

Cheltenham Chamber of Citizens

A 501(c) (3) Nonprofit

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Minutes: Annual Meeting January 26, 2020

Held 7:00 p.m. at All Hallows Episcopal Church, Community Room
Greenwood Ave. & Bent Rd. in Wyncote, Pa.

- 1) **Welcome and Introduction of Board Members** – Edie Cerebi, President. *Edie welcomed participants, including Cheltenham Township commissioner, Matthew Areman, and candidates for PA 154th Congressional seat, Ray Sosa, Napoleon Nelson, and Jay Connors. (Commissioner Brad Pransky and candidate Adrienne Redd arrived later.) Edie introduced current CCC board members – Poppy Bass, Judith Gratz, Olga McHugh, Jeff Olawski, Gail Post, Emily Stine, Susanne Whitehead.*
- 2) **Secretary Report** – Gail Post. *Motion to accept minutes of Annual Meeting, January 13, 2019 – Emily Stine -1st, Olga McHugh - 2nd, approved.*
- 3) **Treasurer Report** – Poppy Bass. *Current balance in Freedom Credit Union account is \$1754.75. Motion to accept report – Jeff Olawski – 1st, Judi Gratz – 2nd, approved.*
- 4) **Web Administrator Report** – Emily Stine. *Emily reported that there are 409 email accounts listed, and 94 emails were sent in 2019, with a 34.3% open rate. Motion to accept web administrator report – Susanne Whitehead - 1st, Poppy Bass – 2nd, approved.*
- 5) **President’s Report** – Edie Cerebi. *Edie highlighted the following topics:*
 - a. **Importance of contacting CCC about events** – *The community is encouraged to email information about events to the CCC for dissemination to the community.*
 - b. **Civic Engagement 2019** - *Edie shared the CCC mission, which is to educate and inform, and champion civic engagement and transparency in local government. The CCC uses email blasts, a website, and a Facebook page to share information about community activities and concerns, with the intent of prompting public discussion and civic engagement. The CCC was originally formed in response to concerns about proposed changes to the Jenkintown/Wyncote train station. Recent concerns that the CCC addressed in 2019 include:*

1. *The CCC is seeking a permanent commitment from SEPTA to restore and maintain the historic Jenkintown/Wyncote train station beyond the ten years they have proposed. The CCC is a consulting party in the Section 106 process involving the train station.*
2. *The CCC is a consulting party on the PennDOT Church Road improvement project, addressing concerns in particular about potential negative effects on the area and the potential for increased flooding.*
3. *The CCC has addressed concerns about PFAS water contamination through education efforts. The annual 2019 meeting provided a presentation on PFAS contamination, and additional information about this topic is included on the CCC website.*
4. *The CCC website provides “environmental information you can use” through helpful articles provided by environmental educator and board member, Judith Gratz.*
5. *The CCC continues to monitor SEPTA’s recent proposals to meet ADA compliance at the Jenkintown/Wyncote train station, and the proposed JOSS/SEPTA collaboration project.*

a. Board Reorganization Meeting: *Sunday February 9, 2020 at 7pm, 127 Hewett Road. 2020 Monthly Board Meetings will be held the second Sunday of each month, unless a change is necessary. Meetings are generally held at 127 Hewett Road, Wyncote, Pa.*

b. Presentation of Board Members for 2020 and Nominations from the floor

<i>Poppy Bass</i>	<i>Current Treasurer</i>
<i>Edie Cerebi</i>	<i>Current President</i>
<i>Judith Gratz</i>	
<i>Olga McHugh</i>	
<i>Jeffrey Olawski</i>	<i>Current Vice President</i>
<i>Gail Post</i>	<i>Current Secretary</i>
<i>Emily Steinberg</i>	
<i>Emily Stine</i>	<i>Current Web Administrator</i>
<i>Brooke Welch</i>	
<i>Susanne Whitehead</i>	

There were no nominations from the floor. There was a motion to accept the slate of members – Jeff – 1st, Susanne – 2nd, approved.

