



SOCIETY HILL CIVIC ASSOCIATION

THE RESIDENT NEWSLETTER

313 Pine Street

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

July, 1977

NEXT MEETING COMING UP. MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!!

Thought you'd get the summer off, did you? Well there's a SHCA meeting coming up on Tuesday, July 19th at Old Pine, 7:30p.m. On the agenda is a talk by the Philadelphia Cultural Council's Dallas Alinder who will outline the summer programming at Penn's Landing, Independence Mall and the Parkway. And you'll be given a chance to supply some input.

Also on the agenda is a presentation by Chart House on its plans to put a restaurant in the Mariner's Church (more on that below). The Redevelopment Authority's Donna Smith will be on hand to referee. Eat early and come over for enlightenment.

MARINER'S CHURCH HEATS UP

Like My Fair Lady's Alfred Doolittle, residents of the eastern end of Society Hill have been trying to get to the church in time. They're not trying to get to a wedding, but to arrange a separation. The church in question is the decrepit Mariner's Church building at Front and Delancey. They're trying to prevent the Redevelopment Authority from turning it over to Chart House, a California-based chain which wants to convert the 109-year-old building into a 300-seat restaurant.

Principle objections are that the neighborhood is already over-restauranted (there are over 40 within a four-block radius of the site) and overcrowded with cars (Chart House has no plans to provide on-site parking for its patrons).

Assured by the Redevelopment Authority last winter that it would approve an alternate development plan in harmony with the neighborhood, residents scurried to find a suitable developer. They found Alex Wolfington, a builder who lives in the community. Wolfington submitted a plan to put four single-family townhouses in the building, restoring the facade (in addition he secured buyers for the houses).

That should have solved the dilemma, right? Wrong. The Redevelop-

ment Authority proposed to award the building to Chart House for a restaurant. A neighborhood committee, co-ordinated by Joy Lindy, has hired an attorney, Leslie Carson, to represent its interests. An initial appeal has been filed with HUD, and further strategy is being mapped out. The legal action could be protracted and complex. Residents wishing to support the action with time and/or funding should contact Ms. Lindy at WA-2-4042.

GET YOUR KIDS OUT FROM UNDERFOOT

Three Steps Cooperative School is offering morning classes for 3- and 4-year-olds and an afternoon kindergarten for 4- and 5-year-olds. Managed by the parents of its students, the school provides social and intellectual experiences for children at low tuition rates. It will be housed in the Old Pine Community Center this fall. Call Judy Elman (WA-5-8630), Donna Stiteler (MA-7-6351) or Susan Smith (WA-5-4421) for more information.

THE DODSON CASE

The case of Dodson, et al v. The Redevelopment Authority and HUD has reappeared as a neighborhood issue. It came up just as elections were being held for the new SHCA Board, and has occupied most of the attention of the Board ever since. The case concerns seven former Society Hill residents who were evicted by the RDA four years ago from houses on the 600 block of Lombard Street, owned by the Octavia Hill Foundation. While hundreds of people were displaced from Society Hill as a result of government action, these seven people have never accepted final resettlement funds. They have brought suit through Community Legal Services to be rehoused here. The plaintiffs' lawyers have worked out a proposed consent decree with the RDA and HUD which would result in the building of 14-18 units of subsidized rental housing on three RDA sites on Sixth St.

At a general meeting of the SHCA on June 13th, the membership, as the Project Area Committee, voted against the proposed consent decree 180-8. An alternative settlement which recommends housing the seven people in existing buildings in Society Hill was passed by a vote of 195-3.

The SHCA viewpoint was ably put to the Redevelopment Authority in a letter from SHCA President Joe Bright that was read into the record at the RDA Board meeting of June 15th.

It was pointed out that the neighborhood was not opposed to the resettlement of the plaintiffs, but that it was very much against constructing 14 to 18 new units. There are only seven people involved,

and as this is not a class action suit, there is no need to build 18 units. The cost to the government, including the gift of the land and permanent subsidies is out of proportion to what is just and necessary, especially when there is an inexpensive and more convenient alternative. The concentration of all units within 150 feet of 6th and Pine would result in an unnecessary concentration of low income housing there, which is contrary to HUD policy, common sense, and public housing program experience. The best interests of the seven elderly plaintiffs would be served by immediate relocation into existing buildings, as new construction would result in years of delay and more litigation in a case that has already dragged on for four years.

