

**Fairmount Civic Association
General Membership Meeting
The City School
Thursday, October 30, 2014**

1. Call to order - 7:30pm
2. President's Announcements:
 - A. Thank you to Zorba's, restaurant of the month (back by popular demand)
 - B. Introduction of the new principal of the City School, Melissa Sanchez - new campus to open in fall 2015 in this location, pre-kindergarten through 1st grade. She gave a little background on her family and professional background in education. The school will have a focus on learning disabilities. They will be adding a playground to the campus, which will be open to the community. They are happy to speak to prospective families.
 - C. Tuesday 11/4 is election - reminder to come out and vote
3. Captain Ray Convery, 9th Police District - he is here to address the crime that has been happening in the area.
 - A. There was a robbery/assault - the three kids are under arrest, and they are not from the area. Their unique clothing enabled the police to find and arrest them.
 - B. There is an issue with residents leaving valuables in cars. The Captain implored residents to NOT leave anything of value visible in cars. These attract window smashing. They will smash windows even if they see cords, which they think means something else of value could be in the car. Please pass the word along to neighbors. There are extra patrols as a result of this.
 - C. In Spring Garden, two people are robbing people at gun point. Please be aware of your surroundings and don't hesitate to call 911.
 - D. People who walk dogs can be a good set of eyes for the police in terms of alerting them to people who look suspicious. There are flyers in the back with tips for what to say when calling 911.
 - E. The police are also flyer cars to alert them to the car break-in issue.
 - F. Crime in the 9th district is however down by 10% from last year, which was a historic low.
 - G. It is very helpful for community residents to attend the sentencings because it helps the court pass stricter sentencings.
 - H. An FCA member mentioned about seeing sweepers who might be squatting in area vacant buildings.
 - I. There have been complaints about illegal parking which the police have been ticketing for.
 - J. The Captain addressed the question of seeing people testing door handles: this is not illegal but if they open it they can be arrested for attempted burglary.
 - K. Another resident mentioned potential drug activity on 25th between Polar and Parrish. Again, the police said to call 911 to report anything suspicious.
 - L. You should still use 911 even if there is not an emergency, such as seeing broken glass on the ground from a car.
 - M. There are plenty of bike and unmarked cars, in addition to marked cars doing patrols.
 - N. Another member mention the motorcycle/ATV issue so the police are trying to find out where they get gas.
 - O. A member witnessed an assault on a woman on Fairmount Avenue and called 911 but didn't intervene. She asked what she should have done. Captain Convery asked people to be aware of their surroundings, and the more information they can get from witnesses the quicker they can get criminals locked up.
 - P. Question - if 911 is called from here, where will the signal be picked up? The Captain confirmed they will be routed to center city (8th and Race). They will know based on your location which precinct to dispatch.

4. Darrell Clarke, City Council President –
- A. Darrell mentioned CSI, which is the Community Sustainability Initiative. In looking at some research at various indices for the 9th district this neighborhood ranked pretty high for public safety (which is bad) but if you drill down it is related to thefts from auto and other petty, nonviolent crimes. Councilman Clarke reiterated the importance of not leaving anything of value in your cars.
 - B. Also, using the CSI data they want to target resources in terms of more police protection as it relates to the data. They will be discussing this as the next year’s budget discussions begin.
 - C. He would like to see a more aggressive surveillance system across the city to support police follow up activities. He mentioned the initiative for registering private security cameras. He would like to see even real time cameras connected to police laptops in their patrol cars, so they could see what was going on in known hot spots to be proactive regarding what they see.
 - D. Regarding education, there just isn't enough funding, and there will be an aggressive push for a school formula that works. The per child contribution formula from the state does not work.
 - E. Regarding charter vs. public schools, we need to figure out what to do with it: if the are things that work well in charters, they should be replicated. There should be one set of guidelines relating to all schools.
 - F. In order to grow the city, we need to keep families and we do that by fixing the school system.
 - G. The budget is relatively stable. We are in the black in terms of the city's fund balance. There are some big transfer taxes coming in, as well as improved business taxes.
 - H. He plans to continue to work with the Captain regarding crime issues.
 - I. Regarding the 22nd street bike lane issue, he believes it is a two lane street, and would like to see it continue as such.
 - J. PGW proposed sale - Mr. Clarke has some handouts regarding the privatization issue.
 - J.i. There was no consultation of City Council. They don't have any opportunity to change the documents of sale.
 - J.ii. Council hired its own consultant. They had conclusions that didn't jive with the Mayor's administrations' conclusion, namely that commitments with respect to rates, jobs, unions and other items were only for three years.
 - J.iii. As a result, no member of council supported the Mayor's proposal.
 - J.iv. Council believes Philadelphia has an opportunity to be an energy hub for the whole region, particularly as it relates to Marcellus Shale. Our infrastructure is unlike other places, in that we have a port and significant highways and railways, so we are well set up to be an energy center. Council wants to identify expansion opportunities to enhance capacity and diversify and convert ports to be able to export. Because of this, we will become a desirable location to attract new business. Utility cost factors heavily into location decisions and we would be able to offer that cheaply to new businesses. December 5 there will be over 100 companies coming to town interested in the energy opportunities.
 - J.v. There will be a hearing in two weeks to talk about the “narrowly tailored” Mayor's proposal and what the council would like to see happen.
 - J.vi. Compliant from a member about 311 responses - they can't seem to locate certain intersections or geographic landmarks. Mr. Clarke stated this is likely due to lack of funding for support on the back end to carry out the workload. He said you should even call his office instead. He would like to see service delivery enhanced.
 - J.vii. Question about the safety of transporting liquid natural gas (LNG) through our neighborhood: there is a lot of product moving through already. If you don't move the LNG through rail you need trucks, which are less safe. There are always risks, but trains are largely safe.

