Gwinhurst Civic Association meeting

*05.04.2017 Meeting Minutes*

# Attendees -

GCA Board: Steve Bufflap – President, Adrian Dejong – Vice President (absent), Dave Paules– Treasury;

Kristin Ford – Secretary (absent)

Residents:

18 attendees

Special Guests:

NCC Councilman John Cartier

* Talked about vacant property registration
* Vacant property - county complaints 395-5555
* Events: Friday May 12 is Shimp feast at Claymont Fire Company.
* Resident raised concern about Top of the Hill investigation. Cartier says police are investigating. We need to be careful though because the criminal has been elusive to date.
* Resident raised questions on whether the county could put liens on people’s properties for lack of maintenance. Cartier answered yes, in the extreme case, if the county found them in code violation over several cases.
* Residents asking about the property on 28 Georgetown that was in code violations for years and was knocked down and not rebuilt. Concerns about mosquitos when the hole created fills up with water. Cartier explained that the property was put through the sheriff sale to remediate the code violations. Turns out the new owner is now being cited for MORE code violations. Owner has open permit to build. Code enforcement aware of it. Proceeding with filing code violations and fines. If permit expires, county could order the hole to be filled with dirt. Concern about kids falling in, etc. Contractor could lose his license as a contractor.
* Residents asked about Merchant Square. Owned by Allied Properties. Not a stellar developer. Some demolition on the buildings going on. Cartier admitted that property is no longer in his district. In Penrose district.
* Conversation shifted to Tri-State Mall and its development. No new news at this time. Reiterated that steel mill is demolished, and area planned to have business park, housing, etc. and the Claymont train station being moved to that area in 2020.
* Resident brought up concern that trucks are parking trucks in the county park. Cartier asked that residents call the county police. That’s not allowed to drive vehicles in that park.

**Crime Report**

# Financials -

Starting balance from last meeting, 2/02/2016 $20,731.13

Debits $2,250

Credits $2,335.02

**Total Balance as of 05/04/2017 $20,816.15**

YTD dues 175/580 have paid their dues for 2017 resulting in a 30.2% contribution rate.

By comparison: 2016 dues 169/578 for 29.2% contribution rate.

Pending Credits: 1687.50 (75% of 2,250 from snow plow)

Pending Debits: 138+278.77+45.44

Yard Sale on May 6th 2017.

# Minutes

* Residents asked about contacting the county park service to pick up loose debris (sticks) that residents might organize after a storm. Cartier said it’s not on a set schedule, so just call when the pile to pickup is significant
* Allison Robertson – presented her progress on signs about driving slower in the neighborhood to remind people about driving slower. DelDOT was able to gift 100 signs and Allison supplied 50 yard sticks to put them up. 56 without stakes. 50 stakes for $45. 2208 Harrison. Allison will purchase and send the receipt to me.
* VFW is hosting a Beef/Beer/Auction for Karen Foust to raise money. On May 13, from 1-6 and $25 per ticket. Residents should exit through the VFW main entrance to find out more.
* Next meeting is august 3rd.

# Prior Issues Raised (historic meetings)–

**Extra lighting for Lincoln/Townsend Ave**

* Some residents asked about getting lights on Townsend as there are none.
* Councilman J. Cartier informed residents that we need to submit a petition with 60% favoring more lights.
* He noted the lights will not be decorative, but the basic ‘cobra’ style metal overhang model.
* NCC applies a light tax to pay for the power for the lights.
* The NCC petition will be provided to whoever requests it.
* GCA Board recommends that those that want lights form a committee to organize the collection of signatures, and inform the community on their progress.

**Stop signs are needed. Some intersections have 1, 2, or none.**

* Rep Short will follow up with DelDOT on which intersections should have stop signs.
  + Grant and Garfield has none (Invalid. No intersection here).
  + Odessa and Lincoln has 1

**Mobile home at corner of Holly Oak and Philly Pike**

* Residents complained to code violations and debris. J. Cartier promised that he would carry this back to Code Enforcement, personally (Frank Walsh).

