



SOCIETY HILL CIVIC ASSOCIATION

THE RESIDENT NEWSLETTER

313 Pine Street

July 1979

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

FIRST THE GOOD NEWS

There will be no membership meeting of the Society Hill Civic Association this summer if we can help it. But the Dodson case or I-95 could change that - so watch your mailbox.

EVEN BETTER NEWS

Here are the new officers and directors elected at the last annual election. Know your quadrant people. They are your representatives on the board. Keep them informed of your hopes and fears and feelings about the neighborhood.

President	Michael Willmann	925-9283 (h)	WA 2-1415 (o)
Vice-President	Leonard Zack	627-0440	
Secretary	Nancy Frenze	923-5459	
Treasurer	Edna Wenk	925-5390	

Northeast Quadrant

Steve Brown	923-9329
Damon Childs	627-5145
Joe Koplín	925-7803

Northwest Quadrant

Ruth Luborsky	627-0861
Marsha Perelman	922-2508
Martin Weinberg	922-7822

Southeast Quadrant

Duncan Buell	627-1186
Joy Lindy	922-4042
David Cook	627-1387

Southwest Quadrant

Bob Breading	925-0714
Liz Ostrander	922-6179
Bernie Cleff	922-4246

ANNUAL REPORT: HEALTHY DIVIDENDS

With the ceremonious passing of the gavel from the old to the new board complete, it is time to take a look at what has been achieved in the outgoing year. With the support of the neighbors and its committees last term's SHCA Board...Reached a settlement with the developer on the Mariner Church site and received notice that the construction of five town-houses with off-street parking will begin this summer...Was authorized by the membership to seek constructive alternatives to a full cover on I-95...Succeeded in having the Ross House winterized by NewMarket until restoration would begin this summer...Negotiated the shortening of the Crafts Fair's season in response to the request of the neighbors...Continued working with the City on traffic and parking and produced a first - an auto parking sticker...Eliminated the basketball court near I-95 at Penn's Landing when lighting was not assured...Signed the agreement with Pennsylvania Hospital to rehab the facades of fine homes at 7th and Spruce - a real win for the SSS Committee and the board...Kept up the ongoing work of zoning and Dodson...Opposed the sidewalk cafes and supported the Philadelphia Open House.

DODSON UPDATE (AS OF JUNE 27)

Councilman Jim Tayoun at the request of Mother Bethel Church, 6th and Lombard, is seeking another location for one of the three low-income housing units so that an archives building for the church could go up at 6th and Pine.

Previously HUD and Community Legal Services filed a motion to dismiss the suit of the SHCA and named individuals on the grounds that we have no standing and that there is no law to support our position. On June 21 the judge ruled that we do have a standing but he dismissed the lawsuit because we had not stated a cause of action. Counsel advised that SHCA should make a motion for a rehearing and an appeal.

Thereafter the SHCA Board met on June 25th to respond to the compromise proposal by Councilman Tayoun and later, on June 27th, the President of the SHCA, board members Childs and Ostrander and SHCA attorney Olan Lowery met with representatives of CLS, HUD, the Redevelopment Authority, Mother Bethel and the project developers. That meeting produced a new proposed compromise which was scheduled to be presented to an emergency meeting of the full board on Monday, July 2 at 8:00 p.m. at Mother Bethel. A follow-up meeting with HUD et al is scheduled for July 6 at HUD. Stay tuned...

BITS AND PIECES

The cobblestones on Stampers Street are not being removed. Their foundation is just being reinforced and levelled. The historic stones should be back in place by next week...The hole in the ground at Spruce and Dock Streets which has been waiting for a U.S. Marine Corps museum for years may soon get it. New estimates are being submitted and construction should commence in the near future. Since the cornerstone was set in 1976, The Marine Corps War Memorial Fund has been raising money for the project...The free tree program has been cut, so as of last month if you have a diseased or dying tree, you'll have to replace it yourself...The Craft Fair will run from June 16 until August 18 - only ten weeks. Thanks to the efforts of the committee it will not run forever as it did last year. Maybe we can do better next year...The May baskets multiplied in number and variety during the week of the Philadelphia Open House. Hats off to all those clever flower displayers.

RAISE HIGH THE ROOFBEAMS

God may be dead in the suburbs, but in Society Hill religion is doing just fine, thank you.

The renovation of Old St. Mary's Church, Philadelphia's first Roman Catholic Cathedral, has been completed. The work was undertaken to bring the church into conformity with the new liturgical practices sanctioned by Vatican II. A new marble altar has been installed so Mass can be offered with the priest facing the congregation. A pulpit has been installed for the first time. Every effort has been made to make the new fittings blend harmoniously with the mid-18th century interior.

