

Brookline Together Community Meeting Minutes April 12, 2021

Board Officers:

President: Caitlin McNulty

Vice-President: Blake Plavchak

Secretary: Ally Bove

Treasurer: Bill Kim; co-chair Mark Hopkinson

Finance Vice-Chair: Mark Hopkinson

Community & Business Engagement Chair: Melissa Kilmer

Community & Business Engagement Co-Chair: Sami Melhorn

Beautification Chair: Lisa Wilson

Beautification Co-Chair: Blake Plavchak

Attendance:

Caitlin McNulty, Blake Plavchak, Ally Bove, Bill Kim, Mark Hopkinson, Melissa Kilmer, Lisa Wilson, Jason Tigano (guest)

Caitlin McNulty called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

- March 8, 2021 community meeting minutes were approved (motion: Caitlin McNulty, 2nd: Bill Kim, all in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions)
- Treasurer Report – Budget Report
 - Current balance \$25,378.58
 - 2020 taxes were returned due to an error with the EIN; that has been corrected and resubmitted
 - Checks being sent out this week to anyone who has submitted receipts to Bill for approved expenses
 - Discussed potentially moving accounts to a bank with technology that is more compatible with Quickbooks – our current bank’s technology makes our recordkeeping a bit difficult
 - After discussion, the board voted in favor of authorizing the Treasurer to open a new account at PNC Bank and transfer the funds from our primary (operations) account at Community Bank to the new PNC account for easier bookkeeping. Other current accounts will remain at Community Bank. (Motion: A. Bove, second: B. Plavchak, 7 in favor, 0 opposed.)
- New Business
 - Committee Updates
 - Membership
 - 2021 membership has increased compared to 2020
 - Events
 - Food Truck Tuesdays are in full swing and have been busy so far
 - Community Yard Sale – Saturday, June 5
 - permit approved for sales @ the Rec Center in addition to people’s residences, so people can now sign up to sell @ the Rec Center
 - Breezefest – Saturday, August 14
 - Melissa is working on the permit
 - If anyone has ideas for signage re: social distancing and masking during community events, please send along to Melissa
 - Considering using unused Newsletter advertising funds to advertise on a billboard at McNeilly and Rt 88, \$625 for 4 weeks. Will put those businesses’ logos on the billboard, as well as our summer event dates
 - Jason has a contact there; he’ll connect Melissa with them to inquire about potentially donating advertising space/time
 - Beautification

- Storage Shed
 - Progress is slowly improving
 - Have been asked for drawings of the lot plan by the City permitting office showing the size of the shed we're planning for
- Cleanups
 - Spring Cleanup: Saturday, April 24, meet at 8:00 a.m. at Brookline Teen Outreach
 - A volunteer is bringing mulch to be dropped in 1 location on the Blvd
 - We'd like people to bring wheelbarrows to help transport the mulch!
 - Reached out to Lowes about donating flowers
 - Fundraising Plan – trying to plan a raffle to raise funds for the shed project. Hoping to have items donated: a wheelbarrow full of pots, seeds, soil, gloves, etc. Trying to complete this by early May so we can sell raffle tickets at May's Food Truck Tuesday events.
- Brookline Breeze 5K Race Update
 - Tabled for now – the contract has not yet been approved by the City's Law department. We have reached out and asked the City if the race is likely to be approved to occur for 2021 (either in-person or virtually) but have not yet heard back.
- Business District Revitalization Presentation Report
 - Mark attended this presentation, held by Urban Redevelopment Authority, on behalf of Brookline Together
 - Thursdays at 11am = Business District Network meetings held by the Office of the Mayor
 - Mark provided a summary of the presentation, including examples of how the URA has helped to revitalize business districts in multiple neighborhoods in the city, including Warrington Ave in Arlington/Hilltop and the Bloomfield/Garfield region. This provided a segue to the following discussion regarding code enforcement (see next bullet point):
- Brookline Blvd Business Code Enforcement
 - Discussion of potential plans & strategies
 - Need to make sure we are protecting our neighborhood's businesses
 - Businesses need occupancy permits to occupy commercial space on the Blvd and operate – but many may not have such permits
 - When buildings are sold, it shouldn't be a problem because any bank funding the sale will require an inspection and walkthrough. However, when commercial space is being rented, we should help advocate for any incoming business owner and make sure the space is up to code.
 - There are matching grant programs from the URA that may help with the cost of improvements.
 - Code enforcement from Permits, Licenses, and Inspections can take a property owner to magisterial court if they do not bring their properties up to code. A local magistrate has the power to fine a business owner up to \$1,000 per day for being noncompliant with codes.
 - When new businesses open, we should contact them to make sure they have the requisite occupancy permit and help them make sure they're compliant
 - Can search city occupancy permits at <https://pittsburghpa.gov/pli/cert-occupancy-search>

- Will begin announcements at all of our community meetings to have people alert us when new businesses are opening so we can try to reach out to them prior to opening
- Old Business
 - Jacob/Whited site construction start date and plan update
 - The guard rail along Whited is very crooked, as though perhaps someone wrecked into it, and needs to be repaired. Blake will contact DOMI about it.
 - Bill has a chainsaw and is planning to cut down some of the larger dead trees on the lot.
 - An anonymous neighborhood resident has offered to do the grading work at a very discounted price; Bill is meeting with this individual in mid-April.
 - The hillside along Jacob needs some cleanup; we should have the money for this work with our URA grant
 - We have a Love Your Block grant from 2020 and applying for a 2021 grant to help support some of the landscaping work.
 - Flags at Cannon Park and Jacob/Whited have been replaced.

Meeting adjourned at 8:51 pm (motion: C. McNulty, second: Bill Kim, all in favor).

Notes for upcoming community meetings:

- May Community Meeting Theme: Summer Events and Projects
 - Presentations from Beautification Committee, Business & Community Engagement Committee, City Representative
- July Community Meeting Theme: Rising Brookline Real Estate Costs & Affordable Housing in Brookline
 - Speaker potentially from the city Housing Authority?

Mission: To promote a vibrant and livable community through collaborative initiatives that unify Brookline's business and residential interests.

Goals for 2021:

1. Increase membership
2. Increase revenue
3. Improve communications