

**Penn Knox Neighborhood Association
Germantown, Philadelphia 19144**

**Community zoom meeting, January 4, 2022, 7:00 pm
Minutes**

Attending: Adam Kaufman, Maggie Manzer, Terese Vekteris, Grace Flisser, Zarah Adams, Deneene Brockington, Tom Kang (from Councilman Oh's office), Representative Darisha Parker, Sue Patterson, Colleen Cacace, Georgette Bartell, Pat Albright, Don Jones, Liza James, Monty Yellock, Christine Gaddie

1. Neighbor Introductions: Adam started us out by introducing himself; many on the zoom call followed.

2. Old Business:

- a. Maggie reviewed with us that in our December meeting, PKNA had approved a variance request for 147 W. School House Lane to have three units on the property rather than two. The Zoning Board hearing will be on February 23rd at 9:30 am; email Maggie if you'd like more information. Our "yes" will likely be heard by the ZBA.
- b. We are still trying to schedule a community walk with PPD Commissioner Outlaw and will keep the neighborhood updated about that event

New Business:

3. Elections: Adam announced that today was selected as the day for PKNA elections for Co-Chair positions of committees and for officers, all for two-year terms. All the officers were running for re-election; Deneene Brockington was running for Chair of PKNA. Deneene introduced herself as a resident for seventeen years on the 5200 block of Knox Street and is a block captain and Committeeperson of the 12th ward/17th division. She likes her "old-school" block where there are great neighbors who know each other and hold social events and clean-ups. Although she used to feel that the PKNA leadership was not necessarily in touch with the neighborhood's needs, she's felt a change in the PKNA board recently. She's worked with Councilperson Bass and Representative Parker to address issues contributing to the fatal shooting on her block in the last year. She wants to "strengthen relationships with key partners", such as city and state representatives and key institutions such as GFS and PSD, and find more resources to work with, increase participation in PKNA by going door to door to achieve that. Maggie moved that we make a vote on the entire slate of board nominees, including Deneene and all the present PKNA officers, all at once, and Grace seconded the motion. Those PKNA residents on zoom voted unanimously in favor of their taking on their official roles. Maggie moved that we vote for Kevin and Else Zuber as Co-Chairs for the Quality of Life committee; Grace seconded. The PKNA residents voted unanimously in favor of electing them. We can still take future nominations for Co-Chair of the Neighborhood Development and Conservation committee.

PKNA Co-Vice Chair Angela Steele had previously nominated Colleen Cacace for Co-Chair of the Neighbor-to-Neighbor Committee, and she accepted. We will vote on this nomination at our February meeting. Adam added that if we get other nominees for committees, we'll vote for

these positions next month.

Related to Neighborhood Conservation and Development Committee: Maggie stated that this group used to be the zoning committee. As its Chair, on behalf of PKNA, Maggie has reached out to Ian Hagerty of the Philadelphia Planning Commission and she also reached out to Joe McCarthy's RCO Baynton Hill Neighbors. She and Joe would like to review with Ian the 2035 Commission's recommendations for the re-zoning of certain properties in PKNA recommended in the 2035 plan. For this effort, Maggie is calling for volunteers to discuss the changes in the map and to come up with any suggestions that could be given to Ian. Once Ian and the 2035 Planning Commission have acknowledged our recommendations, and we accept the plans, they could then pass them on to Councilperson Bass, who would present them for a vote by City Council.

Christine and Sue volunteered to work with Maggie on this effort.

4. Quality of Life Committee:

A. Terese stated that we will continue our litter-free initiative in April, concentrating on the same three blocks we've been working on.

Georgette asked how we can get people on these blocks to join with us, and what stops them from helping us.

Maggie stated her experience with placing a private trash can on the block at W Queen Lane & Knox that filled up regularly in 1-2 days from passersby, often with the trash that made the surrounding properties smell bad and which the individual is responsible for disposal of.

Neighbors requested that she remove her "Love your Hood" trash can in the summer due to the smell. Maybe Angela, Kevin, and Else have suggestions. We can provide gloves, shovels, bags to anyone on other PKNA blocks who want to use the equipment we get from the city for our clean-ups for their own block.

Adam says he picks up trash when he walks his dog; some blocks have a higher litter index than others.

Christine, from the 100 W. Queen block, said that the white apartment houses across from the gas station are always trashy sites - she does pick up trash, but it's too much. She's called 311, L&I has tried to find the owner. Sue said in the chat that they are "hands-off section 8 apartments." Deneene said she did the right thing; we should ask for help from Councilperson Bass and Rep Parker.

Grace said we should post our litter clean-up days on the PKNA FB page and on other Germantown FB pages.

Deneene said that different neighbors come out each time there's a block clean-up; it's hard to get continuity. We need to put out targeted communication on each block.

