

Passyunk Square Civic Association  
General Membership Meeting  
Tuesday, September 4, 2018

President Sarah Anton began the General Membership Meeting of the Passyunk Square Civic Association (PSCA) at 6:37 PM in the South Philadelphia Older Adult Center. Board members in attendance included Sarah Anton, Suzanne Tavani, Andrew Stober, Kristi Buchholz, Theresa Rose, Bill Gross, Alysea McDonald, Christine Knapp and Jeff Brown. Absent were: Henry Sullivan and Monica Montiel.

Sarah informed the meeting that a sign in sheet is going around and asked people to sign. She stated that information sheets regarding PSCA were on the table and the association is always looking for neighbors to volunteer for different activities.

Suzanne reported that the Zoning Committee meetings are always held on the second Tuesday of the month at St. Maron's Hall. This month there are two cases: a single family dwelling at 830 Washington Avenue and a multifamily property at 809 Latona Street.

Sarah mentioned that Karen and Daryn co-chair the Planning Committee and they are working on standardization for the neighborhood. Sarah reported that PSCA has a monthly language exchange where Spanish and English speakers meet for dinner and practice speaking the other language. It is held the third Thursday of each month starting in October. She also said that a paper shredding event is scheduled for September 29 between 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM at Columbus Square Park. PSCA does this as a service to the neighborhood but asks for a donation of \$5.00. Sarah indicated that the Stoop of the Summer recognized people whose house fronts are beautiful.

Sarah requested volunteers to help with fundraising. She mentioned that PSCA's main fundraising events were the Home Tour, the Art Auction, the sponsor program and an annual appeal and people are handling each but she needs someone to coordinate all of it. So if anyone is interested or knows someone who may be, please contact her.

Houses are needed for the Home Tour, which will occur in late October or November, Sarah said. She felt that it was a good way to get to know your neighbors and heard that people compliment the houses they visit. Kristi mentioned that people sharing the PSCA Facebook page with their friends would be very helpful in spreading the word about the Home Tour.

Christine said that a canvassing event will occur in October to let people know about PSCA. A few years ago PSCA canvassed the eastern side of the neighborhood, along 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Streets, since that area is not well represented. Canvassers knocked on doors, told residents about PSCA and got about 100 names added to the email list. This year Christine said they were going to canvas the east-west streets between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Streets. Christine suggested if people can't make the canvassing in October, they can canvas their own blocks, tell their neighbors about PSCA and get to know them.

Sarah introduced Lieutenant Anthony J. Mirabello of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Police District. He said if you need him you should go on the Police District website or call and ask for the Lieutenant since he is the only Lieutenant on the 10:30 PM to 6:30 AM shift. The two biggest neighborhood crime

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problems include theft from auto, where things are taken from a car left unlocked or broken into. That can be prevented with little effort by not leaving valuables in sight. The other issue is robberies. He suggested that people not walk alone late at night but if they must, try to walk on lighted streets. LT Mirabello suggested that neighbors prune trees to minimize the places that robbers can hide. A question arose regarding the protocol to use if a car is broken into. LT Mirabello said that the Police should be called immediately, that way they may be able to get fingerprints. Another question was asked about cleaning up overgrown vegetation. Residents called 311 and attempted to contact the owner but nothing has been done. The LT said that perhaps neighbors could clean it up themselves.

