

**The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd
Board Meeting September 4th 2018
The Lower Merion Academy Building**

Board Attendees

Vanessa Coke Cohen, Michal Frankel, Eric Godfrey, Ricky Guerra, Randy Myer, David Rosenbaum, Dan Russoniello, David Yavil, and Merle Zucker

Excused

Maxine Goldberg, Anne M. Greenhalgh, David Haas, Roger Moog, Jerry Skillings, and Shifra Vega

Also Present: Commissioners Brian Maguire and George Manos and Mike McKeon; Jerry Francis, Lower Merion Historical Society

Guest: Chris Leswing, Head of B & P LM Township

Call to Order

President David Rosenbaum called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Police Report

Officers Chris Kubik and Stephen Shippen

There were several burglaries during the summer, and thefts from unlocked vehicles continue to be a problem. Homes have been burglarized recently by forcing open second floor windows in the rear of properties. The officers repeated suggestions of keeping valuables out of view in vehicles and using cameras and alarms as deterrents in homes. Jerry Skillings mentioned that there has been a problem with illegal parking around the Middle School during both ends of the day and requested stricter enforcement to deter violators. The officers said that residents can report such problems to the LM Police Department's head of Traffic Safety and they will dispatch officers to issue citations (although they did mention that at times the violators are gone by the time that the police arrive).

President's Report

President David Rosenbaum reported that Jeremy Harrison has moved away and resigned from the Board. As a result, we will need another Board member to serve as our representative for the Community Watch Program. Anyone interested should contact President Rosenbaum.

President Rosenbaum also indicated that he had been contacted by Cross Properties about their hope to lobby SEPTA to increase the frequency and service on the Cynwyd train line.

David Yavil stated that renovations of the Bala Station have been completed and are quite nice and that renovations to the Wynnefield Station are underway.

Secretary's Report

The Board approved the minutes of the June 12th meeting.

Treasurer's Report

Eric Godfrey reported that the July 4th financial report has not yet been completed but he anticipates that the figures will be similar to last year.

Introduction of new Potential Members

Richard Lynn and Aaron Gross were introduced as candidates to fill vacancies because of resignations from the Board. Each of their resumes were submitted to the Board and both introduced themselves and made brief remarks about their interest in serving on the Board. A motion was made by Jerry Skillings for the Board to recognize the existence of two vacancies and to fill them with Richard Lynn to serve until December of 2019 and Aaron Gross to serve until December 2018. The motion was seconded by Dan Russoniello and the Board voted unanimously to approve the appointment. They were reminded of the necessity to review the Bylaws and the Conflict of interest policies of the NCBC.

NCBC Website Presentation

President Rosenbaum gave a report on the current issues with the NCBC Website and recent issues with its reliability. He indicated that the website is visually out of date, hard to use and does not include any search functionality. In addition, the website has been unreliable and it is difficult to add and revise content.

President Rosenbaum reports that the NCBC website was built on a platform that has been administered by Roni Lagin & Co. who indicated earlier this year that he did not want to continue offering this service.

Moreover, the website used a host that went out of business without notice, which caused a significant and harmful outage in May. Board Member Jeremy Harrison did what he could while he lived here to restore both the website and the email. There have been outages and disabled email and a host of other problems that make the maintenance extremely difficult. For example, it is difficult for residents to pay their dues on line and for the Board to track payment and membership mainly because the Pay Pal administrator is still listed as former NCBC Board Member Ilene McCaffrey.

Moving forward, the website needs to be attractive, functional, and user friendly. People need to be able to find out what we do, how they can participate, and what the benefits of membership are. President Rosenbaum suggested that the goal of the NCBC website should be to let membership and the Community know what is going on and encourage people to join. The site should be encouraging people to become more active in the Community and reflect the full scope of our activities as an organization.

President Rosenbaum reported that a new NCBC website could include the following improvements to functionality:

- a. Better membership program with integration with back office
 - i. Acknowledgement of dues paying members
 - ii. More concrete benefits for joining (local discounts)
- b. Easier access to posted agendas and minutes

- c. Search functionality – the ability to plug in an address and see minutes and agenda items relating to it
- d. More historical data on the club – listing of award winners from July 4th etc
- e. Better and more up to date calendar of events both for club and for township meetings effecting Bala Cynwyd
- f. Better functionality on tablets and phones

He also suggested that a new website could potentially include the following sections:

- i. News
- ii. Press Releases
- iii. Photos
- iv. Ways to Donate
- v. Information on Land Review Process (perhaps my power point)
- vi. Links to other sites of interest locally
- vii. NCBC history and a Why the Dragon page
- viii. A Board portal
- ix. Directory of local businesses
- x. Report a problem page
- xi. Neighborhood information
- xii. Ability to sign up for our listserv
- xiii. Links to Lower Merion (could include the township calendar)

Many other Lower Merion Civics Associations have more up to date websites than NCBC and many use the Word Press format, which is more modern and user friendly. President Rosenbaum reported that other civics have exciting features that a new NCBC website could emulate: Penn Wynne has an on line store; Haverford has a business sponsor list; Wynnewood lists public meetings with links to community issues; Penn Valley has a sign up for an e-blast.

