

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MERION CIVIC ASSOCIATION
April 22, 2014

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Merion Civic Association was held on Tuesday, April 22, 2014, beginning at 7:30 p.m. at the Merion Tribute House with 1st Vice President Michael Seiden presiding in President Scott Kalner's absence.

Directors present were Anderson, Feuer, Gordon, Greenberg, Hill, Lam, Lavoritano, Marmon, Murphy, Ross, Rutzel, Seiden and Sinai.

Directors absent and excused were Browne, Copeland, Eisenberg, Ettelson, Flaks, Kalner, Potok, and Quinn.

Other Merion residents present included Bill Katz, Karla Moras, and Barbara Sylk.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by 1st Vice President Seiden. A motion was made and seconded and the March 25, 2014 minutes were approved unanimously.

Guest Speaker:

First Vice President Seiden introduced Sister Barbara Buckley, Principal of Merion Mercy Academy, who was invited to come describe the construction changes at the Academy. Sister Buckley has been with Merion Mercy for 21 years, the last 7 years as principal. One of her main activities has been fundraising, which now includes financing the building of a new gym and cafeteria at the rear of the school. Sister Buckley distributed copies of the campus layout and proposed areas of construction, which will begin in June of 2015 if the required financing is in place. She reported that there will be no change in the footprint and there will be a second floor added. The school has an enrollment of 480 girls, grades 9-12, on a 33-acre site. No increase in enrollment is anticipated or planned. Questions from the audience included the issue of inadequate parking on-campus. The spillover is on Meeting House Lane and Sister Buckley reported that school officials are vigilant about restricting the parking to that stretch of road and any neighbor complaints are dealt with swiftly. The neighborhood is used to and satisfied with this arrangement.

Treasurer's Report – Robert Marmon presented the Treasurer's report for March 2014. A motion was made and seconded and the Treasurer's Report was approved unanimously.

Mr. Marmon commented on the diminishing assets of the Civic Association and discussion followed with ideas such as a PR effort and a personal approach by the Directors to contact their neighbors and encourage them to join the Civic Association, pay dues and obtain their email addresses if they wish to be informed about Civic Association activities.

President's Report – 1st Vice President Seiden read the following report submitted by President Kalner.

St. Charles Borromeo Seminary:

There is a meeting at the Seminary on Monday, 12 May at 7:30 PM in Vianney Hall for the Merion community to hear about St. Charles' short-term plans for their upper campus which includes the renovations of the buildings, the consolidation and construction of parking and the relocation of the entry gate on Wynnewood Road. This presentation comes in advance of the scheduled Zoning Hearing Board appearance by the Seminary on 15 May.

For those unable to attend the 12 May community meeting, there is another date – 8 May, same time – where the Seminary is to make the same presentation to the Indian Creek community.

The community meeting and the Zoning Hearing Board application is only intended to address the changed traffic patterns, additional parking and stormwater management to be developed on the upper campus. The development on the lower campus, which will likely include the reuse of the College Building, is not to be discussed. It is still anticipated that there will be an announcement of the selected developer in the late spring.

(Todd Sinai asked what process the Civic Association uses to decide what its position will be, such as holding a special directors' meeting. Further discussion included opinions on when to formulate such a statement since there is not a great deal of time between when the St. Charles public meetings on May 8 and 12, and the Zoning Board meeting on May 15. Commissioner Gordon suggested that the Association determine what points to look at and attend the May 15 meeting prepared to speak.

Barbara Sylk raised a concern that the process is pre-determined and neighbors have no recourse and no ability to offer a unified presentation. Karla Moras asked Todd Sinai to divulge plans before the May 12 meeting so that citizens can meet, and he agreed to post information on his website. Les Greenberg offered that the Civic should wait until Bishop Senior reveals the plans and then a plan and statement can be developed from that. George Ross offered that there are enough members of the Civic qualified to look at the plans and formulate a plan for what the Civic's approach should be.

Commissioner Gordon suggested a subcommittee be formed composed of Michael Seiden, Scott Kalner, Les Greenberg, George Ross and Bob Marmon. Dave Rutzel moved that the Civic Association authorize the Civic action committee to meet with the township staff to discuss the St. Charles Seminary Application to the Zoning Hearing board before the May 15th hearing. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.)

E-Mail Service

The Seminary made a quick change in the date for the community meetings, based upon its schedule for the Zoning Hearing Board calendar. Notices were sent via e-mail blasts to advertise both sets of dates but Yahoo had some glitches that hampered delivery of the notice for the revised meeting date. Going forward, MCA will look to use Mail Chimp, an e-mail subscription service, to streamline its membership notification system and to make it more reliable. This service will be provided to MCA for no cost.

Social/Fundraising

The 2nd Annual Beer-Tasting is scheduled for Friday, 13 June in the Tribute House. The Social/Fundraising committee is holding a meeting this coming weekend – date and time to be confirmed – to plan volunteer operations, publicity and fundraising opportunities.

Merion/Cynwyd Business District

The effort to provide planters in the business district is moving ahead with a maintenance plan as part of the overall budget. Contributions from the business association and the two primary civic associations have been secured. The two banks in the district – Wells Fargo and Continental Bank – will be approached to close the funding gap.

By-Laws

Bill Katz, an MCA member and an attorney, is working with Michael Seiden and Leslie Greenberg to update the by-laws. A presentation is expected to be made of the initial recommendations at the next MCA Board of Directors meeting.

Board Make-Up

Due to changed work commitments that prevent her from attending Board meetings, Tami Fratis has decided to resign as a Director. She remains a member of the Civic Association.

Please help the Nominating Committee in identifying potential new Directors for the Board.

Commissioner's Report:

Commissioner Brian Gordon began his report by noting that the population of the Township has remained relatively flat at 57,000 since 1980. The Township debt stands at \$103 million.

If the project on Cricket Avenue goes forward, it will be massive, as an 8-story structure has been approved; however, state funding for the parking garage has been cancelled, so the project is on hold.

Ernie McNeely's contract for Township Manager has been approved, with salary and benefits revised from the previous manager's contract.

Commissioner Gordon expressed concern that the Lower Merion Township Police are not as visible as he would like them to be and will continue to request more policing, as burglaries in Merion continue to occur.

Committee/Representative Reports:

Federation of Civic Associations -- Kevin Murphy reported that the last meeting was cancelled because of Passover, but that the main topic of concern at the last few meetings regards zoning as related to upcoming projects.

Community Action, Zoning and PR -- Les Greenberg reported that the proposal to build a restaurant at the old Wynnewood post office location has been cancelled. He also reported that he and President Kalner met with Liz Rogan, president of the Board of Commissioners, to establish a relationship.

Old Business – None

New Business – There being no more new business, a motion was made and seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m. The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be held at the Merion Tribute House on Tuesday, May 27, 2014 at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Helen Guy, Secretary