Fall 2015

The Gateway

Newsletter of The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd

The Oldest of the Main Line Civic Associations – 1906

P.O. Box 717, Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania 19004 • www.balacynwyd.org

TheNeighborhoodClub@BalaCynwyd.org

Roger Moog, *president* • Courtenay Harris Bond, *editor*

President's Letter

Dear Residents,

In my final newsletter as president of The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd, I feel compelled to focus residents' attention of the quality-of-life impact of ongoing development projects and those slated for the near future.

From January through December 2015, my current term of office, The Neighborhood Club has reviewed and will continue to consider a record number of residential, commercial and institutional development proposals for new and expanded facilities in Bala Cynwyd. Lately, The Neighborhood Club Board of Directors has been discussing between four and five pending projects at every monthly meeting.

The majority of these building projects are being proposed by developers as a direct result of the more permissive zoning amendments that our township commissioners have instituted over the past few years. These development-friendly zoning modifications focus most new development right here in Bala Cynwyd rather than in the many other neighborhoods throughout the township.

In essence, we are providing a significant boost to township revenues in the form of higher property taxes gleaned directly from Bala Cynwyd.

Unfortunately, we also have to contend with the staggering increase in traffic volume and construction delays, noise

(continued on pg. 4)

Neighbors Encouraged to Attend The Neighborhood Club Annual Meeting

The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd's Annual Meeting
Tuesday, November 10, 2015
7:00 p.m., refreshments • 7:30 p.m., start of business meeting

LOWER MERION ACADEMY

(adjacent to Bala Cynwyd Middle School on Bryn Mawr Avenue)

Please join us for refreshments prior to the meeting followed by elections of directors and officers. After our elections we will conduct a full slate of business including presentations and discussion about current neighborhood issues. All neighbors are welcome.

Candidate Slate for The Neighborhood Club Annual Elections

Following are the candidate slates for The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd elections. Candidates were interviewed by The Neighborhood Club's nominating committee. Per our bylaws all members with dues paid for 2015 are eligible to vote.

The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd Officers
Jerry Skillings, President
Dan Russoniello, Vice President
Eric Godfrey, Treasurer
Anne M. Greenhalgh, Secretary
John C. Grugan, Solicitor
Roger Moog, Past President

Directors, terms expiring December 2016
Courtenay Bond, Amara Briggs. Alison Munoz, Joseph Oxman, Sara Pevaroff Schuh, Meredith Toole, Merle Zucker

Directors, terms expiring December 2017
Russell Dayvault, Maxine Goldberg, David Haas, Glenn Manko, Frances McComb, David Rosenbaum, Shifra Vega

Any neighborhood club member wishing to nominate a candidate for officer or director other than those selected by our nominating committee should consult The Neighborhood Club's bylaws at **www.balacynwyd.org** for details.

Commissioner's Corner

Greetings Neighbors,

As I sit here gathering my thoughts about what to write about, I am watching one of the last sunsets of summer. With the summer season now over, school is back in session, as is the Lower Merion Township's Board of Commissioners — and I contemplate what lies ahead in the coming months for the community. September brings with it preliminary discussions of the 2016 township budget and 2016–2021 capital improvement plan. Therefore, during the second week of September, the board held its first budget workshop. Township staff presented preliminary departmental budgets to the board in order to receive feedback and direction. Once again, staff had worked hard to contain costs without compromising service levels. From all indications it appears that there will be no need to raise taxes at this time, which would make it the fifth consecutive year without a tax increase.

Another topic that the board discussed was the solid waste fee, the fee that residents pay for refuse pickup and disposal services. The Lower Merion Township Public Works Division presented a vast amount of information about current costs, expenses and fund balances to the board. That information, coupled with a still-to-be-determined total cash disbursement from the county (due to the ending of its waste system authority), means the board has not proposed any increase in solid waste fees. Continuing to provide high levels of service such as this at no additional cost is clearly another win for township residents.

In addition, Lower Merion residents will soon enjoy another large win: the long-awaited opening of the extension of the Cynwyd Heritage Trail across the Manayunk Viaduct Bridge. Users of the Cynwyd Heritage Trail will now be able to cross into Manayunk without having to use public roads. This project shows what can happen when several entities work in conjunction with each other. We offer our thanks to the City of Philadelphia, the William Penn Foundation, the Montgomery County Commissioners, several of our other elected officials and Lower Merion Township for generously contributing their support and their resources to this project. Because of the cooperation and hard work of all these entities, Lower Merion residents will have the opportunity to enjoy the spectacular views of the river and of the surrounding communities that flank both sides. And we will finally have a safe and secure path to and from Manayunk! The much-anticipated ribbon cutting ceremony will be held on the bridge at 11 a.m. on Oct. 30.

