

PHILADELPHIA CROSSTOWN COALITION

Minutes of Board of Delegates Meeting on January 26, 2019

Location: Trolley Station Restaurant, 40th & Baltimore

Host Member: Spruce Hill Community Association

Called to Order: 6:30 p.m. **Adjourned:** 8:15 p.m.

NEXT MEETING Monday March 25; Location TBD;

Attending: 22 member associations, represented by 29 delegates. See attached sign-in sheet for attendees.

Welcome – Chair Jeff Hornstein

- 1) **November Minutes** Approved w one correction
- 2) **Treasurer's Report** Ilene Wilder, Treasurer not present. Jeff Hornstein states that treasury is good and that we are about to start another round with the Giving Circle, for schools.
- 3) **Guest Speaker The Honorable Darrell Clark, President, Philadelphia City Council,** (accompanied by Jeff Jones, staff attorney, and Cory Bell, Traffic Specialist)
Public Safety Officer program, and Real Estate Taxes. Last year, Philadelphia had over 300 homicides and 1200 shootings; police could be freed up to do more on this. New York has a Safety Officer program - a force trained to do certain things, at salaries half of police officer's \$70k. Ages 18-45. We've seen this work in other cities. We proposed this last year with Bill 180818; FOP was against it. We didn't get official response from the Administration. We'd like it to be on the ballot in May, but we want significant buy-in, so it may wait until November.
Questions:
 - *Would they be Union?* Yes
 - *Could this program be used as a training program for police?* Great question
 - *Quality of life crimes?* Homeless people? Trash problems? We are revising the bill to put more things in.
 - *Is there an implicit play to take the Parking Authority back with this?* No, that is state legislation.
 - *Sanitation?* No, that is Streets and SWEEP
 - *Why do you want to do this through a charter change?* So it is funded
 - *More voters show up for the general election, so that could be a better time to get more response.*
 - *Is this a center city issue or would it be in outlying neighborhoods, too?* It could be.
 - *Bicycle Coalition/Vision Zero program could help with identifying changes in the Bill.*
 - *Would they be responding to L&I issues?* No
 - *Has a hearing date been set?* Not yet.

Property Taxes

Questions:

- *Can there be a cap on %/year increase to protect people who have lived in a neighborhood for a long time?* The significant challenge we have is that 1/3 of the City is not paying taxes – non-profits (Penn, Temple, etc); We still have 30,000 properties that are vacant or underutilized. The whole issue around the 10-year tax abatement – that issue is going to come to a head. You are right that the incremental increase in taxes is nipping at homeowners' heels. We are just introducing legislation that would alter the plan made under AVI, where you had to have a 200% increase to get relief. We want to lower that to 50%. With a hard cap on real estate taxes, it affects budgets that can't budge. The state-wide assessment law inhibits our ability to address areas as we would like to.

- *Does the Ryan Report deal with the issue about frequency of assessment? In a hot real estate market, with the assessments every four years, there can be a big increase.*

We hired Ryan to look at how the OPA functions. The office is out of compliance on 18 points. Unfortunately, annual assessments are not realistic because of the variety of housing across the City. The Ryan Report said City-wide assessments could be done every 3-5 years, with spot assessments.

- *The Ryan Report identified that less expensive houses more frequently over-assessed?* Jeff Hornstein said that in some neighborhoods, it is hard to find comps, there isn't enough transaction history.

- 4) **Guest Speaker Paul Steinke, Executive Director, Preservation Alliance**, here to speak about the Draft of the Final Report on the Mayor's Preservation Task Force
Philadelphia is the most historic city in the U.S., over 300 years. Our main preservation challenge has been to prevent occupied, tax paying buildings from being demolished. The outcome at Jeweler's Row got the mayor's attention to create the task force. The Preservation Alliance will be looking to local groups to help support the implementation of the recommendations in the task force report. The final report will be out late in February; we now have the draft of the final report. We are waiting for the mayor to tell us what recommendations they will support in this spring council session.

The Alliance wants to change the attitude of the City to a "Preservation First" attitude. We want to incentivize developers, create more regulations, and historic districts. It can be hard to make the case for why preservation is important in a city with all the problems that we have, but we can't let the City get demolished while we are working on opioids, and schools, etc.

