

**The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd**  
**Board Meeting March 12, 2019**  
**The Lower Merion Academy Building**

**Board Attendees**

Courtenay Harris Bond, Vanessa Coke Cohen, Michal Frankel, Eric Godfrey, Maxine Goldberg, Anne M. Greenhalgh, Aaron Gross, Ricky Guerra, Roger Moog, Randy Myer, David Rosenbaum, Dan Russionello, Jerry Skillings, and Merle Zucker

**Excused**

David Haas, Richard Lynn, Linda Sagman, and David Yavil

**Call to Order**

President Rosenbaum called the meeting to order at 7:35 P.M.

**Police Report**

No report.

**President's Report**

**President Rosenbaum** gave updates on:

- Membership letters. Two went out, one to residents and one to businesses. President Rosenbaum added more businesses to the list; he also spoke to apartment buildings and enlisted their support in distributing out membership letter. He has also spoken with Harry Conry from EY Productions about enhancing the list of local businesses.
- Website. Directors will see that West Laurel Hill is a key donor.
- Magnets. Residents who purchases either a Premium (\$50) or Benefactor (\$100) membership will receive an NCBC car magnet.
- Sidewalks on St. Asaph's Road. Public Works Director Paul McElhaney has reported that the Township is preparing to put the project on the east-side of St. Asaph's Road out to bid and hope to complete it before the end of the year. The sidewalk project on the west-side project of St. Asaph's Road is ahead of the east-side project.
- Lower Merion Board of Commissioner Races. President Rosenbaum announced that both Commissioner Brian McGuire and George Manos have decided not to run for re-election and elections are contested for each of those positions. President Rosenbaum asked the Board and those in attendance to express their appreciation to Commissioners McGuire and Manos for their service to our community. The Board did so with a round of spirited applause. President Rosenbaum announced that three of the candidates for the Board of Commissioner positions were present; Ricky Guerra, Gilda Kramer, and Mike Leibowitz introduced themselves. President Rosenbaum indicated that the fourth candidate, David McComb is a member of the Lower Merion Shade Tree Commission, which had a meeting at the same time as our meeting, but Mr. McComb indicated that he would come late to our meeting, and he did. President Rosenbaum added that the NCBC is a non-partisan organization that does not endorse candidates. He reminded Board Members that while they were free to endorse candidates in their individual capacity, they should not do so in a way that suggests that the endorsement is from the NCBC. President Rosenbaum also announced that the NCBC has historically sponsored candidate forums and that we

could do so again on Sunday April 7<sup>th</sup> if the Board is so inclined. Roger Moog indicated that the NCBC held a candidate forum when he was President and thought that it would be appropriate for the civic to do so again. Following a brief discussion, the Board agreed that the NCBC would hold a forum for candidates.

### **Vice President's Report**

Dan Russionello announced that The Club will hold its elected officials dinner in mid-April. The target restaurant is Citron Rose, a location that previously hosted the event and that serves kosher so all members of the community can participate.

### **Secretary's Report**

Randy Myer moved to approve the January 2019 minutes; Eric Godfrey seconded the motion. The January Minutes were unanimously approved by the Board.

### **Treasurer's Report**

**Treasurer Eric Godfrey** gave the March Treasurer's Report:

- 2019 YTD Statement of Financial Activity (January 1, 2019 – March 9, 2019) indicating YTD Net Revenue of \$ 285.07
- 2019 YTD Financial Position (through March 9, 2019) indicating current Total Assets of \$17,394.44 of which \$13,121.37 are temporarily restricted funds.

Michal Frankel moved to approve the Treasurer's Report. Ricky Guerra seconded the motion. The Treasurer's Report was unanimously approved by the Board.

### **Presentation**

**Zoning Hearing Board Applications for 23 and 25 Heckamore Ave** (non-conforming and already constructed decks) by Dan Coval, Esq. and Mark Fink.

Plans for these two homes that included patios were submitted and approved by the Township. During construction, the builder discovered that the water table was higher than anticipated and, as a consequence, constructed decks on each home that were the same size as the patio and that were a foot and a half above the ground. The township inspected the homes and issued a certificate of occupancy for one of the homes at a time when the footers for the decks had already been installed. The Township did not indicate that the decks were non-conforming, and the developer built the decks. When the as-built drawings were submitted for approval, the Township noted that the decks were non-conforming and were erected in required setbacks. The developer is seeking a variance for both properties. His lawyer Dan Coval said that he thought that the infractions did not cause any harm. The resident who owns one of the homes wants to keep the deck that is encroaching and has no objection to the non-conforming deck on the other home. A pre-existing fence and a wall prevent the decks from being seen from the property line, another reason why Attorney Coval thought the issuance of the variance should not be objectionable. President Rosenbaum indicated that NCBC Board Member David Yavil lives on an adjoining property and said that he appreciates the homes that the builder has constructed and has no objection to the decks, which he thought were attractive. The builder intends to reach out to the other neighbors to get their input.

