

# Chestnut Hill Community Association Board Meeting

Minutes of the Meeting of August 27, 2020

Via Zoom

## Members Present

Tony Banks, Alex Burns, Catherine Brzozowski, Kathi Clayton, Lucie Daigle, Keith Kunz, Laura Lucas, Jenny McHugh, Bradley Wells, Craig Hosay, Joyce Lenhardt, Richard Snowden, Andy Kite, Karl Martin, Hillary O'Carroll, Larry McEwen, Lindsey Toconita, Michael Harding

## Members Absent

Dan Pulka, Jason Bissonette, Jason Pierce, Susan Bray, Lynn Schroeder, Anne Standish,

## Others Attending:

Anne McNiff, CHCA Executive Director

Phil Dawson, CHBA Executive Director

Laura Lucas, Board President, opened the meeting at 7:00 pm.

## **President's Welcome**

- Approval of Agenda: attendance was noted on Zoom meeting, it was moved that the agenda be approved as presented. The motion was seconded and approved.
- Approval of June 2020 minutes: It was moved that the minutes be accepted. The motion was seconded, and the minutes were approved.
- Laura gave a report on the Virtual Garden Tour and encouraged everyone to check it out. She thanked the committee for all their hard work.

**2. Introduction of new board members** – Laura introduced the new board members: Michael Harding, Alex Burns and Lindsey Toconita, and re-elected board members – Kathi Clayton, Lucie Daigle, and Lynn Schroeder, and Susan Bray. Board members whose terms had expired and had gone off the board were thanked for their service: Jean Wedgwood, Marilyn Paucker and Lindsey D'Angelo. Patricia Cove was thanked for serving as the representative for the CH Conservancy.

**3. Remarks from out-going president** – see attached from Laura Lucas

**4. By-law Changes** - The changes to the by-laws were voted on by the membership in this year's election and passed.

**5. Green Space Initiative update** – Laura presented the draft budget to the board. This is a working budget and the committee will continue to develop these projects and specific requests would be taken to the Executive Committee for approval. The Green Space committee is recommending that the CHCA make a \$20,000 matching grant from the Tree Fund to the Friends of Pastorius Park for planting of Trees and bushes and removal of invasive plants in the amphitheater area. Specifics on how the match will be administered will be presented to the Executive Committee for approval. The board voted to approve this process.

## **6. Election of Officers**

The following slate of officers was presented from the nominating committee:

President – Kathi Clayton

VP of Operations Division – Tony Banks

VP of Social Division – Bradley Wells

VP of Physical Division – Larry McEwen

Secretary – Andy Kite

Treasurer – Karl Martin

A motion was made to approve the slate as submitted, the motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

**The following board members were submitted by the nominating committee to serve as at-large members of the executive committee:**

Lindsey Toconita  
Richard Snowden  
Catherine Brzozowski

A motion was made to approve these nominees for at-large members of the executive committee, the motion was seconded and approved unanimously

**7. Incoming President's remarks** – see attached remarks from Kathi Clayton

**8. Community Supper** – Kathi asked if the board would be interested in hosting a Community Supper that would allow CHCA members to come together in a safe way. The number of attendees would be limited by city regulations. Kathi will contact the board members who expressed an interest.

#### **Community Partners Updates**

- CH Business Association – Phil Dawson reported on the activities the CHBA has been involved with during the pandemic in order to help businesses survive. The feeling is that the Neighbors have been very supportive and “shopping local” as much as possible. Labor day weekend will be when many of the stores will be reopened to (minimal) foot traffic.

Craig Hosay made a motion to formally thank Laura Lucas for her great work as board president. This was supported unanimously.

**The Board adjourned at 8:00pm.**

## **Out-going President Laura Lucas' remarks:**

Tonight we have the honor of bestowing the title of President to the next board member who will lead our 72-year organization. This is an elected position by our peers. I have held this position for almost 5 years – the longest tenure in our recent times. Traditionally, at this time of transition, your outgoing leader shares some reflections of what we have accomplished during our together and the new president shares some thoughts. That's what we'll do tonight.

I've had the luxury of being VP of Operations for two years before being President and have chaired or been a part of most committees other than those in the Physical Division. I've had my hand in fundraising, grant allocations, social and operational issues. I've kicked the tires and rebuilt or fine-tuned most things that I've been a part of. I've done the best that I can to position our group for success and I'm proud of the stability and spirit of partnerships that I have brought to this group.

During my time as president, we have added Movie Nights at the Water Tower to extend the summer and to appeal to families and younger demographics. This brought an event to the "East Side" and is a nice complement to the Pastorius Park Concerts on the "West Side". This also opened up awareness of the Water Tower struggles for funding and improvement needs, and brought us three exceptional new board members associated with the WT.

At the same time, we have formed and strengthened partnerships in the business community with the Business Association; in institutions like the Chestnut Hill Hospital, the Conservancy, Woodmere, Morris Arboretum, Springside Chestnut Hill Academy, Friends of Pastorius Park, the Water Tower, Chestnut Hill Youth Sports Club, and Chestnut Hill College among others; and in City of Philadelphia and state offices. Each has brought great synergies to the Community Association that have benefited them and us – as well as Chestnut Hill.

We have taken over support of the CH Tree Tenders, formed a Tree Fund with a significant endowment, and have restarted the Greenspace Initiative committee to guide our greening efforts. We've brought folks and institutions together to broaden awareness of our pocket parks and greenspaces – and their needs for the future (work that frankly, is never done). We refreshed the World War II Memorial park at the Water Tower in fall 2019. We've also taken part in neighborhood cleanups at the Water Tower. The Greenspace Initiatives committee is now working with Friends of Pastorius Park on our next project and has developed a framework for future allocations.

