhood Association (PKNA)  
Community zoom meeting March 1, 2022 Minutes**

**Attending:** Deneene Brockington, Reginald Hall, State Representative Darisha Parker, Town Watch Integrated Services (TWIS), Anthony Murphy (TWIS; anothony.murphy@phila.gov), George Stevenson (Councilperson Bass' Constituent Services, Trash Task Force Advisor), Don Jones (Community Liaison, DAO), PPD Officer Bernard Spain (39th District Crime Prevention Officer, Bernard.Spain@phila.gov), PPD Officer Sharon Ings (39th District Community Liaison) Angela Steele, Adam Kaufman, Maggie Manzer, Therese Vekteris, Grace Flisser, Cheryl Smith, Pat Albright, Phileasa Patrick, Greg Paulmier, Russell Kleinbach, Theodore Stones, Kevin Zuber, Else Eaton, Georgette Bartell, Alison Weiss, Tom Kang (from Councilperson Oh's Office), Tara Smith (Town Watch) Marian Jahn, Zarah Adams

**1. Neighbor Introductions:** Deneene started us off with our introductions, and many people greeted the group and introduced themselves.

**2. Old Business:**

- a. Deneene announced that we have scheduled a community walk-through with PPD Commissioner Outlaw; elected officials, block captains, and board members will accompany her, and we will report about it in April.
- b. Deneene announced that we're ready to vote for Colleene Cacace for Co-Chair for the Neighbor to Neighbor Committee. Grace moved that we hold the vote and Deneene seconded it. All those who were PKNA residents voted yes for Colleen in the chat (14 votes), with one abstention. Colleen was duly elected.
- c. Angela and Grace described the purpose of the Neighbor to Neighbor committee: to get people together as individuals if possible in order to connect us through social events, online or in person, to get a resource guide together to offer each other help, and other such ideas.
- d. Maggie, Co-Chair of the Neighborhood Conservation and Development Committee, said she is looking for a Co-Chair and for volunteers.
- e. Angela, Co-Chair of the Quality of Life Committee, reported that she emailed all our requests and input from the February meeting with Philadelphia Commissioner of Streets, Richard Montanez, to him, and will follow up with him.

**3. Speakers:**

- a. Deneene introduced George Stevenson, 8th District Councilperson Cindy Bass' Constituent Services Representative and Trash Task Force Advisor. Over time, he has helped the 5100 block of Knox Street with their follow-up on their concerns. Mr. Stevenson explained the 8th District's Community Leadership Caucus which makes neighborhoods aware of the resources available to help with their quality of life issues and asks them to work in partnership with them by giving them input and requests for improvements. The District offers:
  - a Housing Initiative for Basic Systems Repair, a program with eligibility requirements for help with home repair;
  - an Adaptive Modification Program to help differently -abled peoples with structural modifications to their houses;

- a Philly First Home Program, a program with eligibility requirements to help first-home ownership;
- a Philadelphia Neighborhoods Home Preservation Loan Program - providing low interest loans for repairs;
- a Street Lighting Repairs Program.

The District is working in other areas such as tree removal and trash and recycling.

Home owners are responsible for their own sidewalks, trees, lots, and for putting out trash.

Dumping won't be picked up. The city will figure out whose responsibility a tree in an alleyway is.

We need to use 311 as a "data collection point" to take in information as a first contact to start a trail that can be tracked as it moves through to repair. 311 will alert PGW or other utilities or services to do the work. Mr. Stevenson gave us some rough timelines for how long repairs take, but it always depends on the amount of work currently underway in the city. PKNA will now be on the radar of the 311 contact.

There will be a google doc that Deneene and the board will send out to everyone that allows us to chart and track what problems are on our blocks, such as abandoned cars and so on. We will be the "eyes" for the 8th District, sending monthly reports on problematic issues to Mr. Stevenson. He stressed that we can just note the problems once - we don't need to repeat them on the google doc chart every month.

