

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MERION CIVIC ASSOCIATION
MARCH 22, 2011

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Merion Civic Association was held on Tuesday, March 22, 2011, beginning at 7:45 p.m. at the Merion Tribute House with President Kevin Murphy presiding.

Directors present were Bagley, Blakeney, Browne, Eisenberg, Feuer, Flaks, Fratis, Gordon, Greenberg, Kalner, Lam, Lavoritano, Murphy, Piltch, Potok, Quinn, Seiden and Wylonis.

Directors absent and excused were Ettelson, Hill, Lapes, Marmon, Mudrick and Stevenson.

Other attendees included Carl Watson and Sharon Wolfson.

The Meeting was called to order by President Murphy at 7:45 p.m. and the February minutes were unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report -- Treasurer Bob Marmon was not present and submitted the February 2011 report by email.

President's Report – President Murphy introduced the first speaker of the evening, Officer Snyder of the Lower Merion Police Department, who began his report by saying that he had no crime report of any significance and repeated the standing advice to lock doors and windows to discourage break-ins. The current concern of directors who live near St. Joe's is the increased number of student cars taking up parking on Raynham Road. Officer Snyder responded that because the Lower Merion police must focus first on public safety and criminal activity, residents are asked to continue monitoring the parking situation.

The second speaker was Roger Moog, past president of the Bala Neighborhood Club, whose topic was the City Avenue Rezoning Initiative. Mr. Moog was accompanied by John Grugan, current president of the Club.

The Initiative proposal calls for an increase of up to three times the current office building density. The Township need for more tax revenues must be balanced against the impact of increased traffic on City Avenue and the communities of Bala Cynwyd and Merion. Traffic studies suggest that the increase in traffic would result from a south to north flow through, with more local traffic being forced onto residential side streets.

The Bala Club favors the redevelopment of the Bala Cynwyd Shopping Center to not only refresh the appearance and ambience of the shopping area, but also to raise revenues for the township.

Engineers have proposed improvement at many intersections along City Avenue as well as widening the Avenue with four lanes traveling in each direction. It is questionable that funding from federal, state and township sources would be easily obtained, considering the economic hardships all government sectors face.

Mr. Moog suggested that residents should focus on requesting a compromise of the proposed zoning ordinance to assure a balance between what the Commissioners would like and the quality of life the residents would like to maintain. There is a perception that the redevelopment process is moving too fast without enough community input or careful consideration.

The third speaker was David Blumenfeld, president of Cross Properties, the developers of the Palmer Seminary property in Wynnewood. Mr. Blumenfeld was accompanied by Kevin Michals and Rudyard Porter and their attorney, Kenneth Aaron of Weir & Partners law offices. The Palmer Seminary was originally the Green Hill Farms Hotel and Apartments, built in 1919 and designed by Horace Trumbauer. The developers plan to redevelop the main building into 132 apartment units.

The Building and Planning Committee meeting on April 4 will consider the rezoning of the property from an R3 (single-family construction) to an R7 (multi-family construction) category for residential occupancy. The Board of Commissioners will have a public hearing on April 20.

Mr. Blumenfeld stated that Cross Properties stands on its record of planning in cooperation, not in opposition to, property owners who are neighbors to the development sites it has been involved in, and Merion, Penn Wynne and Wynnewood are no different -- there is a strong desire to be respectful of the site, the existing buildings, the neighboring communities. The Cross Properties associates finished their presentation with a question and answer period.

The Directors and Merion neighbors in attendance discussed the question of obtaining a Class I historical designation to protect the Seminary buildings in the event that the developers are unable to acquire the necessary financing for their project and could propose razing the buildings for a different type of project.

President Murphy continued his report with a thank you to all, and specifically Karla Moras, for their active participation in and attendance at the many on-going Township meetings whose agendas have included issues important to the Merion community. He reported that the Merion Civic Association is the most represented of all the Civic Associations in Lower Merion at these public meetings. President Murphy is encouraged and energized by this active participation and is hopeful that the Merion Civic will continue this level of involvement.

President Murphy announced the passing of two people, well-known to the Merion Civic community: Ray Tompkins' husband of former Civic Association Director Nancy Tompkins' and Matt Adler, son of former Civic Association president Gary Adler and his wife Phyllis. Our deepest sympathies go out to both families.

President Murphy will continue to keep the Civic informed on crime in the community, the Comprehensive Plan, the street signs mandate, the City Avenue district, new Commissioners and the billboards issue. Lastly, if anyone has received a flood zone letter, it is important to respond.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Arts and Education — Frances Quinn announced the Flag Day concert is scheduled for June 9. Frances suggested inviting a speaker on environmental issues be invited for the Neighbor-to-Neighbor event.

