

Passyunk Square Civic Association
General Membership Meeting
Tuesday, June 4, 2019

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

Sarah thanked the old Board and Kristi Bucholtz who did not run for re-election, for service to the community. She had the Board members present introduce themselves. In addition, Sarah introduced committee chairs: Lynn Maldrano of the Events Committee, Karen Thompson and Daryn Edwards, co-chairs of the Planning Committee and Drew Albergo who is on the Zoning Committee.

State Representative Elizabeth Fiedler had not yet arrived from Harrisburg so Sarah introduced Bryan Fenstermaker from the Passyunk Avenue Revitalization Corporation (PARC) and Adam Leiter of the East Passyunk Business Improvement District. Bryan explained that PARC is a 501 c (3) that works in partnership with the East Passyunk BID to help beautify the neighborhood. Cleaning is the biggest thing they do, Bryan stated. They also maintain public spaces such as the fountain. He told neighbors to call if they see something that is not right. PARC also works on getting lighting and cameras. Adam indicated that the BID helps revitalize businesses along Passyunk Avenue from Broad Street to Ray's Happy Birthday Bar (Federal Street). They work with about 200 businesses in that area but also with visitors coming to the neighborhood. The BID showcases Passyunk Avenue through marketing, promotions and maintenance. They also navigate City grant programs for businesses and try to ensure collaboration and safety. The BID sponsors events such as the recent Flavors of the Avenue and the upcoming Car Show. Adam mentioned that the BID is up for reauthorization so on June 11 they must go to City Council to explain what they are doing.

Representative Fiedler arrived and conducted a Town Hall. She introduced Katie, her chief of staff. Fiedler indicated the boundaries of her district as being south of Wharton Street and east of Broad Street along with six blocks west of Broad. Her job can be separated into two separate parts: constituent services and legislation. As part of constituent services she does town halls and community events. Her main office is located at 9th and Ritner Streets but she also has satellite offices. Fiedler mentioned that she is doing a shredding event in front of South Philly High School this Saturday. She has also held renters rights workshops, helps with the state and Penn DOT with such things as obtaining birth certificates. Two Congress people divide the district and she has them come to her main office to assist constituents with Federal issues.

Fiedler explained that she is in Harrisburg about three days a week to work on legislation. She works with legislators across the state. Today she was working on general assistance for the poorest Pennsylvanians. She is also working on Fair Work Week legislation which was recently introduced, whereby employees would receive their work schedule two weeks in advance so that they can plan their lives. Fiedler mentioned that on June 21 she will be giving away free ice cream from a sliding window in her 9th and Ritner Street office.

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Fiedler indicated that she has had town halls across the district. She is helping with unclaimed property and SEPTA key cards. She is also working on school capacity issues and with the Teachers' Union to obtain funding to remediate concerns in school buildings. Katie mentioned that on June 12 someone from Congressman Dwight Evans office will be at 9th and Ritner between 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM to answer any questions regarding Federal matters. On June 13 the police captain will hold a community meeting there.

Fiedler left cards for people to take and said they should feel free to contact her. A question was asked about when the legislative session will end. Fiedler replied that it will end once a budget is passed, which should be the end of June. Another questioner asked about the uniformity clause. Fiedler explained that Pennsylvania has this clause, which requires that people be taxed at the same rate. That didn't make sense to her and it restricts progressive taxation. She said that some legislators were optimistic that it could be changed. Another person asked if anything could be done in Harrisburg about the increasing Philadelphia property tax. Fiedler felt that the City assessment was out of whack. The City is looking at revising the ten year tax abatement. A question was asked about the likelihood of passing the Governor's proposed tax on natural gas. Fiedler replied that the Governor called that proposal Restore. The Republican House Speaker Turzi introduced legislation called Engage, which was much a more business friendly gas tax. She thought there was a possibility that something may pass.

Sarah indicated that Fiedler was helpful in obtaining a major grant for Kirkbride elementary school. She also mentioned that the newsletter was on the table for people to take. Sarah indicated that there will be no PSCA membership meetings in July or August; however, the Zoning Committee will continue to meet monthly and the newsletter will be prepared as well.

