

Queen Village Board Meeting minutes—September 10, 2009

Present: Jeff Rush, Neville Vakharia, Mike Hauptman, Richard Wolk, Ted Warren, Kathy Dilonardo, Bill Landy, Ed Bell, Steve Schatz and Kathy Conway (Emeritus)

Not Present: Walt Lowthian, Don Ackerman, Andy Speizman

Minutes: A motion was made to accept the minutes as written, seconded and passed by the board.

Treasurer's Report: Ed moved to accept the report and Ted seconded the motion which was passed by the board.

Director's Report:

**** Weccacoe Building improvements over the summer:** New light switches inside community room now, new, brighter exterior lights above entrance and community room window, new computer (thank you!)

Roof: Dept of Rec maintenance patched the roof in July. Repairs and improvements in the community room are now scheduled for mid-September.

The community room was used for 8 children's birthday parties/ baby showers this summer.

****Emanuel Lutheran Church (1001 S.4th St)** Congregation no longer meets there; has combined with another. In all likelihood, the Lutheran Church will put it on the market. Al Dorof co-chair of QVNA Historic Preservation Committee has written an article for the Sept *Crier* giving the rich history of the church and building. He has contacted Jon Farnham at the Phila Historical Commission, who will keep an eye out in case any development plans (condo etc) come through his office. Al has also contacted John Gallery of the Preservation Alliance, who might put an article about Emanuel Lutheran in their newsletter.

Al suggests that in the event the building goes on the market, that QVNA/Historical Preservation Committee sends out a "call to action" for residents to express their opinion that the building be preserved should a developer take it on—perhaps an e-petition which could be sent to the history committee e-mail box. We will stay tuned to whatever happens and forward information to the community.

****QVNA grants announcement to community greening groups:** Carla sent letters announcing the grants to all the greening groups in QV at the end of July. The deadline to submit applications is Sept. 15. Kathy has volunteered to head up a Grants Committee that would go over the grant requests and put them in priority order for board action. Neville made a motion that we establish such a committee with Kathy as chair. Richard seconded it and the motion passed. Carla is happy to serve on that committee as well.

****Mario Lanza Park** dog run. (See below under Nuisance Noise Committee.) This is a community issue beyond the scope of what the Friends of Mario Lanza Park or individual dog owners can deal with. We need to take action on this issue in conjunction with Friends of Mario Lanza Park.

****“An Evening with Marty Labb” talk (Thurs. June 25)** was an absolute success. Over 50 people attended and really enjoyed it (as did Marty). Richard was a great questioner. Al Dorof (Historic Preservation Committee co-chair) and I would like to organize a **second such evening of QV “history-telling”**---perhaps focusing on the building of I-95—sometime in the fall The board passed a motion to hold another “history –telling evening” and to provide \$75.00 for refreshments.

****Contribution for HeadHouse Soiree fundraiser on September 23:** QVNA is one of the sponsors. Mike made a motion that QVNA donate \$300 to the event which raises money for the rehabilitation of the structure. Ted seconded it and the motion passed.

****“Dog Free Area” in the grassy area next to Frederick’s restaurant.** A couple of residents with children contacted Carla last year and again in late May requesting that area (one of four grass areas

between Frederick's and South Street) be set aside for people. She forwarded the request to Jeff and Barry Promos, ILMC Executive Director (who manages that land)—back and forth emails—the ILMC Board approved, Jeff copied Walt, Don, and Kathy. Carla ordered and installed the 5 signs with help from one of the parents. ILMC paid for the signs (which read: “Dog Free Zone, This area for people to enjoy the grass” and underneath a smaller sign that reads “Sponsored by QVNA”)

Community response as measured by comments to QV office: 13 emails in support and thanking; 1 critical and asking for a meeting. One phone call from a resident who left message, but no call-back number; said that he represented 35 dog owners; expressed his dissatisfaction because of supposed “secret meeting”; indicated they would not abide by the signs.