Botanical — Judith Flaks announced the Botanical Park clean-up is scheduled for May 1 at 9:30 a.m. The rain date is May 15.

Commissioner — Commissioner Brian Gordon announced that the next Zoning Board meeting on March 23 at 6 p.m. will address the St. Joe's application. The York Lynne condos got the storm water management accessions it was looking for, with more plantings on the periphery of the St. Joe's fields serving as buffers. The parking problems along Raynham Road continue,

with the St. Joe's students parking there during the day. There is discussion about how to keep St. Joe's students from trespassing on private property, with perhaps the installation of wooden fences. There will be a neighborhood group to consider the parking problems.

Community Action, Zoning & PR – Les Greenberg spoke to the importance for the Civic Association to discuss the Palmer development in terms of planning for the possibility that the developers might not acquire the funding to go forward with their plans. He proposed a motion that the Merion Civic Board approve a plan to request reclassifying the Palmer property from a Class II property to a Class I property in order to protect the existing buildings from demolition. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously. Mr. Greenberg noted that he and Michael Seiden are attending Comprehensive Planning meetings and suggested that the area Civic Associations unite to become more active and focused in civic matters.

Federation of Civic Associations — President Murphy reported that the T-Mobile proposal has been withdrawn. The Federation encouraged its members to remain active participants at the Comprehensive Plan workshops and meetings. Future meetings will focus on land use, institutional, commercial, residential, public land and community facilities.

Finance – No report.

History — Lauren Wylonis reported that the History Committee will be partnering with the Lower Merion Conservancy to consider historic district designation in Merion. She reported that 20-25 people attended the community meetings at Adath Israel; some signed petitions in favor of the designation. We will have to wait and see if there is community support for the project. Tami Fratis made a motion to approve Lauren's proposal for the Merion Civic Association to partner with the Lower Merion Conservancy. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously. President Murphy noted that the proposal had been amended, as the \$500 contribution needed to begin the process will be earmarked as such from Lauren Wylonis' dues donation for 2010-11.

Membership – No report.

Newsletter — President Murphy announced the Spring/Summer newsletter issue will be planned at the committee meeting at Marjorie Mudrick's house on March 31 at 7:30 p.m. All articles are due to her on April 17.

School Board – No report.

Social – Judith Flaks commented on the poor attendance at the New Residents Reception and suggested that next year the invitations should go out earlier; new residents should be called and personally invited; an R.S.V.P. request be added to the invitation.

Station and Grounds, Postal Affairs — Scott Feuer announced that Spring clean-up and planting day at the Merion Station is scheduled for May 1 at 9:30 a.m. Flyers will be posted; refreshments will be served inside the train station, as is customary.

Scott observed that SEPTA has erected excessive signage at the train station, directing riders to the inbound/outbound side, the ticket office; signs regarding parking, etc. There is a total of more than 15 new signs. The funds came from the federal stimulus package approved by President Obama. Scott would like to petition SEPTA to remove the signs that were installed in the flower beds.

Streets, Lights and Traffic – No report. President Murphy encouraged Director Dolores Browne to contact Scott Kalner, Director, and chairman of HARB regarding her street sign ideas.

Website -- Michael Seiden continues to update the Civic Association website.

Barnes – Scott Feuer announced the Barnes annual plant sale is scheduled for May 7, 7:30-8:30 a.m. for members, 8:30-12:00 noon for the public. June 5 is the Barnes Community Day for the first 450 neighbors who are invited to tour the arboretum and the galleries.

Community Watch — President Murphy announced that new Community Watch signs have been posted on the side streets off City Ave.

Merion Community Coalition – No report.

Narberth Fire Company – No report

St. Joe's – No report.

Old Business – President Murphy reiterated the need to pick a date for the golf outing: June 13, 27; August 1, 15; September 12 and 19 are possibilities.

New Business – President Murphy reported that Phil Bagley will no longer be updating and maintaining the Merion map and that Dolores Browne will take over that duty.

President Murphy requested that two new ad hoc committees be formed, as follows:

- Centennial Committee led by Scott Kalner
- Ad Hoc Merion Community SJU Committee chaired by Lauren Wylonis with members Karla Moras, Tami Fratis, Judith Flaks, Scott Kalner, Michael Seiden and Les Greenberg.

There being no more new business, the meeting, on motion made and seconded, was unanimously adjourned at 10:25 p.m. The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be held at the Merion Tribute House on Tuesday, April 26, 2011 at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Guy, Secretary