MINUTES
NOVEMBER 2025 MONTHLY MEETING
THE NEIGHBORHOOD CLUB OF BALA CYNWYD
UNION FIRE ASSOCIATION & ZOOM
Zoom Account: 823 745 2538
Password: 850924
November 11, 2025
7:30pm

Attendance: Kay Sickles (President), Vanessa Coke Cohen (Vice-President), Jason Landau Goodman (Secretary), Marion Williams (Treasurer), C. Aaron Gross (Past President), Maxine Goldberg, Joseph Hirsch, Margaret Hunting, Sandy Kornhauser, Bill Krebs, Brian McGuire, Roger Moog, Dan Russionello, Jim Remsen, Juan Rodríguez, Merle Zucker

Absent: David Haas (Solicitor), Anne Greenhalgh, Randy Myer, Mark Prudente

Public Officials in Attendance: State Representative Mary Jo Daley, Commissioner Gilda Kramer, Commissioner Jeremiah Woodring

CALL TO ORDER
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Kay Sickles called the meeting to order at 7:36pm

POLICE REPORT

Lower Merion Police Department officer shared information on a recent car break in and how useful home security cameras are. He noted that perpetrators are targeting both the thefts of cars and items within them. The officer urged more caution on being vigilant for bad actors and securing residents' homes, cars, and possessions as the holiday season gets underway — including awareness of surroundings to prevent pick-pocketing while in public spaces and getting packages that have been delivered to a home address quickly inside. Additionally, the officer suggested residents check in with any older adults in their lives to safeguard them against scams for money that come by phone or email. Finally, the officer promoted community education about best safety practices while walking while it is dark outside and the importance of paying attention to the surrounding environment, and wearing reflective vests or lights. Comments were raised to the officer about 1) the importance of crosswalks in the township and monitoring traffic patterns at the Belmont Avenue intersection with I-76 heading over the Green Lane Bridge, and 2) concerns with cars stacking up in no standing zones during school dismissal times around Cynwyd Elementary and Bala Cynwyd Middle School.

ELECTED OFFICIALS REPORT

Representative Daley highlighted that PennDOT would have an online presentation about the proposed intersection improvements for St. Asaphs and Belmont Avenue on November 18th. Representative Daley shared that she visited Valley Forge several months ago for an America 250-related event and learned that the organization will promote local communities having open readings of the Declaration of Independence on July 4th and encouraged NCBC to consider doing so in 2026.

Commissioner Woodring noted that car break ins are a serious concern for the area, and that the Lower Merion Police Department remains vigilant in pursuing and preventing bad actors, with an emphasis on more community policing with more foot patrols and an increased regular presence in residential neighborhoods. Commissioner Woodring noted that the school bus cameras have captured approximately 830 violations in September 2025. He added that there are increased numbers of applicants for positions in the Lower Merion Police Department and that strong candidates are being considered towards having a full complement of authorized officers in the department. Commissioner Woodring provided a summary of the ongoing Lower Merion Township budget process in dealing with a structural deficit that will likely result in real estate tax increases, parking meter rate increases, and an increase in the solid waste fee. He noted the Board of Commissioners will host budget hearings on November 19th and December 3rd open to the public.

Commissioner Kramer further discussed the budget process and how the township has a structural deficit after not raising taxes for 13 years until last year. She noted that the proposed ban on gas-powered leaf blowers is expected to be at the Board of Commissioners meeting on November 19th. Commissioner Kramer discussed a pending township policy on regulating the location of vape + smoking shops. She also noted that the pilot curbside composting program has about 25 remaining spots open for those eligible in the defined program area in Bala Cynwyd. Commissioner Kramer provided an update on the Montgomery Avenue traffic safety study and what next steps may be considered in the push to improve conditions along the major road through the township. Finally, Commissioner Kramer shared that she continues outreach with business owners in the Merion-Cynwyd district in working towards establishing a new association — and asked for any interested business owners to contact her for more information.

APPEARANCE BY ZONING APPLICANT ETHEN OSTROFF

A local business owner presented information on his request for a variance in order to operate a legal office — a professional service — in a building on Montgomery Avenue in the Merion-Cynwyd business district. He shared he currently has a zoning appeal before the zoning hearing board and requested the NCBC Board not oppose his request. A discussion took place among the NCBC

Board members about the appeal and the context of the current zoning policy and the specific circumstances of the applicant being just two feet within a prohibited 100 foot distance from a retail-zoned business.

Kay made a motion to issue a statement to the Lower Merion Township Zoning Hearing Board of no position on the appeal, seconded by Aaron. The proposed position is as follows:

> "NCBC received a presentation from the applicant and reviewed the information. Since the use is only a two feet deviation from the code requiring 100ft distance from a retail-zoned business, that it is a legal services office, that it sits off of Montgomery Avenue and not directly on the street, and that there is no need for additional parking, NCBC does not take a position on the application for a variance from Lower Merion Township Code § 155 - Table 5.3 to allow for the ground floor office use to remain."

The NCBC Board voted unanimously to convey this position to the Lower Merion Township Zoning Hearing Board.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS

Secretary Report, Jason Landau Goodman
Jason shared that drafts of the meeting minutes from September 2025 and October 2025 have been circulated with the NCBC Board.

Kay made a motion to adopt the September 2025 minutes as presented, seconded by Brian. Unanimous passage with Joe and Aaron abstaining.

Kay made a motion to adopt the October 2025 minutes as presented, seconded by Vanessa. Unanimous passage with Aaron abstaining.

MOTION FOR OFFICER NOMINATIONS FOR 2026

Kay discussed the decisions ahead to consider who would be candidates for NCBC Board officer positions for 2026.

Kay nominated Juan to join the slate for NCBC Board officers as Vice-President for 2026, seconded by Brian. Nomination unanimously approved by the NCBC Board.

Kay nominated Vanessa to join the slate for NCBC Board officers as Secretary for 2026, seconded by Joe. Nomination unanimously approved by the NCBC Board.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Brian highlighted that Jim will be presenting a talk on the history of College Park at the Union Fire Association on November 20th at 7:30pm.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Membership, Vanessa Coke-Cohen
Vanessa highlighted the work to bring in new members and encourage neighbors whose membership has lapsed to rejoin. She shared that there will be efforts moving forward to have membership run through a new online platform.

NEW BUSINESS

Vanessa shared that a letter sent to NCBC as a representative organization of Bala Cynwyd from Lower Merion Police Department Superintendent Andrew Block thanking the residents of Snowden Road to East Lodges Lane for the lunch they provided to police officers in appreciation of their work through the events of October 3rd. It was noted that the letter should be shared online to pass along the note of gratitude.

Dan suggested that there should be a regular budget update at NCBC Board meetings in the future. Aaron proposed that a formal report should be presented at least four times a year.

Kay moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:16pm.