Sarah introduced Jennifer Devor who spoke about voter registration. She is a Committee person and spoke about how to join or start a voter registration drive. Jennifer explained that is a way to meet people in the neighborhood. There are non-partisan registration groups such as Project Home, which focuses on registering the homeless. Millennials in Action is another group that conducts non-partisan registration. They are attempting to register 5,000 people before this general election registration cutoff date of October 9. Jennifer suggested that if volunteers hand out voter registration forms once they are filled out the volunteer take it back and mail it directly. People can also find candidates to work for or they can work at the polls. In Philadelphia there is a 49% vacancy rate for poll workers. If you are interested you can go on [philavotes.com](http://philavotes.com) or approach the election board. They are empowered to swear in poll workers on the day of the election. People are paid \$125 to work at the polls for the day. It is also a great opportunity to get high school students involved in the political process. Translation services are also needed and translators receive \$75 per day. Interested people can contact the Committee of 70 or the City Commissioners Office. Jennifer mentioned if workers see illegal activity they should report it to the Board of Elections and be as specific as possible. New registration cards were on the table and Jennifer explained how to fill them out. She reminded everyone that in order to vote a person must be a U.S. citizen over 18 years of age. Also if someone is voting in a new location for the first time they must show ID in order to vote. They may also want to register on-line. Jennifer indicated who legally could not vote. The homeless can use a shelter address or a PO box as a voting address. Jennifer suggested that volunteers could ask realtors who recently bought houses and then go register them. Another problem is people who are already registered but who don't vote. The last election only 18% of Philadelphians voted. Christine mentioned that she and Theresa will help people who may want to do registration drives.

The next speaker was Sarah Locklund from Herbology, a Medical Cannabis dispensary opening up on the 1100 block of East Passyunk by the end of September. Sarah L. mentioned that she is from Chicago but has come to Philadelphia to do community education and outreach about medical cannabis for Herbology. She is also visiting physicians to answer any questions that they may have. Sarah indicated that modern medical cannabis research has confirmed the beneficial uses of cannabis in treating or alleviating the pain of many medical conditions. Herbology uses the term cannabis since marijuana was a derogatory term given to cannabis in the 1930s to associate it with immigrants. She explained that although hemp and cannabis are related they are not the same. Hemp is used in industrial production while cannabis is a plant that can be used for medical purposes. Sarah said that medical cannabis is better than that bought on the street

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because it is legal and also tested to insure that it is organic and has no pesticides, toxins, solvents, etc. Medical cannabis can be consumed by: smoke/vapor, tinctures, oil/wax, edibles, suppositories and transdermals. Edibles are not legal in Pennsylvania. Herbology doesn't like to recommend smoking but inhaling vapor gas is a quick way to obtain the effects of the cannabis. Sarah suggested that people begin with small doses, go slow and be patient. They should also space the dosage and not use cannabis with alcohol. People should check with their doctor to ensure that there is no problem mixing cannabis with their prescriptions. Users should also be consistent and observe the effects of using cannabis.

Sarah showed a chart which indicated that 435,000 people in the U.S. died from tobacco annually while no one has died from using cannabis. She briefly explained the science of cannabis but pointed out that much more research needs to be done. According to studies in other nations, cannabis reacts with receptors throughout your body. In addition, your body produces cannabinoids that help regulate the body. Thirty states, Sarah said, have some form of medical cannabis laws. However, the Federal government classifies cannabis as a class I drug with no medical benefits, which is not true. That is holding research back in the U.S.

In order to become a medical cannabis patient in Pennsylvania Sarah indicated that a person must:

- 1 – register for the program by going on-line to [medicalmarijuana.pa.gov](http://medicalmarijuana.pa.gov).
- 2 – visit a physician and get certified. The qualifying conditions are serious.
- 3 – return the patient registry, pay \$50 for the medical marijuana ID card and wait for the card.

Medical cannabis caregivers also need an ID card. They must be over 21 years of age and pass a background check. If a person is under 18 they must have a caregiver to receive medical cannabis.

A question was asked about security at their dispensary. Sarah replied that the doors are always locked, they have bullet proof glass and a security guard is on duty at all times. A pharmacist is also on staff at all times along with patient counselors. Another person asked if they obtained zoning to open on Passyunk Ave. Sarah Anton explained that the property is zoned commercial so they could open up by right; there were no zoning issues. Karen mentioned that there were articles about Herbology when they first applied to open.

Officer Ace Delgado, the Community Relations Officer for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Police District, reported that there will be a Community Day at the 3<sup>rd</sup> District office. It will be September 22 between 11:00 AM and 2:00 PM. People should come to meet their police officers. They will have hot dogs, burgers, slides and music.

