

**The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd (NCBC) Virtual
Board Meeting
June 1, 2021**

Board Attendees

Ed Altman, Vanessa Coke Cohen, Maxine Goldberg, Anne M. Greenhalgh, Ricky Guerra, Brian McGuire, Glenn Manko, Roger Moog, Randy Myer, David Rosenbaum, Nielufar Varjavand, and Merle Zucker

Absent

Aaron Gross, Eric Godfrey, David Haas, Anita Pepper, Dan Russoniello, and Linda Sagman

Officials Attending:

Representative Pamela DeLissio and Commissioners Gilda Kramer and David McComb

Call to Order

President Ricky Guerra called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

Police Report

Officer Daniel Gilbert encouraged board members to sign up with the vacant house program. Neighbors can call 610-649-1000. If enrolled in the program, an officer will stop at the house the first and last day of the resident's vacation (and sometimes in between depending on the length of the vacation). In response to a question about the rise in antisemitism nationally, the police have increased patrols in the vicinity of local synagogues. Police are also monitoring the rise of large packs of motorcycles and ATVs. David Rosenbaum reported observing them obstructing traffic at the Belmont Avenue exit, traveling at high rates of speed up Belmont Avenue toward City Avenue, and making noise in excess of ranges permitted by Lower Merion's noise ordinance.

Elected Officials Report

Representative Pamela DeLissio – reported on her work as minority chair of the House Children and Youth Committee. She made special note of House Bill 764 that would amend the Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) to allow employers to hire an employee on a provisional basis on par with the 45-day provisional hiring window that is currently authorized for child-care providers. Under this legislation, an employee hired under such circumstances is not allowed to work alone with children until all clearances are received. Representative DeLissio also reminded the Board that 2021 is a redistricting year.

Commissioner David McComb – reported that he is working closely with Representative DeLissio in support of resuming the running of the Cynwyd Train. Commissioner McComb also gave a financial update. The Township's revenue over the past year has fallen short by roughly \$4M. The robust real estate market has helped offset the shortfall. The American Rescue plan has resulted in \$23.3M to Lower Merion Township. The Township will use the money on special projects, including infrastructure. Commissioner McComb continues to work with the NCBC and the Township on revisiting the zoning of City Avenue. He added that the Township has made a commitment to become carbon-free by 2045.

Commissioner Gilda Kramer – reported that COVID-19 case counts continue to decline as the number of residents who have been vaccinated increases. The "positivity rate" in Lower Merion Township is also declining, which is another good sign that we are beginning to get the pandemic under control in our community.

Commissioner Kramer also reported that the Township's Building and Planning Committee heard about progress on revisions to the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO). The SALDO provides standards for processing land development plans, plan content, and general standards for land development, including the layout and design of roadways and improvement in the right of way. The proposed revisions will address transportation, including "complete streets" standards for the Township's streets, streetscape

design, street trees soil volume and structural soil standards, transportation demand management, bus stop design and electric vehicle charging station standards. The revisions will include "greening standards" and recreation and community amenities, impact study requirements, and processes.

In addition, Commissioner Kramer reported on her latest episode of Health Matters, an LMTV show that she hosts. In June's program, "Vaping: The Smoke that Makes You Choke," two high school students discuss vaping and its risks.

Commissioner Kramer said that the Township needs summer helpers in the Public Works Department and that the pools will triple in capacity this summer.

She closed by noting that the sewer tax bill is in the mail to residents.

President's Report

President Ricky Guerra – made a request that Commissioners support the placement of a trash can at Bala Park. He also asked for the Board's input regarding convening in person in September. For now, the September meeting will be virtual.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Ed Altman – presented two reports:

- Statement of Financial Activity for the period January 1, 2021 – May 30, 2021 indicating YTD Total Revenue of \$14,016, Expenditures of \$9,751 and Year to Date Net Operating Revenue of \$ 4,264.
- Statement of Financial Position through May 30, 2021 indicating Current Total Assets of \$25,591 of which \$8,202 are temporarily restricted funds.

Roger Moog moved to accept the Treasurer's Report. Merle Zucker seconded the motion. The Board gave its unanimous approval.

Secretary's Report

Secretary Anne M. Greenhalgh – presented the May 2021 minutes for review and approval.

Vanessa Coke Cohen moved to approve the March minutes. Randy Myer seconded the motion. The Board gave its unanimous approval.

