

Chestnut Hill Community Association

Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, February 25, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.

via Zoom

Attending CHCA Board Members: Andy Kite, Alex Burns, Anne Standish, Bradley Wells, Cathy Brzozowski, Jason Bissonette, Jenny McHugh, Joyce Lenhardt, Karl Martin, Keith Kunz, Larry McEwen, Laura Lucas, Lindsey Toconita, Lynn Schroeder, Richard Snowden and Tony Banks

Also attending from CHCA staff: Anne McNiff and Celeste Hardester

Community Members attending: Daniel Piotrowski, David Mercuris, Jeff Duncan, Joe Pie, Les Escobedo, Melissa Degenhardt, Richard Berkman, Sanjiv Jain

1. President's Welcome – January meeting minutes and February meeting agenda were approved.
2. Physical Division
  - a. 10 E. Bethlehem Pike update
    - i. Celeste Hardester walked the attending Board and community members thru the proposed apartment building plans that were presented to the DRC by the developer Frankel and zoning attorney Carl Primavera. One option is a 47 foot tall, 34 unit building that the developer says could be built "by right". To achieve this "by right" status, this option employs 2 "bonuses" within the city code: 1. An Affordable Income Housing bonus by making a donation to the affordable housing Trust Fund and 2. a Green Roof bonus. This option has no parking accommodations. Without employing these bonuses, the second option presented is a 55 foot tall, 23 unit building that contains 9 parking spaces. Both options have retail/commercial on the ground floor of the building.
    - ii. Jeff Duncan spoke on behalf of the Summit Street Neighbor Group and presented their concerns: The architectural detail and construction materials of the building are not consistent with the CH historic district; the lack of adequate parking; drainage, sewage and water pressure impacts upon surrounding area; sunlight impact on the buildings/homes immediately adjacent; environmental concerns about the former Sunoco gas station site being free of contamination; how and where construction staging will happen and if there ends up being parking, that the entrance is not on Summit Street.
    - iii. During the discussion that followed, it was generally agreed that the 1<sup>st</sup> step that needs to happen is to determine what actually can happen at the site "by right". Richard Snowden suggested that the CHCA share consulting and legal costs with the Summit Street neighbor group. Larry McEwen proposed speaking with Carl Primavera before paying anything and asking him for a summary of the "by right" points of the development. Joyce Lenhardt raised the question that she thought a buffer is needed when commercial development abuts residential and interprets the code differently than the architect of the project. Daniel

Piotrowski, Chairman of the Chestnut Hill Baptist Church next door to the proposed development, voiced his support for both the concerns expressed by the Summit Street neighbors and for the CHCA being involved.

- b. 30 West Highland Avenue update
    - i. Celeste reported that the proposed project has worked its way through the CHCA's public hearing process, having been reviewed by the LUPZ on 2/11 and referred to the DRC on 2/16. A subcommittee was formed to continue discussions with owner and architect with the goal to present the final agreement to the CHCA Board at the March 25 Board Meeting.
  - c. 8612-14 Germantown Avenue update
    - i. Celeste indicated that the LUPZ/DRC and the CHCA Board have already reviewed and approved this project, but that subsequent to the approval, it came to light that some neighbors had not received the DRC meeting notice letters that they should have. The neighbors have raised concerns about trash, dumpster and parking issues and have asked that the project go back through the CHCA's review and approval process. Property owner Sanjeev Jain indicated that he does not wish to do that and spoke about his willingness to meet with the neighbors to discuss and resolve issues. The project has a ZBA date prior to the March CHCA board meeting so there isn't enough time to go through the entire review process again. The CHCA will set up a meeting with the neighbors to facilitate mediation and bring an agreement to the March 16 DRC meeting. In light of this, a motion was made to authorize the CHCA Executive Committee to review the outcome of the mediation after the March 16 DRC meeting and render the CHCA recommendation to the ZBA. In order to do this, the EC will meet the third Thursday, March 18 instead of March 11. The motion passed: Susan Bray voted no and Richard Snowden and Laura Lucas abstained.
3. Executive Director Updates
    - a. Membership Report: Anne McNiff reported that the CHCA has 1,263 active members. So far this year we have had 233 renewals, 29 new members and had the first bulk sale of 24 memberships to Bowman Properties.
    - b. 2<sup>nd</sup> round of PPP loan – While the CHCA applied for this thru Bank of America, they declined our application – an experience also shared by the Chestnut Hill Local. Anne indicated that she has applied through Huntingdon Valley Bank and the application is progressing. She also reported that the CHCA is going thru the loan forgiveness process for the 1<sup>st</sup> PPP loan from Bank of America and that appears it will be successful.
  4. Social Division Updates
    - a. St. Patrick's Community Activities – Bradley Wells (CHCA VP Social Division) commented that the CHCA is looking for an outdoor dining venue partner to host an Irish music and dance performance.
    - b. Possible PPC concert – Bradley also stated that the CHCA is exploring how to bring back Pastorius Park Concerts and Movie Nights later this year – talking to the city about its plan for permitting outdoor events.
  5. Annual Appeal

