

Passyunk Square Civic Association
General Membership Meeting
Tuesday, April 3, 2018

President Sarah Anton began the General Membership Meeting of the Passyunk Square Civic Association (PSCA) at 6:35 PM in the South Philadelphia Older Adult Center. Board members in attendance included Sarah Anton, Kristi Buchholz, Andrew Stober, Henry Sullivan, Andrew Emma and Jeff Brown. Absent were: Monica Montiel, Ilene Wilder and Suzanne Tavani.

Sarah asked people to sign in on the sign in sheet, which she passed around. She reported on three big PSCA events coming up. First is the Philly Spring Clean Up on Saturday, April 7. If neighbors want to help clean up they should meet at Passyunk Gardens at 9:00 AM. The neighbors on 11th Street are also cleaning up their street. If people want to clean up their blocks at any time they should e-mail the Clean Streets Chair, Monica Montiel, and she can help them do so. Next is the spring tree planting on Saturday, April 21 starting at 9:00 AM at Capitolo Playground. Only ten trees will be planted but volunteers will also do some mulching. Residents have until May 7 to apply to get trees in the Fall. Third is the annual Art Auction, which is PSCA's big fundraiser. Tickets are \$15 on line but \$20 at the door. Theresa Rose and David Guinn are chairing this year's event. Other events are indicated on PSCA's website and Facebook page. Sarah also mentioned that on the seats are lists of PSCA committees and various projects with which they are involved.

Next Sarah mentioned that PSCA's election is going to be held at the May 1 Membership Meeting. Being an RCO PSCA must follow rules for its elections. Nick Ventrola chairs the Election Committee and indicated that five candidates have been nominated and they are unopposed. The current Board members running for re-election are Andrew Stober and Henry Sullivan. Three other candidates are also running: Alysea McDonald, Bill Gross and Christine Knapp. Nick mentioned that the election will be the only thing on the agenda for that meeting and he urged neighbors to come out to vote.

Sarah then turned the meeting over to City Commissioner Al Schmidt who explained that the City Commissioners run elections in Philadelphia in a non-partisan way. He put together a list of dates to register and vote in the upcoming primary election. Schmidt explained that voters can register to vote either on-line or the regular way. They can register now by going to the Pennsylvania Department of State website. If you have a driver's license the Department of Transportation already has your signature. Schmidt mentioned that during the last presidential election turnout was 78% of registered voters yet it was only 9% for the last DA and Controller election. This year in Pennsylvania we will be voting for U.S. Senator, Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Congressional Representative, every state representative, state committee person and ward committee person. He stated that the Pennsylvania Supreme Court recently redrew Congressional boundaries but if you live in PSCAs boundaries you are in the new 3rd Congressional District. Schmidt said if people needed any information, he is active on social media. He also indicated that the City Commissioners collect data relevant to elections before they happen and people can obtain election related information by going to the philavotes.com website. Schmidt wants to make the information as accessible to voters as possible for any reason or for no reason.

Questions were raised about how secure the voting system is from being hacked and is there fraud. Schmidt said that we are lucky in Pennsylvania since the voting system is so primitive it is

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not connected to the internet. Therefore, the 4,000 voting machines in Philadelphia can't be hacked. However, the system also creates skepticism since there are no paper ballots to back the electronic ballot. The City Commissioners do a manual audit of voting machines and compare it with the electronic ballot totals. The next system should have paper ballot backup, but that will cost \$20 to \$25 million.

In response to election fraud, Schmidt said when he was elected he did a report on election fraud in the previous election. He worked with the DA's office and got 9 indictments and 9 guilty pleas over the last four years. Almost every case involved an election board as opposed to individual voters. Although election boards are usually bi-partisan they aren't always so. Cases have been brought against them for adding votes. Cases have also been brought when the board helped someone vote for a relative who was unable to vote for themselves. As a Republican, Schmidt was in the uncomfortable position of disagreeing with the President who was claiming widespread election fraud nation-wide. Schmidt found that Penn DOT has enabled non-citizens to vote. Non-citizens are eligible to sign up for driver's licenses and Penn DOT encourages people who do sign up but are not already registered, to register to vote. If a non-citizen registers and tries to vote that act can prevent them from becoming a citizen. Schmidt wants Penn DOT to inform non-citizens not to vote.

A question was raised about the southern boundary east of Broad Street of the new 3rd Congressional District. It is Tasker Street with a little jog up 10th Street; however, if you live in PSCAs boundaries you are in the 3rd Congressional District.

In response to a question about whether a new voter can apply for an absentee ballot, Schmidt stated that Pennsylvania election code makes it difficult to vote. A new voter can apply for an absentee ballot but City Commissioners did not respond to the absentee ballot requests until the last few days. Schmidt mentioned that the City Commissioners don't mail things to all one million registered Philadelphia voters because that costs one million dollars. If there is a major election and a mailing is necessary, they ask City Council for additional money to do the mailing.

Sarah explained that Theresa Rose has post cards for the Art Auction. Also, the next Zoning meeting is Tuesday, April 10 and it will include cases at 827-829 Wharton Street and 1012 Wharton Street.

Sarah indicated that she had a ward and division map up front on her computer. She introduced candidates present: for the 184th state representative district, Tom Wyatt, Elisabeth Fielder and Jonathan Rowan; for the 3rd Congressional District, Bryan Leib. Sarah invited the neighbors to meet the candidates. Neighbors met and spoke to the candidates and the meeting ended.

Submitted by Jeff Brown