Monty said in the chat that doggie bag drops would be helpful, and trash cans, especially near the Boys and Girls Club (B&G).

Adam said we'll include the litter clean-ups in our flyers. Grace said that we're overdue for a flyer.

Georgette said that the source of the trash is a problem - from whom, why does it come?

Adam said that people park in front of his house, eat lunch and just throw their trash out of the car window; he then picks it up. We just have to do our best without driving ourselves crazy.

Rep Parker said that she and Cindy Bass will reach out to L&I by email, to which they usually

respond. We can also work with a Block Captain beautification campaign. We need to find ways to reach people, maybe with robocalls and email blasts. We need partners.

Adam said we could put up signs like “litter-free zone” in Germantown, or just No Dumping signs.

Maggie said the white buildings on Queen Lane may be legally required by the city to have private trash collection if they have enough units.

Adam said we should build a relationship with the landlord.

Zarah said that the trash cans on corners or near bus stops are overflowing. Can we get 311 to empty them more often? Can we get a city-wide program that standardizes the number and locations of trash cans and when they are serviced?

Adam has seen an increase in trash lately that’s thrown around on trash days - so he picks up trash on the streets on trash days.

Tom from Councilperson Oh’s office said constituents complain about trash outside buildings, but L&I can’t cite the owners since the trash is picked up by the time the city authorities reach them. So we should take and date photos, create a timeline of them to take our “trash” case to the building owners. The neighborhood organization can do that.

Maggie said the white buildings’ tiny trash bags aren’t properly secured, so the trash spills out and spreads down the street.

Georgette said that trash cans can be expensive; you need a car to transport them.

Maggie said trash cans are the landlords’ responsibility.

B. Terese said that the traffic study we’d requested had been conducted, but the Streets Department did not find driving conduct that would call for speed guards or other action on W Queen Lane.

We should still download, sign, and send the letter on our website that requests specific safety actions in PKNA to the Streets Department.

5. Neighborhood Development and Conservation Committee

Maggie said the 147 W. School House Lane zoning variance had been approved by PKNA last month and there will be a ZBA hearing for it on February 23rd at 9:30 am that anyone can attend.

You can speak at the hearing for 147 W School House Lane by registering your attendance at the meeting in advance.

Maggie will submit our required Meeting Summary to the ZBA in January.

The owner of 20 W. Queen Lane, who had requested a variance to allow four living units on his property, had rescinded the request for a variance.

6. Treasurer’s Report

Maggie said that PKNA has \$1,916.18 in our bank account, with some dues-paying over the last month. Please donate /pay dues to help us pay for our zoom account and website expenses, equipment, other costs that we have.

As a Representative of Friends of Howell Park, Sue added that we were able to use some grant monies from the city that we had applied to for a party that we’d never held in 2020, canceled due to Covid. It was agreed in conjunction with members of Friends of Howell Park, in whose name the grant was received, that a portion of the approved grant monies was used for supplies

for a bulb planting in Howell Park, off Greene Street, to be scheduled in the Spring.

Open Mike

Rep. Parker will ask Commissioners Williams and DiPetri and L&I to look into our trash problem. They can also educate us on how to trash responsibly so that sanitation trucks have an easier job and don't have to deal with the trash that's inappropriately disposed of.

Adam will follow up with her; we're trying to get an L&I representative at a PKNA meeting.

Grace said that the DAO is holding a virtual job fair on January 6th.

Pat announced that Crossroads Women Center is part of a campaign to increase welfare benefits which have been the same since the 1990's and are advocating for anti-poverty legislation. They are asking Governor Wolf and the State Senate for this. She hopes Rep Parker will help in this effort, and she can get more information to others interested in the issue.

Georgette said that the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf (PSD) is finally plugging roof leaks in the property they bought adjacent to the school. Maggie and Adam said we've had no communication from them; the hope is that PSD will use the building rather than applying for a hardship with the Philadelphia Historical Commission to tear it down. Sue asked if PSD was suing the Historical Commission for its designation of the building as historically significant; Georgette said she believed so. Maggie will email or call to find out.

Maggie said a permit was issued for the "splash station" at the new B&G Club park at Greene and Coulter, but we've had no response from our communication to them. Rep Parker said she would arrange a meeting with PKNA and the B&G club, such as a zoom meeting so that we can relay information to Penn Knox neighbors about when the facilities will be completed and open for use.

Deneene added in the chat that she'd like PKNA to speak with the Police Athletic League, too.

Maggie said she was authorized by Friends of Howell Park to buy 100 contractor bags with some of the grant money from the city (from the grant money for the party we hadn't been able to have) for our monthly clean-ups.

Adam thanked everyone, and we ended the meeting.

Submitted by Grace Flisser