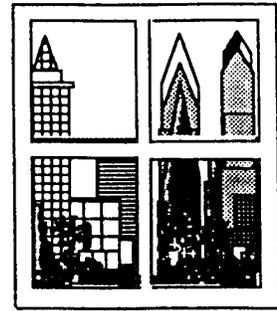


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S O S N A

Neighborhood Advisory Council
Board Meeting
September 29, 2004
-- Approved --

Attending: Laura Blanchard, Soledad Perez Gillespie, Ann Hoskins-Brown, Gloria Jackson, Ted Lee, Alan Mandel, Tony Moretti, Bill Pearson, Sam Porter, Jennie Robbins, Marni Showell, Doerte Smith

Guests: Eve Lewis, Larry Lane, various community members

Minutes: Upon a motion made by Doerte Smith, seconded by Bill Pearson and unanimously approved, it was resolved to accept the minutes from the August board meeting.

NAC Report: Eve Lewis reviewed the NAC Director's report and noted that about 143 blocks have either PMBC Block Captains or SOSNA Block Representatives. There are roughly 160 blocks within the service area.

She reported that we have received an additional \$1,500 contribution towards the Community Fair from Trigen along with \$110 in individual contributions and two \$20 vendor fees. Press releases about the Fair have been sent out and she has received confirmations that Representatives Babette Josephs and Harold James will be attending. The Commissioner of Records will also attend and there will be a broad range of entertainment and activities including choirs, drill teams, a science demonstration, the Happy House clinic and health screenings. Marni Showell expressed concerns about setting up the tents on Friday evening and it was agreed that it was worth the extra costs associated with a Saturday set-up. There are T-shirts for volunteers and gift certificates and other prizes for block captains. Tony Moretti suggested that we also offer gift certificates from the SOSNA Thrift Shop.

Ms. Lewis reported that Babette Joseph's office informed us that we would need to resubmit our grant proposal under new parameters set by the State. Ms. Josephs informed Ms. Lewis that the minimum grant size was \$5,000 (we had applied for \$3,000) and asked us to resubmit a \$5,000 proposal with \$2,000 of it allocated to other organizations to which Ms. Josephs had made previous commitments. The two groups, to receive \$1,000 each, are the Schuylkill River Park Dog Association and the Seger Dog Park Association.

Finally, Ms. Lewis reported that a suede jacket was stolen from the thrift shop and a police report was filed. She commented that the shop is blocked by chain link fencing from developers working on the block and expressed concerns about developers throughout the area being poor neighbors. Marni Showell suggested contacting L&I about the problem.

Alan Mandel commended Ms. Lewis for her creativity and excellent work organizing the Community Fair and moved we accept the NAC Directors Report. Gloria Jackson seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Finance Report: Tony Moretti presented the financial information we received from Tom Strybuc. It was noted that the cash flow portion was missing and Bill Pearson commented that we have been waiting over a year for regular cash flow reports from Mr. Strybuc. Laura Blanchard noted that this is why we are moving towards completing our financial/accounting work in house. Alan Mandel moved that we accept the Financial Report with reservations. Soledad Perez Gillespie seconded and all approved. The board noted with dismay that there was no Thrift Shop report and no TBSRP Report in addition to the missing cash flow document.

Personnel: Laura Blanchard announced that Drew Menton has left SOSNA for another position as of September 24, 2004. In addition, after reviewing the NAC and Housing Counseling budgets, we found there were funds available for administrative support personnel and have hired two part-time temporary administrative staff members. Both positions should become permanent and will need to be posted. The temps currently in the positions will be encouraged to apply for the permanent part-time positions. Ms. Blanchard noted that Sue Cole is back at work full time after her injury. She also noted that we will begin using ADP for our payroll service as of October 1, 2004.

