



**Neighborhood Advisory Council  
General Meeting Minutes  
April 13, 2005**

-- APPROVED --

**S O S N A**

Ann Hoskins-Brown, Chair opened the meeting at 7:40 pm and welcomed everyone in attendance.

The minutes from the March meeting were unanimously approved.

Ms. Ann Hoskins-Brown read the zoning agenda for the upcoming SOSNA Community Zoning Meeting on Wednesday, March 16, 2005 and encouraged neighbors to attend.

Ms. Hoskins-Brown informed the members of the recent resignation of Ms. Marian Jones leaving a vacancy on the Board. When this occurs the Bylaws state that the Board can appoint a member to fill the position. The Board has appointed Stephanie Green to fill the position until the election in October 2005. Ms. Green was introduced to the membership.

**Action: A motion was made and seconded to ratify the action taken by the Board to appoint Stephanie Green to the Board. The motion was unanimously approved.**

Eve Lewis, NAC Director announced the programs available at Sharon Savings Bank and the need for community support. Sharon Savings Bank is the only bank in the SOSNA service area and has not received community support anticipated. Ms. Lewis added that all businesses on South Street and in the service area need our support. Ms. Lewis introduced Ms. Kao Kue of the Empowerment Group and announced the upcoming fundraiser to promote small businesses in Philadelphia. Ms. Jessie Frisby, President of the South Street West Business Association (SSWBA) invited Ms. Kao to present at the SSWBA monthly meeting.

**Introduction of Guests:** Ms. Hoskins-Brown introduced Mr. Abdur-Rahim Islam, President of Universal Companies. Mr. Islam gave a brief summary of Universal Companies and Universal's methodology. He discussed the challenges of building market rate housing opposed to building affordable housing and the learning curve. *Mr. Islam then introduced his associates Mr. Jeffrey Cruse, Sr. Vice President of Real Estate, Mr. Stanley Perry, Real Estate Manager and Ms. Patricia Wilson-Aden, Vice President of Arts, Entertainment and Cultural Affairs.*

**Mr. Jeffrey Cruse** gave an update on Bainbridge West. The Bainbridge West development is from 15<sup>th</sup> Street – 17<sup>th</sup> Street from South Street to Christian Street. Mr. Cruse stated they have been working to build a community where everyone can live while staying competitive with other developers. Universal is doing both rehab and new construction building in stages (i.e. 2 units then 5 then 7 etc.) until all the units are completed. If residents have complaints with any buildings or lots, residents are to contact Universal at (215) 732-6518 and they will respond. Moving from affordable to market rate has had its challenges. Mr. Cruse stated twenty-seven (27) units were acquired at fair market value.

**Mr. Stanley Perry**, Project Manager for the 17<sup>th</sup> & Carpenter Street LLC development, a partnership between SOSNA and Universal Companies. Mr. Perry is also the Project Manager for the Point Breeze Estates, an affordable housing development at 16<sup>th</sup> and Federal. Mr. Perry spoke of the partnership

between SOSNA and Universal and applauded Ms. Susan Cole, SOSNA's Housing Director for her participation and counseling of the applicants for the Point Breeze Estates.

The 17<sup>th</sup> & Carpenter Street development consists of 21 units – 17 affordable, 3-market rate and 1 disabled unit. A total of 35 parcels are required for the development. Construction is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2005. The cost of construction is roughly 7.5 million dollars. No properties have been conveyed as of yet. Four properties are still in the transfer process from PHA to the new entity, pending HUD approval. The PHA Board agreed to transfer the property in October of 2004.

Mr. Islam introduced **Ms. Patricia Wilson-Aden**. Ms. Aden discussed the larger vision of the surrounding area – creating viable employment, economic recovery, education and viable commercial use that build on the musical heritage and resources to sustain that. Ms. Aden stated that there are 4 components:

- Relocate R&B Museum to Philadelphia
- Establish R&B Center
- Festivals (R&B)
- Entertainment District (From 13<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> Street)

Universal has identified an Architectural firm, Vitetta to study reuse of the Royal, who is currently working on City Hall. The project has the support of the Historic Preservation Alliance, Center City District, and the Greater Philadelphia Tourism. Ms. Aden informed residents that Universal is undertaking a number of studies: economic impact study of the music industry; competitive analysis; currently waiting for funding to do a feasibility study of the Royal as a restaurant live performance venue.

Universal is committed to improving the appearance of the Royal. Universal will undertake some beautification steps short term and anticipate funding for long-term measures to secure the building from further damage.

## **Q&A**

A resident questioned if parking was being considered. Discussion ensued about parking; metered lots were discussed as an option as well as parking lots at Broad Street and Washington Avenue.

A Homeowner was concerned about the resale of affordable units. Mr. Islam stated there were deed restrictions to maintain affordability.

Residents were concerned with Universal's capacity to develop what is owned and that other businesses were cropping up on South Street. Mr. Islam was asked for a firm timeline for the development of the Royal. Mr. Islam stated there was none. Ms. Aden stated studies are currently underway and conceptual plans should be completed by the end of the year.

A resident requested a copy of Universal's Annual Report. Mr. Islam stated that Universal does not produce an Annual Report. Discussion ensued.

Meeting adjourned.

*Respectfully submitted  
Eve Lewis  
NAC Director*