**Pats’s Pizzaria’s fence**

* Residents noted fence was damaged this past winter. It is leaning into neighboring yards. It was reported to County Enforcement already. However, residents asked Cartier to check into this as they felt code enforcement was not pursuing remediation aggressively enough.

**Massage Parlors on Philly Pike**

* We continue to be plagued by numerous massage parlors that are fronts for organized crime, including human trafficking and prostitution. Residents asked Rep Short whether government is doing anything to address the problem.
* It’s a state issue (because Philly Pike is State jurisdiction), thus
* Attorney General Matt Denn is involved. Rep Short and Sen Harris McDowell are working this issue.
  + It’s recommended that we continue to write letters to State House Representative (Bryon Short), and our State Senator (Harris B. McDowell), Attorney General Matt Denn, Governor Jack Markell to keep heat on the issue.
  + We should stop in at the local State Police office on Philly Pike to complain about massage parlors in order to get more attention at stopping it in our neighborhood.
  + The concern is that this is a point solution and they could re-occur in our area or another without a holistic plan.
* These massage parlors are NOT being screened by business licensing by the state. They aren’t being re-reviewed. State claims it doesn’t have the authority or resources to re-investigate these places after granting the initial license. Can only investigate after a complaint is raised against one of them.
* Residents asked about licenses for the workers and whether we should be reporting to the police those without licenses? How can we get police to focus on this with as much attention as Drug Selling
  + For example, licenses for hair stylists are granted, but no one inspects them once granted UNLESS a complaint is filed. Massage parlor licensing is the same way under the law currently.
* Other ideas raised were to chase after property owners
  + Exponential legal fines and fees with each violation.
  + “flashing signs” onto Philly Pike are a code violation that we should apply to getting them shut down/regulated out of business

**NCC Councilman John Cartier spoke with the residents:**

* Residents asked Cartier to get county out to examine Gwinhurst park between Park Drive and Lincoln. There are downed trees and over growth in the area that many residents would like addressed/touched up to make the park more presentable.
* A sump pump is pumping directly into Gwinhurst Park making it difficult for the county to cut due to flooding.
  + If the pump is 6ft out from property it isn’t in violation. Code enforcement will review to see if it is being drained directly into park
* Reminder: 90 day Vacant Properties should be reported to 302-395-5555 (county enforcement)
* Open Code Enforcement violations were provided by Councilman Cartier
* Autozone site demo has begun (old 7-11 on philly pike)
* Old coach house site will become a Dollar General. Nothing citizens can do to prevent this (there is no legal concept of “not in my backyard” that we can apply.)
  + Dollar General will be pressured to adhere to the Claymont Overlay design guidelines.
* Superfresh site: no new developments or interest to buy it from anyone yet.
* EVRAZ Steel site: Continuing its demolition. No definitive plans for its next usage.

**State Rep Bryon Short spoke to the residents**

* Addressed the problem of the massage parlors.
* Repair of Harrison Ave 2 blocks at speed bump at park coming this year (2016). Rep Short also indicated that he will revisit our community, recognized that our roads are in need of significant repairs/reinvestment.

**Reminders and Followups**

* **Code enforcement/County park clean up** 
  + 302-395-5555 if you suspect a code violation please call and report to this number.
  + Contact Paul Johnson (parks maintenance manager) with any complaints of park land or county land not being sufficiently maintained for public safety.

# Community Calendar –

* **Gwinhurst Community Yard Sale scheduled for Saturday 6.11.2016 8:00-1:00pm**
* Facebook communication will be created
  + Post/Link to other Yard Sale Facebook events
* NCC Classified and NCC Yard Sale sites
* News Journal advertisement will be included
* Postcard mailing to residents
* **Claymont Fire Hall Shrimp Fest** – Friday 5.6.2015, 7-9pm, $30.00 pp. TIX SOLD OUT
  + 3223 Philadelphia Pike, Claymont
  + <https://www.facebook.com/events/958209970964517/>
* **Bellefonte Arts Festival** – Saturday May 21st 9-5
  + <http://www.bellefontearts.com>

Next Meeting – August 4th, 2016