

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MERION CIVIC ASSOCIATION
September 24, 2013

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Merion Civic Association was held on Tuesday, September 24, 2013, beginning at 7:30 p.m. at the Merion Tribute House with President Scott Kalner presiding.

Directors present were, Eisenberg, Gordon, Greenberg, Hill, Kalner, Lam, Lavoritano, Murphy, Quinn, Rutzel, and Seiden.

Directors absent and excused were Browne, Ettelson, Feuer, Flaks, Fratis, Marmon and Potok.

Members of the Merion community also attended.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by President Kalner. A motion was made and seconded and the June 25, 2013 minutes were approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report – Dave Rutzel, Finance Committee Chairman, presented the proposed budget for 2013-14. He summarized the last five years of dues receipts as being generally lower than in previous years and suggested that fundraising will need to become a part of the Merion Civic Association operations in order to maintain the savings balance of the Association. It was noted by President Kalner and Secretary Guy that the dues within the corresponding past two fiscal year periods has been fairly consistent and may be indicative of an improving economy. Chairman Rutzel suggested that a \$3,000 annual goal be established for supplemental fundraising. Within the budget is an allocation of \$1,000 for improvements to the Merion/Cynwyd business district, a contribution that will be matched by the Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd. The proposed budget will be voted on at the annual meeting on October 20, 2013.

President Kalner introduced the guest speaker of the evening, JulieAnn Murphy, the Historic Preservation Coordinator for the Lower Merion Conservancy. Prior to Ms. Murphy's presentation, Patricia Thompson, the executive director of the Lower Merion Conservancy, spoke about the organization and its role in preservation in the Township. JulieAnn's presentation began with a definition of historic districts, with the Merion neighborhood around Latch's Lane and Highland Avenue cited as a good example of a logical historic district due to the overall quality of the houses, the integration of the landscape and the homes and the overall architectural integrity found in the community. Pennsylvania law provides for a framework to preserve properties within historic districts and JulieAnn will be writing a formal description of the proposed Merion historic district, hopefully culminating in the writing of the Township ordinance to establish the district, anticipated to be completed in about a year's time from start to finish. It was noted that it is Township custom, but not a legal requirement for the consent of 70% of the property owners within the proposed boundaries of the historic district to move the designation forward in the Township process.

The purpose of creating a district in Merion is to ensure that the character of the neighborhood and the associated property values are maintained. The current preliminary boundaries are around the very large properties on N. Highland Avenue and N. Latch's Lane, but Ms. Murphy believes the boundaries could be shifted to reflect some aspects of the changing "story" of

Merion from a community of farmland and grand estates to a community of commuters. Ms. Murphy will be seeking input from the residents to help her define the historic district.

President's Report – President Kalner noted that there is a house and garden tour of the Merion neighborhood scheduled for September 29, organized by the Lower Merion Conservancy in conjunction with the Civic Association. He reminded all present that the last Centennial celebration event is coming up on October 20, the 100th Annual Meeting. Father Gillespie of St. Joseph's University will give a talk that will address current events in 1913, the year of the founding of MCA.

President Kalner reported that the Township comprehensive plan is expected to take an additional 9 months, with the overall project taking approximately 3 years to complete, roughly twice the duration that was originally targeted. Once the final plan is adopted by the Board of Commissioners, legislation will be developed as an outgrowth of the plan to regulate land use. There will be a quarterly meeting in October to integrate the work of all the committees working on the plan.

Preliminary planning efforts on improvements for the Merion/ Cynwyd business district are proceeding and several meetings have been held with the two local Township commissioners, Township staff, district property owners, proprietors and members of the MCA and the Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd. A presentation of the 2007 planning study that is shaping these discussions will be made at an upcoming meeting.

The Rockland Avenue bridge has been taken down. President Kalner will be meeting soon with State Representative Mary Jo Dailey to discuss the possibility of getting some state funds to relocate the temporary South Narberth Avenue pedestrian bridge to the Rockland Avenue location.

The Merion train station clean-up is scheduled for October 13 at 9:30 a.m.

Commissioner -- Commissioner Gordon began his report with a discussion on the proposed roundabout at the intersection of East Wynnewood Road and North Narberth Avenue, confirming that the idea was voted down by the Township Commissioners in favor of a traffic light, which will likely be installed in about one year's time.

On St. Charles Borromeo, Commissioner Gordon said there is a Township proposal to develop athletic fields on the southern portion of the site, possibly using Lancaster Avenue instead of Wynnewood Road as the entrance and egress access. Bishop Senior, the head of the Seminary, spoke to Commissioner Gordon about St. Charles taking its time on making decisions about the redevelopment of the property to ensure that its options are not unnecessarily limited.

Idris Road has been paved, the curbing is in, and the topsoil along the tracks is being prepared for the planting. The work crew has done a thoughtful and careful job.

Committee Reports

Federation of Civic Associations -- Kevin Murphy reported that the main topics at the last meeting included the comprehensive plan; the roundabout on East Wynnewood Road; the

choice zones for the two high schools; Jim Greenfield, an attorney, was hired to keep the Federation apprised of comprehensive plan proceedings to aid in understanding the potential implications for proposed strategies for changes in land use regulation.

Community Watch -- Kevin Murphy reported that a mailer went out to recruit volunteers.

Narberth Fire Company/Union Fire Company – Kevin Murphy reported that the firehouses are conducting open houses, recruiting new volunteers as well as fundraising.

Community Action, Zoning and PR -- Les Greenberg gave updates on real estate developments in the near future -- at the Wynnewood Shopping Center and the Whole Foods project.

Old Business – None

New Business – Todd Sinai reported that, in response to the pending redevelopment of the St. Charles Borromeo seminary, he and several nearby community residents are forming a group called Coalition for Neighborhood Quality, to enhance community involvement and keep neighbors involved in the discussions with both the seminary and the Township on the project's development.

There being no more new business, a motion was made and seconded and the meeting was 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 22, 2013 at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Guy, Secretary