

Passyunk Square Civic Association
General Membership Meeting
Tuesday, November 5, 2019

President Sarah Anton began the General Membership Meeting of the Passyunk Square Civic Association (PSCA) at 6:32 PM on October 1, 2019 in the South Philadelphia Older Adult Center. Board members in attendance included Sarah Anton, Suzanne Tavani, Bill Gross, Christine Knapp, Alysea McDonald, and Jeff Brown. Absent were: Theresa Rose, Andrew Stober, Monica Montiel, Liz Moselle, Henry Sullivan and Patrick Pasquariello.

Sarah introduced Police Sergeant Lawson for the PSA-3 update. Sgt. Lawson asked if anyone had any concerns. Question-when something violent occurs there are many rumors but it is hard to get solid information about it. Is there a way to get information about it out? Can it be posted? Sgt. Lawson agreed to do so. Someone mentioned it is helpful if published on the Nextdoor app. Question-is there a police blotter? Sgt. Lawson replied that the police update their website but he's not sure if the local webpage is updated. Question-the alley between 12th and 13th around Federal is being used by homeless people as a bathroom. Can the police do something about it? Sgt. Lawson said the policy is to work through outreach. They come out and talk to the people and try to get them to go to a shelter. Sarah mentioned that Ace Delgado had a one page sheet which tells where the homeless can go. Sgt. Lawson indicated that Ace is a great resource but neighbors should not hesitate to call 911. Question-two men with suitcases live in the front door of a house across the street from her. They chose not to use the outreach and often use the street as their bathroom. She has called 911 but they didn't show up. Sgt. Lawson replied that 911 calls are prioritized but someone will eventually come out. He also knew the men she was speaking about, said that he will address it at roll call and have them moved. Question-there was a car break in on her block and the car had been stolen. Is this a trend? Sgt. Lawson answered no. Theft from autos is one of the biggest problems in the neighborhood and people should make sure that their cars are locked. Question-what were the shots at 5th and Reed Streets? They were gang related, Sgt. Lawson replied. Two local gangs were shooting at each other. There is an ongoing investigation of the local gangs. Question-are regular people subject to the shooting? Sgt. Lawson, the two gangs are shooting at each other and the police are constantly monitoring them. Question-I was assaulted on 11th Street. Someone tried to grab my purse but didn't get it. Should I report that? Definitely, Sgt. Lawson responded. Don't hesitate to call 911.

Sarah introduced Suzanne for the Zoning Committee report. Suzanne indicated that the Zoning Committee meets the second Tuesday of each month. This month's meeting will be on November 12 and has three cases: 720-726 Manton Street and 725-729 Latona Street. They want to redivide the lot lines and build houses with garages. 1328 S. Clarion Street wants a sit-down restaurant on the first floor. 1542 E. Passyunk Ave. is asking to legalize the first floor for a residential apartment.

Sarah introduced Jeff as Secretary and Bill as Treasurer. Karyn Thomas, co-chair of the Planning Committee, stated that there will be a paint day for Percy Street on Sunday, Nov. 10 between 10:00 AM and 12 Noon. The next Planning Committee meeting is Monday, November 18 at Capitolo. Sarah introduced Danielle who organized the Percy Street Halloween party. Alysea reported that the Home Tour was a success. Six houses were on the Tour and about 50 people participate. They raised money for PSCA programs such as the street cleaning. Next year's

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Home Tour will be held on October 17, 2020. PSCA's spring fundraiser is the Art Auction and that will be held on March 28, 2020. Alysea mentioned that she also chairs the Communications Committee and if anyone is interested in it, please contact her.

Sarah pointed out Drew who is on the Zoning Committee and said that Christine got PSCA to participate in Philalatinos. She introduced Lynne and Marge who handle other events. Marge stated that the two Happy Hours this year have been very successful. The first was at Barcelona while the second joined with EPX, took place at Bok. The next Happy Hour will be at Brigantessa on Nov. 19 between 5:30 and 8:00. It will also include a raffle.

Sarah introduced Liz who is doing Love Your Park at Gold Star Park. Liz said that Love Your Park is a City-wide event which will occur this Saturday, Nov. 9 between 10:00 and 12:00 Noon. Not only is Gold Star having an event but Capitolo is as well. Due to construction, Columbus is not participating this year. Sarah encouraged everyone to come out to Love Your Park events. She mentioned that she is hoping to have a representative of Parks and Rec attend the Membership Meeting and give an update on all renovation occurring in the neighborhood parks.

Sarah explained that PSCA has a Step of the Month contest to choose the most attractive house front. This month had a Halloween theme and 1507 S. 8th Street won. If someone wants to nominate a house for Step of the Month please use stepofthemonth@passyunk.org.

PSCA has a street cleaning contract. A crew comes every other Friday to clean the numbered streets in the neighborhood. The next cleaning is Nov. 17. Sarah asked neighbors to check the numbered streets and if they are not cleaned well let PSCA know. Question-is there cleaning on 9th Street. Sarah replied there was but only below Passyunk Ave. 9th Street above Wharton and Broad Street are not part of the contract. If the street cleaning contract is effective PSCA will raise money to do other neighborhood streets. Question-does PSCA do this with EPX? No, Sarah replied. EPX does not do street cleaning. PARC has a street cleaning contract that cleans Passyunk Ave. every day.

