

Washington Square West Civic Association

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

January 12, 2021

Conducted Via Zoom

- I. Call to order by the President, Neal Pratt at 7:06 PM
- II. Attendance: 1. Neal Pratt, 2. Robert Sher, 3. Deb Sweeney, 4. Rick Spitzborg, 5. Judy Applebaum, 6. Catalina Gonzalez, 7. Tami Sortman, 8. Jonathan Broh, 9. Sukrit Goswami, 10. Carl Engelke, 11. Richard Lee, 12. Marisa Shaaban
- III. President's Report:

Sen. Nikil Saval, 1st Senate district, was the meeting guest and introduced by Neal Pratt, President. He responded to questions from the board and community as follows:.

- 1). Is there additional state relief for the theaters? Federal stimulus packages and borrowing packages have been initiated at the local level.
- 2). How can violent crime be addressed as a fundamental right? This is being seen in many cities. I am a proponent of gun control and strong measures of relief for working class and poor residents needs to be addressed to help with the issues of violence. We need to be investing in our communities.
- 3). How do you expect to work with the public school system as they return to pre-pandemic learning in the classroom? A) Budget funding needs to be increased by \$300,000,000 through a fair and revised funding formula. B) Leveraging federal funding on a broad remediation now of facilities and in the future to be environmentally sound.
- 4). How do you see limiting the number of medical marijuana facilities? I will be happy to look into it for you.
- 5). How can you shift the Public Utility Commission from the current policies to advancing for clean energy standards? A) Need five on the commission rather than current four. B) Establish a clean energy standard higher than the current standard in neighboring states. C) Work on the climate caucus setting goals that move to higher clean energy standards. D) Broader community awareness of climate.
- 6) How do you plan to help solve homelessness in the 1st district? A) Transform the housing system to house people. B) Vacant land use for housing. C) Maintaining current housing and helping to keep people in their homes.
- 7) What committees have you received an assignment for? Assignments will be available on Thursday.
- 8) What safety precautions are in place to secure Harrisburg? There are increased security measures. Senate is still in remote sessions.
- 9). What is the possibility of one year only to redistribute taxes to the lower income population (progressive taxes)? A) This is a hope of many but laws prohibit this currently. The proposal is a fair share tax plan. This has been a difficult issue to deal with given the many local issues and organization is a challenge. Several groups are working toward this.
- 10). Extension of premises is a challenge. How can you help WSW with this issue? The office has a dedicated staff to help work through these perceived violations. This will be followed up systemically to address the issue.
- 11) How can you help with the historic preservation of WSW? Historical sites and buildings are throughout the city and need to be preserved. Expanding tax credits to provide some incentive

to developers with an emphasis on preservation rather than demolition. Advocacy is an important step and the senator's office has a full time person to work on this. There will be a focus and support this initiative.

12) Considering that public school children have not been in school since March, what can you do to help provide services and get our students back in to schools? The broad feeling among educators is that schools are not safe to be open. Rapid distribution of the vaccine is critical in creating a safe environment for return to schools. There is a need to expand safe access sites allowing students to learn. School facilities need to be evaluated for safe conditions. Community ideas on potential solutions are welcome.

Sen. Saval looks forward to working with the civic on all issues in Washington Square West, Philadelphia and the Commonwealth.

IV. The board approved minutes from December 8, 2020 meeting.

VI. Treasure's Report:
No updates.

VII. Committee Report

Zoning Nothing to vote on this month.

At the January 26 meeting there will be a 123-127 12th Street civic design review for proposed high rise.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:02 PM by Neal Pratt. NEXT MEETING: February 9, 2021 at 7PM via Zoom

~The WSWC always welcomes and encourages the public to attend meetings. The Civic is in need of individuals willing to be involved in the Civic activities and to serve on the various committees.~