

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF  
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MERION CIVIC ASSOCIATION  
JANUARY 25, 2011

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Merion Civic Association was held on Tuesday, January 25, 2011, beginning at 7:30 p.m. at the Merion Tribute House with President Kevin Murphy presiding.

Directors present were Blakeney, Browne, Feuer, Flaks, Gordon, Greenberg, Hill, Kalner, Lam, Lapes, Lavoritano, Marmon, Murphy, Piltch, Potok, Quinn, Seiden and Wylonis.

Directors absent and excused were Bagley, Eisenberg, Ettelson and Stevenson.

Other attendees included Allegra Coleman, Karla Moras, Sherry Waldron, and Leigh Ann Smith of the Federation of Civic Associations.

The Meeting was called to order by President Murphy at 7:30 p.m. and the November minutes were unanimously approved with corrections. The Executive Committee minutes of January 13 were approved as well.

Before beginning his report, President Murphy introduced both speakers for the evening, beginning with Officer Peter Condon of the Lower Merion Police Department, who began his report with a review of the latest burglaries in Lower Merion including thefts from cars as well as of the cars themselves, house burglaries and graffiti on Bala Avenue. Officer Condon then reminded the audience of the common sense precautions for preventing burglaries and asked everyone to remain alert and notify the Lower Merion Police Department of any unusual activity.

The second speaker was Laura Shell of the Planning Commission. Ms. Shell began her talk by describing the Issues Report document as the scope of work, the road map of the Comprehensive Plan for Lower Merion future development. The document was prepared by Lower Merion Township Planning Staff and Montgomery County Planning Commission Staff, 2007-2010.

The Planning Commission has hosted public meetings to introduce the Issues Report contents, but Laura reported that public response and attendance has been light. Participation is encouraged so that Lower Merion residents become active participants in the planning process. The next meeting is scheduled for January 31, at 7-9 p.m. -- details are on the Merion Civic website.

The land use section of the document is very pertinent to Lower Merion as regards "tear downs," infill (the building of a house between two existing properties), institutions and historic preservation.

Karla Moras commented that the Issues Report is already becoming an outdated document as it was formulated in 2007. Scott Kalner suggested that historical designation may have several underlying agendas, not simply the preservation of an historic building/district. Marty Piltch commented that the Comprehensive Plan must address quality of life issues, particularly that of maintaining Merion as "bedroom community."

Merion residents can contact Chris Leswing for input to the Comprehensive Plan as well as Laura herself, by sending hard copy communication to the Township Building. Karla Moras emphasized the need for the public to be heard throughout the process of the Comprehensive Plan to avoid being side-lined in the discussion and implementation of the plan. The Comprehensive Plan is for the welfare of the community, and not in service of the Planning Commission.

**Treasurer's Report** -- Treasurer Bob Marmon presented and distributed the combined November/December 2010 report.

**President's Report** -- President Murphy began his report with a summary of the proceedings of the Executive Committee meeting on January 13, 2011. The Committee proposes that Community Action, Public Relations

and Zoning become one committee; and Postal Affairs be merged with Station & Grounds in order to streamline the work of the committees and maximize the participation of Directors. A motion to merge the committees was made, seconded and approved unanimously. Other discussions focused on the status of the dues notices; Comprehensive Plan, St. Joe's, street signs and police matters as well as speakers for the director meeting in January and the next Neighbor-to-Neighbor event.

The unfunded federal mandate regarding street signs was discussed by the Directors. Merion street signs have been in use for almost 100 years and as such contribute to the legacy and historic appeal of the community. Marty Piltch proposed a motion to encourage the Township to provide funds for Merion to maintain its old signs with the gold fluorescent paint. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously. Marty Piltch and Brian Gordon clarified that the implementation of federal mandates is not open to discussion. Marty therefore offered that both the old and the new signs should be displayed together.

President Murphy recognized Marty Piltch, who spoke next on the proceedings of the most recent meeting of the Nominating Committee. He reported that the Merion Civic Association By-laws were not followed in the appointment of Directors, that the Class lists were not accurate and that the most recent classes of Directors were not legitimate due to omissions and/or inappropriate procedures in the appointment and reappointment of directors. The Committee recommended that the following three classes of directors be established according to [Bylaws Art. V, Sec. 5-01(a)]:

Class 1 (Term of office expires in Oct. 2011):  
Blakeney, Gordon, Hill, Lam, Lavoritano, Marmon, Piltch, Potok, Seiden

Class 2 (Term of office expires in Oct. 2012):  
Bagley, Eisenberg, Ettelson, Feuer, Flaks, Quinn, Stevenson, Wylonis

Class 3 (Term of office expires in Oct. 2013)  
Browne, Fratis, Greenberg, Guy, Kalner, Lapes, Mudrick, Murphy

Marty Piltch recommended that at the October 2011 Annual Meeting that the members be requested to ratify, modify or nullify whatever action the Board of Directors may take in response to the Nominating Committee's overall recommendations.

