MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MERION CIVIC ASSOCIATION SEPTEMBER 27, 2011

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Merion Civic Association was held on Tuesday, September 27, 2011, beginning at 7:45 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, Murphy, Piltch, Quinn, and Seiden.

Directors absent and excused were Bagley, Eisenberg, Ettelson, Fratis, Marmon, Mudrick, Potok, Stevenson and Wylonis.

Other attendees included Merion neighbors Emory Dabney, Ed Goldberg, Neil Kaufman, Dave Rutzel, Paul Schimmel, Charlotte Swenson, Carolyn Wood and Patty Martin from St. Joe's.

The Meeting was called to order by President Murphy at 7:45 p.m. and the June minutes were unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report -- Treasurer Bob Marmon was not present and no report was made. His report was issued via email and received after the meeting and covers June, July and August 2011

President's Report – President Murphy welcomed all to the meeting and invited the Directors to introduce themselves to the Merion neighbors in attendance. President Murphy began his report by summarizing the significance of the City Avenue Redevelopment project to Lower Merion Township with regards to a lack of careful planning, a disregard for quality of life issues in favor of commercial development issues and institutional expansion and a disregard for the opinions of residents as voiced at the various meetings and workshops that have occurred over the summer. The Township approach has been to describe a vision of what the City Avenue redevelopment would be, short on concrete and considered plans.

President Murphy distributed information about the website for planLM, which is an independent group of Lower Merion residents that has organized itself around focusing on the whole redevelopment plan, zoning issues and has taken on a watchdog role, as well as a sample petition addressed to Commissioner Liz Rogan and the Lower Merion Board of Commissioners asking for a comprehensive plan acceptable to the community; a design for development that is neighborhood-centric and not just another office park or entertainment center; a design that offers a development plan that is pedestrian friendly, neighborhood friendly and transit friendly. President Murphy also distributed the draft Ordinance, dated 9/7/11, to amend the code of the Township to allow for the development, which will include parking and loading requirements, density regulations, development design standards and signage regulation.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Arts and Education — Frances Quinn announced that the next event to be planned is the Neighbor-to-Neighbor November meeting. Frances is looking for a topic of local or regional importance.

Botanical — Judith Flaks announced that the fall clean-up in the park is scheduled for October 2 beginning at 9:30 a.m.

Commissioner — Commissioner Brian Gordon began his report by reminding the Directors that the hot topics in front of the Commissioners is the City Avenue Redevelopment plan and the budget for the Workers Association contract. The most important budget item issue in the contract is the rising cost of healthcare benefits, running at an increase of 9-10% per annum. The benefits plan that was approved did not result in the hoped for savings, which could have favorably influenced the upcoming policemen's contract. It is thought that the contracted employees have received overly generous benefits as compared to non-contracted employees. Marty Piltch interjected that the township manager should work for the taxpayers, not the township employees.

Commissioner Gordon stated that the Civic Associations in the Lower Merion have positively influenced the course of the City Avenue planning by becoming vocal and expressing the opinions of their constituents. The result has been to slow down the process, to push for more careful and considered planning with regards to traffic volume and structure development. Some Directors voiced a wish to have a 3-D mock-up of the plan so that residents can better imagine the vision the Commissioners have in mind.

Community Action, **Zoning & PR –** Les Greenberg's report focused on the City Avenue development issues. Residents are very concerned about traffic and the projected 10-30 years of building that the Commissioners are envisioning.

The Palmer Seminary development is moving ahead, with existing buildings being designated Class I, of historic significance.

Adath Israel has filed a zoning variance petition to allow Golden Slipper to hold classes at the synagogue. Golden Slipper is a non-profit adult education, non-sectarian group, offering programs for senior citizens.

The Van Sciver building on City Avenue is being renovated and readied for the CVS pharmacy that will occupy the building.

The next Comprehensive Plan meeting regarding Historic Preservation issues is scheduled for October 11, 7:00 p.m.

Federation of Civic Associations — Marty Piltch reported that Irene McNeil, president and founder of public access TV, spoke at the meeting of the Federation regarding the volunteer nature of the enterprise, the shortage of funding and the lack of interest on the part of the Township in funding the program. She plans to retire at the end of 2012. The second guest speaker was Lori Salganicoff of the Lower Merion Conservancy, who has been a guest speaker at the Merion Civic Association as well. Lori spoke about the importance and value of using historic designation as a way to preserve history in our communities.

Finance – Marty Piltch announced the Finance Committee met last Monday, September 19, to discuss the budget for the next fiscal year, which will be presented at the Annual Meeting on October 16. If any committee chairs have budget needs, please contact the Finance Committee.

History — No report. Lauren Wylonis will be resigning as Director, creating a chair vacancy.

Membership – Dolores Browne reported she has been thinking about different ways to increase Civic membership and would like to try an idea she has read about, which involves creating and distributing a membership newsletter online. Merion residents would be invited to submit a photograph and a short description of themselves, their work.

Newsletter — Marjorie Mudrick submitted her resignation after the completion of the fall newsletter, which was a shorter version than previous. President Murphy announced he is looking for a new chairman for the committee.

School Board – Vivian Lapes reported there is a new webcam claim for \$10,000, the claimant has not been identified by name. A total of \$1.6 million has been paid out by the Lower Merion School District in webcam claims. The school district claims it was an accidental oversight that the cameras were never turned off. More than 65,000 images of unsuspecting Lower Merion students were captured.

Social – Judy Flaks announced details of the upcoming Annual Meeting, October 16, 4:00-7:00 p.m. She distributed a sign-up sheet for refreshments, set up and clean up.

Station and Grounds, Postal Affairs — Scott Feuer reported that as a result of his communications with the General Manager of SEPTA, Joe Casey, work will be done on the undercarriage of the outbound platform shelter structure.

Station and grounds clean-up is scheduled for Sunday, October 30 at 9:30 a.m. Refreshments will be provided and set up inside the train station.

Streets, Lights and Traffic – Renee Hill reported one call regarding a lighting problem on Baird Road, which turned out to be a PECO problem.

Website -- Michael Seiden continues to update the website, keeping it current. There was a brief discussion about changing the "wallpaper" photography of the opening page, to be more seasonal.

Barnes – Scott Feuer reported that the new museum will open downtown on the Parkway on May 12, 2012. Minor renovations to the fence and tea house in Merion are planned. There are plans as well to maintain the Barnes Arboretum, with various ideas being considered on how to fund a team of maintenance gardeners and possibly involve Merion residents.

Community Watch — President Murphy announced that National Night Out was on August 3. The next meeting of the group is scheduled for the first week in October.

Merion Community Coalition – St. Joseph's University Ad Hoc – Les Greenberg reported the committee of St. Joe's staff and Merion residents is working cooperatively, with a good dynamic amongst members, and a spirit of compromise.

Narberth Fire Company – No report.

St. Joe's – St. Joe's is planning to start a chapter of Rotor-Act -- a group from the Rotary partners with college students to work on community projects.

Old Business – President Murphy reported that the Golf Outing will be cancelled for lack of participation. MCA will get back its deposit.

New Business – A discussion began regarding the necessary motions required to change the start time of meetings in the fall and spring. Marty Piltch suggested that this twice-yearly ritual be eliminated with a motion to assign a start time of 7:45 p.m. during daylight saving months and a start time of 7:30 p.m. during standard time months. A motion was proposed, seconded and approved unanimously.

There being no more new business, the meeting, on motion made and seconded, was unanimously adjourned at 9:15 p.m. The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be held at the Merion Tribute House on Tuesday, October 25, 2011 at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Guy, Secretary