The RDA made no decision at that meeting. It had placed the issue on the agenda for its meetings of June 1st, 8th, and 15th, and had withdrawn it at very short notice, for example, at 6 p.m. on June 7th, before the 1:30 p.m. meeting the next day. While the Authority is to be commended for postponing a decision on the Dodson case until the Association could meet and vote on the proposed consent decree (as the Association requested that it do) nevertheless the large numbers of SH residents who attended each of these meetings were dismayed at the many sudden, and apparently unnecessary, changes in the agenda.

In a June 8th meeting with Hillel Levinson, City Managing Director, and John Gallery, head of Housing and Community Development, residents had a chance to discuss their feelings with the city. Mr. Levinson was sympathetic with the residents' views that the proposed consent decree was unreasonable and that it would make much more sense to house the plaintiffs in existing buildings. He directed Mr. Gallery to communicate these concerns to the RDA Board and to try to work out a settlement with the plaintiffs' lawyers on that basis. Mr. Gallery, however, seemed less sympathetic with the residents' views. He said we should settle for 18 units, or HUD might try to force something worse on Society Hill, perhaps in connection with the problems the City is having with HUD over its management of Federal housing funds. However, Mr. Gallery's fears are probably ill-founded. As Leslie Carson, the counsel retained by the Civic Association Board to advise them on this matter, has pointed out, the legal position of the plaintiffs is weak, and there is little reason, save political expediency, for the RDA to agree to the extravagant settlement proposed by the plaintiffs' CLS lawyers; if the City will fight this case it can win. Mr. Carson feels the benefits demanded are greatly beyond what the plaintiffs could use and exceed the legal authority of HUD and the RDA.

Furthermore, the proposed settlement would be an unauthorized use of funds by HUD and RDA in the absence of evidence that the plaintiffs have a legal case for action. Thus, there is a very good chance that the plaintiffs will lose if the case comes to judgment, Mr. Carson believes. Since the plaintiffs

are the ones who must settle this case before they lose it, he says, if the Redevelopment Authority and/or HUD notify the plaintiffs they intend to vigorously contest the case, the plaintiffs would have no intelligent alternative but to accept the SHCA proposal for settlement in existing buildings.

To this end, you should write Mayor Rizzo and tell him how you feel about this. The City can win this case on our behalf if the RDA does its job and fights instead of giving in and accepting the proposed consent decree.

HIC, HAEC, HOC

Anyone who spots a notice for an application for a liquor license alert SHCA by calling Ruth Dugan (WA-2-3195).

THE INAUGURATION BALL WON'T BE TILL JANUARY, BUT WE THOUGHT YOU'D LIKE TO MEET THE NEW SHCA ADMINISTRATION EARLY

Here are the results of the May 18th election and the Association's officers until next May: President: Joe Bright; Veep: Jan Stephano; Secretary: Liz Haines; Treasurer: Ruth Dugan. And here are your directors: Northwest quadrant: Caroline Gladstone and Susan Wanink; Northeast quadrant: Harry Goldberg, Henry Miller and Russ Willis; Southwest quadrant: Bob Breeding, Jim Fornari, Dick Ostrander and Fred Weinstein; Southeast quadrant: Tim Lemmer, Lee Richards and Malcolm Strikler. Our congratulations and best wishes to these stalwarts all.

RUMORS ARE FLYING

Word has it that the Rusty Scupper people have acquired the warehouse building on the Southwest corner of Front and Lombard for a large restaurant. The Scupper is doing so well it is preparing to open an annex.

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An unspecified development is scheduled for Luigi's parking lot.

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The Society Hill Club will be building squash courts and racquetball courts on its roof. (What will happen to the "adult sun-bathing?")

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St. Peter's School is contemplating a full-day kindergarten.

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The current chicken pox epidemic didn't start in Blackwell Court.

BUT WHERE WILL THEY PUT THE SHUTTERS?

The new Old Pine Community Center and Archives Building at 4th and Lombard St. was dedicated at a ceremony on Friday, June 24th at 2:30. Old Pine Church, as owner, will sponser community projects in space which includes a gym, a fully-equipped kitchen, meeting rooms, and

offices as well as space for the Three Steps Nursery School. St. Peter's School will be the primary tenant during the day. The basement will be used as archival storage space by the Presbyterian Historical Society. The inside of the building looks beautiful.

