MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MERION CIVIC ASSOCIATION
June 24, 2014

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Merion Civic Association was held on Tuesday, June 24, 2014, beginning at 7:30 p.m. at the Merion Tribute House with President Scott Kalner presiding.

Directors present were Browne, Copeland, Eisenberg, Feuer, Gordon, Greenberg, Hill, Kalner, Lavoritano, Marmon, Murphy, Quinn, Ross, Rutzel and Seiden.

Directors absent and excused were Anderson, Ettelson, Flaks, Lam, Potok and Sinai.

Other Merion residents present included Amy Copeland and Susan Guthrie.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by President Kalner.   A motion was made and seconded and the May 27, 2014 minutes were approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report – Bob Marmon presented the Treasurer's report for May 2014 A motion was made and seconded and the Treasurer's Report was approved unanimously. Mr. Marmon announced that instead of presenting the monthly reports for June, July and August at the September meeting, he will be sending the directors a report at the end of each month to keep everyone aware of the finances. He also said that the Merion Civic Association expenses are minimal, praise to all who are spending funds only as needed and staying within the budget.

President's Report –   President Kalner began his report with an update on the Montgomery Avenue Traffic Study in the Merion/Cynwyd business district and the resolution adopted back in November. The consensus was that the mock-up of what the lane change would look like does would not capture all the features of the planned change. President Kalner read the phrase in the resolution which needs to be struck. It was in the wording of item #1 and is in quotes as follows:

1. Engage a consultant to perform a traffic study and analysis for Montgomery Avenue from Meeting House Road to Bangor Road to "explore the feasibility of installing a temporary three lane configuration" to assess the long-term feasibility and desirability of this arrangement.

Following a discussion about the wording of the resolution supporting the redevelopment of the district, approved by the Merion Civic Association on November 26, 2013, there was a motion made to make a change in the language. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously and was amended.

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING REDEVELOPMENT OF THE MERION-CYNWYD BUSINESS DISTRICT

WHEREAS, in April 2004, the Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd, the Merion Civic Association, the Lower Merion Commissioners representing Bala Cynwyd and Merion, and the Lower Merion Township Staff commissioned a report (the "Report") that studied the intersection of Montgomery, Old Lancaster, and Levering Mill Roads in Lower Merion Township (the "Intersection");

WHEREAS, The Report concluded that Intersection, as then configured, could not fully accommodate the traffic volume experienced in the Intersection, resulting in repeated long waits on Montgomery, Levering Mill, and Old Lancaster;

WHEREAS, the Intersection has been and continues to be hampered by the lack of a signaled and controlled left-hand turn signal onto Levering Mill and Old Lancaster Road(s);

WHEREAS: traffic experts report that left-hand turning lanes at traffic lights with a controlled lefthand turn signal can ease traffic congestion in intersections with up to 60,000 cars per day;

WHEREAS the current traffic pattern at Levering Mill and Old Lancaster Road(s) result in a back- up of cars going east in the morning and west in the afternoon, consistently on all weekdays.

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the Merion community to have wider sidewalks, more street trees, more easily accessible and safer on-street parking in the business district that serves the neighborhood, THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED: The Merion Civic Association requests that Lower Merion Township

1. Engage a consultant to perform a traffic study and analysis for Montgomery Ave from Meeting House Road to Bangor Road to explore a three lane configuration for the roadway (two through lanes and one dedicated center turning lane) to assess the long-term feasibility and desirability of this arrangement.

2. Develop plans for streetscape improvements in the business district including additional street trees, planters, awnings, green spaces and uniform sidewalks.

3. Consider providing a crosswalk with flashing warning lights at the intersection of Montgomery Avenue and Parsons Road to facilitate a pedestrian crossing at this point and we reaffirm our support of this measure as an important traffic calming device that can also enhance pedestrian safety.

4. Consider providing a new traffic signal or crosswalk with flashing warning lights at Bangor Road and Montgomery Avenue to facilitate the walkability and improve pedestrian safety within this portion of the Merion Cynwyd Business District.

ADOPTED THIS 26th DAY OF November 2013 by the MERION CIVIC ASSOCIATION
Amended, 24th day of June 2014 by the Merion Civic Association
Scott J. Kalner
President, Merion Civic Association

Les Greenberg, Director, stated that Brian McGuire, Commissioner, has promised to obtain Township funding for the traffic study, which would be an important first step.

