



SOCIETY HILL CIVIC ASSOCIATION

THE RESIDENT NEWSLETTER

Box 3, Philadelphia, Penna. 19105

October 1979

Mark your calendars. The next general membership meeting of the SHCA will be on November 7, 1979 at 8 p.m. at Old Pine Community Center - don't miss the fireworks - lots of committee reports and pending issues.

THE NEW NEWMARKET

Maybe you've noticed and maybe you haven't but two of our houses are missing on S. 2nd Street at Head House Square.

The houses, old 407 and 409, were demolished with the approval of the Philadelphia Historical Commission when it was determined that bricks were crumbling and the buildings were beyond restoration. A spokesperson for NewMarket noted that facades identical to those of the mid 19th century dwellings will be built of special bricks now being made.

Not considered historically significant, the houses were razed as a first step in the restoration of the John Ross House (southeast corner of 2nd and Pine) and its conversion to a restaurant, Victoria Station. The recently-demolished houses were between Ross House and a mid-19th-century dwelling at 411 S. 2nd St., which will become part of the retail complex.

The Ross House, built in 1789 and historically certified, will provide restaurant facilities on part of its first level and on the second level extending into adjoining buildings. Work is in progress now and the restaurant opening is slated for fall 1980.

Elsewhere in NewMarket, construction continues on the redesigned shopping center that currently resembles a set of children's blocks arranged by an underachiever. NewMarket reports that the rehabilitation has been undertaken to improve the pedestrian traffic flow inside the center, to make it esthetically more pleasing, and to respond to neighborhood needs for retail stores of substance.

The first areas to be redesigned are expected to be completed in a few weeks and most of the rearrangement will be over by December, according to a spokesperson. The most visible changes will involve a modified fountain area (not suitable for big entertainment attractions) and glazed tile underfoot.

About a dozen new stores are expected as tenants of the center, along with a new restaurant (Lilly) near Front St., and another (not identified) behind the Rusty Scupper.

One long-time retail tenant has engaged in legal action against NewMarket, claiming that the expanded commercial footage exceeds the amount allowed by a consent decree NewMarket entered into after a class action suit by a number of neighbors.

Incidentally, if you're wondering about John Ross, well, he was a Scottish merchant who acted as purchasing agent for the Continental Congress.

PENNSYLVANIA HOSPITAL DILATES ITS PLANNING

Pennsylvania Hospital is currently proposing the construction of a new core tower at a cost of approximately \$50 million.

The construction is the next step in an expansion program which was begun in 1959 and these are its major components: 1) Conversion of the Spruce Building into a long-term care facility of approximately 210 beds. 2) Demolition of the Ayer, Elm and Outpatient Buildings and the construction of a "pallet" building connecting the Scheidt and Preston Buildings. This would centralize receiving and distribution functions, house new primary care, emergency and outpatient facilities and allow for the expansion of radiology, physical therapy, cardiology and respiratory therapy facilities. 3) Construction of an acute-care patient tower above the "pallet" building, bringing the hospital's total acute-care beds to 412 (down from a current acute-care capacity of 433).

Discussions between the hospital and the community are continuing on concerns such as architectural compatibility, economic necessity, and the impact of traffic and parking.

At the present time, the Health Systems Agency review staff has not acted favorably on the project and the Agency's approval could be a major stumbling block.

IT'S A DITCH, IT'S A TRACK, IT'S A SUPERHIGHWAY

The 2.2 mile stretch of I-95 which hems Society Hill, finally opened quietly in late August to reduced-speed traffic. It may not be 35 miles an hour as promised, but it's definitely less than 135.

Construction of sound barriers continues and progress of contractors will be monitored. The barriers, when completed, will be subject to testing for effectiveness in reducing traffic noise levels.

Attention of the community now will be focused on the placement of exit and entry ramps and their effect on street traffic in Society Hill. Stay tuned.