Suzanne reported that the Zoning Committee meets the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM in St. Maron's Hall. She invited people to attend the meetings. Suzanne mentioned that if people have a project they should speak to her in advance to get advice as to how best proceed with it. This month, Suzanne reported, three cases will be before the Zoning Committee. 1230 Federal Street, 925 Cross Street and 1117 S. 7th Street. Suzanne also thanked all the people who attended the St. Maron's Festival last weekend, it was very successful.

Sarah indicated that she chairs the Beautification Committee. She mentioned that the garden in front of SPOAC is managed by Philadelphia master gardeners. On Thursday, June 6 between 5:00 and 7:00 PM there will be a Juneberry harvest. Community Gardens Day is Saturday, June 15. Both the Passyunk Garden and the Capitolo Community Garden are participating so people should stop by. The Department of Public Health will come to the Passyunk Garden to speak about mosquito control. In addition, Passyunk Garden is open every Sunday between 4:00 and 6:00 PM.

Karen indicated that the next Planning Committee meeting will be held on Monday, June 17 at 7:00 PM in the Capitolo Playground building. People will be updated on neighborhood developments.

Daryn mentioned that Percy Street received a small grant, which will enable it to be painted.

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Sarah stated that PSCA will be participating in a sign round up on June 15. She also indicated that paving is occurring in the neighborhood, particularly on 11th Street. She pointed out that maps indicating where the paving and other Street Department and Water Department work will occur are on the table for people to take.

Sarah raised the issue of the 1100 Wharton Street Municipal Complex. She explained that the City owns the property, including a Fire Station, a parking lot and the old Fleet Management building, and wants to sell it. They put out an RFP for proposed developers. The newsletter has information about proposals that have been received and PSCA will be distributing flyers about it to the immediate neighbors. Drew asked why the PSCA Board would vote to select a proposal at the end of June when the process would not be complete. Sarah replied that PSCA is fortunate to have been invited to be part of the selection process. Andrew then gave an overview of the process. He explained that in 2012 the City prepared a South Philadelphia Plan, which indicated potential uses for this site. Based on the plan the City prepared an RFP and informed PSCA about it. PSCA suggested some inclusions in the RFP such as affordable housing units and space to provide additional capacity for the Jackson School. Two proposals that were submitted in response to the RFP are being seriously considered. Once the City chooses a developer it will go before the neighborhood for input and go before the Zoning Committee regarding zoning matters. Andrew mentioned that there was a wide range of views in the neighborhood and it is important that the City hear them. Suzanne stated that neighbors should make their concerns know to Councilman Squilla. He has assured PSCA that he would not introduce any legislation selecting a developer without community support. Drew asked why there must be 155 apartment units why not senior housing or something else. John indicated that Squilla is the key to this development. He felt that there is too much density in the neighborhood and developers keep proposing apartments rather than single family housing. Sarah encouraged residents to voice their concerns directly to their political representatives and asked that they copy PSCA on any correspondence. She said that PSCA will obtain neighborhood input and make a recommendation. Suzanne pointed out that whatever the project is, it will have to come back to the community and proceed through a zoning process.

Theresa informed the meeting that Theatre Exile is having a block party Saturday, June 8 from 4:00 until 7:00 PM. Sarah stated that several other events are occurring in the neighborhood schools and parks. Lynn mentioned that PSCA and EPX are discussing a joint event to hear the Democratic Presidential debates.

Raina Searles with the Fringe Festival spoke next. She indicated that Festival Arts is having Uumbal, a dance throughout the neighborhood. They would like to have representation from South Philly. They are auditioning for dancers from all communities, abilities and ages.

Dan O'Neill indicated that there will a Pop-up venue presentation at 1315 E. Passyunk Avenue by the Bearded Ladies Cabaret and Fringe Arts. They will do opera, dance and explore cabaret as an art form. It will occur within the building on Tuesdays through Sundays from September 7 until 29. No streets will be closed and parking will be available in the ACME lot and the liquor store lot. On weekends there will be family oriented events during the day. Other events will

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occur in the evenings. They are working on managing the sound so that it doesn't disturb the neighbors.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:59 PM.

Submitted by Jeff Brown