

The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd (NCBC)
Board Meeting
April 18, 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, Laura Edelstein, Anne Greenhalgh, Vanessa Coke Cohen, Linda Sagman, Mary Jo Daley, Nanci Goldman, Frederic Goldfine, Maxine Goldberg.

Absent:

Dan Russoniello, Ricky Guerra.

Officials Attending:

Commissioner 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. A citizen concerned regarding the WaWa incident questioned the Sergeant concerning police training and the Sergeant did his best to respond to the citizen's questions.

ELECTED OFFICIALS REPORT

Lewis Roseman, who is running for David McComb's seat, introduced himself and spoke briefly about his campaign.

Commissioner Mike McKeon— Reported that the following evening the Commissioners would be voting on the new proposed firearms ordinance, which is a product of compromise. He reported that there are three (3) areas where firearms will be permitted to be sold. Two of these three locations, Rockhill Road, where guns have been permitted for sale for over 100 years, and City Avenue, are in Bala Cynwyd. Mike reported that we can view this proposed ordinance in a positive light because it takes the Bala Ave. retail corridor off the table for future gun shops. In addition, the ordinance puts in place some more stringent rules than we currently have, such as outlawing additional licenses for people to sell guns out of their homes.

Mike also noted the following important dates:

June 7: Sustainability plan vote

June 14: ARP allocation. \$12 million still not allocated.

May 24: Agenda meeting for the Commissioners to set their priorities for the remainder of 2023. The NCBC asked for a meeting with all 3 commissioners before this meeting so that we can pitch our ideas for the budget.

The activity arising out of the incident at WaWa is ongoing. The Township is currently arbitrating the contract with the FOP.

State Representative Mary Jo Daley – reported that budget hearings are finished in the House and session is about to start. Committees have all been formulated and they are starting a short session that runs until June. She wants the constituents to know her office is planning “meet the Rep.” events. Sign- ups for these informative and small group information sessions should be available soon on her website.

Her office is sponsoring the following events:

Senior Resource Fair April 28, 10am -12 noon at the Kaiserman JCC.

Shredding event May 21, 9 am-11 am

Riverbend event for the solstice, June 21

Rep. Daley also wants everyone to know that her office can help people with Septa senior cards for people 65 and over.

In response to a citizen’s question about leveraging the small democratic majority to change gun laws, Rep. Daley explained that we have exactly one less democrat than we need – need 102 dems and have 101 dems to get some momentum for gun legislation. There are 2 special elections coming up that would help us get that 1 vote we need. The Democrats are working on it.

President’s Report

EXECUTIVE REPORTS

President’s Report, C. Aaron Gross

Update on East Levering Mill Road: Aaron met with the groups of neighbors - the dispute is about which side of the street the sidewalk should go on.

Update on Local Events:

City Ave. Special services district: It is obtaining a new security vehicle and a cleaning person. it is also soliciting proposals for landscaping and a retail strategy consultant. T

Farmers market starts June 1, is moving to Thursdays and will be at the same location. Vanessa will send an e-blast to all residents.

Cynwyd Heritage Trail – Septa delay continues due to presence of wires. It is going to renovate the whole place and make it a more welcoming station.

Acme/Federal realty – They continue to make excuses regarding delays with a development plan for the Lord & Taylor property. Hanover is planning to start this Summer and we are waiting on a timeline for demo to start.

Website: still being ignored by the website management team. We need a new vendor to serve the website. As soon as the website is more operative, we will start posting the Minutes.

Treasurer’s Report: Laura: finished books through the end of 2022. \$36,500. Notable difference in revenue from sponsorships. Laura made a motion for approval. Seconded by Roger. Dan, Anita and Vanessa abstained pending review of the documentation.

Approval of the Minutes from March 2023: Kay moved to approve the March 2023 Minutes. Randy seconded Kay’s motion and the Board approved the Motion.

11 Bala Avenue, Cross Property, Kevin Michals (Developer), Jillian Dierks (Township)

Mr. Michaels explained the delays, stated they have numbers from a contractor which make the project viable and they are ready to move forward. They are working with the Township to ask for an extension of approvals and to submit permits by the end of the year and start construction Q4 2023. They expect to be done in 16-18 months; Mr. Michaels described an 85 unit building with 10,000 sq. ft. of retail. They profess to want to activate Bala Ave. by filling the ground floor with bars and 4-6 restaurants under 1 roof.

Jillian Dierks led a discussion after Mr. Michal’s presentation. Following the discussion, the Board formulated the following resolution:

The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd opposes the extension of approvals by the Township for the development of 11 Bala Ave. except on the following basis: the Township (1) requires Cross Properties to obtain all necessary building permits by December 31, 2023; (2) requires Cross Properties to maintain the streetscape of the property such that it is not either a general nuisance or eyesore for the community or an attractive nuisance for children; (3) requires Cross Properties to market the property to attract viable and desirable commercial tenants for the first floor such that the first-floor space is activated; and (4) adopts a strategy to enforce high standards for building materials.

Local Stakeholder Presentation: Lower Merion Historical Society, Kate Jiggins and Erin Bentley

The Historical Society has a new, 11 person board. One of its new initiatives has already resulted in the discovery that 18 North Highland Ave. is a historically significant property that was occupied by notable women. It will be receiving a historical marker.

The annual meeting was scheduled for April 30, with elections followed by a book launch for Jim Remson.

Waiver of Land Development Plan, No. W-23-001 - Kosloff Torah Academy High School, Presented by Rick Goldfein: Following the presentation, the NCBC voted to not oppose the approval of the waiver of land development plan.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Membership – **Vanessa Coke Cohen** reported that membership is at 239, with 57 new members.

Ad Hoc City Avenue – **Roger Moog** did not have any news to report

Zoning Report – See notes regarding discussions and the resolution for 11 Bala Ave.

Federation – **Maxine Goldberg** mentioned the Rosemont Villanova resolution re: Oakwell and she is hoping the NCBC supports it.

Newsletter - **Jim Remsen** reported that the newsletter is in process with plenty of articles for the upcoming issue.

July 4th: Anne M. Greenhalgh reported that fundraising is about to begin and requested assistance finding a soloist. The Board Anne's suggested nominations and voted (David Haas abstaining) to approve 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

Old Business:

A Citizen advocated for the Neighborhood Club to take a position on the WaWa incident and the Police Departments response to it. Brian McGuire led a discussion concerning the existing advisory board and past efforts to make it an official board. The NCBC passed the following resolution:

The NC Bala Cynwyd requests the police to institute anti-bias, de-escalation and racial sensitivity training in-person, on a regular basis by professional third person entities on a regular and periodic basis. It also requests the police to elevate the police and minority relations advisory committee status to an appointed board, to be appointed by and to report to the Board of Commissioners. Brian moved and Anita seconded. Unanimous.

In addition, a citizen raised the issue of whether the police are practicing active shooter drills in person in school buildings and whether we can have them rotate through all the public and private schools.

New Business: No new business.

Adjourn

The Board gave its unanimous approval.

Respectfully submitted,

Kay Sickles Secretary