

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MERION CIVIC ASSOCIATION
November 27, 2012

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Merion Civic Association was held on Tuesday, November 27, 2012, beginning at 7:30 p.m. at the Merion Tribute House with President Kevin Murphy presiding.

Directors present were Blakeney, Browne, Eisenberg, Feuer, Gordon, Greenberg, Hill, Kalner, Lam, Lavoritano, Marmon, Murphy, Potok, Rutzel, and Seiden.

Directors absent and excused were Bagley, Ettelson, Flaks, Fratis and Quinn.

Merion residents Karla Moras, Lynne Raymond, George Ross, Tom West, Eileen Berko, Devin Grosh, Bill Earley, Nora Goldfine, Laurie Fine, Karen Ackerman, Sharon Wolfson, Gary Blum, Larry Real and Kathy Barker were in attendance.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

President Murphy opened the meeting and introduced the new president, Scott Kalner. A motion to approve Scott as the new president was made and seconded, and unanimously approved. The now President Kalner assumed his role and conducted the rest of the meeting.

The October 27 meeting Minutes were approved unanimously.

President Kalner introduced the first of the two speakers of the evening, Officer Matthew Tierney, of the Lower Merion Police Department. Officer Tierney reported there was very little activity to report on, mostly motor vehicle thefts; one house break-in. Suspected criminals have been arrested. Officer Tierney closed by taking questions from the audience.

The second speaker was Don Cannon, Director, Lower Merion Public Works. Mr. Cannon was invited to come to the meeting to present a tentative plan for landscaping the strip along Idris Road, from the train station inbound side, starting at the parking lot and extending to Highland Avenue after Amtrak has finished its project to eliminate a water drainage situation which has caused a spongy condition beneath the train tracks. The proposed work by both Amtrak and Lower Merion Public Works is scheduled for spring, 2013.

Merion neighbors living on Idris Road and Highland Avenue attended the meeting to both protest the lack of communication from Amtrak that it was embarking on the engineering project that included the preliminary step of clearing all of the trees and shrubs from the strip, leaving no barrier between the road and the train tracks, and a plan to build a 200 foot wall along Idris Road, which was halted by the intervention of neighbors, the Commissioner and Mr. Cannon, in favor of a more esthetic and effective solution to the water drainage problem. Neighbors were also interested in getting information about plans going forward.

In a discussion about future maintenance of the plantings which will replace all of the trees and shrubs that were removed preparatory to the work, Mr. Cannon stated that Idris Road residents, according to property deeds he consulted, own several feet of the strip extending from the far curb in front of their property towards the tracks, which is an unusual situation he has not encountered in other parts of the Township. This private ownership situation may have a bearing on what is planted, and who will maintain after planting.

Mr. Cannon will bring more information to the Civic Association as it develops. In the meantime, he will be meeting with Amtrak representatives to plan out the project.

Treasurer's Report –

President's Report – President Kalner expressed appreciation for Kevin Murphy's leadership in the last two years. He feels honored to be the president of the Merion Civic Association in the Centennial year of 2013, and wishes to look to the future of the community by focusing on the historic district project; working with other civic organizations to revitalize the commercial district, which he has begun discussing with various civic and township parties. President Kalner would also like to include the Rockland Bridge, which has been closed for several years, keeping part of the Merion community disconnected. A centennial celebration will be planned in conjunction with the annual Flag Day concert which will occur on June 13, 2013. Other ideas for the next two years of the Civic include an electronic version of the yearbook, recruitment of new Board members, reaching out to younger families and making the Civic Association a forum for the community.

President Kalner announced that Irene McNeil wishes to televise one of the Merion Civic Association Board meetings.

President Kalner initiated 3 motions, all were seconded and unanimously approved, as follows:

1. To permanently change the starting time of all future Civic Association Board meetings to 7:30 p.m.;
2. To elevate Michael Seiden to the post of 1st vice president
3. To re-elect the Executive Committee of Scott Kalner, president, Michael Seiden, 1st vice president, Bob Marmon, treasurer and Helen Guy, secretary.

The Nominating Committee needs to nominate a 2nd vice president.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

As the discussion regarding Idris Road was extensive, it was decided to dispense with all but the following Committee reports.

Botanical — Scott Feuer introduced Bill Earley, the president of the Botanical Association, who presented the work he has done in the park since assuming his new role last June.

Commissioner — Commissioner Brian Gordon reported that there will be no property tax increase in the new Township budget; wage and health benefit increases of Township employees need to be controlled to bring in line with the private sector with the police contract being separate; police force numbers have increased; a number of capital projects (bridge repairs, libraries) are ongoing; the debt service rate is 15.7%.

Community Action, Zoning & PR – Les Greenberg reported that the Rosemont College zoning hearing wherein the College wants to expand artificial turf, lighting on its sports fields, has concluded and will be voted upon by Zoning Hearing Board. Other items include the L.A. Fitness gym in Wynnewood; the Sibley Avenue project; City Avenue transportation issues. The Federation of Civic Associations passed a resolution, which the Merion Civic Association supported, against the 24/7 hours of operation at the L.A. Fitness, as well as a resolution against the Rosemont College lighting project proposal.

Old Business – None

New Business – None

There being no more new business, a motion was made and seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m. The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be held at the Merion Tribute House on Tuesday, January 22, 2013 at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Helen Guy, Secretary