24 COMMITTEES, NO WAITING

The new 1979-1980 Committees are as follows:

STANDING COMMITTEES

Communications - Leonard Zack - 627-0440 & Nancy Frenze (Newsletter) - 923-5459
Cultural - Ruth Luborsky - 627-0861
Design Review and Urban Renewal - Robert Breading - 925-0714
Fund Raising - Martin Weinberg - 922-7822
Legal Review - Paul Putney - 972-3629 & Joseph Bright - WA 5-6567
Liquor - Marsha Perelman - 922-2508
Long-Range Planning - Stephen Brown - 923-9329
Membership - Martin Weinberg - 922-7822
Neighborhood Preservation Coalition* - Damon Childs - 627-5145 & Joy Lindy-
922-4042
Nominating - Michael Willmann - WA 2-1415 (o), 925-9283 (h)
Resident Newsletter - Alan Halpern - WA 5-3431
Traffic and Parking - Joy Lindy - 922-4042 & Duncan Buell - 755-6685
Zoning - Damon Childs - 627-5145

*delegates

Ad Hoc Committees

Cable Television - Damon Childs - 627-5145
Chernock Properties - Marsha Perelman - 922-2508
Disco (Second & Walnut Streets) - Mrs. Frank Elliott - 627-3229
Head House Craft Fair -
Low-Income Housing - Liz Ostrander - WA 2-6179
Neighborhood Crime Protection -
NewMarket -
Pennsylvania Hospital - Dr. Paul Wallner - WA 2-6376 & Stephen Brown-923-7329
Pet Litter -
Political Forum - Marsha Perelman - 922-2508
Tun Tavern - Gloria Ordovery (o) 885-5300 ext. 253-4
Washington Square East Towers - Marsha Perelman - 922-2508

We need volunteers to work on them. Call Mike Willmann 925-9283 h; 922-1415 o, or Nancy Frenze 923-5459.

New Members: Use the form below to join SHCA and designate a Committee choice.

Tear off and Edna Wenk Please renew my (our) membership in
Mail to: 110 Pine St. the Association for May 1979-May 1980.
Phila., Pa. 19106

Name: _____ 1 person, \$6
Address: _____ 2 persons at same address, \$10
Phone: _____ I request waiver of dues

Committee Interest: _____

Add \$1.00 for your own numbered SHCA parking sticker.

ZONING REPORT: SOME WINS, SOME LOSSES

273 S. 4th: A variance permitting a one-family dwelling to be used by an

architectural designer was denied. It was a two-and-a-half-year battle and was won by the united efforts of SHCA and neighbors.

712 Locust: The plans originally submitted by the original five developers (before the present developer defaulted) will be reviewed and a selection will be made at the October 15th RDA meeting.

Dock Street Site (triangular tract in front of Bookbinder's): Land use change from commercial to residential approved by City Council; part of the site will be sold to Bookbinders for a parking lot; the remaining portion will be sold for development of single-family houses.

6th & Washington Square (the now-infamous Norman Denny towers): Used last spring as an improvised skateboard park. The site is presently an eyesore. But maybe not forever. Title will be transferred in November from Empire Associates to Greenwood Realty for construction of two high rises containing up to 1200 units. Shudder!

337 South 4th: A two-story addition with 100% land coverage on an existing one-story structure (a garage and single family dwelling) which was opposed by RDA and SHCA, was approved by the Zoning Board. Don't ask why.

225 S. 4th: Owner applied for change from commercial to residential on this one-time railroad building. SHCA took no position. ZBA approved. 24 condos with 13 parking spaces.

251 Pine: Owner increased density from three to four apartments then applied for a variance. Opposed by SHCA and immediate neighbors. Hearing on September 26th. Results expected in 10 days.

730 Pine: Owner applied for use variance for art gallery. SHCA opposed. Request withdrawn by applicant.

208 S. 3rd: City approved plan to split one house into two, but opposed parking in back yard space; approved parking in the common area.

256 S. 6th (607 Spruce): Holy Trinity School. Variance requested for use as a day care center. SHCA took no position. ZBA approved.

THE CRAZY MIXED-UP HALL-MERCER LITIGATION

Last year the SHCA and certain individuals entered into a comprehensive agreement with the Pennsylvania Hospital which included, among other things, an agreement on the part of the hospital to preserve the facades of the buildings on the south side of the 700 block of Spruce Street and an agreement on the part of the SHCA and the individual protestors to discontinue the lawsuit against Hall-Mercer. That suit began when the out-patient mental health clinic was built without getting proper variances. In the last round of the litigation, the hospital was denied a variance for its Hall-Mercer addition by the Zoning Board of Adjustment. The hospital then appealed the Zoning Board's decision to the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas.

Pursuant to the agreement, Joe Bright, counsel of record in that litigation for the SHCA and the individual protestants, is now responding to a request by the attorneys for the hospital to remand the matter to Zoning Board, where in all likelihood the decision will be reversed, the variance granted, and the litigation terminated.