Additionally, I would be remiss if I did not mention the continued forward progress being made along the Belmont Avenue corridor. As you may or may not know, there has been a complete set of plans for the re-working of Belmont Avenue to allow for better travel. Our first joint effort was seen in the last year with the construction of the new CVS Pharmacy. This joint effort between the developer and the township brought nearly one million dollars worth of intersection improvements at Belmont Avenue and Rock Hill Road at no expense to the township.

The Bala Cynwyd community has also been extremely fortunate due to our strong relationship with our local representative Pam DeLissio. She has championed our needs at the state level, and, with Assistant Director of Economic and Community Development Angela Murray, has worked to secure 100 percent funding to purchase several properties needed for the expansion of Belmont Avenue, and continues to work diligently with township commissioners George Manos, C. Brian McGuire and myself to help identify other funding sources.

Sincerely,
Paul McElhaney, Lower Merion Township
Board of Commissioners Vice President, Ward 3

Upcoming Meetings

Manayunk Bridge Extension to Open in Late October

The Manayunk Bridge extension, which will connect the Cynwyd Heritage Trail to Manaynuk, is scheduled to open at a special ceremony at 11 a.m. on Oct. 30.

In addition, the Friends of the Cynwyd Heritage Trail have been holding discussions with members of the Barnes Foundation about starting a program in which the museum's staff would assist with plantings and education along the trail. This exciting new effort may start as soon as the spring.

In the meantime, the Bala Cynwyd Farmers' Market will continue from 2:30 to 6:30 p.m. every Thursday through November on the Cynwyd Heritage Trail at Barmouth Trailhead, at the end of East Levering Mill Road. Local vendors offer a variety of goods including fruits and vegetables, breads and cookies, eggs and cheeses. Contact the farmers' market at balafarmersmarket@gmail.com to receive weekly market email blasts.

For more information about the Cynwyd Heritage Trail, visit: *www.cynwydtrail.org*

Creating Accessibility in the City Ave District

In an effort to highlight the ways in which the City Avenue corridor is easily accessible via all modes of transit, the City Ave Special Services district partnered with the Greater Valley Forge Transportation Management (GVF) to host a car-free event on Sept. 16. The GVF, the Circuit, the Montgomery County Planning Commission, the Delaware Valley Planning Commission, SEPTA, Zipcar and other organizations highlighted various options for getting around the district via carpooling, public transportation, biking, walking and more.

In addition, the City Ave Special Services District recently installed traffic adaptive signals along St. Asaphs Road and developed a work-around to a PennDOT issue to make them go live shortly, possibly by the time residents read this newsletter.

Other enhancements along City Avenue include the installation of traffic adaptive signal equipment, new pedestrian signal heads with countdown timers, new pedestrian push buttons and signage, ADA ramp construction and other intersection improvements. Phase I of this project is fully funded by a combination of a congestion mitigation and air quality grant and funds from Lower Merion Township, the City of Philadelphia, PENNDOT and the City Ave Special Services District.

The district also has a commitment for matching funds for Phase II of the project from Saint Joseph's University, the City of Philadelphia, Montgomery County and the district itself. These matching fund commitments enable the City Ave Special Services District to apply for a multi-modal fund grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development. Phase II includes a variety of pedestrian safety installations, drainage upgrades and intersection improvements.

Furthermore, the district is planning a redesign of Presidential Boulevard, including the addition of a mid-block crosswalk with signalization. The district has applied for a grant to fund this project.

Also, thanks to the zoning ordinances passed, the district is beginning to see the planning for new pedestrian-friendly, transit-oriented, mixed-use developments.

Stay tuned for more exciting initiatives within the City Ave Special Services District by visiting **www.cityave.org** or by following the district on Facebook or Twitter.

Interested in Becoming a Neighborhood Club Director?

Please send a resumé or letter of interest to:

The NCBC | Attn: Nominations

P.O. Box 717 | Bala Cynwyd PA 19004

President's Letter *(continued from pg. 1)*

pollution and erosion of residential quality of life, which come with this new development.

While generating increased traffic in our community, some of the proposed projects and development currently underway are located in business areas or in unused industrial sites. When completed, some of these buildings may be consistent with and complementary to their surroundings. Other projects, however, sit in residential areas where existing homes are being acquired and where more neighbors are being directly exposed to construction impacts, worsening traffic and increasing residential erosion. One such residential development has even been proposed for the parking lot of the Bala Cynwyd Shopping Center. This building would feed rush hour traffic directly into the already severely congested St. Asaphs Road.