A QV eblast went out and there is an article in the September *Crier* outlining the actions, background, and reasoning. As of Sept. 8, all signs were ripped out (most likely by 1 or 2 individuals). New signs are on order (paid for by ILMC). PA Horticultural Society will be doing turf renovation on that area in late Sept. and it will be cordoned off for about 3 weeks (publicized in *Crier* article).

****Crier ad insert page** We have had a number of businesses on the waiting list who want to advertise in the *Crier* so Carla priced out an insert page and filled its two sides with ads from area businesses, following up on discussions with Jeff. The first insert appears in the September issue of the *Crier*. The insert will pull in approximately \$500/month approximately in revenue beyond paying for printing and editing costs.

****Philadelphia Water Dept. (PWD) Rain Barrel Workshops/Stormwater Relief program.** QV resident Carla Castillo met with Carla to say that PWD will no longer be running rain barrel workshops in-house. They want to get community groups involved to implement stormwater management solutions at the community and household level.

Two ways in which PWD will encourage this involvement:

1. PWD is willing to help non-profits find funding to purchase rain barrels at a discount. PWD would train individuals to run a rain barrel workshop in the community.
2. PWD will issue an RFP in Spring, 2010, to non-profit organizations to submit their applications to be “Non Profit Green Home Centers.” Three or 4 non-profits throughout the city will be selected in a competitive process. They will receive funding to hire an individual to run rain barrel workshops, purchase and install rain barrels for homeowners that request them, and conduct follow up to make sure they are being used correctly. The 3 or 4 non-profits chosen to participate will most likely be distributed according to the different watersheds in the city.

Carla has taken the rain barrel workshop training and hopes that QVNA might want to get involved with this project---- we have an ideal place (Weccacoe) to offer workshops to QV and surrounding communities. Should QV decide to submit an application to be a “Non Profit Green Home Center,” Carla has indicated her interest—she speaks Spanish and could facilitate workshops in both English and Spanish, pulling in a much broader community.

At this point in time, this is an FYI so that you are aware of the above possibilities.

****QV Tree Tenders:** We gathered and submitted 16 homeowner request forms for trees from residents for the TreeVitalize Spring 2010 planting.

****Friends of Shot Tower applied for a Green Plan Philadelphia grant** to renovate the spray pool at Shot Tower, and combine with other sustainable practices. They asked for a letter of support from QVNA which we sent to them to include in the grant request

Community Design Collaborative: The Friends of Weccacoe are submitting a proposal to the Community Design Collaborative to develop a masterplan for Weccacoe. If they are awarded the grant, the board approved paying the \$1000 administrative fee so that the planning could proceed (architects and landscape designers donate their services estimated at \$30,000-\$50,000 and work with the community to help formulate the plan).

Central Delaware Advisory Group (CDAG): They would like to set up an outreach program regarding the Delaware waterfront that could include setting up a website to build community support for the waterfront; locating either casino there is a low standard for the waterfront. Jeff, who serves as one of the vice presidents of CDAG would like to see all civics donate to help in this cause. Mike moved that QVNA donate \$1000 to CDAG. It was seconded and the motion was passed.

Nuisance Noise Committee: Mario Lanza Park dog run area is experiencing serious noise problems intense from 6 a.m. to 8 am and barking dogs after 11 pm onto beyond midnight. We discussed possible solutions but none seemed enforceable. We need to address this problem in the coming month. There have been complaints both to the office and to Nuisance Noise Committee on the web site during the last two weeks. As a related item, Amy Shelanski emailed Carla to say that QV Dogs is defunct, so there is no dog owners' group.