We had delivered successful fundraisers and community events year after year – in the shape of our Holiday House Tour, Black and White Gala, Circle of Trees, Holiday Parade and more. We have offered public meetings on Tax Reform, Safety, and City Elected Races. We have kept true to our founding premises to protect and strengthen what is special about this historic village through the many volunteers with preservation, conservation and development experience who support our Physical Division zoning matters and the board's actions to support these experts with governance oversight.

As a new 501(3) at the start of my tenure, we have modified how we fundraise and focused inward to ensure we are investing in this organization and our membership. We have strengthened our paper and made significant changes there with a board, purpose and gameplan to reposition what is a community asset. We have also make significant changes in our Community Association office staff – with changes in executive directors, membership and PR support. We have invested in a community development role. And I'm sure we will continue to pivot for other changes to position both the Community Association and the Paper, and possibly the Community Fund in the future.

What I'm most proud of us that we have done this together. \*Almost\* always united. (Note I said almost.) We have had respectful dialogue. We have put the community first. As the Community Association moves into more uncertain times, I hope this spirit continues. I ask that you continue to lean into the challenges ahead and give our next leader the same trust and respect that you have given with me.

Thank you for allowing me to lead the group and for embracing our next leader who will need your support. It has been rewarding.

## **In-coming President Kathi Clayton's remarks:**

It is an honor to be elected president of the Chestnut Hill Community Association.

I thank the Nominating Committee and Board members for your confidence in me to lead the Community Association in such a challenging time.

The CHCA has had many successes in the past few years under the leadership of Laura Lucas. She has worked tirelessly on behalf of the community. She is a hard act to follow.

We are fortunate Laura will continue as a board member and active on the Greenspace Committee. I am also counting on Laura's coaching me on running a good tight meeting covering all agenda items.

Marilyn Paucker, Jeanne Wedgewood and Lindsey Diangelo are also circling off the board. All 3 of these women have committed to share their talents and institutional knowledge with us when they are called upon for advice and assistance.

You have chosen a terrific executive committee I look forward to working with Tony Banks, VO Ops.; Larry McEwen, VP Physical; Brad Wells, VP Social; Karl Martin; Treasurer; Andy Kite. Secretary.

They are joined Richard Snowden, Cathy Brozowski and Lindsey Toconita on the Ex Committee.

I also extend a warm welcome to the new board members, Alex Burns, Michael Harding and Lindsey Toconita. We are counting on you to jump right in with both feet.

In preparation for this meeting I re read the CHCA bylaws. The stated purposes of the CHCA at its founding in 1959 are the same today a little more than 60 years later.

To encourage a sense of community 2. Seek comprehensive and long range solutions, cooperate with other entities and coordinate community efforts. 3. Maintain and improve the quality of life of the CH community 4. Assist and support charitable endeavors and organizations within the community. 5.

Educate and update the community regarding charitable, religious, educational and civic concerns. 6. To encourage participation by community members in the formulation of its policies to insure the CHCA activities are consistent with the expressed wishes of the community, democratically arrived at.

2020 is a whole new world from 1959.

Dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic is incredibly challenging for everyone.

It is difficult for organizations like the CHCA, which will not stage its signature large events, to remain connected and relevant while adhering to the important social distancing guidelines. How best does the CHCA involve people in civic, cultural and educational matters and just plain fun stuff to engage and entertain kids and adults?

In my opinion this requires a multifaceted approach consisting of print, digital, social media and virtual presentations and entertainment valued enough to sustain and increase awareness of, membership in and encourage contributions to the CHCA. I am relying on you to help come up with ideas, plans and projects and volunteers who work to make them a reality.

We are off to a good start. Laura, Jenny McHugh and Anne Standish have put together a wonderful Virtual Tour of some very lovely gardens in Chestnut Hill complete with personal tours by some homeowners. It is now on our website. Please check it out. Tell your friends.

Our CHCA award this past year honored all the essential workers in our area. Each week over the past month some of these dedicated people have been profiled in the CHCA The Local. We have a few more articles in the works and we are working on an Award banner across Germantown Avenue.

The Philadelphia area will be practicing social distancing for at least 7 months. We must think of ways in which we can keep the community at large involved, grow our membership and increase our financial contributions.

What types of events and activities are practical over the fall and winter? How best can we continue to collaborate with the other major institutions in the Chestnut Hill? Would a Community Supper under the Stars catered by our restaurants and/or food trucks at the Water Tower work or Chestnut Hill College work? Or a reservation only lunch or dinner along the avenue complimented by appointment retail shopping be appealing?

What else should be placed on social media? How about meet the CHCA members spotlight? What civic and educational content should be included?

I'd like to see another virtual tour or 2- similar to the terrific Virtual Garden tour we just posted. Perhaps a Halloween party-virtual. Definitely a holiday decorations theme-in early to mid December-People describing their favorite decorations, food or seasonal treats? Should there be a kids talent show?

I appreciate that we are volunteers in an organization with a small staff-Anne and Heather can't clone themselves-and we have a limited budget. We have to think creatively and recruit people to work with us. I don't pretend that is easy-it is not but we can come up with a plan and make it work.

We can do some things, not everything. We have to determine what we are capable of and how we may be successful.

My first priority is to secure a place where the meetings of the Executive Committee and the Board can take place in person next month for those who are comfortable doing so. It should have wifi strong enough for zoom. A space of 10 and a space to 25 where we can socially distance is required.

In the meantime please email, text or call me with your suggestions regarding outreach. I will also attempt to reach out to you. We can also meet in person outside or inside while keeping safe protocols.

Thanks for your attention. I promise my future remarks will shorter.