

SOSNA General Meeting  
9/13/06 – meeting notes

SOSNA Board Chair Charles “Les” Robbins opened the meeting at 7:40 PM. A motion to approve the minutes of the June General meeting was made, seconded, and passed.

Robbins introduced guests from the Recycling Alliance who made a presentation on the state of recycling in Philadelphia and their new “Recycle Now” campaign. While the City was one of the first to have a recycling program, it now lags behind many other cities in the volume it recycles. In fact, the City is out of compliance on 14 of 19 provisions of recycling statutes. Blue Mountain Recycling on Grays Ferry Avenue currently has the capacity to recycle a broad range of materials without the need for sorting and the City Controller’s office believes that the City could cover the cost of recycling and actually increase revenues if recycling were increased, however the Streets Department disagrees and is reluctant to increase recycling. Programs like Recycle Bank have been shown to increase the level of participation on the part of residents. The Recycle Now program is asking residents to put pressure on current City officials and Mayoral candidates to increase recycling. A petition was circulated (and will be available in the SOSNA office). Residents are encouraged to contact their council person to ask for improved recycling opportunities.

Robbins introduced Lt. Deal from the 17<sup>th</sup> Police District who gave an update on crime in the SOSNA area. There was one shooting in the area on South Street on August 9. Theft from autos is decreasing, but residents are still being warned to not leave anything in their cars that might attract attention – this includes things like empty store bags that thieves might think contain goods and loose change. He answered questions from the audience and provided the following information:

- The area on 20<sup>th</sup> between Christian and Carpenter is improving with at least one drug dealer arrested. Best method for eliminating dealers is to eliminate demand. Most demand in our area is local.
- There is a “park and walk” unit in place around 22<sup>nd</sup> and St. Albans
- A bike patrol of at least 4 officers is operating in the area. They are effective because dealers have a hard time spotting them.
- The Curfew Center is helping and serves as a warning for kids who may be on the borderline

Robbins introduced guest Keri White of the Center City District. White works on the District’s Center City School’s partnership program with the Philadelphia School District. She gave a brief overview of the program noting that the new Center City Region is up and running. She promoted the upcoming Elementary School Fair to be held at the Convention Center in October. A number of questions were asked about Center City set-asides at magnet high schools and charter schools. At present, there are no set-asides at the magnet high schools and each charter school has it’s own policy.

She noted that Paul Vallas is in favor of regional set-asides because of the very high cost of bussing students.

Robbins introduced Gary Spahn who was representing the SOSNA Election Committee. Spahn gave an overview of the election process and named the other members of the Election Committee. He noted that nominations would be taken for the five board positions currently being filled by Juanita James, John McHugh, Sharon Melvin, Les Robbins, and Marni Showell. He noted that Marni Showell had reached the limit of her board time and was not eligible for re-election. The remaining board members were eligible to be nominated.

Spahn read the qualifications for nominations including documented attendance at a minimum of four general meetings or Special Service Area Briefings. He reported that the Election Committee had compiled a spreadsheet of the number of meetings each person has attended and 24 people were eligible to be nominated (not including sitting board members not up for re-election). Spahn then read the names of those eligible for nominations.

A number of questions were asked from the floor as follows; responses were by Gary Spahn unless otherwise noted:

Q: Did the meeting about 2400 South Street count towards eligibility?

A: No, OHCD determined that the 2400 South meeting did not count.

Q: Who defines a Special Services Area Briefing?

A: OHCD

Q: How many additional people would qualify if the 2400 South meeting was counted?

A: About 5 for nominations and a few more for voting.

Q: Did the Election Committee come to a different conclusion than OHCD about counting the 2400 South meeting?

A: Yes, the Election Committee came to a consensus that the meeting was valid and should be counted, but OHCD was consulted and overruled the Committee

Q: Is it standard practice for SOSNA to ask OHCD to validate meetings?

A: Clearly stating that this was his opinion, Spahn stated that he felt there was more dependence on OHCD throughout the process than necessary.

Q: Did the Election Committee contact OHCD for a ruling on this meeting?

A: No, the question was raised by a non-Election Committee member who was present at the Election Committee meeting.

Q: Is the membership empowered to change how this kind of situation is handled?

A: Yes, members can vote for a bylaws change to change the voting requirements. However, bylaws changes must not conflict with OHCD's NAC contract.

Q: Was there a bylaws amendment proposed to change the voting requirements?

A: Robbins answered that a change had been proposed however it was a legal matter and he would not discuss the issue.

Q: The bylaws state that the Election Committee governs the elections. Why is a government funder involved in this decision-making process?

A: Robbins stated that time was limited and it was necessary to move on with the agenda. He commented that as part of its strategic planning process over a year ago, the board discussed that SOSNA was evolving and that the NAC wasn't necessarily what should be driving the organization, however the board still needed to discuss the issue going forward.

Gary Spahn asked if there were additional questions and when there were none, opened the floor for nominations. The following were nominated to run for board positions:

- Andrew Kerber
- Bob Lewis
- John McHugh
- David Zuzga
- Charles "Les" Robbins
- Mark Scott
- Hanna Kim
- Sharon Melvin
- Ann Hoskins-Brown

Juanita James was nominated, but declined to run.

Spahn noted that the nominees would be asked to complete a short questionnaire prior to the election. The election will be held on October 11<sup>th</sup> at the Graduate Hospital Auditorium. Polls would open at 7:30 and close at 8:30 PM.

Debra Williams announced that the NAC would be holding its annual fall fair at Marian Anderson Recreation Center on Saturday September 16 from 12-5. The event is free and open to the public.

Eve Lewis announced that the Economic Development Committee is working with a consultant on a strategic plan which would be presented to the neighborhood in either October or November.

Upon a motion from the floor, the meeting was adjourned.