DOWN BY THE RIVERSIDE: BIG DOINGS

For some smiles of a summer night (and some toe-tapping, too) head down to the Stephen Girard Pavilion on Penn's Landing (at Chestnut Street). Every Saturday, folk-rock; every Wednesday, golden not-so-oldies; every Sunday, longhair fare. Here's the schedule:

Folk Rock Concerts: Saturdays 2-4 p.m.; July 9-Sept. 10.

July 9: John Mayall; July 16: Little River Band; July 23: Eric Anderson; July 30: Leon Redbone and Steve Goodman; Aug. 6: Tom Rush; Aug. 13: Musica Orbis; Aug. 20 & 27: Indefinite; Sept. 3: Tracy Nelson and Diane Davidson

Nostalgia Nights, Wednesdays, 7-9 p.m.; July 6-Sept. 7.

July 6: The Dovells; July 13: The Original Four Aces; July 20: Danny and the Juniors; July 27: Brooklyn Bridge; Aug. 3: Chubby Checker; Aug. 10: The Intrigues; Aug. 17: The Original Skyliners; Aug. 24: The Big El Show; Aug. 31: Joey Dee and the Starlighters; Sept. 7: Bobby Rydell, MC Joe Niagara

Classical Concerts, Sundays, 5-7 p.m.; July 10-Sept. 11.

July 10: Robert Ensinger Chorale; July 17: unscheduled; July 24: Rita Jones Dance; July 31: Pro Musica Brass Ensemble; Aug. 7: Phila. Dance Co.; Aug. 14: Phila. Singers; Aug. 21: Retired Musicians from Phila. Orchestra; Aug. 28: Phila. Civic Ballet; Sept. 4: Mostovoy Soloists (tentative); Sept. 11: unscheduled

PLUS 7 TREATS FOR '77 AT INDEPENDENCE MALL THEATER

1. Pop 77: IMT, daily June 29-Sept. 2 (except July 4) 12-1 p.m.
2. Children's Theatre: IMT, Weds., June 29-Aug. 31 10-11 a.m.
3. Puppets for Children: Rose Garden - June 27-Sept. 5 11, 1:30, 3 p.m.
4. Plays for Children: "Fourteenth Colony" and "Cats" - Sat. 11, 12, 1, 7p.m.; Sun. 12, 1, 2, 3 p.m.
5. "1776": June 28-Sept. 4 -- every night but Mon. at 8p.m.
Free by ticket.
6. "Dr. Doolittle": IMT, July 25-27 and Aug. 1-5 at 2p.m.
7. Fife and Drum and the One Uppers: June 27-Sept. 5 - throughout park.

WATCH THE ZONING BOARD STAMP OUT SOCIETY HILL

- 728 Pine thru 725 Addison: legalization of conversion of Carriage House to additional apartment; Association opposed; granted by ZB 4/12/77.
- 8th and Manning; Hall Mercer expansion; Association opposed - requested a setback on Manning; granted by ZB; appealed by SHCA; sent back to ZB for further testimony on parking.
- 321 S. 6th request to sell rear yard to 533 Delancey; Association opposed unless proponents of subdivision agree to deed restriction for open space on both properties; granted 6/17/77 without restriction.
- Rusty Scupper: variance for walk-in freezer (already constructed on loading dock): Association opposed because it obstructed NewMarket's only loading dock, thereby causing deliveries to be made via pedestrian walkways with delivery trucks parked on Front and Second Sts.; decision at first postponed; but granted 6/17/77.

GOOD NEWS (MAYBE) FROM THE REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

- 224-228 West Washington Square - RDA presently in negotiations with lawyers to recapture title from Max-Knorr Realty Co.
- 3rd and Spruce - RDA negotiating with Bonsall Realty as developers.

HELP!

Meet your neighbors and the issues head - on. Volunteer your services for chairperson or membership committees listed below (or suggest a new one!), by calling the following board members:

Design Review: Bob Breeding (WA-5-0714) - Represents SHCA at RDA's Advisory Board of Design to provide neighborhood input on design for plans to local land.

Traffic/Parking: Malcolm Strickler (WA-2-1906).

Zoning: Ruth Dugan (WA-2-3195).

Newsletter: Tim Lemmer (923-7142); Jan Stephano (WA-3-4921).

Urban Renewal: Dick Ostrander (WA-2-6179) - Develops ideas for undeveloped, vacant or unfinished properties.

NewMarket: Harry Goldberg (629-1229); Rev. Lee Richards (923-7147)- Works with NM project manager and plaintiffs in consent decree to

deal effectively with problems that arise, which affect the neighborhood from the NewMarket - Head House complex.

