



WASHINGTON SQUARE WEST CIVIC ASSOCIATION

THE POST

Serving the Community from Broad to 7th and Walnut to South Streets since 1935

December 2004

Issue 9

CALL FOR WRITERS

Are you a Wash West resident interested in:

- **Neighborhood development**
- **Local business**
- **Noteworthy neighbors**
- **Parenting in Wash West**
- **Quality of life issues**
- **Architecture and local history**

or any other topics that may interest your neighbors?

If so, please consider becoming a writer/reporter for the WSWCA Post. A great neighborhood deserves a great newsletter, and we need your help to make it happen.

Contact Annette at 215-545-5853 or earling@zaza.com

Attention All Members— A Discussion of Neighborhood Improvement Districts

At the general membership meeting in October during the discussion of lighting our neighborhood, the subject of a NID (Neighborhood Improvement District) was brought up and briefly discussed. Those in attendance expressed an interest in finding out more about NID's. In response to this interest, Wash West has asked Larry Houston, a member of our governmental affairs committee and a specialist in setting up NID's, to be our guest speaker at our January Board Meeting.

Below you will find a short summary of what a NID is. I would like to invite everyone to come to the meeting to hear Larry's presentation. Following his talk, everyone will have the opportunity to ask questions so that we all can make an informed decision as to whether a NID should be further studied by Wash West.

Please tell your neighbors and friends who may not be members of the Civic Association about this special meeting, and urge them to attend. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at applebaumd@snip.net

Wash West and the NID Law

The persistence of litter in our neighborhood adversely affects property values and sends the signal that this is a community with little pride in its environment. In Baltimore a large neighborhood has had a district to deal with such problems for more than a decade. Pennsylvania law makes that possible here.

The Neighborhood Improvement District (NID) Act authorizes residential and other types of areas to form improvement districts similar to Center City District, providing services planned and managed by local people. When a group such as the Civic Association agrees on a plan which includes proposed services, budget, cost-sharing and governance, the City Council can adopt an ordinance that authorizes the neighborhood to provide services such as periodic sidewalk cleaning. The costs are low to the homeowner because all properties share them through an assessment on all benefitting properties. In Philadelphia, special districts have contracted with Center City District to provide cleaning. The law also authorizes use of NID funds for brighter pedestrian-scale sidewalk lighting.

The law was adopted to give areas an alternative to the problems associated with trying to raise funding through voluntary contributions. Typically, the latter system is unfair in that many benefit who do not contribute; the amount raised is usually too little; the time devoted to soliciting funds is great and the process produces less and less money as the years pass.

If half of the properties affected or the owners of properties representing half of the total assessed valuation in the proposed district object, the plan is defeated. Otherwise, local people can enjoy a clean and pleasant environment.

WSWCA Meeting Highlights

December 14, 2004

Present: J. Applebaum, C. Baker, M.J. Barrett, K. Cushing A. Earling, I. Gold, B. Hornsby, J. Jordan, J. Matteo, J. Menegakis, M. Schultz, H. Wittich

Absent: S. Batcheler, E. Ferry, L. Metzger

I. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A representative from Society Hill's Civic Association attended tonight's meeting seeking support for a petition against the proposed demolition of The Dilworth House, on the Eastside of Washington Square, (223-225 S. 6th street). The property's owner/developer wants to replace the house with 12-15 luxury condominiums. Those against demolition see the Dilworth House as historically significant to Philadelphia, not for its age or design, but because it is an icon for the rebirth of the neighborhood. Mayor Richardson Dilworth commissioned this house, his primary residence, be built in what was then a rundown neighborhood so to encourage revitalization of the area. (The Hopkinson House, built in 1963, is under historic protection.) Interested Philadelphians are asked to sign the petition, voice their support for preserving Dilworth House to the Mayor and Historic Commission.

II. BOARD MEETING MINUTES

November's minutes were unanimously adopted.

III. TREASURER'S REPORT

The treasurer's report was highlighted and unanimously adopted.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Government Affairs

200 block of Juniper Street

The Committee had previously been approached by owner who sought variances to open a pizza shop on this property. He was asked to return to committee but has not done so to date. Meanwhile, the police approached the Civic requesting its opposition to the variances because of safety concerns posed by opening another late night, take-out place in a crime-ridden area.

Motion: The Board voted unanimously to oppose variances to open a pizza parlor on this property.

Signatures

This establishment seeks to transfer its existing liquor license to an entity called "The Philadelphia Golf & Travel Club". Some time ago, Civic President

Applebaum met with the Signatures principals and Councilman DiCicco when Signatures stated they only wanted the liquor license if their operation could be expanded to include adjacent space on the property. The necessary variances for expansion were subsequently denied. Signatures current request for transferring its license raises concerns they will again seek ways to expand their operation. "East of Broad", neighboring institutions and local residents will voice their opposition to the liquor license transfer at hearing scheduled for January 11th. Should an appeal be required, WSWCA will weigh in with its opposition.

The remainder of the meeting was spent evaluating and enhancing WSWCA's Committees—in terms of current structure, effectiveness, objectives and potential reorganization.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Iris J. Gold, Secretary



Noteworthy Neighbors

The WSWCA newsletter will be including profiles of Washington Square West residents — **Noteworthy Neighbors** — please suggest a neighbor, friend, even yourself! We are looking to profile interesting people who reside in Washington Square West (need not be a member of the Civic Association, although I will certainly invite them to become one if they are not already!)

Interview questions may include – What brought you to Wash West initially, and what about the neighborhood causes you to continue to want to make Wash West your home? What is the one thing you would change about the neighborhood if you could? What trends in the neighborhood do you see in the short and long-term?

Please E-mail me with suggestions for interview subjects and/or interview questions to me at upennivy@alumni.upenn.edu and include the subject heading "WSWCA Profiles". I look forward to hearing from you!

Jennifer Jones is a senior asset manager and life coach and has lived in Washington Square West since 1987. She believes in working toward life balance, and her financial endeavors are offset by interests including horse-back riding, belly dancing, eco-system preservation and animal rescue, community activities and horticulture.