Questions:

- *What are the three recommendations that the Preservation Alliance would get behind?* We think one new regulation and one new incentive would be a great place to start. The incentive that we like the most are to modify the tax abatement. You only get the value in an existing

value by what you put new into it. We would like to change that to rehabilitating the building and the increased assessed value by doing that. For a regulation, we'd like to see the creation of a new kind of historic district – a partial control district. One more: we don't have a survey of the historic buildings, all the buildings that could qualify for historic designation. The PCPC just did 18 districts for 2035. We'd like to do 18 districts and survey each one to give us the basis for what can be protected. There are over 525,000 structure in the City. Only 2% are protected. That is half the percentage of the average of the largest cities in the U.S.

Is there an objective list of what qualifies for historic? Yes, the Historic Commission has a 10-point list. Also, the National Park Service has criteria.

Could the Preservation Alliance have picked demolition delay as a regulation? We advocated for this delay and thought anything older than 75 years was a good place to begin. The Mayor's office thought that would never get through Council, that it would be dead on arrival. It was the Task Force as a whole that didn't support this.

Do you have a council person lined up to support your two items? We think Councilmen Squilla and Jones might be supportive so we are hopeful but not ready to move ahead yet.

I've tried to get a sense of various neighborhoods concern about preservation and where the coalition is, and it has struck me that every part of the City should be concerned about over the counter permits for demolition. It happens in areas that affect quality of life as well as preservation issues, and affects all of us, and that there shouldn't be the right to just demolish what is next to you, what is in the middle of the block, etc. Neighborhoods who haven't yet felt development pressure may not have felt this yet, but as long as development continues, it is coming to you.

The problem is piecemeal work, and then they consolidate and you see what they are doing. We need to take on the issue of over the counter. A lot of times there is no plan, it becomes a security issue. We think we should inject and infuse how development works in the City. Let's move the needle back and encourage rehabs while we continue to allow building on vacant sites or sites with insignificant properties.

Jeff Hornstein asked if anyone here willing to form a form a working group with Paul Steinke on this. Barry Grossbach and Celeste Hardester

5) **Reports**

a) **Best Practices committee** – Joe Kain reported having 26 responses out of 34 members asked. Primary interest so far as priority is Zoning and Land Use, then Affordability, Streets Maintenance, Relations with City Hall. If you haven't responded yet, you still can.

b) Chair's Report

- **D&O package** has been submitted to Dash & Love. We should have a quote by the next meeting. Eugene Desyatnik said that an organization having cash on hand for deductible can affect whether it qualifies for a policy. The legislation proposed by Councilman Henon would help in the event of a lawsuit, at the discretion of the City Finance Dept. This changes the risk climate and might somewhat improve the premium quotes, but it is too soon say.

- **FONE**, Jeff Hornstein, summit will be in April 13 at the Comcast Center, sponsored by the Coalition and the Goldenberg Group. Also, we just finished another round of the Giving Circle, the 3rd round of \$10,000 of grants.

c) **Zoning and Land Use** – Steve Huntington reported that 3 of 10 requests to City Council have been activated so far: 1) Date of RCO meeting must be posted with Orange Hearing Notice; 2) Refusal must be posted with Orange Hearing Notice; 3) Relief for people who appeal Property Tax, providing that interest and penalty do not need to be paid on increased amount.

At zoning meeting in December, we heard from representatives from the Bar Association and PACDC. Bar concerned about the mail notices and the additional large orange sign. We should go back after the Council election to get more reasonable provisions to be put in. Cost is \$1.76 per address, and mailed notifications tend to be returned.

We spoke to PACDC's about responsiveness of ZBA to communities in general. We might be able to get some steps in place by working with them. Three years ago the Coalition published with the BIA (small developers), Development Workshop (large developers), came up with ten suggestions for the ZBA. Some have been done. We would like to resume working on this.

Next Zoning meeting will be Feb. 26, 27, 28.