Many fine period objects have been restored to Old St. Mary's, including the episcopal chair of Bishop Conwell, the 1791 baptismal font from

Holy Trinity Church, and four massive candlesticks from the church's collection. Two 400-pound cast bronze chandeliers, which until 1967 hung in Independence Hall and which were subsequently in the possession of the Carpenter's Company, have been hung in the church.

The improvements are set off with a new paint job and lighting system. The renovation is the result of two years of planning by Bishop Martin Lohmuller.

Over on Spruce Street the historic Society Hill Synagogue is in final stages of a ten-year restoration. Thomas U. Walter, the Philadelphia architect who designed the dome of the U.S. Capitol and Girard College, designed what was then the Spruce Street Baptist Church in 1829, and made several changes and additions later.

The building became a synagogue in 1910. The main roof and cornice are being restored to the 1829 appearance, with the east cornice being restored to Walter's 1851 reconstruction.

SATURDAY NIGHT FUROR

No, it's not Chuck Peruto and LaBuca at 8th and Locust; it's Ray Posel and a disco at 2nd and Walnut, and it's practically a fait accompli. In violation of the neighborhood's needs and wishes the State Liquor Control Board granted the transference of a liquor license from North 13th Street to 2nd and Walnut. Owner (and neighbor) Ray Posel has rented to Roho Corp. and they began construction of a second-story disco in his shopping plaza in front of his Ritz movie, a building that with the exception of an occasional nomadic tenant, has been vacant since it was built in 1976. Mr. Posel's steadfast loyalty to excellence in providing our neighborhood and the city with a first-rate movie house in spite of an inauspicious financial beginning is applauded! However, with the possibility of town houses on the adjacent property (now the Bookbinder's parking lot) a growing reality, it is inconceivable to many that we can't do better than a disco with all its inherent traffic and noise problems. The weekend traffic jams caused by NewMarket are a sign that the area is already overloaded with commercial usage.

Thanks to the efforts of Gee Elliott and friends, within four days over 300 neighbors signed a petition in opposition to the construction. It's now up to the SHCA Board and you to act for the benefit of those directly affected. Let your quadrant chairman know your views and write to Governor Thornburgh. The granting of liquor licenses indiscriminately without the consent of the neighborhood must stop. Alice Cooper Go Home!

THE FRIENDLY SKIES OF PENN'S LANDING

At present a public heliport, Keystone Heliport Co., is temporarily operating on the future site of a new, 300-seat seafood restaurant - yes, a Chart House - which is coming in November - completion in Spring of 1980. In the meantime OPDC is advertising for a franchise to operate the seaplane service to New York similar to a previous one now defunct.

Meanwhile, the Port Authority Museum at P.L. is a lovely, carpeted and vacant spot with a 500-seat auditorium for community use just waiting for negotiations between the Maritime Museum and the Pennsylvania Historical Commission to end and its doors to open. This time the State funding is allocated.

THE ROAD TO I-95

From its conception in 1951, I-95, the highway that will run from Maine to Florida (1,866 miles) without a traffic light, has had its share of problems in every city. Philadelphia was no exception. In 1965 Senator Clark went to Washington and along with Veep Humphrey and a Presidential Task Force made the reality of a cover and the depression of I-95 as it ran past the nation's most historic mile a federal order. But the cover was not the only priority. To prevent access ramps from turning all of center city neighborhoods into an automobile-choked nightmare, the Neighborhood Preservation Coalition, a conglomerate of 18 neighborhood groups was formed. In 1971 the NPC took the highway bureaucrats to court. The result was a consent decree ordering access and egress from I-95 to Delaware Avenue (and not thru the neighborhoods). Also ordered were completion of sound barriers and a cover prior to the opening of the highway. Over two decades have passed since the "Main Street of the East Coast" was planned and over a decade since the Presidential Task Force mandated the cover. One ponders the weight of our successes in light of the current dilemma. Presently the state has no money for a full cover (from Chestnut to Dock) or for a partial cover (from Chestnut to Walnut). Last fall the SHCA membership authorized the Board to negotiate alternatives to the complete cover called for in the consent decree, and to bring those proposals back to the Association for approval.

In a letter to Tom Larson, State Dept. of Transportation Chairperson, the NPC stated that the following stipulations should be met before the expressway can be opened. Portions of the letter are reprinted herewith:

"I. General.

- A. The NPC receive copies of all noise barrier contracts and work schedules.
- B. PennDOT guarantee that any cost overruns or additional costs in completion of barriers or other projects under the Consent Decree will be met in the present or next year's fiscal budget.
- C. PennDOT establish firm work schedules and completion dates for barriers with its contractors and make every good faith effort to meet these dates.

