

Washington Square West Civic Association

Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors

October 10, 2023

The meeting held via Zoom was called to order at 7:00pm Eastern Time by Tami Sortman, President of the Association.

The following Directors were present:

- Jonathan Broh
- Leigh Ann Campbell
- Patrick Coue
- Sukrit Goswami
- Richard Le
- Katie Low
- Casey Kuklick
- Russell Richie
- Marisa Shaaban, Vice President
- Robert Sher, Treasurer
- Tami Sortman, President
- Deb Sweeney

Absent:

- Drew Moyer, Secretary

Ms. Sortman welcomed members and attendees and reviewed the agenda. The minutes of the meeting held on September 12, 2023, were unanimously approved as written.

Ms. Shaaban reviewed the process for the annual board of directors' election to be held next month at the Association's annual meeting. The meeting will be held in-person at a location on Jefferson University Hospital's campus. The specifics of the location will be provided in the weekly e-post newsletter and on social media. Ms.

Shaaban explained that there are seven board seats that are up for election. In addition to four director positions with terms expiring this year, there are three vacancies including one created by the recent resignation of Julia Hutnik who moved out of the community.

The following members expressed interest in being a candidate and met the criteria as outlined in the Association's by-laws. They will be invited to make a statement at the Annual Meeting. They are:

Current Board members up for election:

Richard Le

Marisa Shaban

Robert Sher

Deborah Sweeney

Candidates for Board:

Peter Coe

Andrew Ferrarelli

Andrew Jones

Ashkay Kamath

Ms. Shaaban and Ms. Sortman announced that a community meeting was scheduled for Oct. 25 via Zoom with invited guests from Chinatown and other organizations who will speak. This will be another community meeting like one held earlier when 76Place representatives and Comcast Spectacor representatives had the opportunity to address the community.

Mr. Sher, Treasurer, reported that the Association's annual tax return was filed. He noted that additional volunteers are needed to help share the work related to membership and finance.

Russell Richie reported for the membership committee and invited members to attend the monthly committee meeting held on the 3rd Monday of every month.

Deb Sweeney reported for the Greening Committee and announced that the annual Cleanup Day will be held on December 2, 2023, from 9am-2pm. She reviewed coordination with the city, police, the bicycle coalition, and volunteers. There will be additional signage this year for safety.

Katie Low announced that a grant was received for street beautification and improving window and façade appearance on vacant storefronts.

Jonathan Broh, Chair of the Zoning Committee, reported that there were no zoning matters requiring a vote this month. However, he noted that the Art Commission reviewed signage on the new Jefferson building at 1101-1153 Chestnut St. which was discussed at last month's meeting. The Zoning Committee recommended non-opposition to which the Board unanimously agreed. He reviewed two matters which were likely to come before the Committee at its October meeting. They are:

1. 1206 Walnut Street – a restaurant seeking a special exception for take-out service.
2. 708 Sansom St. (formerly the Toll Bros. site) – variances relating to above-ground parking. This is a joint issue with Society Hill.

Mr. Broh covered a topic relating to the Historical District application. Any property that has been in commercial use for 25 years or more and is over 2,500 sq. ft. would be exempt from historical district restrictions. This has created a concern regarding the potential for visitor accommodation (Air BnB) usage for hundreds of dwelling units in the neighborhood. The Zoning Committee is collaborating with the Councilperson's office on a potential zoning overlay to address this issue. Further action on this will include a public hearing.

Ms. Sortman reported that the Historic District application was submitted to the

Philadelphia Historical Commission and is under review. The Association and the Preservation Alliance are working to address PHC comments, primarily relating to images used in the application. It is hoped that approval will be received by year-end.

Mr. Casey updated members on the tree planting day scheduled for November 18.

Patrick Coue's resignation was accepted by the Board due to his planned move out of the state. He expressed his appreciation for the Board and the work of the Association.

Ms. Sortman invited comments from the community at which time a resident expressed concerns over changes to a neighbor's living structure and installation of a gate at an adjacent parking lot. Mr. Broh provided information on permitting and variance requirements relating to these matters.

There being no further business, a motion was made, seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:07 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Drew A. Moyer

Secretary

(via Zoom video replay)