6) New Business

- Chuck Bode raised the issue of some RCO's needing more knowledge about how to review projects and communicate with the ZBA. Jeff Hornstein suggested this could be incorporated into a Best Practices summit later in the spring.
- Unidentified voice raised issue of the ZBA staff being trained, and that this concern is something that should be raised to people running for Council.
- Celeste Hardester asked about member experience with any problems with Homeowner's Associations. Barb Capozzi said It is State Law that a development of more than 10 houses must be an HOA. Jeff said most seem to work alright in Queen Village. Steve said it is a workaround to build townhouses in CMX-3. and that this has been a problem in Northern Liberties and

Fishtown. West Powelton faught one off.

- Steve Huntington asked if we want to talk about quality of life crimes that a public safety officer might be responsible for. **MOTION: Motion to write a letter to Councilman Clarke expressing a desire to be more specific in defining what Quality of Life crimes are. Motion passed. Judy Applebaum will help write it.**

7) Next meeting will be March. 25th, specific location TBD.

As recorded by Celeste Hardester, January 28, 2019

Date of Meeting Jan. 28, 2019

Bella Vista Neighbors Assn.

Brandy Bones	
Dennis Halda	✓
Eugene Desyatnik	✓

Callowhill N'hood Assn

Leah Strenger	
Joanne Kundrat	✓

Cedar Park Neighbors

David Hincer	
Catherine Hoffmann	

Central Rox

Celeste Hardester	✓
Margaret Ann Morris	
Jim Petkovits	✓

CCRA

Steve Huntington	✓
Jeff Braff	✓
Wade Albert	
Lauren O'Donnell	✓

Cobbs Creek NA

Larissa Mogano	

East Falls Commun Council

Meg Greenfield	
Bill Epstein	✓

East Kensington Civic Assn.

Graham O'Neill	
Nicholas Esposito	
Gordon Stein	

East Passyunk Crossing

Dominic Falso	
Beth Dougherty	
Samantha Gross	
Leon Malloy	

East Point Breeze Nbrs

Miguel Garces	✓
Jerry Sulat	
Sarah Stevenson	

Fairmount Civic Assn.

Danielle DeLeo Kim	
Kellyann Beene	
Kevin Wonder	

Fishtown Neighbors Assn.

Ian Wilson	
Joseph Kain	✓

Garden Court Commun Assn

Jamie Gauthier	
Lauren Hansen Flaschen	
Maurice Jones	

Girard Estate Neighbors Association

Paul Rossi	✓

Hawthorne Empowerment

Albert Hicks	
Haneef Nelson	

Holmesburg CA

Tara Gontek	
Bryan Gontek	
David Dlugosz	✓
Cheryl Molle	

Logan Square Neighbors Assn.

Sam Little	
Andy Toy	
Drew Murray	✓

Lower Moyamensing CA

Patti Tahan	
Colleen McDonough	✓
Andrew Barbato	

Manayunk NC

John Hunter	
Kevin Smith	

Mantua CA

De'Wayne Drummond	✓
-------------------	---

Northern Libs Nhood Assn

Matt Ruben	
------------	--

Overbrook Farms

Cynthia Cronin-Kardon	
Denise Pettus	
Stephanie Kindt	

Overbrook Park

Marc Reason	
Angela Reason	

Packer Park Civic Assn.

Barbara Capozzi	✓
-----------------	---

Passyunk Sq. Civic Assn.

Ilene Wilder	
Sarah Anton	
Andrew Emma	

Powelton Village Civic Association

Blaise Tobia	
Steve Sebelski	✓
David Crawford	

Queen Village

Jeff Hornstein	✓
----------------	---

Society Hill Civic Association

Lorna Katz	✓
Rosanne Loesch	
Mary Tracy	

S. Broad Street Neighbors Assn

Peter Zutter	✓
Greg Damis	

SOSNA

Nicole Koedyker	✓
Murray Spencer	✓

Spruce Hill Community Assn

Monica Calkins	✓
Eric Santoro	✓
Barry Grossbach	✓

Walnut Hill

Horace Patterson	✓
------------------	---

Washington Sq. West

Judy Applebaum	✓
Jonathan Broh	
Lyric Chen	

West Powelton/Saunders Park

Chuck Bode	✓
Lucia Esther	✓

GUESTS

Councilman Clarke	✓
Paul Steinke	✓
Jeff Jones	✓
Cory Bell	✓