Following the zoning presentation, the Board discussed the handling of zoning hearing board matters generally. President Rosenbaum indicated that his practice was to inform the Board of

Zoning Hearing Board Matters involving Bala Cynwyd Properties together with the relevant filings and to ask if Board Members were interested in having a presentation on that issue. President Rosenbaum indicated that his practice was to invite a developer to make a presentation if a single Board Member expressed interest in having a presentation. Anne M. Greenhalgh made the point that the President's leadership style (whether more executive or legislative), the appearance of the zoning matter (whether seemingly small or large), and the perceived amount of time the matter will take (slight or great) should not dictate whether or not a particular zoning hearing board matter comes before the Board. She encouraged President Rosenbaum to continue his best practice of bringing all zoning hearing board matters to the Board and soliciting their input.

Anne moved that we take no position so long as the builder alerts the neighbors of the zoning hearing board proceeding. Courtenay Harris Bond seconded the motion. 12 voted in favor; 1 opposed; 1 abstained. The Board approved the motion.

### **Committee Updates** **Newsletter**

Courtenay Harris Bond gave an update on the upcoming newsletter. She also raised the issue of the publication of future newsletters. She asked if the Board would like to continue mailing a printed newsletter or to post newsletters on the website.

### **Membership**

Vanessa Coke Cohen, Maxine Goldberg, and Merle Zucker focused on the residential component of membership. Vanessa raised the question of motivation behind joining The Club. She suggested surveying residents to learn more. She recommended that the civic sponsor small meet & greets and other social events and that we should not be an organization that only focuses on zoning and July 4th. Gilda Kramer suggested bringing back the Summer Solstice party, which was once sponsored by the Merchant's Association. Mike Leibowitz, who is the current President of the Merion Civic Association indicated that his civic sponsors inexpensive, family oriented events, including a Halloween parade, a concert in the park, and a field day.

**Celebration Chair Anne M. Greenhalgh and Li Halpern** reported that we would like to expand beyond the usual businesses. Li reported that we can purchase a list of more than 1,000 businesses in Bala Cynwyd from InfoUSA in order to raise more funds for the 4th. To acquire the list is \$200, plus \$150 for EY Productions to merge the list. Merle Zucker moves that approve the purchase of the list; Roger Moog seconded the motion. The Board moved to unanimously approved by the Board.

Anne also asked that directors submit names for consideration as either Patriotic Speaker, Inspirational Speaker, Citizen and Merchant of the Year.

### **Zoning**

**Aaron Gross** reported on preparation for the Township Meeting with The Neighborhood Club and four other civics on 3-25-19 from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. Some of the main issues are the Merion/Cynwyd business district, density, parking, and institutional movement. The Township plans to pass the ordinance by the end of July.

President Rosenbaum commented that the proposed new code does not contain any new provisions relating to the City Avenue District, the largest commercial district in the Township. He believes that the Township should take the City Avenue District into account now. Commissioner George Manos recommended that the Board address specific issues in the zoning code covering the City Avenue District by making specific proposals; he believes that we have neither time nor resources to study this issue properly before the desired adoption date for the new code. He indicated that over 90% of the Township is covered in the new code. Commissioner Manos thought that one issue that the NCBC may want to investigate is that the new code reduces density potential in the western suburbs and increases density potential in the eastern suburbs. He questioned why our part of the Township should bear the brunt of increased density. George Manos also brought up the idea of holding a zoning focused town hall/round table discussion with the NCBC board, residents, and our commissioners, as a follow up to the March 25th meeting. In preparation, Board members should familiarize themselves with some zoning issues relevant to Bala Cynwyd.

Finally, Aaron Gross said that, thanks to Jerry Francis, the Bala Egyptian Theater was added as a Class 1 Resource to Historic Registry.

### **Federation**

**Ricky Guerra** reported that the Lower Merion Police purchased 50 body cameras and that the Township is considering placing speed bumps near schools and parks.

### **Elected officials Report**

**Commissioner Brian Maguire** encouraged members of the Board to attend the Township's meeting with the NCBC and others regarding the new zoning code, which will be held on March 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Commissioner George Manos** supported Commissioner Maguire's recommendation and mentioned longer term matters, including affordable housing and the parking situation on Levering Mill Road & Belmont Avenue are being worked on and he hopes to make a proposal on the former before the end of the year.

**Commissioner Michael McKeon** echoed the recommendation to attend the March meeting at the Township.

A motion to adjourn was made by Dan Russionello and seconded by Ricky Guerra. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Anne M. Greenhalgh, Secretary