6) Old business – *Nothing to report*

7) New Business and Announcements – *Emily Stine announced that there is a final Zoning/Hearing board meeting scheduled to address the JOSS/SEPTA proposal on Feb. 3, 2020.*

8) Presentation: *Judith Gratz introduced the guest speaker, Alan J. Greenberger, who was invited to speak about Transit Oriented Developments (TOD). A TOD has been informally mentioned and proposed as a possible development for the Jenkintown/Wyncote train station area, and Mr. Greenberger was invited to share his expertise on this topic, along with opinions about how a possible TOD might affect the local community.*

Mr. Greenberger is an architect and city planner, and among other things, has worked with the City of Philadelphia as Deputy Mayor for Economic Development and Director of Commerce. He also was the Chairman of the Philadelphia City Planning Commission. He has worked to improve

commerce and economics, improve zoning, attract firms to the Philadelphia area, and helped to get Philadelphia named a World Heritage City. He currently teaches in the Westphal College of Media and Design at Drexel University, and is chair of the department of architecture, design and urbanism.

A TOD was defined as a district that is adjacent to mass transit, is compact and comparatively dense, and contains mixed uses, including business and residential. It encourages walking, is pedestrian-oriented, and “tames the car to make it behave.”

Mr. Greenberger opined that the proposed JOSS/SEPTA project is fairly large for the area, proposes to incorporate retail and office space, and that its greatest merit is that it offers a solution to the current need for ADA accessibility at the station. However, Mr. Greenberger stated that the proposed project is not a TOD, because it is “not residential, not really a district, and not what TOD is about.” He shared slides highlighting examples of a TOD in other communities and noted that the local community of Chestnut Hill is consistent with definitions of a TOD.

A discussion followed, where Mr. Greenberg responded to questions from the audience, including the following:

- a. Are legal steps needed to start a TOD, and can it supersede historic district restrictions (Olga McHugh)? In Philadelphia, actual zoning laws are not necessary to establish a TOD – you just need to create it around a transit area. It is up to the community to sort out what they want. Historic districts have legal standing beyond zoning*
- b. Does an interest in obtaining state or federal grants drive a push for a TOD, and how do TRIDs (transportation reinvestment districts) relate to this (Lora Lehmann)? TODs or TRIDs are usually reserved for areas where there is agreement about the wish to increase density*
- c. Is a TOD merely an opening for other developers to pursue additional development (Edie Cerebi)? The project has both merits and problems, and the idea that it would spur further development needs to be addressed with officials, as this is a bigger question. However, the train station area does not lend itself in an obvious manner to a TOD or further development because there are few developable parcels available. Everyone in the community would need to agree about further development.*
- d. If a TOD is intended to reduce traffic, the proposed development at the train station would actually increase traffic and congestion, particularly with SEPTA’s history of shutting down other stations further down the line. There also is the issue of the historic station falling into further disrepair (Emily Steinberg). There are multiple issues to address – the least of which is a TOD.*
- e. If there is a TOD, what should it look like in this community (Edie Cerebi)? It probably would not look much different than it already does.*
- f. What are best practices in design that you would suggest (Emily Stine)? Create more residential buildings immediately around the station. Reduce traffic congestion by eliminating how many roads come together at the intersection of West, Greenwood and Township Line Roads.*
- g. There is an impression some have that high density housing will necessarily result in an increase in young family occupancy, resulting in more demand on the local schools. In fact, new apts. may attract many without children (Olga McHugh). The percentage of*

homeownerships is declining in this region. Young people are reluctant to take on debt and want to rely less on cars. In terms of concerns about housing, both the township and borough need to work together to develop an agreement in terms of what they want for the community.

- h. Would developing a TOD in Warminster take pressure off plans to develop the area surrounding the Jenkintown/Wyncote station (Judith Gratz)? It might help, but it is likely that the community in Warminster might oppose it.*
- i. A brief overview of SEPTA's history with the Jenkintown/Wyncote train station proposals was discussed. They have shut down 64 stations, and although they have added 2000 additional parking spaces in the region, there still is a demand for more parking. An increase in parking spots at the station will feed latent demand and increase traffic (Tom McHugh, Edie Cerebi). SEPTA probably does not want to offer the development themselves, as their business mode informs investment decisions. Overall, SEPTA needs to stop discussing the proposal for a TOD, because what they have available does not qualify as a TOD, and the township and borough need to collaborate and combine their ideas.*

9) Adjournment - *Edie thanked Mr. Greenberger and participants. Motions for adjournment were not taken.*

Respectfully submitted by Gail Post on 1/29/20.