

The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd (NCBC)
Board Meeting
May 23, 2023

Board Attendees

Aaron Gross, Jim Remsen , Jason Landau Goodman, Randy Meyer, Brian McGuire, Roger Moog, Merle Zucker, Kay Sickles, David Haas, Linda Sagman, Nanci Goldman, and Nielufar Varjavand.

Absent:

Anne Greenhalgh, Vanessa Coke Cohen, Anita Pepper, Laura Edelstein, Frederic Goldfine, Maxine Goldberg.

Officials Attending:

Commissioner Gilda Kramer

Call to Order

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

Police Report

Officer Brian Innella gave the Police Report. He reviewed the most recent report for the last week in the Township. After a typical uptick in crime when the weather turned nice, crime has leveled off. He stated the officers are seeing less motor vehicle theft, and fewer car break-ins.

Attendee Ellis Weinberger asked about which portions of City Ave. have more criminal activity. The Officer stated that the establishments that are open later have more crime than other locations. He also noted that the side streets around St. Joe's where there is a lot of on-street parking have car related crimes. The Officer suggested that Ring doorbell's are an effective deterrent.

ELECTED OFFICIALS REPORT

Commissioner Gilda Kramer: Gilda presented a police report concerning a recent uptick in burglaries. The burglaries are being committed by a transient group that scopes neighborhoods while sitting in cars, mid-priced SUVs and minivans. They hit at dusk, mostly houses that are set back and dark without cars in the driveways – homes that look like people are not home. They enter primarily through glass patio doors and second floor windows and doors. They seem to ransack for jewelry.

They police recommend: Make your home look occupied. Secure doors and windows. Place lights on timers to go on at dusk. Add motion sensitive lights and keep shrubs low and don't share vacation plans on social media.

Gilda provided the following information: We can request Township trees at <https://www.lowermerion.org/departments/public-works-department/public-works-divisions/shade-tree-division/tree-planting-and-maintenance>.

She also noted the Sustainability Plan is scheduled to be finalized and accepted on June 7. Thereafter, publicity will start. The Commissioners are holding the priority setting workshop May 24, 2023 and she will have more to report after the meeting. Budgeting in early June. The Township is on track to have another good year. She and our other Commissioners are pushing for funding for Bala Cynwyd focused projects.

President's Report

EXECUTIVE REPORTS

President's Report, C. Aaron Gross

Farmer's Market starts June 1! It will be open on Thursdays, 3-7 pm.

Aaron mentioned that he spoke with Commissioner Stevenson and this discussion is continued under "Old Business".

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer's Report, Laura Edelstein: Laura was not in attendance and did not provide a written report.

Approval of the Minutes from April 2023, after an amendment concerning the gun

Ordinance: Brian McGuire moved to approve the Amended April 2023 Minutes. Randy Myer seconded the motion and the Board approved the Motion for the Amended Minutes.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Membership – Vanessa Coke Cohen was not present and did not have news to report.

Ad Hoc City Avenue – Two new RFPs, which comprise 2 of the 5 components of a master plan have been sent out. They hope to have the plans completed by November.

The NCBC discussed concerns regarding the downturn in commercial real estate. Aaron discussed his attendance at the State of City Ave. event where Brian Fenstermacher spoke. Of note, he had a chance to interact with people from Mack Properties, the new owners of the Grant and the Kelly, who worked for Cross. They will meet with us in the near future.

Aaron reported the positive development that the pedestrian underpass at St. Joe's is supposed to be completed by November, 2023. Aaron met with Marly Weiss and she gave him resources to reach out concerning pedestrian safety.

Zoning Report – Nothing to report.

Federation – Maxine was not present and there was no news to report.

Newsletter - Jim Remsen did not have news to report.

July 4th: Linda presented concerning the fundraising meeting and reiterated that Anne circulated numbers and the request for all Directors to donate to show our support for the event.

Gilda will investigate the timeline for the erection of the Gazebo.

Old Business:

1. Bala Avenue, Cross Property

Aaron reported that he had a follow up discussion with Jillian Dierks re: this property.

The NCBC had a short discussion regarding the resolution drafted following the discussion at the April Meeting, in light of this new information.

Aaron moved to pass the Resolution as written:

The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd opposes the extension of approvals most recently granted by the Township to Cross Properties for the development of the Bala Ave. property, except on the following basis: the Township (1) requires Cross Properties (or, if Cross Properties transfers the property, the successor owner) to obtain by December 31, 2023 all building permits necessary for the development of the property in compliance with the approvals most recently granted by the Township to Cross Properties; (2) requires Cross Properties (or, if Cross Properties transfers the property, the successor owner) 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 (or, if Cross Properties transfers the property, the successor owner) to market the property promptly and on an ongoing basis to attract viable and desirable commercial tenants for the first floor such that the first-floor space is activated, occupied and ready to open for business when the residential portion of the development is completed and has reached 50% occupancy; and (4) adopts a strategy to enforce for development of the property high standards for the type, appearance and quality of exterior building materials. The Motion passed unanimously.

2. Police Resolution

Aaron presented the resolution that we drafted following the discussion at the April meeting, which reads as follows:

The NC Bala Cynwyd requests the police to institute anti-bias, de-escalation and racial sensitivity training in-person, 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. The NCBC decided to table this resolution until next month after Aaron reported his conversation with Commissioner Stevenson. Of note, after the police department learned that various civic associations were planning to pass resolutions concerning training, the police

department let them know that the police go through third party training 4 times/per year in person. In addition, we are seeking to address minority relations issues with nuance. Brian McGuire added that the police cannot elevate the Advisory Board status. The Commissioners need to elevate it.

New Business:

We are permitted to open the meeting so that members can present issues to the Board. Marion Williams attended to present issues concerning the loss of trees in Bala Cynwyd and her hope that the NCBC can fill a void in educating our citizens concerning the importance of the tree canopy and action we can take to preserve and enhance it.

Aaron spoke as a member of the Shade Tree Commission and discussed the limitations on actions it can take. It would like to focus on trying to communicate a greater volume of information to the community. There has been a lot of struggle between the Commission and the Township in terms of what the Commission is permitted to do. It is legally defined as having authority on the 10 ft. strip of land next to the street. That missive does not include distributing information for people in the Township to learn about caring for the greenery on their properties. Township is wary of creating Facebook pages for Commissions and other entities that could become a political atmosphere.

Aaron noted the Shade Tree Commission meetings are held the first Tuesday of every month in the Township Building. Aaron is putting Marion and her husband Charles Kline in touch with various people on the Beautification Committee. Asking Marion to participate with the members of the Committee. The NCBC discussed other ways we can be more active in this sphere and will be moving forward in taking greater initiatives.

William Krebs, a resident of the Fairmont, spoke about a noise reduction initiative for the area around Conshohocken State Rd. Mr. Krebs is sending his initiative to Aaron to look at.

A neighborhood citizen named Hillary spoke about information she received that there are there are a lot of kids who do not live here who are attending our schools. Aaron informed Hillary this is an issue to address with the school board. Linda spoke about the process that the school administration uses to verify addresses.

Our next meeting is June 20, 2023.

Adjourn

Aaron motioned to adjourn.

The Board gave its unanimous approval.

Respectfully submitted,

Kay Sickles Secretary