

Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
March 16, 2010, 7:00–8:30 p.m.
The Children’s Institute Hillman Room

Board Members Present: Raymond Baum, Rich Feder, Judy Feldman, Lori Fitzgerald, Wayne Gerhold, Ed Goldfarb, Beatrice Goldszer, Brett Prince, Jeff Rosenthal, Sidney Stark, and Eric Wagner

President Ray Baum called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. He asked the board to review the draft February 2010 Board meeting minutes.

Financial Report: Wayne Gerhold handed out a Fund Balance Report for March 2010. He highlighted that the unencumbered balance is up to \$13,157.03, which is up from last year. The Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition magazine account now has enough reserves in the bank to publish the magazine even before advertising revenue is received. The Coalition is also steadily repaying the magazine purchase money debt.

Mr. Gerhold also described his initial discussions with Carriage House regarding leasing of the Coalition office space after the Carriage House mortgage loan is paid off. Mr. Gerhold told the board he would keep them posted about negotiations.

Nominating Committee: Ray Baum asked which board members would like to serve on the nominating committee. The nominating committee will help plan the annual meeting in June, nominate directors and officers and recommend people or organizations for special recognition at the annual meeting. Wayne Gerhold, Beatrice Goldszer, Eric Wagner and Sidney Stark are appointed to the nominating committee. Following the meeting, Cici Summers was also appointed to the nominating committee.

Annual Meeting: The annual meeting was tentatively scheduled to take place June 15 at the Community Room at Summerset. Lori Fitzgerald volunteered to design the invitations. Lori, the nominating committee and the board will make additional plans for the annual meeting.

Brett Prince suggested that the focus of the annual meeting be on the Master Plan. Ms. Fitzgerald suggested that the SHUC try to get more advance media notices for this year’s meeting. Jeff Rosenthal suggested the meeting focus on the differences the SHUC is making in the community and opined that a single focus for the meeting is a good idea. One idea of a theme was “the future of Squirrel Hill; a snapshot of what we’ve done and intend to do.”

Membership Committee: A new Membership Committee was discussed. Judy Feldman, Brett Prince, and Lori Fitzgerald will be working on this, with Judy as chair. The board members were asked to think about the incentives of being a member of the SHUC. Beatrice Goldszer described the SHUC’s ability to fix problems and clean up the area. Judy Feldman suggested that the SHUC try to reach more people by framing it as a social networking opportunity. She also mentioned trying to increase opportunities for social gatherings.

Summerset Development Update: Ray Baum reported that the Summerset Developers appear to be close to obtaining site development financing needed to complete the main road through Summerset to Brownsville Road and beginning construction on the next phases.

Squirrel Hill Master Plan Update: Rich Feder reported on the March 1 Master Plan Advisory Committee meeting. The next meeting will be held on April 15, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. at the Children's Institute. This committee will continue to get feedback from people. As an attempt to get public input, the first public meeting is tentatively scheduled for May 17th and may encourage individuals to come to the annual meeting in June.

Squirrel Hill Theater – Commercial Development Issues: Ray Baum reported that Rocco Didomenico, the owner of the row of buildings where the Panera Bread and Barnes & Noble and the Manor Theater are located, is actively marketing the vacant space.

Ray Baum suggested that a group be put together to brainstorm how the properties at the corner of Forward and Murray, from the former Squirrel Hill Theater to, and including, the former Poli building may be redeveloped.

Rich Feder also suggested that there should be a public process to discuss how the property should be used. He also recommended a study on parking. The importance of facilitating parking and creativity in attracting residents was discussed.

Ray Baum suggested that the Squirrel Hill Magazine have articles that focus on the positives of Squirrel Hill. Lori Fitzgerald offered to write an article which will discuss the successful businesses that may not be readily visible.

Ray Baum reported that The Children's Institute and a representative from CMU will present development plans at the April Board meeting.

Ray Baum also reported that Giant Eagle has purchased the BP Gas Station property at the corner of Forward and Murray and intends to replace it with a Get-Go. Giant Eagle has not yet determined its timing or exact plans.

Proposed public meeting with Public Works Director: Ray Baum reported on his meeting with Rob Kaczorowski, City of Pittsburgh Director of Public Works regarding snow removal, potholes, street repairs and the proposed Public Works facility in Schenley Park (which the Coalition has previously supported, but which presently has no funding) in other Squirrel Hill related issues. Mr. Kaczorowski agreed to a public meeting if the Coalition scheduled such a meeting, but the board determined that there is no need to schedule such a meeting in the immediate future.

Committee Reports: Beatrice Goldszer described some of the activities of the Litter Patrol, including her "Pick-It-Up" poster contest being held at local nursery schools. The goal of this project is to "teach young children to be environmentally astute." Prizes will be given to the winners and the art will be displayed in the library. She suggested that the posters also be displayed at the Coalition annual meeting. She also encouraged members to come to, and spread the word about, the spring clean-up being held on April 25th from 9:00 a.m. to noon.

Magazine Update: Wayne Gerhold mentioned that Kjerstin Pugh was not able to make it to the meeting because she was putting the final touches on finishing the current issue. She is trying to send it out by April 2, in time for it to reach everyone before Easter. He mentioned that the Squirrel Hill Magazine is experiencing a small drop in advertising. Kjerstin is researching what other magazines are costing to advertise so that we can have a more competitive rate. It was suggested that magazine production team be honored at the annual meeting. Ray and Wayne are going to interview a candidate to work with Kjerstin. She would be another consultant working primarily on the magazine, with some time to devote to other Coalition work.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.