Zoning: Doerte Smith reviewed the Zoning Report and noted that we are already fully booked for the October meeting. She noted that one request was from a new owner who applied to legalize a deck built by the previous owner without proper zoning. In order to expedite the process, Ms. Smith asked the new owner to create a survey with yes or no check boxes asking the neighbors if they objected to the deck or not in lieu of including it on the agenda for a community meeting. She noted that the majority of the Zoning Committee disagreed with her handling of this issue so a letter had not been written. Ms. Smith suggested to the owners that they move forward with their hearing without a letter from SOSNA. Soledad Perez Gillespie commented that she sent Ms. Smith a letter strongly objecting to waiving our process and indicated that we need to treat all owners equally in whatever we do. Ms. Smith noted that we had done something similar in the case of a garage that required legalization and she felt the same circumstances applied to the deck. Ms. Gillespie asked when the garage came up and Ms. Smith noted that she had sent the information to the Zoning Committee members via e-mail. Ms. Gillespie stressed her strong objection to conducting business via e-mail as it disenfranchised those committee members who do not have access to e-mail. Laura Blanchard suggested that this topic should be an expanded discussion for another date.

Elections: Laura Blanchard noted that the Elections Committee met in mid-September and pointed out that the expanded qualification dates for eligibility to run for the board or vote in the election was not included in the by-laws. She reviewed the various ways in which SOSNA had promoted the expanded eligibility for this transitional election and expressed deep concerns that if we did not stand by the expanded eligibility we would severely disenfranchise both candidates and voters. She reported that OHCD provided guidance on mechanisms by which we could adopt the expanded eligibility and that she asked the Election Committee to reconvene. The Election Committee did reconvene (see attached report) and recommended a one time exception to the SOSNA by-laws to allow those SOSNA members who have attended at least 4 General Meetings or Special Service Area Briefings between April 2003 and October 2004, inclusive, to be able to run for the SOSNA NAC Board and vote in the election.

Ann Hoskins-Brown moved that we accept the Election Committee's recommendation. Alan Mandel seconded the motion. Ted Lee disagreed with changing the by-laws at this juncture. He commented that the by-laws are the by-laws and changing them now sets a bad precedent. Laura Blanchard noted that she felt personally responsible and felt a moral obligation to uphold the spirit of our commitment to the community. Marni Showell commented that we are all responsible. Mr. Mandel felt that we had all worked hard on the bylaws and made a simple human mistake. He went on to note that the integrity and honor of the organization was at stake. Mr. Lee reiterated his displeasure at changing the bylaws and Doerte Smith replied that maintaining our integrity is critical. Bill Pearson reminded the board how much pressure we were under when we were revising the bylaws and commented that this was an opportunity to correct a mistake. He went on to note that the change only impacts this transitional year.

Ms. Blanchard called the question and the motion passed with 9 in favor, 0 opposed and 2 not voting. The Chair also did not vote.

The Election Committee made a second recommendation to hold two meetings in October 2004, the first to count towards the 2004 election qualifications and the second to count towards the 2005 election qualification. Ted Lee suggested that attendance at the October meeting can count for both the 2004 and 2005 elections. The board agreed with this recommendation and declined to vote on the Election Committee's second recommendation.

17th and Carpenter Development: It was reported that the development is progressing slowly but is still on target. There are several lots owned by HUD that need to be transferred but HUD isn't working to move this forward. Doerte Smith will send Ms. Blanchard a reminder about the situation. Ms. Smith also reported that the partnership agreement with Universal is almost ready to sign but now needs to be changed to include language about an environmental study.

Strategic Plan: Eve Lewis reported that the Planning Commission is working on our neighborhood strategic plan, but that it is one of over 60 that they are completing.

Open Space: Doerte Smith attended the PACDC sponsored meeting on open space. She reported that the City is finally doing an open space plan and suggested that we move forward aggressively on this. She noted that there are funds available for planning and technical assistance but that it is a long process and requires some matching funds. Tony Moretti reported that the Fitzwater 2000 gardeners were unhappy about their situation and felt that the City had "dropped the ball."

Schools: Ann Hoskins-Brown reported on the Central Philadelphia Development Corporation's new education initiative and commented that the schools in our service area are included in this initiative. Soledad Perez Gillespie remarked that the children at Pierce were selling candy to raise funds to honor the Honor students. Marni Showell noted that the Pierce students had been very generous to the seniors and St. Anthony's. Doerte Smith asked if the schools have been notified of the Community Fair and Eve Lewis will follow up.

