

Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd
Meeting Minutes 11/14/2023

Present: C. Aaron Gross (President), Vanessa Coke Cohen (Vice-President), Kay Sickles (Secretary), Jason Landau Goodman, Brian McGuire, Merle Zucker, Maxine Goldberg, Jim Remsen, Anne M. Greenhalgh, Roger Moog, Nielufar Varjavand, David Haas (Solicitor), Frederic Goldfein, Randy Myer, Dan Russionello

Present Township Commissioners (and Commissioner-elect): Louis Rossman, Gilda Kramer, Mike McKeon

Absent: Laura Edelstein (Treasurer), Ricky Guerra (Past President), Linda Sagman, Anita Pepper

CALL TO ORDER & ANNOUNCEMENTS at 7:39 pm by C. Aaron Gross

POLICE REPORT — No police report as no officer was present.

ELECTED OFFICIALS REPORT

Commissioner Kramer:

It is budget season. Budget hearings Nov. 15 and November 29th.

- No increase in real estate taxes for the thirteenth consecutive year.
- 10% increase in the solid waste fee, which is equal to a 2% increase in tax.
- Very strong year of a business privilege tax.
- \$25 million in federal stimulus funding

Sustainability:

- The Township authorized money in the budget for the initial installations of solar panels at the Penn Wynne Library, and an assessment for other potential placements.
- Working on an ordinance to regulate gas-powered lawn equipment, to be considered early next year.
- The plastic bag ban goes into effect in January 2024.
- Working on an expansions of the low-income senior and disability residences at Ardmore House, and working on securing more funding from county.

Additional details can be found in Commissioner Kramer's email newsletters.

Commissioner McKeon: Spoke concerning safety and criminal activity in the community.

Our new Commissioner, Louis Rossman, said a few words about his plans as in in-coming Commissioner.

Zoning: **Bala Chabad, 202 Bala Avenue, Rabbi Baruch Davidson**

- The applicant is appealing the denial of Zoning Permit application R-2023-2920 and the Zoning Officer's determination that religious use is not permitted in the CAD-BV Zoning District. In the alternative, the applicant is seeking a variance from. §155-5.1(B)- Permitted Uses and §155-Table 5.1-Uses to allow for the religious use at the property located at 202 Bala Avenue, Bala Cynwyd.

President Gross and Rick Goldfein recused themselves from the matter, but remained present. The Board heard a presentation by Rabbi Davidson, the head rabbi of the Chabad that is currently leasing the space on Bala Avenue. He informed the Board of the current activities that take place at the Chabad and the Board asked questions.

The Board considered and discussed whether it would take a position on the matter. Randy presented a motion to take no position on the matter. Brian seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously (with 2 abstentions) to take no position and agreed to draft a written communication after the meeting. **This communication is attached hereto.**

EXECUTIVE REPORTS

Nominations, Roger Moog

Roger: Presented a motion for Joe Hirsch, Marion Williams and William Krebs, for nomination to the slate for a vote at our next Board meeting. He added that we have a fourth nominee, Molly Wallace, and a fifth nominee, Sandy Kornhauser, who we would be interviewing in the coming week.

Seconded by Anne.

Vote: Unanimous vote in favor of adding the candidates to the slate for a vote at the December 2023 meeting.

President's Report, C. Aaron Gross

This month's Federation meeting took place last night and we have not yet received the report.

We will be creating a new committee to improve communications with the residents who live in the St. Asaph's corridor.

Planning Department Update

Aaron is proposing a new ordinance requiring a bond or escrow for large properties undergoing demolition. The purpose of the new ordinance is to ensure the Township has funds to improve the conditions and ensure safety of abandoned properties, such as the property on Bala Ave.

Discussion regarding requiring Directors and elected officials to attend the monthly meetings in-person.

Membership Recruiting: Vanessa

Discussion regarding efforts to increase membership. Discussion regarding making contacts with the middle and high school to increase student involvement.

Aaron: Reported concerning the status of the sidewalks project and the need for people to complete the survey. We should be receiving the current list and have the ability to submit suggestions for additional locations.

Website Contract Approval

Discussion regarding signing a contract with a new entity to run the website. No resolution on this.

Levering mill contract

We pay \$50/hr. to rent the meeting space at Levering Mill House: \$1500 for 10 meetings per year.

Aaron moved to approve the expense.
Kay seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

Secretary's report:

Kay moved for approval of the October 2023 Meeting Minutes.
Seconded by Brian McGuire.
Unanimous approval.

Treasurers report: No treasurer present. Aaron circulated a statement of financial condition, however, withdrew the statement for additional review.

2024 Budget Discussion, Brian McGuire

The Board had a discussion concerning our finances, including that we raised \$43,000 at July 4th this year. We plan to pass the budget in December or January.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ad Hoc City Avenue, Roger Moog

Roger and Aaron lead a discussion about the sale of the property Tishman Speyer to the Adjma family of 1, 2, 3, 4 Bala Plaza. Currently, 92% tenancy. New owner has stated that first priority is a hotel.

Environmental, Marion Williams

Marion reported regarding the Tree Tenders success in planning tree plantings and requested reimbursement in the amount of \$980. Aaron made a motion. Kay Seconded.
Unanimous vote in favor of reimbursement.

Annual meeting is December 19, 2023, hybrid. 7pm is refreshments, 7:30 is meeting.
Newsletter coming to front door.

Adjourn. 9:51pm

SCHEDULE FOR FIRST HALF OF 2024:

January 9
February 6
March 5
April 2
May 7
June 4

**The Neighborhood
Club of Bala Cynwyd
Board of Directors**
P.O. Box 717
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info@balacynwyd.org
www.BalaCynwyd.org



Officers (2023):
C. Aaron Gross, Esq., *President*
Vanessa Coke Cohen, Esq., *Vice President*
David Haas, Esq., *Solicitor*
Kay Sickles, Esq., *Secretary*
Laura Edelstein, CPA, *Treasurer*
Ricky Guerra, Esq., *Past President*

Directors:
Maxine Goldberg
Frederic Goldfein, Esq.
Jason Landau Goodman, Esq.
Anne M. Greenhalgh
C. Brian McGuire
Roger Moog
Randy Myer
Anita Pepper
Jim Remsen
Dan Russionello, AIA
Linda Sagman
Nielufar Varjavand, MD
Merle Zucker

RESOLUTION BY THE BOARD OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD CLUB OF BALA CYNWYD

1. WHEREAS, the Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd dedicates itself to promoting the residential character of Bala Cynwyd, and enhancing the viability of our commercial corridors and is the sole Civic Association recognized by the Township of Lower Merion for the neighborhood of Bala Cynwyd;
2. WHEREAS, Bala Chabad appeared before the Club's board at the NCBC meeting held on November 14, 2023;
3. WHEREAS, the Zoning Hearing Board has scheduled the hearing of an appeal and a request for a variance in the alternative, to be heard at the meeting scheduled for November 16, 2023;

BASED UPON THE FOREGOING, it is hereby Resolved, on November 14, 2023:

The Board of the Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd takes no position on Bala Chabad's appeal (Appeal #4588) of the Township's denial of a zoning permit sought by Bala Chabad for its proposed use at 202 Bala Avenue.

Our Mission

The mission of the Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd is to strengthen the social, cultural and economic fabric of our diverse community by promoting civic engagement, preserving the historic character of our residential neighborhoods, protecting our remaining open space, and enhancing the viability of our commercial corridors.