

## **Summary of General Meeting – June 13, 2011 - Spring Garden Civic Association**

The meeting was held at St. Andrew's Lithuanian Church Hall, 19th and North Streets, 7:00 PM. The candidates for election for Board members and Officers assembled at 6:30 to greet members as they arrived.

Over 70 people attended.

There were two featured speakers, Fire Department Battalion Chief Demski and Mark Focht, Executive Director of the Fairmount Park Commission and First Deputy Commissioner For Parks and Facilities:

- 1) Battalion Chief Demski provided tips about preventing and dealing with fires, which were quite useful and led to a series of questions by meeting attendees. (There had been 2 fires in the neighborhood within the last 6 months, a bad one on 21<sup>st</sup> St. that resulted in injuries, and a quickly-extinguished but potentially dangerous fire in the eastern end; so there had been a request for a speaker from the Fire Department). The gist of the presentation was that you have to have a plan to get out of the house well in advance of a fire, and especially for young children and the elderly. Once a fire breaks out, get out and call 911. Even if you have an alarm system, the system only calls one fire station, but a call to 911 will result in a response from 3 or 4 stations, to ensure that you get the support you need. (Different stations provide different kinds of support, and you want a variety of them to deal with a fire thoroughly.) He told us sad stories of people who fumbled with keys to get out of a locked gate, or a window grate, and perished, or who went into a room to fight the fire, only to get overwhelmed by the smoke. Another tip was to store propane tanks for gas grills 15 feet away from the house. The Fire Department will come out and inspect your house for fire hazards if you call and request an inspection, and they will even install smoke detectors if you cannot afford to do it yourself. He discussed various kinds of smoke detectors, and mentioned one more advanced (and expensive) such device that would set off an alarm in the whole house and not just at the site of the fire. He said that rope ladders and folding aluminum ladders are hard to use, because they lie up against the house; and he did not recommend relying on them as your escape strategy. Everyone should also leave a key and contact information with a neighbor they know will be around when they go

out of town. That person can deal with the fire company at your property if need be, and contact you while you are away. He also mentioned that, in today's houses, there are many more synthetic items than in the old days, which not only ignite more quickly, but also produce a lot more smoke.

- 2) Mark Focht from the Fairmount Park Commission gave an extremely interesting and inspiring power-point presentation about : 1) the City's parks, and: 2) the improvements involving the Ben Franklin Parkway. It is the City's mission to have a park within walking distance of every citizen by 2015, and they are well on the way to accomplishing that goal. The impressive new Parkway improvements and developments will make it more pedestrian friendly (with a reduced number of roadway and parking lanes, and dramatically wider median strips), as well as adding new cultural and family sites, children's areas (e.g., the park across from the Cathedral), and outdoor cafes. One of the most dramatic improvements will be the replacement of the Vine Street bridges between 19<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> Streets, which will also involve covering over more of the Vine Street Expressway for green areas and parks. That project will take place from 2012-2015. With all of the planned landscaping, parks, and roadway improvements; the new Barnes Museum; the improvements to the Rodin; and the enhancements at the other cultural institutions, about \$1 billion is being spent on the Parkway. The Parkway will be a truly magnificent cultural venue which will rival, or even surpass, that of any major capital city in the world. In response to a question from the audience, Deputy Commissioner Focht said that the City does not yet have a good solution for the pedestrian crossing from the Parkway to the Art Museum at Eakins Oval. They have done numerous studies, but have not yet come up with a good way to make that crossing safer and easier.

We hope to be posting the slides from his power point presentation on the web site.

Following the speakers, Pat Freeland introduced the slate of officers and board members up for election, and all of the nominees were duly elected. Pat also thanked the membership for the privilege of being the Civic Association President while the community battled all manner of problems. The neighborhood is a much better place to live in than it was, and she gave credit to many in the audience and in the community who helped us fight and win so many battles over the years. The Civic Association has

now declared a ~~War~~ War On Trash+as its next major battle, and it will continue to make other quality of life improvements as we move forward in this exciting time of transition and new accomplishments.

The new officers are:

Allen Rubin: President; Justino Navarro, Vice President; Al Girard, Treasurer; Rob Platten, Secretary; Pat Freeland, Past President.

The Board members are: Patrick Boyle, Ian Cope, Carmen DiCamillo, Bruce Dunn, David Elliott, Pat Freeland, Al Girard, Ruth Herd, Victor Keen, Justino Navarro, Jim Pavlock, Bret Perkins, Rob Platten, Kevin Rasmussen, Danielle Stoppel, Darlene Suarez, Michael Treacy, Orla Treacy

We plan to post more news items and other notices on the website going forward, as a more efficient and effective way of communicating with the community.

Check it out at [www.springgardencivic.com](http://www.springgardencivic.com)

As always, we welcome comments, questions, and suggestions.

Rob Platten  
Civic Association Secretary