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

Submitted by Jeff Brown

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explained that a majority of the funds that PSCA raises goes to pay for a trash contract. We use the same contractor as does PARC and they have recently changed their contractor so we are changing as well. We're also changing the way the contract worked. In a few weeks we are going to try having the contractor use a team instead of an individual, to clean the streets every other Friday. We're asking neighbors to help us monitor the contract by taking before and after photos of their blocks.

The Percy Street project is also proceeding. We received a grant for the 1300 block of Percy Street from the Community Design Collaborative. If anyone is interested in getting involved see the flyers on the table or speak to Theresa Rose or Bill Gross.

Sarah then asked the Board members to introduce themselves, which they did. She mentioned that there is a list of all PSCAs committees on the table and we are interested in anyone who may want to volunteer for any committee. PSCA has a lot of work and can use all the volunteers we can get. Sarah reminded people to sign in on the sheet being passed around. She mentioned that June 16 is community gardens day and some of our neighborhood gardens are participating. Capitolo Playground is also having its flea market on June 16.

Sarah opened the floor up for any questions. Jeff asked about the street construction schedule. Sarah replied that there is information about it on a table in the back. She also stated that the Passyunk Post is back and on top of the street paving and other things.

Sarah then turned the meeting over to Allison Fritz, Anna Kissle and Jen Hombach of the South Philly Food Co-op. Allison defined a co-op as being a group of people coming together and individually owning an organization to meet a need such as food or housing. The co-op takes on the life and energy from the people in it. The South Philly Food Co-op has entered into a lease to have a full service grocery store in a newly constructed mixed use building at 2031 S. Juniper Street. The first floor is 3,333 square feet and will contain the co-op while apartments will be located on the two floors above. The grocery store will source from local farmers. It will have meat, dairy, bulk goods, dry goods and even ice cream. It will create jobs and retain money in the neighborhood. Profits are reinvested in the store or get passed back to the members. Members get to vote on a board of directors and have a say in what the store offers. Membership is a \$200. To date, 907 families have signed up and over \$700,000 has been raised towards the opening of the store. Members are required to volunteer eight hours every year; however, the members are considering voting to eliminate the volunteer requirement. The co-op only has one paid consultant, everyone else volunteers. It was first organized in April 2010, then it incorporated and conducted multiple surveys to determine what people wanted. Currently it has leased the store and is launching a search for a general manager. Although there are over 900 members it is striving for 1200 since it needs a six to eight month cash flow. Members can also make loans of \$1,000 and choose the term and interest rate of the loan. Most co-ops receive loans from ten to twenty percent of their members. The co-op also has fundraising events and, even though it's not a non-profit, it can apply for grants. Allison asked people to join South Philly's only cooperatively owned grocery store.

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Next Sarah turned the meeting over to Karine Shamlian of Clean Markets on behalf of the Philadelphia Gas Works (PGW). Karine explained PGW's Energy Sense Rebates and Grants program. PGW offers rebates and grants to residential, commercial and industrial properties. The goal is to make the properties energy efficient, which improves the comfort, saves money and increases the value of the property. Rebates are offered for high efficiency furnaces and boilers. However, they must have a minimum efficiency of 94%. For residential buildings there is a rebate on the first furnace of \$500 and \$250 for any additional units in the building. The rebate for the first boiler is \$1,500 with \$800 for any additional units. People can apply on-line or mail in the application. PGW requires some basic information along with the application including a copy of the AHRI certificate verifying that it meets the 94% efficiency requirement and a copy of the most recent PGW bill. Rebates are turned around in four to six weeks. Commercial rebates are available for boilers, hot water heaters, storm trap replacements and food service equipment. The benefits include boosting comfort, tenant retention, worker productivity, lowering the operating cost/square foot, and increasing the property value.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:46 PM.

Submitted by Jeff Brown