Cable TV: Elizabeth Haines (WA-3-1350) - Seeks to obtain cable TV for the neighborhood.

Liquor Control: Ruth Dugan (WA-2-3195).

If you're interested in teaching or volunteering your services for the Community Workshops for the fall, please contact Peggy Heller 923-2019.

OOPS, THERE GOES ANOTHER HISTORIC BLOCK

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) called "a public information meeting" on January 13th at Holy Trinity School "to provide an opportunity for representatives of national, state and local government, public and private organizations and interested citizens to receive information and express their views on the proposed Washington Square Unit 3." Just such a group of neighbors went to the meeting and voiced their support of plans which would preserve 700-714 Spruce Street buildings, properties included in the National Register of Historic Places. SHCA president, Ted Robb then wrote to HUD, RDA and the ACHP putting the neighborhood's views on record. Subsequently, it was learned that the purpose of the meeting was not strictly as advertised.

On April 18th, 1977 the SHCA had its monthly meeting with guests Augustine Salvitti, executive director of RDA, Robert Clement, acting area director of HUD, and Mr. Treadwell, EPA representative. At that time Mr. Salvitti mentioned in passing that the 700-714 buildings were cited for demolition. Mr. Treadwell verified it and showed surprise at the membership's astonishment, stating that "the purpose of the Jan. 13th meeting" was to obtain from the neighborhood "feasible and prudent alternatives to demolition" and since none were offered, the ACHP had approved the Hospital's plans.

After that bombshell was dropped, Mrs. Gensensway, a concerned neighbor, wrote Dr. Ramsey, chairperson of the January meeting, explaining what was happening and requesting the Council's assistance in setting up guidelines to protect these structures. On May 25th, Dr. Ramsey responded by agreeing with Mr. Treadwell's version of the meeting, and offering no guidelines or assistance.

So here we are--faced once again with the insensitivity of HUD and RDA, and now the ACHP, on preserving the historic quality of our unique neighborhood. To join Mrs. Gensensway and concerned neighbors who seek to preserve these magnificent structures, call WA-5-6795.

PERUTO POWER?

In case you haven't heard, attorney Charles Peruto owns the building on the NE corner of 8th and Locust (the old W.B. Saunders annex) and has applied for a liquor license there for a bar-restaurant, LaBuca; to be operated by Blaze Spinelli, a former Gaetano's waiter (Peruto already has a license to house Renfield Importers, a wine and spirits distributor). This is in complete violation of the Urban Renewal Plan adopted by HUD, RDA and City Council which calls for total cessation of further commercial activity in this historic area. In January, the SHCA Board unanimously passed a resolution authorizing then president Ted Robb to take whatever steps necessary to oppose the license. On April 20th at the LCB hearing, St. George's Greek Church, RDA, SHCA and the City Police Department opposed it. At the May 23rd LCB hearing, The Hall Mercer Community Board joined the opposition, while Mr. Peruto did his level best for four hours to tear at the credibility of Ted Robb. Unfortunately, Pennsylvania Hospital remained neutral--a position Mr. Peruto used in his defense.

The next hearing is scheduled for Friday, July 1st, 1977 at 9:30 a.m. in the State Office Building, 10th floor, Broad and Spring Garden. If you get this newsletter in time and are opposed to the license, your presence would be helpful.

DARTS & LAURELS

Laurel--To Ed and Carol Bottone for confining their food service this summer to the inside of Lautrec and Borgia. While last year's sidewalk waffles were tasty, they added to the weekend Head House confusion. We recommend instead Ed's magnificent salmon en crouete and Amaretto cheesecake plus the elegant tonsils of Donna Jean weekends at the Borgia.

Dart--To Central Penn for providing the most sluggish service north of the Banco Nacional de Guerrero. While we're at it, C-P, how about showing a little green to the neighborhood. Some bushes and trees might make you look as good as Abbott's Dairies.

Laurel--To the RDA's Donna Smith for getting the lot at Third and Spruce manicured.

Laurel--To the Ritz Theatre for bringing back the \$1.50 movie. (One of the three film rooms has been showing all those great movies you missed uptown, like Network and The Late Show, at 1950 prices.)

--Rhadamanthus

(If you'd like to work on the next issue of the newsletter or have a news item included, contact Jan Stephano (WA-3-4921), Tim Lemmer (923-7142) or Alan Halpern (WA-5-3431) or mail it into The Resident Newsletter, 313 Pine Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106.)