ON THE WATERFRONT

On October 7th there will be live music, entertainment, games, TV stars and food on Penn's Landing for the benefit of St. Christopher's Hospital for Children.

Piers 3 and 5 North -- above market -- are being marked for residential development. Can't think of a neater place to live than on a pier. Especially if you're a rat.

The Maritime Museum and the State reached an agreement and the doors of our new and lovely Port Museum should be opening soon.

The Chart House will begin construction in 60 days on the site of the Penn's Landing heliport. Leonard Tose will have to arrive by car.

A new service building to house the Penn's Landing Corp and OPDC along with a small restaurant, sidewalk cafe, gift shop and toilet facilities will replace the trailers and temporary tacky set-up the Landing put up with this summer. OPDC director Jim Martin says it will be a smooth-looking operation soon. We hope so. The Embarcadero has it all over the Atlantic City boardwalk and it's a heck of a lot closer.

TIME'S UP

Joel Chernock, son of Councilwoman-at-large Beatrice Chernock, has been under agreement with the Redevelopment Authority to complete six residences on the 700 block of Spruce Street. Deadline after deadline has passed without completion of the projects. How does he do it? So far no grand jury.

WINTER CARE OF TREES

Water well before the freeze. Don't use rock salt to melt the snow/ice, use a "melt-it" type of preparation or sand. Clean up dead leaves. If you have any botanical problems, call the Penna. Horticultural Society Hot Line, 922-8043.

SQUARE SHOOTERS

The fountain pump in Washington Square has been repaired and all ceremonial and regular flags have been cleaned, the Wash. Square Association reports. On the agenda for the future is the removal of the dead trees and the resurfacing of flagstone walkways. The Associates offer a reminder: Dogs are to be leashed in the park and dog owners are responsible for the dog waste.

GYPSIES NO MORE

The SHCA finally has a "home" to call its own. With the generous cooperation of the board of the Old Pine Community Center and Center director Peggy Noyes, the Association will hold all future board and general membership meetings at OPCC, Fourth and Lombard Streets.

All board meetings are open and always have been. But when the board was compelled to schedule meetings at the homes of directors, community participation was often more imagined than real.

Board meetings are held once a month. General membership meetings at least four times a year. The schedule for the remainder of 1979 follows:

Board -- November 7th at 6:30 p.m.
General Membership -- November 7th at 8:00 p.m.
Board -- December 5th at 7:30 p.m.

The Association also has a new mailing address: Box 3, Philadelphia, Pa. 19105. Drop us a line about what's on your mind.

KEEP YOUR EYES PEELED

The SHCA Board concurs with Zoning Chairman Damon Childs that "the Zoning Committee become a Committee of the Whole". The vigilance necessary to catch posted zoning notices in time to discuss them and act upon them intelligently is the responsibility of all Association members. Anyone who sees a zoning notice posted should inform his quadrant director and the quadrant directors will then poll their constituency. In turn, Damon Childs will phone the quadrant directors involved before the hearing to find out whether their constituency approves or opposes the issue. The president will then decide whether or not the entire Board should be called for polling or the general membership should be polled. (The same technique will be used with notices of application for liquor licenses)

IF YOU WON'T PUT YOUR POOCH IN PAMPERS...

Anyone who has walked around Society Hill recently has faced the offal truth that hip boots may be a necessary purchase. A long-standing City Code (Chapter 10, sections 101, 102 and 107) requires all animals except cats and horses to be kept on a leash when they are not on the owner's property, and forbids owners to knowingly or negligently permit an animal to "commit any nuisance" on any sidewalk, wall, or private property other than the property he owns. It provides for a fine of \$25 for a first offense. Unfortunately the law is more honored in the breach than the observance. Enter the Pooper Scooper. It is a device required by law to be carried in New York and can be purchased here at Our Mother's Pet Store, 108 South 20th Street. Latest estimates place the number of cooperating neighbors at two -- Ellen Miller and Martha Levey. Which is regrettable. Consider this statistic. Only ten dogs walked three times a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year, adds up to an annual gain of 10,920 new spots in which to avoid putting a foot down. If you're a dog owner, be a good neighbor and get a Pooper Scooper. It's not only good for the neighborhood, but it will do wonders for your waistline.

GOOD DEALS

In our last issue we asked members to recommend tradespeople they were happy with. We received the following response from a Pennsylvania Hospital urologist:

"I am recommending a Ronald D. Thompson for landscaping, house repairs, plumbing, painting, and major construction. I have used Mr. Thompson in my center city office as well as in my residence, and was thoroughly pleased with his dependable work and fair pricing. His listing can be found in the Yellow Pages."