II. Area North of Benjamin Franklin Bridge: Barrier construction be substantially under way.

III. Arch Street to the Benjamin Franklin Bridge.

- A. The basic concrete wall (without brick facing, concrete caps and pillars, etc.) be completed to within two feet of its design height.
- B. The noise attenuating qualities of the wall have first been tested as being in compliance with the noise reduction criteria set forth in the Consent Decree.
- C. PennDOT budget in next year's budget sufficient funds for the construction of the landscaping portions of the barrier and agree to complete construction of the landscaping portion of the noise barrier before December 31, 1981.

- IV. Chestnut Street South to Delancey Street: The NPC proposes the modified cover as presented at our meeting of May 4, 1979 instead of the required full cover, provided the Federal Department of Transportation approves the modified cover design. The NPC agrees to modify the Consent Decree to allow opening of I-95 provided that funds for the modified cover have been placed by the Governor in the 1979-1980 Budget and the fund appropriated by the Legislature in the bill is signed by the Governor.
- V. Delancey Street South to Washington Avenue.
- A. Construction on all barriers be nearing completion.
 - B. All joint use applications, especially for use of land under I-95, be expedited as rapidly as possible.
 - C. Priority in study, funding and construction be given for fiscal year 1979-1980 to noise barriers below Catherine Street to Washington Avenue.
 - D. Agreements on modifications of street traffic patterns at Catherine, Queen and Christian Streets be implemented by the City of Philadelphia as a signatory to the Consent Decree.
 - E. Landscaping contracts and maintenance agreements be budgeted and implemented in fiscal year 1979-1980 in conformity to maximum extent possible, with needs, desires, and convenience of the community.

We feel that the above conditions represent considerable compromise on our part, while protecting the basic needs of our communities. While we are not in a position to make a definitive judgment on the proposed highway opening date of June 29, 1979, it does not appear to us at this time to be a realistic target date. This is particularly so in that you are apparently unable to let contracts in Elfreth's Alley area because the bids came in forty (40%) percent higher than anticipated and you must now reassess your available funds. Without even the contracts being let in the Elfreth's Alley area, it is impossible for us to further consider a date certain for opening the highway."

Although Secretary Larson has repeatedly told the NPC that the State would honor its obligations, more assurances are necessary. Over a year ago, after signing the consent decree and assuring us they had sufficient money for sound barriers and cover, the State discovered it had money for neither. Through the efforts of the NPC the State Legislature found \$250,000 for the sound barriers. Now the bids for sound barriers exceed the appropriation, and there is still no money for even a partial cover. After our experience of broken promises in the past, can we feel confident the present commitments will not meet the same end?

As the Newsletter went to press, Secretary Larson was threatening to go to court to open the highway without NPC agreement if a "near-term" opening date could not be agreed upon by all the parties at a meeting on or before July 13. Watch the papers. Let the Board know your views - call our NPC delegates, Joy Lindy 922-4042 or Damon Childs 627-1387.

ZONING NEWS BLUES

273 S. 4th: A hearing before the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) for a variance permitting a one-family dwelling to be used by an architectural designer and design office is scheduled for July 11 at 5:30 p.m. at the ZBA hearing room, Sixth Floor, City Hall Annex. SHCA and the Redevelopment Authority (RDA) are opposed.

719-725 Spruce: Completion due June 3, 1979

717-721-723 Spruce: Completion due September 3, 1979.

At present, owner is proceeding slowly but not according to RDA timetable...an understatement.

712 Locust: The owners were found in default of their agreement. RDA will review the plans of the five developers who had originally submitted proposals. Decision should be made during July.

Dock Street Site (triangular site in front of Bookbinder's): Sadly the litigation is still outstanding; happily RDA is proceeding with the Urban Renewal Plan change. A hearing is scheduled in July for general commitment to mixed residential townhouses, plus parking for Bookies.

Sixth and Washington Square: Present owner is to pass title to a new developer for 600 units in two towers. The principals (one is a neighbor, Mr. Kowlenowski) are experienced in community, residential, and industrial development. It sounds like a heck of a high density for the area.

337 S. 4th: The owner wants to erect a two-story addition which will provide 100% land coverage on an existing one-story structure. It is presently a single-family, one-story garage. RDA and SHCA disapproved and recommended that the owners readjust the plans to meet the Urban Renewal Plan (maximum urban coverage is 70%). At the hearing on June 21st, ZBA agreed to an extension to June 28th. RDA Design Review Board will examine adjusted plans, and ZBA will look at revisions on July 5th. If the owner does not submit rehabilitation plans for coverage of only 70% of the land, the SHCA will oppose!