Transportation Committee: A meeting was held in May among Streets Department, Police Department and QVNA representatives to discuss on site the implementation of the 10 recommendations made by the Transportation Committee under the chairmanship of Jim Markham and approved by the Board (reported in the June board minutes). While on-site at 2nd and Christian, the Streets Department suggested that Stop signs replace the lights at that intersection on a trial basis and that if it proves to be an improvement (i.e reducing the speed of motorists along Christian who currently speed up to try to get through the light, and increasing safety for pedestrians crossing there) the arrangement would become permanent. Richard Wolk, chair of the Transportation committee, brought it up to the committee over the summer and the committee voted by email (7 yes votes, 2 w/reservations, no "no" votes) to present a resolution to the board to conduct such an experiment. There have been 4 accidents in the last 16 months just west of Second on Christian and a number of near accidents involving pedestrians and cars. This was done at Second and South and has made it easier and safer for pedestrians to cross and forced motorists to slow down at that intersection. Richard presented the following motion which was seconded by Bill. The Board of QVNA approves the favorable resolution of its Transportation Committee who previously voted for the recommendation of the Streets and Police Department to ameliorate speeding and severe traffic congestion in the Christian Street corridor. Specifically, QVNA endorses an 8 month trial to change the four corners at Second Street and Christian/Moyamensing from traffic lights to stop signs. The trial will consist of three steps: First for a period of time all lights will blink red. The second step will be to post stop signs on all corners and turn off traffic lights. The third step would occur at the end of the trial. If the test has been declared successful, the traffic lights will be removed. This trial can be terminated by QVNA or the Streets Department at any time during the trial period when/if it has been determined that the test is not resulting in the safety improvement desired. During the discussion that followed, it was noted that for this to be effective and safe, that the delivery trucks parked in front of the 24-7 could not park there since they block a motorist's view of the oncoming traffic. The police are aware of that and are willing to follow-up on that if the experiment is implemented. It was noted that with the planned heavy construction on Washington Ave over the next three years that traffic will probably increase on Christian as people seek to avoid the delays on Washington, so we should do what we can to get a handle on this issue before that increase happens. The motion was passed. Before this begins, there will be announcements in the *Crier* and e-blasts to explain the nature and duration of the experiment.

Nominations for Board positions: The current officers (President, Executive Vice President, and Secretary) are up for re-election and all are eligible to run again under the by-laws. The current Vice President and Treasurer have served two terms and cannot run for those offices again. Ed Bell has been nominated to run for Vice President and Bill Landy has been nominated to run for Treasurer. In addition to officers, four of the Board positions must be filled by election at this time. Ted, who is currently in one of those positions is eligible to run again. There are three positions which have no current incumbent. Several other members of the community have indicated that they are willing to run as well.

Forgotten Blocks Committee: Ted Warren helped form this committee a year ago with others in the 5th-6th Street /Carpenter Street area. He reports that the Extract factory, currently unused, will be coming down shortly. He also reported that there is legislation (which may pass even as he is reporting) that makes it easier for citizens to seize blighted properties. Jeff said the committee has made a real difference in the area.

Taxes: Bill noted that 2010 property taxes are being sent out. Many of them are reflecting huge increases (as much as a 1000% increase in an example Bill had been sent by a QVNA resident). Bill said that each resident can go to the BRT website and check the 2010 amount for their home. Jeff read a letter that Councilman DiCicco had written to Charlotte Meade, the head of the BRT. The committee will be gathering more information about the tax bills and the city's plan for taxes and make recommendations to the board about possible actions.

Casinos: As nearly everyone is aware, Foxwoods has been directed to move back to its original site at Columbus and Reed Streets. SugarHouse could break ground at any time. Jeff made a motion that the board authorize a letter to Senator Farnese, with ccs to other politicians including the Mayor, Councilman DiCicco and State Representatives that they take time now to write legislation to reform the site-selection process and fully involve any local community/neighborhood considered as a casino site as well as the local civics. The motion was seconded and passed by the board. Jeff invited everyone to e-mail him with any other thoughts on how to attack the casino issue.

September General Membership meeting: The PWD will be there and Jeff asked that we invite Councilman DiCicco to address the tax issue.

Meeting was adjourned.

**Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Dilonardo
Secretary**