Variance Application

Building Signage for Ironworks at Pencoyd Landing 611-617 Righters Ferry Road Bala Cynwyd, Ward 9

Steven Gibson – gave a description of proposed improvements under the application:

- Six wall signs mounted near the top of the building, approximately 80 feet above grade
- They range in area from 74-156 SF, as calculated via simple rectangle around graphics and copy
- All will be internally-illuminated channel letters and graphics

He also summarized the grounds for the variance: The newly constructed 7-story Ironworks building contains a hotel and two restaurants. Due to the building's proportions and unique setting, the Code's size limitations on wall signs are too restrictive to allow for adequate wayfinding and identification. For signs mounted approximately 80 feet above grade, forty square-feet is too small and – from certain views – 30" copy height is too short. The proposed signs, however, are appropriately scaled and placed for visibility from all relevant approaches to the site.

After discussion about the Board's past decisions on matters of signage, including a similar application last year by the Royal Athena, Brian McGuire moved that the Board take no position; Ed Altman seconded the motion. The motion did not pass, with seven voting against and five in favor.

David Rosenbaum moved to oppose the request for a variance. Maxine Goldberg seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of eight to four.

Standing Committee Reports

Ad Hoc City Ave District

Roger Moog – reported that he spoke with Federation about the need for a master plan. He also reported on the May 17 meeting sponsored by the Township. The planners attending the meeting spoke about the region-wise trend turning retail into multi-family units. Roger Moog pointed out that a masterplan would help the Township figure out how to handle the rise in residential construction. In addition, he reported on the May 26 ad hoc meeting with Chris Leswing and Township Commissioners. Roger Moog and other members of the Board emphasized the importance of looking at placeholder projects—at turning our attention to future development projects. The master plan would help define what counts as appropriate development. He also reminded the Board that the NCBC’s position paper was e-blasted to residents.

In response to the report, David Rosenbaum urged the ad hoc City Ave District committee to guard against a single-minded focus on efforts to obtain a master plan, which he supports. He urged the committee to use “its seat at the table” to advance the broader interests of Bala Cynwyd.

To the extent that the Neighborhood Club, by asking for a “master plan” this year means significant change in the zoning of the City Avenue District, Commissioner Gilda Kramer commented that such changes are inappropriate in the middle of the pandemic. She added that the elected Bala Cynwyd Commissioners appreciate the input of the Neighborhood Club on these issues and noted that the Commissioners have also spoken with hundreds of their constituents about the City Avenue District.

Roger Moog concluded the discussion by reminding the Board and Commissioners that the ad hoc committee has not requested, proposed, or developed any draft ideas concerning zoning changes in the CAD code. Committee work so far has focused on review of development magnitude and trends in the CAD from 2010 to 2020.

Membership

Vanessa Coke Cohen – reported that she is sending out car magnets to new members with a note of appreciation from the Board.

Public Service and Improvement

Anne Greenhalgh – spoke with Donna Heller about progress on the Pavilion. As soon as the structure is delivered, she will coordinate installation and be in touch with the Civic. She also recommended asphalt roofing because of considerations regarding price and construction.

Nielufar Varjavand – gave an update on bringing a farmer’s market back to Bala Cynwyd. She and Vanessa Coke Cohen will speak with representatives from Farm to City. The location will be one topic for discussion. She also reported on a federal grant for composting. Commissioner Kramer recommended a coordinated effort with the Township.

Federation

Maxine Goldberg – reported that (in addition to Roger Moog’s discussion of a possible master plan for City Avenue) the Federation continued to address such topics as the pending removal of 482+ mature trees on the Lower Merion School District properties,

July 4th

Anne Greenhalgh – reported on progress on the Independence Day Celebration. Plans include a parade, marching band, field band, soloist, boy scouts and flag raising, foot races, egg toss, pony rides, petting zoo,

exotic animals, and perhaps a trackless train and extreme rock wall. Vanessa Coke Cohen recommended a membership table. Merle Zucker, Maxine Goldberg, and Roger Moog said they would lend a hand.

Old Business

None.

New Business:

None.

Adjourn

Anne Greenhalgh moved to adjourn the meeting. Maxine Goldberg seconded the motion. The Board gave its unanimous approval.

The next meeting will take place on September 14, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne M. Greenhalgh, Secretary