LOW INCOME HOUSING: NO COMPROMISE

SHCA is back to square one on the low-income housing issue. That is - the association is back to its position of favoring the relocating of people who have been dislocated into existing, rehabilitated rental properties in Society Hill, according to Michael Willmann, president of SHCA.

Over the summer an opportunity for changing the association's long-standing posture on the matter arose, when Councilman Jim Tayoun, at the request of the Mother Bethel Church, sought another location for one of the three low-income housing units so that an archives building for the church could be constructed at 6th and Pine.

After deliberation by the Board, the association rearticulated its position in support of that proposal.

However, nothing substantive has come of it. The Tayoun proposal that a compromise be entered into by SHCA, HUD, Community Legal Services on behalf of the relocated litigants, the Redevelopment Authority and Mother Bethel Church to support the archives construction was rejected.

Parallel litigation, opposing permanent low-income housing on the 6th st. sites, SHCA v. Patricia Harris, was also being heard at the same time as the Tayoun compromise was being debated. This case was dismissed and the association is now appealing. Discussion on the merits of the case was never reached.

Attorney Olan Lowery has suggested to individual neighbors that they file challenges when building permits and zoning variances are filed. As of September 13th, no building permits or variances had been initiated.

The board has voted to spend up to, but no more than \$2500 on legal fees and costs in this court fight.

At the last membership meeting a motion asking that the board reconsider the SHCA's role in engaging in low-income housing litigation passed initially but was defeated in a recount.

PARKING STICKERS

Do you have your own numbered SHCA parking sticker yet? If you add \$1. more to your \$6. membership fee, you will receive a parking sticker. Two dollars plus your \$10. joint membership fee will get you two parking stickers. Parking stickers cost \$5. to non-members. Only cars with Society Hill addresses are eligible.

DARTS AND LAURELS

- LAUREL - For residents who put out trash in plastic bags or otherwise carefully contained--on the proper day of trash pickup.
- DART - For those who put out loose trash that blows with the breeze and/or on the wrong day.
- DART - (perhaps even poison ones) for those who use corner litter containers for household refuse, or who pile household refuse on Fifth Street near the A&P walkway. But watch out: The Sanitary Police are on the alert.
- LAUREL - For the builders who are building on formerly ill-kept lots on Spruce Street.
- DART - To Fidelity Mutual Life for the condition of its weed-and-trash-filled lot on Lombard west of the Head House garage.
- LAUREL - To the police inspector who assigned traffic police to the Head House area this summer.
- DART - To the traffic police who ignored the traffic jams and huddled together in earnest conversation so much of their time on duty (What do they talk about?)
- DART - To drivers who ignore the stop sign at Second and Pine, and don't give pedestrians a chance.
- LAUREL - To everyone involved in finally bringing to completion the handsome landscaping of the I-95 cover.
- DART - To the piece of concrete that fell from the Hopkinson House. That's not a neighborly way to protest condo conversion.

- LAUREL - For those who weed the areas around street trees in front of their residences.
- DART - To guide you in the fall election, simply vote against any candidate who pastes his name to a neighborhood lamppost or traffic pole.
- DART - To those who portrayed our I-95 neighborhood battle as a rich vs. poor lawsuit and forgot that the I-95 battle from the outset, was not a neighborhood fight but a campaign to preserve historic shrines and allow waterfront recreational development for use and enjoyment of ALL city residents and visitors. And that it was PennDot's fumbling that caused so much delay. When you point the finger -- point it in the right direction. It was and still is up to PennDot Secretary, Thomas Larsen to honor the court agreement he signed.
- DART - To the neighbor who insists on ACTION by the SHCA -- and isn't even a member.
- DART - To City Hall for not getting the fountain working, the restrooms opened and the trash baskets expeditiously emptied in the marvelous new Expressway Cover Park.
- DART - To City Hall for not replacing the lamp posts on the northwest corners of Second and Pine and Second and Delancey knocked over by Jersey drivers.

Thanks to Joe Bright and Paul Wallner for copy in this edition and the talents of our expanded editorial staff -- Frances Israel, Miki Mahoney, Nancy Frenze, Peg Robb, Jan Stephano and Alan Halpern. To send in items or comment, contact The Resident Newsletter Box 3, Phila., Pa. 19105