Kevin asked how to address the dumping problem that stores and businesses effect, such as a dead tree on a business lot. Mr. Stevenson said that the problem is litter. We can try to have L & I talk to the businesses and do our own clean-ups; and we have to chart this on the google doc to make the 8th District aware of it. Mr. Stevenson can expedite the solution through that channel. Deneene said that when her block engaged in the Leadership Caucus, some problems were dealt with more quickly than others, but it was good to know that the Councilperson was behind them. Representative Parker said that the state can also work on the problems, such as with the city Parking Authority in regard to abandoned cars.

Greg asked about the status of the YMCA building, but Mr. Stevenson said that was a zoning issue and was not able to give an update.

Mr. Stevenson said that he can meet with PKNA regularly, bringing people from the Water Dept, L& I, and so on, to speak with us.

b. Anthony Murphy and Reginald Hall from Town Watch Integrated Services, TWIS, introduced themselves. Mr. Murphy works in Criminal Justice and Public Safety. He stressed that an organized community is what makes for a safe and strong one; engagement is crucial. He works with Councilperson Bass and Representative Parker. There are two ways for the community to engage in Town Watch:

1. "eyes and ears" engagement, in which each block organizes through communication with each other; they "see, document, and report." We need to know everyone on the block, including the buildings behind our own houses, businesses, schools.
2. collaboration with the PPD; cooperate with the PPD by attending PSA meetings; contact them about community crises and getting returning citizens jobs and counseling.

Contact Mr. Murphy at [anthony.murphy@phila.gov](mailto:anthony.murphy@phila.gov).

Representative Parker has gotten a huge grant for TWIS; we need state, city, and police

organizations working together; we need block captains.

PPD Officer Ings announced a March 17th PSA teleconference with the 39th PPD. We can dial in: 605-313-5071, code #946071.

We will have TWIS training at our April meeting!

#### **4. Quality of Life Committee:**

Angela announced that we will start our monthly litter clean-ups on Saturday, April 2, 9:00 -12:00 which is the same date as the city-wide Philly clean-up. Following that, we will have clean-ups on the first Saturday of each month, 9:00-12:00, meeting at two sites: Knox and Hansberry and Maplewood Avenue and Greene St. Mr. Murphy asked for our clean-up schedule.

#### **5. Collaboration with GFS:**

Students want to help the neighborhood by working on the community Garden at Penn and Greene Streets. We will connect them with Susan, who directs the garden.

#### **6. Neighborhood Conservation and Development Committee:**

Terese reported on behalf of Maggie: In response to the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf's appeal of the Historical Commission's designation of their building at 156 W. School House Lane, the Historical Commission submitted documents on January 19 to explain their designation. Right now, there is no decision on the appeal.

#### **7. Treasurer's Report:**

Terese reported on behalf of Maggie: our bank balance is \$1,903.50, having received three dues payments and having paid for our website platform for the next few months. Deneene has been put on the account, with former Chair Brandi deleted from it. Do pay dues: \$10/year suggested for individuals, \$25 for families.

#### **8. Open mike:**

Deneene announced that we need volunteers for committees, we want content for our website, and reminded us of the Saturday, April 2 clean-up.

PPD Officer Spain reminded us to call 311 when we see the need. Reach him at Bernard.Spain@phila.gov. The 39th District Captain's Town Hall meeting is on the 4th Monday of every month. They can give us the monthly crime bulletin.

Pat announced the program, "Kids Get Cash!"- announcing to families that they can get cash or tax credits if they are supporting children. Woman at the Crossroads has written to Governor Wolf asking PA to increase benefits to mothers. She announced an event to celebrate the 50 years of Women Strike for Peace at [globalwomenstrike.net/50years/](http://globalwomenstrike.net/50years/)

Greg stressed that there is an item in the Philadelphia budget for Improvement of Public Facilities Fund giving each Councilperson one million dollars to spend in their district, but there is no accountability for how the money is spent; it is the Councilperson's "prerogative". He urged us to ask Councilperson Bass how she spends the money.

Deneene bade us all good night with many thanks.

Submitted by Grace Flisser, Recording Secretary