President Rosenbaum indicated that Jeremy Harrison began working on a proto type of a new website that can be viewed at: <http://jeremydeanharrison.com/balacynwyd-2018/> . He reported that his hope is that the new website be in a position to be rolled out by January 1st so that it would coincide with the start of payments for 2019 NCBC dues.

President Rosenbaum indicated that Jeremy Harrison estimated that a new website could cost \$6,000 to \$8,000, but that estimate included some services that Jeremy was going to perform for free. President Rosenbaum expressed skepticism that we would get an improved website by relying on free services alone; while well intentioned, free services are not as timely and reliable as they might be if someone is paid for the work.

President Rosenbaum indicated that he wanted the Board to authorize him to spend up to \$8,000 to hire a web designer with the idea that this could be done soon so that a January 2019 rollout would be realistic. President Rosenbaum's hope is that eventually with membership and sponsorship gains, the cost of the website should be revenue neutral.

President Rosenbaum indicated that his intention is to select a vendor and developer by soliciting bids. Before the new website is rolled out President Rosenbaum indicated that a template would be available presented to the Board for approval.

President Rosenbaum asked for those interested in becoming part of this process to step forward. During Discussion, Vanessa Coke Cohen expressed her view that we need an outside web designer and that there should be a committee to work on content for the website. President Rosenbaum urged board and community members to volunteer and noted that our own, Courtney Bond had indicated that she would help us with this project. Jerry Skilling moved that we approve the expenditure of up to \$8,000.00 by President Rosenbaum to move forward with this Website project. The motion was seconded by Merle Zucker and unanimously approved.

Presentation:

Chris Leswing Lower Merion Director of Building and Planning

Topics of ROHO and Cynwyd Trail:

Chris Leswing reported on his recently conducted walk over Three Schuylkill River Bridges that was attended by approximately 100 people and highlighted both past and future trail related and public space projects.

According to Chris Leswing, the Bala Cynwyd Shopping Center and many other commercial areas in the Township were built in the 50's by developers, who were focused solely on the automobile as the main mode of transportation. Chris Leswing reported that many commercial areas are reaching the end of their useful life and need to be modernized, with walkability promoted and public transportation accessible.

Chris Leswing reported that the new buildings being constructed on and near City Ave will include public spaces and multi-use paths designed to promote walkability and connections to a transportation network.

New zoning documents will come out in the fall. Randy Myer spoke of the necessity of walkability and David Yavil talked about the necessity of good signage. Apartments need open spaces, and connectivity to public transportation is a must.

Commissioner Brian Maguire

Commissioner Maguire spoke of the need for Public participation in the new zoning discussion. Chris said the Code is hard to use and that the new one will be more user friendly. The plan is that LM staff will go to Civics and that public dialog is necessary.

Commissioner George Manos

Commissioner Manos commended Chris Leswing for his role in creating the Cynwyd Trail.

Commissioner Manos reported on a problem now with employee parking near Levering Mill Rd and Belmont Ave. and also the need for sidewalks to make walking to the Cynwyd Trail safer.

Commissioner Manos also reported that there will be another Block party on Sept. 16th on Bala Ave. from 1:00 – 5:00 p.m. Vans and food will be there.

Commissioner Manos reported that the public work space across from the BMW will be moved because the building that it is in will be torn down; he indicated that the work space would be moved to the area where the galleries are now located.

Commissioner Manos reported that along with State Rep. Pamela DeLissio, the work with Pennsylvania Department of Transportation is progressing. He explained that the Union Ave Bridge will be torn down and that the work to rebuild the bridge will take a year or two to complete. He indicated that the new bridge will not be significantly different in height but that it will have a longer grade.

Commissioner Mike McKeon

Commissioner McKeon talked about the new Senior Living Facility, which is in the approval process for Rock Hill and Belmont Aves. There will be a pocket park and sidewalks. Commissioner McKeon believes that the project is about as good as it could be at that intersection and that it should not significantly impact traffic.

President Rosenbaum indicated that the Traffic Report for the Senior Living Center had just been released and that counts were performed during the summer and that the report relied heavily on a 2015 traffic study. President Rosenbaum expressed his concern to the Township staff and to the developer, and he hopes that new traffic counts will be done before approvals of the project are sought.

President Rosenbaum also reported that the 9 Presidential Blvd. traffic assessment will now look at other intersections as well. He was asked by the developer about the need for expanded traffic studies, including but not limited to the intersection of Belmont and St. Asaph's Roads, and he urged them to do an expanded study.

Finally President Rosenbaum reported that a medical marijuana dispensary will be opening on City Ave on the Philadelphia side right across from the ACME. Based upon communications that he received, President Rosenbaum does not believe that the dispensary planned for Presidential Blvd. will occur and he indicated that it is unclear on how this new dispensary in the area could affect discussions about other similar projects.

Merle Zucker made announcements of Rep. DeLissio's Town Hall meeting on 9/17 and her Senior Expo on 9/27 at Roxborough Memorial Hospital.

A motion to adjourn was made by Ricky Guerra which was seconded by Jerry Skillings. The vote to adjourn was unanimous.

The next meeting is on October 9th, the location is still to be selected.