It was determined that Les Greenberg, Lauren Wylonis and Dolores Browne, who were all present at the meeting, and were nominated at the Annual Meeting in October 2010, were qualified to offer a motion, second it and approve the above Class lists to be instated and entered into the record. The motion was made, seconded and approved accordingly.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Arts and Education** — Frances Quinn reported that several speakers for the next Neighbor-to-Neighbor event have been suggested and that she is looking for more ideas.

**Botanical** — Judith Flaks reported the planting of Arborvitae and three specimen trees to replace those that were removed by Amtrak. The next meeting of the Botanical Association is on February 16. Les Greenberg pointed out that trees in the community, on both public and private property, need to be cleared of the English Ivy that is growing on many of them. The ivy chokes the trees over time. It was suggested that an article be written for the upcoming issue of the Newsletter.

**Commissioner** — Commissioner Brian Gordon began his report by adding his own encouragement to all to attend the upcoming workshops open to the public regarding the Comprehensive Plan. Further, the Commissioners are discussing lowering the height of buildings proposed in the Bala Cynwyd Shopping Center renovation plan in response to public opinion. The Cynwyd Trail will now be funded to complete the connection to Manyunk. The Commissioners are discussing the maintenance of its own buildings to conform

to “green” standards. The budget for next year is in the beginning stages of formulation. Commissioner Gordon reported that Commissioner Bruce Reed has been replaced by Brian McGuire; Mark Taylor is out, leaving a vacancy.

**Community Action/Zoning** – Les Greenberg reported that Eastern Theological Seminary is submitting a zone change application to the Zoning Hearing Board and Board of Commissioners.

**Federation of Civic Associations** — President Murphy reported that at both the December 13 and January 10 meetings, Kathy Ablanap spoke about the street signs mandate; each civic gave a report and there was a billboards item.

**Finance** – No report.

**History** — Lauren Wylonis announced that historical designation will be the Spring project. The house tour will be postponed to the following year.

**Newsletter** — No report.

**Nominating** – No report.

**Post Office** — Michael Seiden reported that the U.S. Congress has announced it will issue a list of new post office closings.

**School Board** – Vivian Lapes did not attend the last meeting of the School Board but reported the issues discussed: initiatives that will focus on going “green”; the Board is reviewing the homework policy; there is division within the Board regarding the redistricting and an attorney will be arguing for 9 students who did not agree with the court ruling.

**Social** -- No report.

**Station and Grounds** — Scott Feuer thanked Helen Guy for continuing to paint over graffiti in the train tunnel.

**Streets, Lights and Traffic** -- No report.

**Website** -- Michael Seiden announced the addition of School Board information and a new section of the Board of Commissioners to the website as well as a section on Township plans.

**Barnes** – Scott Feuer announced the next meeting of the Arboretum board will be on February 8, when the neighborhood get-together on June 5 will be discussed. Discussion ensued regarding the future of the Barnes buildings and arboretum. There is a certain amount of rumor regarding the future of the museum, as no plans or funds to be provided have been announced by the Barnes Board and the level of unhappiness about the moving of the art collection amongst residents continues. The Barnes Board is looking for ideas on how to best use the museum in Merion.

**Community Watch** — President Murphy reported that Community Watch needs to be publicized and encouraged participation and attendance at training sessions.

**Merion Community Coalition** – Karla Moras reported that St. Joe’s will be submitting a land development plan to the Board of Commissioners in early March. There are drainage issues; sound issues coming from the hockey fields and St. Joe’s will be requesting a waiver regarding the hockey fields.

**Narberth Fire Company** -- President Murphy announced that the duties of the Fire Marshall are being reviewed because of the lawsuit regarding the fire sprinklers in the Narberth development on the site of the Spanish house on Wynnewood Avenue that was razed.

**St. Joe's** – No report.

**Old Business** -- None.

**New Business** –There being no more new business, the meeting, on motion made and seconded, was unanimously adjourned at 9:45 p.m. The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be held at the Merion Tribute House on Tuesday, February 22, 2011 at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Guy, Secretary