Sarah stated that there will be fall tree planting on Nov. 16 and asked neighbors to help. They will meet at Capitolo at 9:00 AM and hope to plant 24 trees by 1:00 PM. Applications on the table are being solicited for the spring tree planting. Question-must you have a tree pit to get a tree? No Sarah answered. The tree planters will cut a tree pit. Question-what if your tree pit has a tree stump? Sarah replied that the owner is responsible for removing the stump. If the stump is small enough it can be pulled out. If it is too big she can recommend a company who can grind it out.

Congressman Dwight Evans was introduced and he thanked the neighbors for doing what they are doing. Democracy comes from the bottom up and the most important title is that of citizen, he said. Rep. Evans stated that we are at an interesting time in history and the citizens will decide what happens. He serves on two committees, the Ways and Means Committee and the Small Business Committee where he is the Vice Chair. The Ways and Means Committee is in the Constitution because nothing can be done without revenue. He is focusing on health care and is a sponsor for HR3, which deals with lowering the cost of prescription drugs such as insulin, by allowing Medicare to negotiate with the drug companies. The House of Representatives passed

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the bill and sent it to the Senate. Rep. Evans also is focusing on universal background checks for guns. He feels there are too many guns on the streets. He is also supporting openness and transparency in government and combating climate change. Rep. Evans explained that the House has passed 250 bills and sent them to the Senate where they wait for some action. He stated that after tonight the real open enrollment begins (the election of all 435 Representatives and the President). He quoted Ben Franklin's response to a question as to the kind of government that the Continental Congress established. Franklin answered "A republic if you can keep it". Rep. Evans mentioned that he was in Bangladesh investigating food security.

Rep. Evans opened up the floor for questions. Question-how do you feel about term limits? Rep. Evans replied the best term limit is an election. Representatives have to convince people to vote for them or else they will be out. Once elected you still have to hustle and convince people as he did in order to get appointed to the Ways and Means Committee. He outworked people competing for the same position. Question-how do you feel about tax incentives for renewable energy? He supported a bill passed by the House which is now before the Senate. They have to strike a deal with Senator Grassley in order to get it voted on there. Rep. Evans mentioned that the Republicans have "starved the beast". In other words, they have not funded some governmental functions, which ends up increasing the cost of those functions and the deficit. Presidents Clinton and Obama both had to spend time and energy reducing the deficit cause by the Republicans. Question-why not control bullets? That is not part of the Second Amendment. Rep. Evans felt that the Second Amendment was established to deal with a militia, which is no longer an issue. He believes that there are too many guns around and mentioned children who were recently shot in the Henry Elementary School. He felt that everyone is subject to gun violence and there must be a national discussion about it. Everything should be on the table from background checks to assault weapon bans. Rep. Evans also supports suing gun manufacturers to change their behavior, as it did with cigarette companies. He looked forward to a debate about guns. Question-how are you partnering with companies and their global supply chains to improve air quality? Rep. Evans felt this was a global challenge. However, it requires leadership from the White House. Some people don't believe in science. There must be educated discussions regarding climate change. Question-the Senate is the place where good ideas go to die. Is there any hope of getting things done? Rep. Evans replied that he recently met with Senator Toomey to deal with affordable housing. He tries to establish relationships with other Representatives and Senators; however, today's Republicans are not like those when he first began his career. He did not feel that much could be done until Mitch McConnell and the President have been changed. House approved bills are not even brought up for a vote; that is not what the process used to be. He mentioned that the nation's infrastructure is in desperate need of repair. But it will not occur unless there is compromise. Question-you're a co-sponsor of a bill with the goal of dealing with the Israel-Palestinian conflict but which reduces funding for Israel. Rep. Evans replied that he didn't think that children should be used as human shields by either the Palestinians or the Israelis. The questioner asked why the bill didn't mention the two state solution. Rep. Evans answered that he is and has been a supporter of the two state solution but he does not think that the U.S. can impose a solution to the conflict. He mentioned that support for Israel used to be non-partisan but this president has made it a partisan issue. The questioner felt

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that the bill has serious flaws and it seems as though it is only concerned with Palestinian children, not Israeli children. Rep. Evans said that when he went to Israel some other Representatives did not want to speak to Prime Minister Netanyahu but he did. He believes that a negotiated settlement is the best solution; the conflict will never be settled militarily. The questioner felt that the two-state solution should be mentioned in the bill. Question-are you for cap and trade? Rep. Evans asked him to explain what he meant by that. The questioner said it was taxing businesses that cause pollution and using the money to clean the environment. Rep. Evans felt that the tax structure needs to be more environmentally friendly. He believed that trade is good and the tax structure can be used to help the environment. He said the gas tax does that and he supported increasing the gas tax when he was in the State legislature. Rep. Evans said the environmental issue was not going to be settled easily. Question-how do you feel about the immigration policy? Rep. Evans said that was a tough issue because we need people to come to this country yet we must protect our borders. A group of people attempted to come up with a solution a few years ago but that failed. We can't pass immigration policy when it is being used as a political pawn. He felt that locking our borders is counterproductive. There is a great divide on immigration policy in the country, even among Democrats. Walls and fences aren't the way. Many people wouldn't leave their homes in Latin America if the economy was good in their countries. Rep. Evans stated that he is a supporter of sanctuary cities but he felt that it should be done on a national level. If the national government doesn't do it then cities and states should. Rep. Evans felt that more than anything else this issue is a real dividing one in the nation.

Dates of Note:

11/6 – Love Your Park

11/10 – Percy Street Paint Day

11/12 – PSCA Zoning Committee

11/16 – Fall Tree Planting

11/18 – Planning Meeting

11/19 – PSCA Happy Hour

11/21 – Language Exchange

11/23 – Deadline for Spring Tree Applications

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7:47 PM.

Submitted by Jeff Brown