President Kalner's second topic was an update of the Comprehensive Plan. A meeting of the committee was scheduled for tonight to discuss historic preservation subcommittee's plans with the Land Use Committee, despite protests to Bob Duncan that the Merion Civic Association always meets on the 4th Tuesday of the month, and therefore, President Kalner and Les Greenberg would not be able to attend. They were both members of that subcommittee and were responsible for content and decisions made regarding institutional land use, commercial corridors, and preserving the quality of the community, so needed to be present. Requests to

change the meeting to another date were denied. President Kalner feels the committee is in a hurry to complete the planning, which is not conducive to producing the best product. President Kalner believed that the meeting would include a recommendation to adopt the plans and went on to say that the Township can designate properties as historic if they so wish, whether or not the property owner is in agreement or not. This process can set up a situation where a property owner can express interest in a designation more to his/her liking in regards to future development and President Kalner believes the designation should apply to the structure and not to the individual owner.

The next topic in President Kalner's report was the St. Charles Borromeo Seminary Special Exception hearings applying to the Upper Campus, of which, there have been three: on June 10, June 17 and the next will be on July 10 at 5 P.M. at the Township Building. Forty-five days following the July meeting a decision on the requests will be rendered. The application is only about the consolidation of the upper campus. President Kalner stated that he will make a statement before the Zoning Hearing Board regarding what the Merion Civic Association supports and does not support on the list of special exception requests.

A lengthy discussion followed, wherein the real intentions of the Seminary were questioned, especially regarding the re-opening and use of the gate on Wynnewood Avenue opposite Highland Avenue. The directors were reminded that the Seminary has a right to plan whatever development will be most financially advantageous, and that Merion residents would like the Seminary to remain on its present site and continue the "good neighbor" relations that have developed over the years.

Discussion of the intentions of the Seminary also focused on the issue that the burden of proof that a project is outside the legal scope of the law lies with the neighbors, and institutions are prepare to wait out the protest period as they are aware of a major change in the law stipulating conditions that must be met by the developers. Bob Marmon, director, explained that before 2006, there were three requirements that had to be met before a project could be approved: no threat of safety or health violations, and the welfare of the community needed to be preserved. This last clause includes the quality of living characteristics that draw home buyers to the neighborhood, namely, quiet, beautiful vistas, mature growth trees. In 2006 that clause was struck down by the courts and institutions and developers know they need not meet quality of life issues. According to Commissioner Brian Gordon, the majority of Township Commissioners are also not interested in the quality of life test of a project.

On the subject of the use of the gate across from Highland Avenue, Susan Guthrie, a Merion resident who lives on Forrest, argued that the safety clause mentioned is very much an issue if the use of the gate is approved, as it presents a hazard to drivers turning left onto Wynnewood from the side streets as visibility is poor and cars must creep out into the intersection to assure a safe turn. In addition, there is no continuous sidewalk on the north side of the street, requiring that pedestrians, who even now, cross the road back and forth to be on the sidewalk, will be endangered because of increased traffic and the required vigilance of drivers making the turns to the possible detriment of not seeing pedestrians negotiating the sidewalks. Dave Rutzel, director, made a motion to draft a resolution from the Merion Civic Association opposing the use

of the gate referred to above. Kevin Murphy, director, seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously. The Executive Committee of the Association will write the draft.

The last topic discussed by President Kalner was the beer tasting fund-raiser. Thirty-five sponsors donated raffle items and food, of which there was an abundance. About forty people attended and it was suggested that better advertising strategies need to be put in place to attract more people. The Civic Association made $535.00, half of last year's proceeds.

Commissioner's Report:

Commissioner Brian Gordon began his report with an update on the Merion/Cynwyd Business District. The business district members are not interested in consolidating parking lots at the rear of the businesses. Banners will be purchased and installed to draw attention to the district. Commissioner Gordon also spoke about the Green Parking Ordinance being planned, which will increase the number of trees planted on the periphery of new or redeveloped parking lots exceeding 20,000 sq ft (accommodating 75 cars) and there will be planted islands interspersed amongst the cars to aid in water absorption, and in adding the beauty of greenery to otherwise barren expanses.

Commissioner Gordon reported that the school district wants to develop a lot on Bala Avenue where school buses will be parked. There is strong neighborhood opposition to this idea, especially since there is ample space for such a lot at the Welsh Valley School.   It was agreed that the Merion Civic Association should join the Neighborhood Club of Bala in opposition to the idea, and we should contact them to see if they are interested in our support. If such support is requested, a motion was made, seconded and approved unanimously to authorize the Executive Committee of the Merion Civic Association to draft a resolution to support the Bala Club's opposition to having a school bus parking lot on Bala Avenue.

Committee/Representative Reports:

Federation of Civic Associations -- Kevin Murphy reported that the new Township Manager will speak at the September meeting.

Narberth and Union Fire Companies – Kevin Murphy reported record high activity of both companies.

President Kalner stated that in the interest of time, his planned opening discussion of the revision of the by-laws will be tabled until the next meeting in September, with revision work taking place over the summer.

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, September 23, 2014 at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Helen Guy, Secretary