Millions of dollars are already needed to improve City Avenue in order to handle the dramatic increase in traffic projected over the next 20 years. In addition, traffic is predicted to proliferate on Montgomery and Lancaster avenues, as well as along Monument, Belmont, Righters Ferry and Conshohocken State roads. These arterials need expansion as well. However, as with City Avenue, funding has not been committed to these improvements, and the future funding outlook does not look promising. Furthermore, widening roads requires taking private land, which is an expensive and unrealistic approach.

Given this development trend in Bala Cynwyd, together with the unfunded and unlikely significant expansion of our roadway system, how do we, as a community, abate this development intensity?

One obvious approach is to again amend the permissive zoning now in place in order to cut back on the overly indulgent level of development. New specialized zones must be added to control institutional expansion in residential areas, and existing special development zones must be modified to more effectively limit new building.

Although this situation is and will continue to be most severe in Bala Cynwyd, the problem will affect all of Lower Merion as traffic to, from and through Bala Cynwyd spreads throughout the entire township on a daily basis. Neighbors here and in other impacted areas, together with the future boards and officers of The Neighborhood Club, must identify and work diligently with those township commissioners who clearly understand the necessary balance between our traditional high residential quality of life and the advantages of moderate development expansion.

We must work toward and vote for effective and immediate help in modifying our zoning code to protect our communities.

Sincerely,
Roger Moog

To be included on our email list and to receive our electronic newsletter, notify us of your interest by emailing info@balacynwyd.org.

Beautification Committee Thanks 2015 Sidewalk Garden Winners

The Neighborhood Club's Beautification Committee is celebrating its 15th year of recognizing sidewalk gardens in Bala Cynwyd. This summer, the committee honored the CVS Pharmacy on City Avenue and residents Jaye d'Andelot Pinch and Lisa Greenspan for enhancing the beauty of the community with their gardens.

The beautification committee tends Bala Cynwyd's public gardens, including those at the post office, library, Academy Building and war memorial.

Volunteers are always welcome to join this effort.

If interested, please email Eileen Conry at econry@comcast.net.

Volunteers Needed

The Neighborhood Club is always looking for new members and volunteers! Please contact us if you are interested in:

- ***Becoming a member***
- ***Volunteering for the Fourth of July Celebrations***
- ***Helping to tend to Bala Cynwyd's public gardens***
- ***Helping out with our email communications and newsletter***

The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd
P.O. Box 717 | Bala Cynwyd PA 19004
TheNeighborhoodClub@BalaCynwyd.org

The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd thanks the following individuals and organizations whose contributions helped make the 2015 Independence Day Celebration a success:

Sam, Jacob, and Ben Adenbaum • Aldar Bistro • Bala Cynwyd School for Young Children • Bala Eye Care
Boston Style Pizza at Merion • Amara, Jason, Gavin and Jenna Briggs • City Avenue Special Services District
City Line Investors • Euro Motorcars BMW of the Main Line • Evie Cohen of RE/MAX Executive Realty
Jane, Tom and Sam Fischer • Gilda Kramer • Hearing Technology Associates, LLC
Law Offices of Jeffrey M. Lindy • Manko, Gold, Katcher & Fox, LLP • Murray's Delicatessen & Restaurant
O'Neill Properties Group • Randy Myer of Fox & Roach, Realtors • Saffron Indian Kitchen
St. Joseph's University • The Bala House Montessori School • The Beth Samberg Team
The Cynwyd Club • The Dairy Café • The Friends of the Cynwyd Heritage Trail
The New Tavern Restaurant & Bar • Valley Press Inc. • West Laurel Hill Cemetery

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Please Visit Our Website!

The NCBC website is a resource for:

- ✓ The monthly agenda
- ✓ Minutes of previous meetings
- ✓ Past copies of *The Gateway*!
- ✓ Contact information for board members
- ✓ Community links
- ✓ PAYPAL — to pay dues electronically!

Please visit **www.balacynwyd.org**.

Thanks to the following neighbors and friends who contributed to this issue of *The Gateway*:

Amara Briggs
Eileen Conroy
Terrence Foley
Anne Greenhalgh
C. Brian McGuire
Roger Moog
David Rosenbaum
Sara Pevaroff Schuh

The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd Membership Form

Your dues help to:

- alert you to neighborhood discussions about critical topics
- preserve the residential character of Bala Cynwyd
- support appropriate commercial development
- monitor zoning, traffic and safety on our streets
- provide community events like the 4th of July Celebration

Please send your annual dues to: The NCBC
P.O. Box 717, Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004

Household: ☐ Benefactor $100 ☐ Patron $50 ☐ Friend $35

Business: ☐ Gold $250 ☐ Silver $100

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Email Address _____

Phone No. _____