History and Architecture: Laura Blanchard wrote a letter to the Claneil Foundation asking for an extension of our grant and noted that the Pew Charitable Trusts has a new initiative that may help with this project.

Resolutions: Laura Blanchard noted that due to Doerte Smith's careful stewardship of our funds, we have excess funds available from our Year 29 NAC Contract. She has discussed the use of the funds with OHCD who has approved spending part of the funds on equipment to

include a PA system; part of the funds on part-time NAC staff; part of the funds to hire LaSalle Non Profit Management to help with board training and development; and part of the funds to hire a part-time Executive Director.

The board reviewed the proposal from LaSalle Non Profit Management. Doerte Smith moved to accept the LaSalle proposal, Soledad Perez Gillespie seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Laura Blanchard reported that there is \$3,500 in the NAC contract to put towards hiring a part-time Executive Director. In addition, she has spoken with Vernon Cothran who felt we could find additional funds to support the position from the Housing Counseling contract. The personnel committee solicited proposals from three consultants, David Feldman, Delores Williams, and Lamar Wilson, and is recommending that the board accept the proposal offered by David Feldman. Alan Mandel asked for Tony Moretti's opinion of the proposal. Mr. Moretti felt it was a strong proposal and a fair price. He noted that if we ended the year with a surplus our contract may be reduced in the future and commented that this is a "use it or lose it" situation. Mr. Mandel also asked for Doerte Smith's opinion. Ms. Smith commented that the organization is at a critical juncture and these services are strongly needed. She commented that the board needs leadership on a day-to-day basis. Mr. Moretti noted that hiring someone full time at this point is cost prohibitive. Bill Pearson questioned whether, as a part-time consultant, Mr. Feldman would be considered an Executive Director by foundations. Laura Blanchard noted that the William Penn Foundation had suggested this model to us. Ms. Smith expressed her hope that moving forward with this proposal would help SOSNA to achieve a direction for the long term. Upon review of the contract, it was suggested to change "identification of funds" to identification and acquisition of funds." Alan Mandel moved to accept the modified contract; Doerte Smith seconded the motion and the motion carried with one not voting. Bill Pearson expressed his displeasure at receiving the information at the last minute.

Resolution regarding Universal: Alan Mandel noted that development is happening all over the neighborhood with the exception of the properties owned by either Universal Communities or personally owned by its Chair, Kenneth Gamble. He asked that SOSNA ask for an accounting of those properties with a report on their status and a timeline for development. Doerte Smith suggested inviting Rahim Islam to a General Meeting to give a report and commented it is her understanding that Universal has hired an architectural firm to convert the Royal Theater into a Supper Club and their development at 16th and South is moving forward. Mr. Mandel responded that he is not looking for an oral report, but for a written list of all the properties conveyed to Universal thus far with a status report and timeline for development of each property. Laura Blanchard pointed out that while the UniPen Partnership was terminated, the City is working with a new partnership between Universal and PHA. Doerte Smith pointed out the complexity of larger scale developments.

Alan Mandel moved that SOSNA ask the Redevelopment Authority and City Council President Anna C. Verna's office to report on the development status of all properties in the SOSNA service area condemned or transferred to Universal since 1990, including Bainbridge West acquisitions and the Royal Theatre, as well as any properties received through VPRC; and that SOSNA ask Universal to report on the status of the roughly 25 vacant properties personally owned by Kenneth Gamble. SOSNA asks that this report consist of a list of all properties; the status of each; and the timeline for their development. Doerte Smith seconded. The motion carried with 9 in favor and two opposed with the Chair not voting. The information will be distributed to the public at a SOSNA General Meeting upon receipt.

New Business: Laura Blanchard reported on a conversation with Belinda Mayo regarding our meeting space. Ms. Mayo questioned whether or not our meetings were handicapped accessible and said we need to hold meetings in a venue that is accessible and in the center of the neighborhood. Eve Lewis will look into alternative venue options.

Alan Mandel asked if there were funds available to offer Ms. Lewis a salary increase. Laura Blanchard noted that funds are available but we must complete the review process first.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM upon a motion by Bill Pearson, seconded by Soledad Perez Gillespie and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted
Ann Hoskins-Brown
Interim Recording Secretary