

Passyunk Square Civic Association
General Membership Meeting
Tuesday, January 7, 2020

President Sarah Anton began the General Membership Meeting of the Passyunk Square Civic Association (PSCA) at 6:35 PM on January 7, 2020 in the South Philadelphia Older Adult Center. Board members in attendance included Sarah Anton, Theresa Rose, Bill Gross and Jeff Brown. Absent were: Suzanne Tavani, Monica Montiel, Andrew Stober, Christine Knapp, Alysea McDonald, Liz Moselle, Henry Sullivan and Patrick Pasquariello.

Sarah introduced Officer Ace Delgado to give the PSA 3 police report. Ace mentioned that there were several assaults, one on the 1500 block of S. 7th Street and another at 8th and Tasker Streets. Two Mexican males were beat up, one in his 20s while the other was in his 40s. The police are looking at videos from the area. Ace said the police try to get the best descriptions they can. He asked people to pay attention to their surroundings. In another instance a female was assaulted and her cell phone was stolen. There were also thefts from auto and he asked that people not leave items in their cars. The police did arrest a woman who was stealing packages. They had videos of her from ring doorbells. Ace mentioned that some package thieves walk along the street with a trash can so if you see someone doing that please call and ask for the person to be investigated. There were no robberies in PSCA 3 this week. A questioner asked if Ace had these meetings weekly and he replied that there are weekly police bulletins. Sarah stated that there is a PSA 3 report at the monthly PSCA meetings.

Sarah indicated that she usually distributes a list of PSCA committees that neighbors can join. She said that PSCA is involved in many activities and if people want to volunteer, contact us.

Suzanne could not attend so Sarah gave the Zoning Committee report. She said that the Zoning Committee meets the second Tuesday of each month at St. Maron's Hall. The January 14 meeting will hear six cases: 1143 Tasker Street, 1145 Tasker Street, 833 Wharton Street, 1029 Reed Street, 1221-23 Annin Street, and 1335 E. Passyunk Avenue. A question was asked about 833 Wharton Street, where the developer is requesting that the ZBA approve some units as Air B&Bs. He said that there was a similar request at 13th and Reed Streets and asked the positions of PSCA and the ZBA. Sarah replied that both denied the Air B&B request.

In Monica's absence Sarah reported that the Tree Cycling event on Saturday, January 4 was a great success. Just under 400 trees were chipped. Due to the wet conditions on the Capitolo fields the truck had to dump its loads in Conshohocken and return back. She also mentioned that people can recycle their Christmas lights if they want to. Sarah reported that PSCA has a cleaning contract to sweep neighborhood streets bi-weekly as a pilot program. All the numbered streets are cleaned every other Friday. She asked neighbors to let PSCA know how the contractor is doing. The next cleaning is Friday, January 10.

Sarah indicated that PSCA has a Step of the Month contest to choose the most attractive house front. This month 620 Federal Street won. They will receive a decal and a gift card.

Lynne reported that there will be a Happy Hour at Devil's Den on Tuesday, January 21 between 5 and 7 PM. PSCA is partnering with EPX. Devil's Den will donate a gift basket for the raffle.

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Daryn, who co-chairs the Planning Committee meeting, stated that the committee meets every other month. The next meeting is Monday, January 27 at Capitolo Playground. The committee is starting to set up a task force for planning issues such as historic preservation. They want to survey what's in the neighborhood. They are also working on a handbook for developers.

Theresa reported that PSCA will have an Art Auction on March 28 from 7 to 10 PM in Theatre Exile, 13th and Reed Streets. PSCA took a break and didn't have one last year. They are accepting artists' donations. It is beneficial for the artists to have their work seen. Submissions are due by February 7. Most of the donations go to PSCA but some go to the neighborhood schools. Tickets are currently on sale for \$10. In February the price will increase to \$15 and they will be \$20 at the door.

Sarah informed the meeting that PSCA has a Language Exchange at different restaurants where Spanish and English speakers can speak to each other over dinner.

On December 16, Councilman Squilla held a community meeting regarding the development of the Municipal Complex at 1100 Wharton Street. The minutes are linked to the PSCA website, Sarah said, and people who are interested should check it out. If anyone has any comments about the development, they should contact Councilman Squilla.

Sarah reported on the tragic fire on 8th Street. She said that PSCA is having on-going meetings with the City and is working to connect resources and neighbors affected by it. If anyone knows of neighbors who are in need as a result of the fire, please inform PSCA. Frank lives next door to where the explosion and fire occurred and he and his wife were home when it took place around 11:30 AM. His building was slightly damaged but five row houses were destroyed. Two people were killed, a 29 year old man and a 67 year old man. Frank stated that when the explosion occurred he and other neighbors ran out to help, some with fire extinguishers. The front of two houses had collapsed and neighbors climbed on top of the rubble to try to pull one man out. While there were doing so the backs of the houses collapsed so they were forced off the rubble. The City did a remarkable job cleaning up the site. However, 8th Street is closed because extensive underground work must be done. The cause of the explosion was a gas leak but it is not yet determined what caused the leak. Numerous lawsuits have been filed regarding the responsibility for the explosion. Frank mentioned that the neighborhood infrastructure is over one hundred years old and the old iron pipes get brittle in the cold weather. He said that it will be sometime before information on the cause is released due to the litigation and investigation. Jeff stated that Sarah did a great job coordinating the clothing and monetary donations for the neighbors. Sarah said that she received so many calls from neighbors, school groups and church groups offering assistance. It was a testament to the community coming together to help neighbors in need. Frank emphasized that if you smell gas, call. Ace agreed and said that no call is a ridiculous call. If there is a strange smell don't count on anyone else calling, you call.

Sarah mentioned that the Philadelphia Free Library is forgiving all fines so if people have books to return they should do so.

Sarah introduced Katie from State Representative Elizabeth Fiedler's office. Katie mentioned that the Representative will be having a meeting about state services tomorrow between 1 and 5

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PM at the South Philadelphia Library. Their main office is at 9th and Ritner Streets if anyone has any questions.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:10 PM.

Dates of Note:

January 7 – Jackson School Playworks

January 8 – Representative Fiedler’s Mobile Office, 1 to 5 PM, South Philadelphia Library

January 10 – Street Sweeping

January 14 – PSCA Zoning Meeting, 7 PM, St. Maron’s Church

January 16 – Language Exchange

January 21 – Happy Hour, Devil’s Den, 5 to 7 PM

9th Street BID Planning Meeting, 7 PM, Fleisher

January 27 – Planning Committee Meeting

January 28 – 3rd District Captain’s Town Hall Meeting

March 28 – Art Auction at Theatre Exile

Submitted by Jeff Brown