

The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd
Board Meeting December 11, 2018
The Lower Merion Academy Building

Board Attendees

Vanessa Coke Cohen, Maxine Goldberg, Anne M. Greenhalgh, Aaron Gross, David Haas, Richard Lynn, Roger Moog, Randy Myer, David Rosenbaum, Dan Russionello, Linda Sagman, Jerry Skillings, David Yavil, and Merle Zucker

Excused

Courtenay Harris Bond, Michal Frankel, Eric Godfrey, and Ricky Guerra

Call to Order

President Rosenbaum called the meeting to order at 7:35 P.M. and made two announcements. First, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled in favor of the School District in the ongoing litigation stemming from the Wolk lawsuit, which paved the way for LMSD's appeal to be decided on the merits rather than on procedural grounds. Second, the School District recently announced plans to build a new middle school and, as a result, they have indicated that the expansion of BCMS will not proceed and that the temporary classrooms in the middle of the track will most likely have to remain in place longer than originally contemplated. The District entered into an agreement in November to purchase properties on Spring Mill Road in Villanova to use as field space in conjunction with the site at 1860 Montgomery Avenue for a new middle school. See Main Line Times for more details:

http://www.mainlinemedianews.com/mainlinetimes/news/lower-merion-school-district-officials-outline-possible-plans-for-spring/article_f08db5b4-f802-11e8-a39b-8b10fcb79edd.html

Police Report

Officer Bills reported that holidays bring an increase in pick pockets and purse snatching. At night, cars that are stolen are typically unlocked with keys inside. During the daytime, cars that are broken into usually have valuables in sight. Burglaries are trending downward with the change in the weather. Target homes have unlocked doors and unlocked windows. Forced burglaries typically take place in properties that are set back and more hidden from the road. The police give extra attention to places of worship during the holidays. In response to the question about security cameras, Officer Bills answered that the doorbell cameras are relatively inexpensive and effective in deterring crime. Ring Security Cameras is one popular vendor.

President's Report

President Rosenbaum gave the Board a preview of the new website, designed by Brand Revive. He highlighted:

- The lettering of the new logo pays homage to the origin of Bala Cynwyd because it utilizes an Old Welsh script and yet has a new look
- A video on the home page shows both the commercial district and a sample of the residential district
- Notices about upcoming public and local meetings that will appear on the home page so that the website will become a community resource that is visited more frequently than our present website

- The website will have a development archive, which will create an on line repository for tentative sketches, preliminary plans and traffic reports.
- A page for the Independence Day Celebration, including recognition of past award winners
- A repository for monthly NCBC minutes and agenda
- An option for businesses to support The Club at various levels for various membership levels.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Eric Godfrey will email the 2019 budget to the Board prior to January 1, 2019. Consideration of the budget was deferred until the January Meeting.

Secretary's Report

Vanessa Coke Cohen recommended a change to the summary of the Federation meeting in the November minutes. The November 2018 minutes will undergo revision and go before the Board for approval during the January 2019 meeting.

City Avenue Special Services District (CASSD)

Terrence (Terry) Foley, President/CEO, City Avenue District gave an update on the CASSD. The organization is unique because it covers two municipalities; Philadelphia and Lower Merion. CASSD began to address crime. Today, crime is less of an issue, and the current focus is on business development and improvements. He reviewed three sets of projects: completed projects, City Avenue Projects, and new projects. Over the course of the year, two pedestrians were "hit and run." Following those incidents, short term pedestrian safety improvements were developed and are on the horizon as well as improved drainage/storm water City Ave.

In response to a question from President Rosenbaum on the subject of medical marijuana, Terry Foley said that the main issue is the distance from schools. The Township ordinance is in line with the State and requires 1,000 feet and the City requires 500 feet. An issue has arisen because a proposed dispensary on the Philadelphia side of City Ave is closer than 1000 feet from a school on the Lower Merion side, setting up a dispute that will be litigated.

In response to a question from Merle Zucker, Terry Foley reported that CASSD works more closely with the Township than the City when addressing traffic issues.

Zoning Report

President Rosenbaum also gave an update on adding the Bala/Egyptian Theater as a Class One Resource to the Historic Resource Inventory. Randy Myer moved that the Board support the designation of the Bala Egyptian Theater as a Class 1 historic designation. Maxine Goldberg seconded the motion. Linda Sagman opposed; no one abstained; 11 approved. The motion passed.

President Rosenbaum also give the Board an introduction to the concept of an 'FAR,' Floor Area Ratio. FAR refers to the area of a lot to the area of a building. An FAR of 1 is the rough equivalent of a one story building on one lot; an FAR of 2 is the rough equivalent of a two story building on a half-acre; and so on.

During the course of conversation about zoning, Roger Moog noted that the Lower Merion Board of Commissioners Meeting of December 19, 2018 would discuss interim zoning changes in the Regional Center District of Bala Cynwyd, designed to reduce incentives for developers to build additional or larger residential constructions.

President Rosenbaum also reported the Township is reviewing a change to the ROHO ordinance. The change would require mixed-use properties and prohibit single use multifamily dwellings. David Yavil moved that we support the change in the ROHO. Linda Sagman seconded the motion. David Haas recused himself. The remaining directors voted and passed the motion unanimously.

Elected officials Report

Commissioner Michael McKeon noted discussion about the upcoming City Avenue ordinance, reported on a widening project for Belmont Avenue, and events at West Laurel Hill in honor of Hobe Baker and a visit by Santa Claus in College Park on December 23rd at 5:00 p.m.

Commissioner Brian Maguire reported on a safety meeting at the Bala Cynwyd Middle School. The Police Department will start ticketing those who are parking illegally. The School District will also support a Crossing Guard at Cynwyd Circle.

Commissioner Maguire added that the School District needs to figure out a phasing in period in anticipation of the construction of a new middle school by the fall of 2022.

Commissioner Maguire reported that the Township may go nine to eleven years with no increase in taxes. Solid waste rates will increase by 10%.

Commissioner George Manos discussed the issue of pedestrian safety that Fay Wright brought to the Board's attention last month. In the short run, the Township may go forward with a recommendation such as painting on sides of the road to make it safer for walkers in areas without sidewalks.

Commissioner Manos brought a new issue to the Board's attention -- wireless carriers are pressuring legislatures so that carriers can place poles wherever they choose. The poles can be as high as 50 feet high. Neighbors expressed concern about the number of poles and wires.

A motion to adjourn was made by David Haas and seconded by Dan Russionello. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne M. Greenhalgh, Secretary