- a. Valentines Fundraiser – Kathi Clayton reported that the fundraiser brought in \$1,000, bringing the current total raised to date to \$38,000.
  - b. Match opportunity – She also indicated that we have an anonymous donor who has committed \$10,000 to the Community Association if it is matched during an upcoming fund drive (most likely held in mid-March).
6. Membership Committee Updates
  - a. Member only events –Lynn Schroeder (Membership Committee Chair) stated that the membership committee held 2 meetings in February and is optimistic about the future. They met with the board of the Local to compare subscriber data, and planned members only events for March and April. Anne McNiff indicated that the Members-only virtual stretch class conducted by Balance gym had 24 attendees earlier in the day.
  - b. Membership Ambassadors – Anne also talked about a plan to identify where CHCA members are in the neighborhood - and where they are not - and to reach out to CHCA Board and other involved members to act as ambassadors for that particular block or street.
7. Update on CH Community Fund Status
  - a. Kathi Clayton read the CHCA’s statement on the Chestnut Hill Community Fund: The Chestnut Hill Community Fund Trustees (CHCF) contacted the Chestnut Hill Community Association (CHCA) in late 2020 to review options regarding a change in Fund's current tax status and structure as required by IRS regulations. CHCA Executive Committee members met with Fund Trustees several times to exchange ideas and share documents. Options were explored with an attorney specializing in non-profit organizational law. Fund Trustees requested the Association nominate and elect additional Trustees to the CHCF Board.

Last week four CHCF Trustees announced they were resigning. We thank Ellen Williams, Jeremy Gudgeon, Monty Claybrook and John Devine for their years of service. Susan Bray and Andrew Glendinning are the two remaining CHCF Trustees. In accordance with the by-laws of the Fund and the Association, the CHCA intends to nominate and elect three Executive Committee members, Karl Martin, Tony Banks and Kathi Clayton, and an outside attorney, Rick Berkman, to replace the four resigned Trustees at the upcoming Association Board meeting on February 25th.

These four nominees have been closely involved in discussions with the CHCF Trustees. During the next few months, all Fund Trustees will work together to get a better understanding of the Fund's current IRS compliance and the Fund's optimum non-profit status that will enable its long-term success to support the community.

Celeste Hardester raised a question about CHCA Board Members being Fund Trustees and vice versa. Richard (Rick) Berkman, pro-bono attorney for the CHCA, answered that nothing in the bylaws of either organization would prevent this and that it is clear in the bylaws that the CHCA has the authority to replace resigning Trustees. It was pointed out that Susan Bray is both a member of the CHCA Board and also a Trustee of the Fund. Rick indicated that the CHCA and CHCF will be retaining a non-profit tax attorney to advise on the best strategy for the future status of the Fund (should the Fund become a private foundation, become a supporting organization of the CHCA or merge with the CHCA). Susan Bray informed the Board that at one of their prior meetings, the Fund

Trustees had decided to become a supporting organization of the CHCA and that there is no animosity between the two organizations. She further indicated that the departure of the Trustees was not signaling any kind of message.

8. Election of CH Community Fund Board Members
  - a. Laura Lucas presented a motion to approve Karl Martin, Kathi Clayton, Tony Banks and Rick Berkman as nominees to the Fund Board to fill the 4 recently vacated seats. The motion passed: Susan Bray and Richard Snowden abstained.
  - b. Each of the newly elected Fund board members will be asked to sign a affirmation of service per the Fund's guidelines.
9. New Business – no new business was presented.
10. Community Partner Updates
  - a. Water Tower – Keith Kunz reported on a couple of graffiti and vandalism incidents. Over Presidents Day the building and playground equipment was spray-painted (some tagging was racial) and the security system was vandalized. The city has since covered the graffiti (Keith hopes it can be removed later) and the WTAC is looking to repair or replace the security system. A plastic storage shed was vandalized around Christmas and the WTAC hopes to replace it with a wooden shed. Currently the Rec Center is open from 4-8 pm for gymnastics and basketball with a limit of 15 people in each gym. 2 clean up dates have been scheduled: upper War Memorial area on March 20 and a more extensive grounds clean up on April 24. Keith reported that the Water Tower is looking at an upcoming 35% reduction in the city Parks and Rec budget which will impact staffing levels; the WTAC is talking to the tennis and pickleball groups about “pay to play” or “pay to reserve” to try and raise some funds.
  - b. CH Hospital – Cathy Brzozowski reported its been a tough couple of weeks - the Tower Health System is struggling. The CEO recently resigned and all director and above staff have taken pay cuts. The good news is that the Hospital's quality indicators are all up and the Hospital is engaging in more community COVID vaccinations. They are exploring partnering with their neighbor Chestnut Hill Presbyterian to offer more space. Dr. Cacciamani will be joining the March CHCA meeting to give a state of the hospital message.
  - c. Woodmere Art Museum – Anne Standish reported that the museum is open with reduced capacity and timed tickets. Currently on display is an exhibition of everyone's favorite Pennsylvania impressionist Walter Schofield. Upcoming exhibitions include one on Tom Judd's Subway Mural for the 5<sup>th</sup> Street-Independence Hall SEPTA Station. The public has the opportunity to meet the artist on 2/27 or 2/28.
  - d. Springside Chestnut Hill Academy – Jenny McHugh reported that the school is successfully holding in-person classes, SCH faculty is being vaccinating over the next two weeks and she offered space to CH Hospital as a potential vaccination program expansion site.