

CASGED Community Meeting Minutes 14 March 2017, 6:30 pm
Board members present: Ruth Ann Dailey, Bob Herbert, John Klinger,
Dennis Lynch, Joe Valorie, Rafael Walton, Chris Rosselot. Absent: Brenda Kay Dailey, Paul
Cerny Jr.

1. RA Dailey called meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. B Herbert led Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Guests from Government Offices:

a) Zone 1 Representatives Sergeant Weaver and Officer Sylvester reported that crime is generally low for the neighborhood.

Updates were provided on the properties located at 915 Chestnut and 815 Phineas. Both properties have been placed on the Nuisance Properties list, and have been referred to the DA. The DA may choose to take action against the property owners to force evictions and cleanup of the properties. The Chestnut Street property has been boarded up; residents were encouraged to call 911 if they witness activity at the property. A drug raid was previously conducted at the Phineas Street property.

A homicide took place on the site steps located near Penn Brewery on Vinial St. The investigation is ongoing.

A serial burglar has been arrested. The actor has been breaking into vacant properties, stealing construction equipment and copper pipes.

Two individuals have been arrested and subsequently confessed to breaking into cars in and around Pittsburgh, including Spring Garden and East Deutschtown. Residents are encouraged to continue to keep items hidden in the trunk.

A community member raised concern over abandoned cars and ongoing suspect activities in the area of Voskamp and Basin. The Sergeant acknowledged the presence of drug activity, stating that the investigation is ongoing; he encouraged residents to report abandoned vehicles to 311.

A community member raised concern over drug activity on Suismon St; residents were encouraged to report all drug activity by contacting 911, calling the precinct, or speaking directly to officers.

A letter of appreciation was presented to the Officers by the CASGED Safety Committee for the swift action taken at 915 Chestnut St.

b) Jeff Martin presented an update from Councilwoman Darlene Harris's office. The Councilwoman is optimistic that upcoming cleanup work being done at the veteran's memorial at West Commons can be extended to include repairs to the Spring Garden memorial.

The Councilwoman is still working to have trashcans returned to the neighborhood.

While discussions to return the water fountain to Catalano Parklet are ongoing, the Councilwoman is exploring the option of having trees planted.

c) While no one from the Mayor's office was available to speak, Ruth Ann Dailey did update the group on the status of a lien paid when the property at 1000 Madison Ave was sold to Neu Kirche. Representative Wheatley's office assisted CASGED in recuperating the portion of the lien that was levied by the State. Paperwork has been submitted three times in an attempt to recover the portion paid to the City. Corey Buckner, from the Mayor's Office, is now pursuing this on CASGED's behalf.

2. Green Spaces updates

a) Chris Waraks is working to get the Kaboom playground updated in time for warm weather. He has contacted and is trying to recruit several local business and organizations to donate materials and labor to repair the fence, plant trees, and provide seating.

b) Madi Nestor reported that plots are still available at Food City. Interested residents can contact her to sign up. There will also be community days coming up for residents who are interested in helping to cleanup and/or plant. Thanks in part of a grant from GTECH, several updates are slated for the garden, including a new entrance on Retail Way. The new entrance will be handicap-accessible entrance. Raised beds are also being added to make gardening accessible to handicapped gardeners. Gates will be placed at the two current entrances in the hopes of deterring theft, but will remain unlocked.

c) Shelly Danko Day from the city's Adopt-A-Lot program presented information. Interested residents can complete an application by accessing the Vacant Lot Toolkit online. Lots are available for license or lease from the city without a fee. Once approved, the lot can be used for food, flower, or water gardens. The required soil test can be acquired free of charge through the county's Conservation District. Assistance is available for site planning and application completion.

4. Dennis Lynch presented an amendment to the bylaws. The amendment, already approved by the Board, will require those voting in Board elections to be at least 18 years old on election day and to have attended at least 3 meetings in the preceding year. The Board has been operating under these rules for years, but felt the by-laws should reflect established practice.

5. Ruth Ann Dailey reminded attendees that CASGED Board elections will take place at the April meeting. Five seats will be open at that time— this includes the seats of Dennis Lynch, Chris Rosselot, Brenda Kay Dailey, Bob Herbert, and John Klinger. She then opened the floor for nominations. Community members nominated Jeff Wuerthele, Chris Rosselot, Chris Waraks, Brenda Kay Dailey, Bill Vlakancic, Tom Pierce, Denise Pierce, and Kim Basick. All nominees accepted except Tom Pierce, who declined, and Brenda Kay Dailey who was not in attendance.

6. Ruth Ann Dailey presented the President's Report. The issues of speeding along Suismon St, Concord, Spring Garden Ave, and Tripoli, and cars rolling through the stop sign at Spring Garden and Arcola were raised. Ms. Dailey said a petition for speed risers on Concord had already been started, but with requests for help on Suismon, maybe a community-wide approach is advisable. She asked for suggestions for possible solutions for each street. Community members suggested adding speed humps and stop signs. The Board will work with the community and city to find solutions.

In response to questions raised by the community at last month's meeting, the Board voted and a claim has been filed with the Magistrate in the hopes of recovering the money from the snowflakes. Updates will be provided as they become available.

Ms. Dailey then updated the community on 1214 Voskamp St. A community member has researched PA law regarding conservatorships, suggesting it might be appropriate for this property. The process requires lots of documentation of community concerns on the property. If pursued and approved, the Board would work with developers to rehabilitate the property.

The community was reminded that copies of the CPA's report following an inspection of CASGED's books are available for viewing at the CASGED offices. Following the CPA's recommendation, the Board has voted to not seek an audit.

Business District Surveys were distributed. Business owners in Spring Garden, East Deutschtown, Troy Hill and Spring Hill were encouraged to complete the survey and join.

7. Committee Reports

a) Ruth Ann Dailey announced the formation of the Fundraising Committee. The committee will plan fundraising events such as home tours. Community members who are interested in participating are encouraged to volunteer.

b) Tom Pierce presented updates to the hotel project. The developers have announced that they are close to financing closure. The majority of the City requirements have been met. With financing expected to be secured in the next 2-3 months, the project could break ground by Fall 2017.

Mr. Pierce also updated the community on the Gateway project. While installation of a monument is not anticipated soon, significant improvements are planned for the grassy area at the corner of Chestnut and East Ohio. The Department of Public Works has agreed to pour the concrete for the retaining wall.

c) Raphael Walton presented updates from the Public Safety Committee. Echoing what had already been said regarding 915 Chestnut, Mr Walton acknowledged the upcoming meeting with the city Magistrate, saying that he would be representing CASGED at that meeting. The community was reminded of the Northside Public Safety Meetings which take place the 1st Thursday of each month. It was announced that the last CASGED-owned camera will be installed at 1145 Spring Garden Ave. The Board will consider community suggestions for locations of other cameras as they become available.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM.