

November 21, 2011

East Kensington Neighbors Association (EKNA) General Meeting

Location: Philadelphia Brewing Company

Chair; Jeff Carpineta

Police Officers from the 26th District spoke on the recent attacks in the neighborhood and offered safety tips on staying safe.

A 911 phone chain is being organized by EKNA and the info will be managed by volunteer. Volunteer was introduced. This phone chain can be used to notify neighbors of an incident and alert the police with multiple calls. A sign-up sheet was passed around for interested participants in this effort. Concept of regular Townwatch *Patrol* was considered by EKNA general assembly for consideration previously and was rejected.

Crime Reports. Bernie spoke on his efforts to get crime reports from the 26th District. A digest of crime incidents in the neighborhood is being developed and will be emailed to interested people.

Land Bank Initiative - guest presenter - Jeff Hornstein spoke on the city wide vacant land initiative called the Campaign to Take Back Vacant Land and passed out a handout with information. Vacant land disposition has long been a contentious issue in the city with a history of corruption. The current system is that if you know the right people, you can get access to the land. This campaign is attempting to create a land bank, which would be consolidation of all vacant land. There would be a community oversight board that would determine how public land is to be bought and sold. A network of land trusts across the city would be receivers of land to be kept in trust forever. There is currently a proposed Council bill, which is available on the Campaign's website. A state law was passed to allow a land bank. Shelter Force magazine has great articles about examples of land banks in other cities. Flint, Michigan, is the best example of a land bank. *Motion put forth by Peter Frank, motion was seconded. A vote was taken on whether EKNA should endorse this campaign. There were 30 aye votes, which was a majority vote.* EKNA will endorse this campaign with the understanding that EKNA will continue to be involved as the initiative develops, that Jeff Hornstein will continue to keep ekna updated. Jeff relayed several accounts of how the City's current land disposition system has undermined residents, put sacred spaces at risk repeatedly, and depleted volunteer energy: Park on Sergeant, Emerald Park, Circle Garden, and Resident side yards were cited as examples.

Zoning. Zoning Committee Chair Andy Barrera gave zoning updates. A property at 2607 Martha Street was approved for a two-unit dwelling. A property at 2146 E Hazzard St has a Zoning Board of Adjustments (ZBA) hearing tomorrow. There is another property at Frankford and Trenton, but there is no hearing date set yet. A property at Amber and York Streets has restarted construction work.

Taxes. EKNA President Jeff Carpineta spoke on the BPT- business privilege tax, which has been revised by City Council and signed by the mayor. This may help many small

businesses save money. New legislation declares the first 50K of income is exempt (for 2014) , 75K in 2015, 100K in 2016 plus new business will be exempt (first two years) if they hire employees per the guidelines.

Nonprofit Technology Resources. Bernie spoke on the Nonprofit Technology Resources (NTR), which EKNA has just joined as a nonprofit member. Bernie handed out 10%-off coupons to the room. When used, these coupons will also donate 10% of the proceeds to EKNA.

Tree Survey. Amy Miller spoke about the neighborhood tree survey, which has been completed. Maps of the completed survey showing live trees, dead trees or stumps, and empty tree pits were passed around. The data has been submitted to the Department of Parks and Recreation and there will be a massive tree planting in the empty pits in the Spring.

Vigil. Jeff asked Henry Pyatt to speak on the recent death of East Kensington resident George Loper. Mr. Loper was struck by a DUI driver while biking on Lehigh Avenue near Jasper Street. The driver had been released from DUI arrest earlier the same day before striking Mr. Loper. Tomorrow there will be a memorial vigil at this intersection at 5:30 pm led in part by the Bicycle Coalition.

Charitable donations. Frank asked if anyone knew of a canned food drive that EKNA could donate to, or if anyone knows of a family in need. Pat McHugh suggested that there be a food drive at the next EKNA meeting and that we look out for families in need. A toy drive was also suggested for the next meeting. A vote was taken to have a food and toy drive at the next meeting, and the vote was majority aye.

A vote was taken to help the Loper family by purchasing a \$200 gift card to a supermarket. This vote was also in favor. Jeff and Pat will coordinate to purchase this with EKNA funds and offer to the Loper family at tomorrow's vigil.

Reminder given about next EKNA meeting and holiday gathering. Dec 12th, 6:30 at PBC.