

## QVNA Board Meeting

March 7, 2013

Present: Jeff Hornstein, Amy Shelanski, Bill Landy, Kathy Dilonardo, Kim Maialetti, Leslie Patterson-Tyler, Amy Grant, Carla Puppini (Executive Director) Cathy Conway (Emeritus)

Absent: Lauren Leonard, Honey Pertnoy

Guests: Jean Barr,

### 1. Minutes

The minutes were reviewed and some corrections noted.

**\*Amy Shelanski moved that the minutes be approved as corrected, Amy Singh Grant seconded the motion, and all approved by unanimous voice vote.**

### 2. Financials.

Bill Landy reviewed the financial statements, which he noted were all in the normal course. He specifically pointed out some good donations received in connection with the Queen Village Community Center fund-raising effort.

The financial report was accepted by all by unanimous voice vote.

### 3. President's Report.

a. ILMC Update. Jeff Hornstein and Carla Puppini met with Barry Promos and ILMC (Interstate Land Management Corporation) attorney, David Scolnic. Jeff has talked with many ILMC board members and developed strategy. Marge Scherneck, ILMC board member, supports QVNA and has looked at charges for other lots. She advised that the QVNA proposal and ILMC response were never presented to the ILMC Board. Pennsport and Whitman representatives on the ILMC Board support QVNA - Pennsport wants to open a lot south of Washington and wants QVNA's support. Marge met with Senator Farnese and has his support. Jeff proposes that QVNA come back with a \$32,000 annual payment counter-offer for both lots with no revenue sharing. Bill Landy proposed that Board approve starting with a 10% increase, rather than 20%, but give QVNA right to go up to 25%. Jeff said that Marge thinks 20% would be reasonable and accepted, would be supported by Senator Farnese and would be approved by ILMC in April.

**\*Amy Shelanski moved that Jeff's counterproposal be approved, Amy Singh Grant seconded the motion, and all approved by unanimous voice vote.**

b. AVI Update. 10,000 assessments are still not done, according to Councilman Kenney. The City Controller's office has sent out information that it is its opinion that the assessment is

unfair and inaccurate. Jeff thinks City Council may ask that the assessment be re-done. Bill wondered how a reassessment could be done by the end of June before the budget is set. Some people have called and been told that it's not the time to talk about numbers, but the basis of the assessment. Energy among the city's civic organizations is building to oppose the assessment. The Office of Property Assessment has been asked to explain its methods. Each civic will contribute to hire a researcher to massage the data. Amy Shelanski asked what will happen if enough people complain. Councilman Kenney proposed a bill that there be a 1% tax rate, regardless of the assessment. Mayor Nutter makes the budget proposal on Thursday next week, budget hearings start after that and some hearings will address assessment issues. Carla noted that there will be a Q&A meeting at Maria Goretti High School on Saturday. Several neighborhood-based clinics are also being planned. The end result may be a one-year delay on implementation. Jeff noted that, once you have new assessments, you have to be revenue neutral for a year, so there wouldn't be another interim rate adjustment. Richard Wolk, chair of the QVNA tax committee, is attending tax meetings and working on response plan. Cathy Conway noted that Pennsport is holding clinic on Wednesday, 3/13, but there doesn't seem to be an organized effort by realtors. Jeff said that Alex Scherneck has written a good article for next *The Crier*. First level appeals aren't mandatory before going to BRT (Board of Revision of Taxes) appeal. The BRT appeal deadline is October 7<sup>th</sup>, but tax bills won't go out until December. Cathy said that mortgage companies are looking at OPA's 2014 assessment values and taxes, and people are being denied mortgages based on the assessment values/tax bills. Jeff said that Cathy should testify at a City Council meeting on the subject about people being denied mortgages. Cathy noted that she attended a meeting with Councilmen Squilla and Kenney and thinks they're willing to negotiate on the tax rate, when she believes we should be holding firm at 1% rate. Many agree the reassessment initiative is having a bad impact on newly recovering housing market. The spending problem in Philadelphia is based partly on huge city pensions. Jeff noted that many cities get more income from property taxes than Philadelphia and some think the shift is a good idea; Philadelphia has one of the highest wage tax. Pennsylvania is constitutionally prohibited from having a graduated tax – it has to be equal across the board. Kim Maialetti asked whether we can develop a strategy for attacking the issue and asked whether Richard Wolk's committee is working on one. Jeff thinks coordination will be at the City level, rather than the civic level. The civic coalition will send the civics information and we'll distribute that information to the neighborhood elist. There is also some talk about a class action suit against City for doing such a poor job, as some other cities have done. Jeff will talk with Richard and the civic coalition to find out what is the plan of attack.

Kim asked what are QVNA's next steps. Jeff proposes that as many people as possible attend City Council hearings – that's where we should put pressure. Kim noted that we need to tell people when they are and what the issues are, and asked whether we should send out action letters. Cathy noted that we should ask Richard to let us know what his committee is doing. AS: There are organizations like the anti-casino group that have communication capabilities. Jeff will recommend to the Tax Coalition that it eblast information about City Council meetings and said we should have a sense of what to do by the March general meeting.

Amy Grant noted that we have 1100 neighbors on our email list and there are 4000 in the neighborhood. We should use our existing list to ask people to check with their neighbors and have additional emails added. We could also use people who distribute The Crier to ask for email addresses.

#### 4. Executive Director Report

**Front Street green space:** Carla met with Front Street neighbors (Betty Borodiak, Maria Roberts, Joann \_\_\_\_ ) and Julie Snell, PHS Project Manager for the ILMC areas, on February 15th. They discussed design possibilities, funding possibilities; tying the area into the linkage system to the river. This is the perfect time to do so with the renovation of Shot Tower and the storm water management push in all these projects.

Neighbors asked about tree removal in “Mary St Garden” at League and Washington. ILMC covers the costs of these removals.

**Ongoing follow-up with Hancock Street neighbors behind 7-11:** There are ongoing issues related to litter maintenance, noise of air conditioners/condensers and landscaping. There have been emails and discussions with neighbors and with the 7-11 manager(s).

**AVI:** Carla has received a couple of calls/emails about AVI. She sat down with a senior neighbor on limited income to discuss the initiative for 45 minutes this week.

**QuickBooks Pro update:** Entering the information from online version has taken several hours this month; also the bookkeeping for donations coming in online is more time consuming.

**Community room rentals—busy time:** There were 5 in February and there are 5 coming up in March. Each rental entails about ½ hr—explaining rental guidelines and doing paperwork.

**Property Tax/rent rebates for seniors/those on disability:** Carla managed 4 inquiries this past month.

**QV Open House Tour:** Tour date is May 4, noon to 4 p.m. All is progressing on schedule. We have 3 houses so far. We are also working on incorporating a short historic talk into the tour (possibly in front of Twisted Tail Tavern).

**Mural Arts Temporary Rain Art Project:** Carla will be part of the stakeholder walk-through with Stacy Levy Friday, March 8 noon.

**QVNA Logo:** We’ve received one Logo design so far.

#### 5. New Business

a. Communications Committee. Amy Grant reported statistics as of January 31st of website use. The newsletter was sent out to 1100 recipients and 470 opened, which Amy noted is a pretty high rate (17% higher than industry average). There were only 9 bounce backs. There have also been 1600 views on Twitter. The most-clicked areas were donations. Amy thinks this data helps in formation of a communications committee and we may not need a

consultant. Amy noted that the website, e-newsletter, and app are all tied together (if you post an event or announcement on the website, it will automatically push out to our app and will appear in the newsletter). The committee will be reviewing best practices for utilizing these tools as part of the development of our plan and policy. Carla said she has a policy of not sending out materials for for-profit organizations. Kim proposed that we use Facebook to poll the community about issues as part of our plan. Amy responded that there are lots of great resources out there and that the committee would certainly look into it. Jeff asked whether we should create an internal board committee. Leslie Patterson-Tyler and Amy Shelsanski offered to Amy with communication matters.

- b. Friends of Bainbridge Green. A representative Christian Dunbar of Friends of Bainbridge Green (FBG) attended the meeting to announce that the organization has been awarded a Community Design Collaborative (CDC) grant, but the group needs \$1500 to accept the grant and must do so within thirty days. It currently has \$500, South Street Headhouse is giving \$500, and asks that QVNA give \$500. FBG will set up a task force of about 50 people to oversee project. A water project will also be sited on 4<sup>th</sup> Street. Jeff noted that Jonathan Rubin has published the project proposal online. Kim asked whether this was the first step in the design process and when community input will be secured. Design work and community input will come after the grant is accepted. FBG has a 10-member board and needs 25 more people from community. Kathy Dilonardo asked whether there will be larger open meetings for whole community. Carla noted that CDC requires a couple of community meetings.

**\*Kim moved that the FBG ask of a \$500 grant be approved, Amy Singh Grant seconded the motion, and all approved via unanimous voice vote.**

- c. Candidates Forum. Pennsport wants to partner with us on a City Controller's forum, which is the only real race going on. Jeff noted that he would rather not use a general meeting for forum, since we have important issues of AVI and public safety to cover in March. Jeff will look into inviting other local civics – SSHH, Pennsport, and Bella Vista – to hold a joint forum.
- d. By-Laws. Cindy Elliott and Amy Shelanski will work to prepare a revised draft of the By-Laws for the May meeting.

## 6. Committee Reports

- a. Schools & Youth. Sixers fund-raiser sales are lagging due partly to the Sixers poor standing and other competing fund-raising efforts. Leslie redesigned the fliers to emphasize kids and schools. The Committee needs \$500 to charter buses for the 80 person choir from Nebinger and Meredith schools which will sing before the game. Lisa French paid directly the first deposit required by Sixers, which was about \$400. The Committee will need \$1100 more and hopes ticket sales will cover this amount, but has some leads on other funders. Jeff will check with a contact about free or cheaper bus

options. The event is on April 14<sup>th</sup> at 3:30, with the choir singing on the concourse one hour before tip-off. Tickets can be bought on-line through Event Bright set up by Amy Singh Grant.

- b. Public Safety. Kim reported that there will be a lot of things going on at the March general meeting. There will be a *The Crier* article and lighting, surveillance cameras, other safety issues will be covered.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy A. Elliott  
Recording Secretary