225 S. 4th: (An old railroad building). Developer wants to put in 20 condo apartments. Plans will be reviewed by SHCA representative to RDA Design Review Board, Bob Breeding.

251 Pine: Owner has applied for an increase in the density from three to four apartments. The application was previously defeated at ZBA and opposed by the SHCA. Now the owner has reapplied for a new hearing which will take place on July 11 at 5:30 in City Hall Annex. Petitions in opposition have been signed by 165 neighbors.

331 S. 3rd: Owner has applied for a variance permitting the addition of a 4th story to an existing one-family dwelling. Hearing at 9:30 a.m., July 17, Room 603, City Hall Annex.

BUNDLE UP

Starting Wednesday, June 27th, trash pickup will be extended on Wednesday night from Front to 7th Street, from Christian to Spring Garden. The 700-block will remain with the Friday night crowd.

NURSERY STORY

If you want a quality pre-school education for your children, take a look at the one at Old Pine Community Center, 4th and Lombard, known as the Three Steps Nursery School. Your 3-, 4-, and 5-year olds are taught by a qualified professional staff in specially designed facilities that have morning and afternoon sessions. There are pick-up from neighborhood sites and delivery to Three Steps. A variety of tuition plans are available. Call Gale Lang at 925-3499.

HAVE YOU GOT A PLUMBER FOR US?

Need a pipe fixed? TV repaired or electrical work done? We are collecting a list of recommended repairmen. Send us the name of your favorite tradesman and we'll publish it in this column in the next issue.

JULY JUBILEE

In the National Park area watch for the Lenton Puppets with a travelling show during July and August. Alongside the Visitors Center "Max and the Tiger" will be performed at 1:30, 2:30 and 3:30. Back again are the Fife and Drum Corps and the Street Theatre Program at the Second Bank with a Franklin Roberts' dramatization of "When the Well is Dry," a play on energy featuring Edison, Franklin, Einstein and tourists. Days and times are Tues. thru Fri. 1-3-5 and weekends 12-2-4. At the Betsy Ross House, it is the drama "Paine" from July 4 to Sept. 2, Wed. thru Sun. 12:30-1:30, 2:30-3:30.

At Penn's Landing it's get ready for the fully rigged Polish vessel, Dar Pomorza and the dedication of the Kosciusko Monument. This ship will be open to the public from 1-5 Monday, July 2 to Sat. July 7, with ceremonies, concerts and fireworks on July 4. Naval Academy yawls, the Gazela Primero, Young America, and a flotilla will greet the Dar Pomorza in front of Penn's Landing. Festivities start on Sunday, July 1.

The schedule of free folk concerts for the summer is as follows:

Saturdays - 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.
Sundays - 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.
Mondays - 8:00 p.m. Square dancing with Stretch Pyott

For further information: Howard Taylor WA 5-5439.

DARTS AND LAURELS

- Dart - To all those who do not paint the trim of their houses. Or paint it pink, and
- Laurel - To the 99% that do - paint it, not pink, that is.
- Laurel - To Labron K. Shuman, Chairman of "The Neighborhood Crime Problem" meeting held recently and the illustrious panel - Lt. McDaniels, Dr. Grierfer, Sharon Wallis, Phyllis Chase, D. A. Barth. And a special thanks to Prof. Lou Rappaport of Temple for getting it all together.
- Dart - To the big brown dog who has turned Stammers Street into an outhouse. Either curb your habit or get a diaper.
- Laurel - To the new Staff Inspector of the Civil Affairs Unit McGeehan. He was recently promoted from Captain of the Sixth District. Congratulations. And welcome to his replacement, Capt. Wendell Rich. We look forward to working with you.

GOODBYE, NOW

And keep those news items coming. Thanks to Gee Elliott, Harry Goldberg, Jack Albert, Bishop Lohmuller, Rabbi Frielander and Sally Hollingsby for their help with this issue. To send in items or comment, contact Jan Stephano, Tim Lemmer, Peg Robb or Alan Halpern or write THE RESIDENT NEWS-LETTER, 233 South Third Street.

Tear off and Edna Wenk
Mail to: 110 Pine Street
Philadelphia, Pa. 19106

Please renew my (our) membership in the Association for May 1979-May 1980.

- _____ 1 person, \$6
- _____ 2 persons at same address, \$10
- _____ I request waiver of dues

Name _____

Address _____ Phone _____

I would be interested in joining committees on:

- Urban Renewal, Long Range Planning, Washington Square,
- Crafts Fair, Neighborhood Preservation Coalition, Crime,
- Legal, Disco, Zoning.