

Federation of Lower Merion Township Civic Associations
Minutes of the Meeting of January 11, 2010
Bryn Mawr Community Center

Present: Ardmore Progressive, no repr.; Ard-Wood, John Mulhern; Belmont Hills, Greg Strickland.; Bryn Mawr, Hank Wilson, Leigh Anne Smith, Duncan Van Dusen; Gladwyne, Joe Brown; Haverford, Anne Mezey, Struthers Cooper, Stephen Billings; Merion, Martin Piltch, Frances Quinn, Bruce Eisenberg; Merion Park, Diane Actman; Narberth, Chris Finley; Neighborhood Club, Maxine Goldberg; North Ardmore, Hugh Gordon, Chad Graham; Penn Valley, no repr.; Penn Wynne, no repr.; Rosemont-Villanova, no repr.; Shortridge, Carl Watson; Wynnewood, Roz Nathanson, Deborah Levine

1. The meeting was called to order by President Smith at 7:30 pm.
2. Minutes of the meeting of December 7, 2009, were approved.
3. Treasurer's Report, Anne Mezey/Struthers Cooper. Checking account \$5545, Money Market Fund \$12,704. Carl Watson reported Community Watch dues unpaid by Haverford, Rosemont-Villanova, and Narberth.
4. President's Report: The Federation's Treasurer's bond has been extended to include the Assistant Treasurer at no additional charge.

The President proposed that the Federation sponsor an educational session, replacing the March Federation meeting, to be run by attorney Laura Solomon, covering IRS reporting requirements of non-profit organizations, strategies to avoid penalties, need for liability and directors and officers insurance, and related topics. Written handouts would be provided. There would be a one-hour presentation and an hour for questions. The cost is estimated at \$2500, to be paid by the Federation. Civic Association presidents and treasurers would be invited to attend. After discussion, this program was approved by a vote of 9 to 0, with 3 abstentions. The abstentions were based on delegates' belief that approval of their civic was required. John Mulhern asked that these three civics consider the matter and report their decision via e-mail to the secretary.

5. Budget Committee, Greg Strickland. The 2010 Township budget as adopted calls for a 2.7% increase in property tax, plus increased solid waste collection fees. The ad hoc budget and capital improvement committees of the Commissioners have been abolished. Bids for the pocket park at Lancaster and Ardmore Aves. have come in above the estimate; a significant part of the total cost is a fountain, at about \$130,000.

6. Township Actions, Carl Watson. Bruce Reed has been re-elected as President of the Commissioners, with Mark Taylor as Vice-President. New committee appointments have been made; a listing is attached to these minutes. Three committee meetings were held on Jan. 6, which lasted 4 ½ hours. The Parks and Recreation Committee extended the dog park ordinance for an additional year, and permitted Narberth residents to participate. A consultant will be hired at about \$75,000 (funded by county and state grants) to update the Parks and Recreation part of the new Comprehensive Plan. The Public Works Committee heard that 4000 households have not responded to specify the level of solid waste collection service they require. Trash cans in Township parks are suddenly overflowing. A suggestion that fees for a new public sewer line on River Road might be changed was controversial and was not adopted. The Finance Committee approved contributions to each of the Fire Companies increased by just 1% from last year. The Ardmore Ave/Lancaster Ave. realignment project (see preceding section) was budgeted at \$600,00 but low bids totaled \$764,000, of which about \$135,000 is for a fountain. The project was approved. A controversy over an apparent requirement for the Planning Commission to advise the Commissioners on the Capital Improvement Plan was settled by the Township Solicitor's opinion that this was not a legal requirement. The Zoning Hearing Board is

continuing hearings on the St. Joseph's athletic field uses. Ludington Library is cutting back on services and will close Jan. 23 for 14 to 16 months for renovations and expansion. The Cynwyd Trail Development plan will be presented at West Laurel Hill Cemetery on Jan. 26 at 6:30 pm. Trail work days are continuing throughout the winter. The Environmental Advisory Council will hold a second session on home composting March 20 and an initial session on use of rainbarrels March 27. Both require preregistration by February 19, and payment of a fee. The Commissioners are continuing to schedule committee meetings followed immediately by Commissioners meetings; these often run very late and have been opposed by the Federation, without effect.

The Planning Commission is considering a number of issues at a meeting tonight (Jan. 11), including extension of the Bryn Mawr Farmers Market for an additional year, a sign ordinance, expansion of the historic properties inventory, and special approval of the O'Neill site (formerly Connelly Container) for housing development. A number of additional issues will probably be considered next month.

The Secretary noted that recent Commissioners meetings have been marked by rancorous, often partisan, debate. The atmosphere of the meetings is distinctly unpleasant, and the meetings often run very late. Seating of two new Commissioners does not seem to have improved matters.

7. Old Business. As promised at the last meeting, the President distributed copies of a questionnaire to go to each civic in preparation for the informational meeting in March. A copy of the questionnaire is attached to these minutes. Completed questionnaires are to be returned to the President.

8. New business. The President presented a resolution opposing the changed hours during which construction noise is allowed under a proposed amendment to the Township's noise ordinance. A copy of the resolution is attached to these minutes. Individual civics are asked to consider the resolution and be prepared to vote at the next Federation meeting. There was discussion of the history and details of the current ordinance. There is agreement that it is outdated and needs major revision; the proposed changes are regarded as a stop-gap solution.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to authorize the Assistant Treasurer and the President, in addition to the Treasurer, to sign Federation checks.

Hugh Gordon noted that the 2010 budget provides no funds (down from \$1000 last year) for the Historic Preservation Awards ceremony. He regarded this as failure to support the historic preservation effort, a professed goal of the Township. It was suggested that the most effective way to effect a change would be for each civic to raise the matter with its Commissioner.

9. Adjournment at 9:02 pm.

Accompanying documents:

1. Township Commissioners Committee Assignments
2. Cover letter for questionnaire
3. Questionnaire itself
4. Resolution on the proposed noise ordinance.

The next meeting of the Federation will be Monday, February 8, 2010, at 7:30 pm at the Bryn Mawr Community Center.