

The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd (NCBC)
Board Meeting
March 21, 2023

Board Attendees

Aaron Gross, Jim Remsen , Jason Landau Goodman, Randy Meyer, Brian McGuire, Roger Moog, Nielufar Varjavand, Merle Zucker, Kay Sickles, Anita Pepper, David Haas.

Also in attendance, Treasurer nominee Laura Edelstein.

Absent:

Vanesse Coke Cohen, Dan Russoniello, Linda Sagman, Ricky Guerra, Frederic Goldfein, Anne M. Greenhalgh and Maxine Goldberg,

Officials Attending:

Commissioners David McComb, Gilda Kramer and Mike McKeon.

Call to Order

President Aaron Gross called the meeting to order at 7:40 pm.

Police Report

Sergeant Ed Sarama gave the Police Report. Crime is skyrocketing in the city and we share a border with the City.

ELECTED OFFICIALS REPORT

Commissioner Gilda Kramer—The Township has a draft sustainability plan which is available now for citizen review and comment and will be presented to the Board of Commissioners on March 29, 2023. The plan is comprehensive and our goal is to meet net zero for carbon emissions.

Gilda also reported that in an effort to revitalize Bala Ave by turning it into an arts and culture destination, a group of citizens have formed a non-profit, Bala Ave. of the Arts, Inc., which will hopefully pave the way for creation of a performance space, a gallery and other related spaces. The group that formed the non-profit are constituting a Board and possibly an advisory board as well.

Gilda also reported that Union Fire Hall won a \$985,000 grant to renovate its second floor hall into residences for the firefighters.

Commissioner David McComb – brought us up to date on the firearms proposal. The current version of the proposed ordinance will limit Federal Firearms licensees to certain areas in the Township.

Regarding the incident at the WaWa, the Police Committee approved a ten day suspension for the officer who was accused of wrongfully tasing a motorist. The Police Committee is recommending a Sub-Committee to address how to communicate with the community in these kinds of situations.

Healthcare Sub-Committee: Narcan training is ongoing as are presentations regarding the opioid related situation in the Township. David reported that we have had 132 opioid overdoses in the Township and the victims have had an average age of 32.

Commissioner Mike McKeon— reported that the Township is undertaking the annual deer culling for 2 days. He informed us that the Townships donates the venison that results from the culling to food pantries. He also reminded us that the most exciting days of the year, dump weekends, are coming up.

Commissioner McKeon also called our attention to the lovely park space next to 251 Rockhill Road, the high end senior living facility that just opened.

Also, our leftover salt is safely stored, so that was a positive budget line item.

He also reported that public works is trying to move forward with the paving projects and is in conversation with utilities about how to move forward in the face of the overwhelming number of utility projects that need to be completed first.

President's Report

President Aaron Gross – meeting last Tuesday was attended by lots of citizens to talk about the plans for Levering Mill.

He also encouraged all to attend Jim Remsen's talk on March 22, 2023 at the Cynwyd Club at 7 pm, which was open to all residents of Bala Cynwyd.

He also let us know that he would be speaking at the meeting for the Rotary Club of the Mainline at Aldar at noon on March 22, 2023.

Aaron moved to nominate Laura Edelstein, who started acting as our Treasurer in December 2022. Laura gave a short address: She is an accountant and moved here in 2014. Aaron moved to elect Laura as the Treasurer. Randy seconded. The Board voted to install Laura into the position as Treasurer.

Light Industrial Sign Ordinance Change: Aaron reported concerning the status of the pending change to the signage ordinance that would permit special signage for non-residential buildings that are 6 floors or higher that meet a square footage requirement and do not have street frontage

for signage. Aaron explained that the ordinance change is intended to enable properties that have invested in our community by developing unique properties that don't have space/opportunity for signage for announce their locations to the public. The Neighborhood Club previously decided to not enter the conversation, however, it was decided this evening that the Neighborhood Club needs to do a closer read of the paperwork to confirm that mixed use buildings with residential space and restaurants, such as the Royal Athena if it were to add a restaurant, would not be able to take advantage of the change.

Treasurer's Report: Laura has been working on the books and hopes to be caught up by next month.

Secretary's Report

Kay Sickles – presented the February 2023 minutes. Brian McGuire made a correction to the minute's content regarding Bala Walks and then the Board gave its approval to the February 2023 minutes. Brian moved and Meryl seconded. Motion passed.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Membership – Vanessa Coke Cohen was absent but sent along a report on membership which Aaron read aloud. Aaron is currently addressing issues with the Website membership directory. Farmers market may move to a weeknight.

The membership showed that community members want to learn more about composting and the Board is investigating opportunities for a presentation. The membership committee is also planning a drive for Cradles to Crayons.

Ad Hoc City Avenue – Roger Moog reported regarding attempts by the coalition of condo owners (led by Mr. Handler) that hired its own traffic engineer to study the potential roundabout configuration to participate in a conversation with PennDot. Although Mr. Handler has been in touch with the Township, the US Representative and PennDot, PennDot will not entertain public involvement. PennDot made clear that the residents will not know concrete information until the plan is final. PennDot disclosed construction will not occur before 2027.

Zoning Report – See information about the signage ordinance.

Federation – Maxine Goldberg will be sending along a Federation report.

Public Service and Improvement – Dan was absent but sent along a note to Aaron regarding the location for the Pavilion at Bala Cynwyd Park. Everything is ready to go and we are on schedule.

Newsletter - Jim Remsen reported that they are gearing up for the summer issue. He has been soliciting stories and has 10-12 story ideas ready for people to write about for an early June issue.

July 4th: Anne M. Greenhalgh was unable to attend this evening but sent a message stating she will be making recommendations to the executive board for honorary awards at the next meeting. The Board received Anne's recommendations as follows:

- Lifetime Achievement Award: Pam DeLissio, former PA State Representative (2011-2023)
- Citizen of the Year: Michael Leibowitz, President, Lower Merion Affordable Housing Corporation, Inc.
- Merchant of the Year: BMW of the Main Line

Bala Walks, Discussion of status of the East Levering Mill Road Project. David McComb informed the Board that one of the three proposals for the desired safety improvements on Levering Mill is workable. This plan involves the addition of a 5 ft. wide sidewalk on the south side. They are going to now move ahead to create a design and work on a deal with PennDot to get the signal at the corner of Levering Mill and Belmont modified appropriately. Three community members raised a concern regarding notice of the project and whether land would be taken from the property owners for the sidewalks. The Township has represented that there is enough road to create the sidewalks without taking land from homeowners. Aaron will endeavor to reach the residents on the street to apprise them of the Bala Walks initiative to address any notice issue.

Old Business: No.

New Business: John Joseph, resident, joined the meeting to discuss the suspension of the officer who tased the citizen at the Wawa. Mr. Joseph requested the Board to take a position on the outcome, however, the Board concluded that because the incident occurred in the Belmont Hills district, not the Bala Cynwyd Neighborhood Club's district, it would not be appropriate for our Neighborhood Club to insert itself in the issue.

Adjourn

The Board gave its unanimous approval.

Respectfully submitted,
Kay Sickles Secretary