J.viii. Question about business taxes for UIL, potential buyer of PGW - Mr. Clarke said taxes for utilities are calculated differently and would be somewhere in the area of \$350k per year, versus the \$18m PGW pays now. He would like to see a public private partnership, with private sector investment.

J.ix. Same member asked Council to reconsider the impact of the double tax on business. Mr. Clarke wants to work with the state on the uniformity clause, which has been a major challenge. For example, the high rises in center city had lower real estate taxes by 30% than before AVI. They are looking at a constitutional amendment to change the uniformity clause as it relates to property and business taxes.

5. Bob McCormick, Nominations Committee Chairperson – no candidates for president were identified before the meeting. The submissions are as follows: Bruce Butler for VP, Scott Dressler for Secretary, David Connelly for Treasurer. For Director positions: Mark Nevins, Chet Wichowski, Larry Reynolds, Bob McCormick, Gina Foody, and Kim Kocher. For FCDC rep: Geni Klein. Bruce clarified that if there is no president then the VP will step up into the president position.
 - A. The floor was opened for nominations - Tom Cavanaugh nominated David Thomsen for the presidency and a director position. David Connelly nominated Larry Reynolds for president. David also nominated Dean Frizlen for director. Joan Myers Goodman nominated Eileen Butler for president. No other nominations received.
 - B. Reminder - everyone who votes needs to be a current member by the night before the December meeting.
 - C. Nominations are now closed. Elections are on December 4.
6. Shahid Rana, Fairmount CDC Executive Director –
 - A. Sha talked about the Philadelphia Food Fight. Tickets are \$60. You can contact Sha directly if you don't want to purchase tickets online. This is the FCDC's annual fundraiser, which allows the organization to better help businesses and help with commercial improvement such as storefront improvements.
 - B. Sha talked about a survey for businesses to understand their greatest needs and concerns, whether it is from loan availability to marketing, to identify theft prevention.
 - C. He is also doing a residents survey to get an understanding of what services you like, what you do not like, such that businesses can get a feel for what residents would like to see.
 - D. Sha will send the FCA a link to put on the website for the survey. Residents were asked to complete the survey at the meeting and return them to him at the end.
7. Treasurer's Report - David Connelly: current assets are \$26k, which is the highest we have had. The investment account is performing quite well. We are in a strong position, will net income of \$1700, mainly from new memberships at FB2F. David reminded everyone that the money the FCA has is for the neighborhood and also reminded people about the gift and grant program. We are growing our assets, but the money is for the benefit of the residents. If you have an idea for a project, please apply on the website for the gift and grant program.
8. Membership Report - Dean Frizlen: Dean gave the membership report, which includes current membership at 340 members, which is slightly below this time last year, but we are up over the average for the year. The FB2F generated many new members and renewals. Dean thanked everyone for checking on whether they are current with their membership. Dean urged people to talk to their neighbors about joining and getting more involved in the community. Larry stated that our membership numbers are very good compared to other RCO's in the city.
9. Activities Committee - Gina Foody via Bruce: Bruce thanked Gina and all the volunteers for their help and for making it the best one so far. There will be another winter social, details to come.

10. Education Committee - Jerilyn Dressler: principal couldn't attend. Mentoring program delayed due to legal review of contract.
11. Zoning - Larry:
 - A. 27th and Girard - Larry gave a review and noted the planning commission approved the project. The new construction will look more modern. No retail tenants have been identified yet. There will be parking for the tenants as well. No zoning changes were required for this project, so we have little say in this project. There was a public meeting last year. Larry attended the city planning commission's meeting. MM Partners is the developer. Planning commission was opposed to a drive-through, and Larry said at the meeting that residents were also opposed to a drive-through.
 - B. Still no word on the site at 26th and Poplar.
 - C. Sha gave some background on the Choice Neighborhoods planning grant (through HUD), which extends to the corner of 27th and Girard. This mainly impacts Sharswood, and the removal/replacement of housing projects, but our neighborhood can potentially benefit from the implementation funds, which can be up to \$100 million in redevelopment funds. This underscores the importance of that intersection.
12. Neighborhood Improvement - Lena Nhek for Sam Holloschutz: there is a clean up day on November 8, 10am-1pm. The event is on EventBrite, and there are 50 people already signed up, mainly through social media and Keep Philadelphia Beautiful, including volunteers who just want to clean the city and don't live in Fairmount. Coffee and water has been donated by OCF and ESP. The table will be in front of the playpen where you can get supplies and a map, with marked boundaries and garbage bag pick up sites. Sam would like to get volunteers into the wooded area near the footbridge. There will be a wrap up happy hour at Urban Saloon with free appetizers and drink specials. Please see Lena to sign up.
13. New Business:
 - A. Question on the parking spots taken out by Septa bus turns - at what point do we raise our concerns to Septa. Bruce mentioned that this has been brought to Septa's attention in the past without much success.
14. Adjourned – 9:15pm