

## Sierra Club of Pennsylvania, Southeastern PA Group Executive Committee Meeting

January 4, 2016

Meeting held at CityCoHo, 2401 Walnut Street

**ExCom Members Attending:** Bill Brainerd, Mike Hoppus, Anne Lovett, JimWylie, John Butler, Pat Beaudet, Prasad Ramnath, Dennis Winters, Dave Moscatello

**Other Members Attending:** Emily Davis, Gary Lytle, Karen Melton

**ExCom Members Absent:** Len Finegold, Mathew Himmelein

The Meeting was called to order by Dennis at 6:45.

Secretary:

Treasurer: The balance in the C4 account began at 1247.67

Expenditures included: \$200 (Coho rent, some of this will be reimbursed), \$10.00 (Bank Charges), and \$55.00 (Robo calls). The current balance is \$636.67. The annual fee of \$276 for our PO box has yet to be paid. It was suggested that we give up the post office box and have our mail come to City Coho. Gary arranged this.

### **Standing Committee Reports**

***Conservation Committee:*** (Jim)

1. Septa E Bus

Chapter Intern Chris Gibbs organized a panel discussion held on Nov 16 at Temple. Septa is working to transition to electric and have applied for a grant to purchase 25 all electric buses. They are also working to change some of the trolley lines to light rail as they work to comply with ADA regulations. They currently plan to use natural gas to generate the electricity for their grid. Mitch Chanan of 350.org wants to create an initiative to encourage SEPTA to use solar energy to meet their power needs.

2. Cardinal Crossing: John Butler presented the issues related to this development project in Delaware County. The developer wants to convert a wooded lot 213 acres in size to an area with 1,000,000 square feet of retail space and 100 residences. This require variances for zoning (currently zoned institutional) and a waiver for a town ordinance requiring 2 trees planted for each one cut. Planting of current trees was subsidized by the town because of the sensitive nature of the property (steep slopes). John asks how can we stop this development. Karen will identify Sierra Club members who live in the area as a start. John moved and Mike seconded that we provide \$100 to pay for lawn signs if C3 funds can be used. The motion passed.

3. Bruner Island: Gary reported that the focus of Beyond Coal will be Bruner Island since it is the closest to us and most offensive. It is continuing to pollute because of loop hole in regulations. The plant is owned by Talen Energy which has a restraining order against Sierra Club. Beyond Coal will meet on Jan 13 to discuss the issue and begin developing strategies to address the issues. Tom Schuster and Rachel Martin from the Chapter office will present at that meeting.

4. Community Urban Air Quality: There is an interest in using Tzoa wearable technology to monitor air quality. Volunteers that walk or bike in the city will be needed to wear the monitors. We will discuss this with Nancy Park, the chapter chair for air quality. Cost for one unit is \$139. A proposal will be circulated.

5. Pipe line infrastructure Task Force. Gov. Wolf established this group on explore the problem of expanding pipelines. The group of 150 members was supposed to be mixed but is very heavily slanted to industry representation. The SPG pipeline committee submitted 4 comments. Tom Au from the Chapter subcommittee also submitted comments

***Political Committee:*** no report

***Newsletter/Communications:*** Pat said she is looking for articles for the next newsletter.

***Education Committee:*** Bill – Bill passed out announcements of the next program – Jan 25 – 6:45 at CCP. Dick Whiteford will speak on the Climate Talks and Peter Handler will speak on a carbon tax as a way to discourage CO2 emissions. He said between 150 and 200 people had attended the Michael Mann talk in November.

***Nomination Committee:*** Dennis reported that Jim Wylie, Gerald Brown, Dennis Winters, Anne Lovette gained the five open seats. Pat moved the John Butler take the seat vacated by Jon Paul Jaworski. The Motion passed.

### **Old Business:**

**Eastwick:** Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority refused to grant title to the 135 acre site to Korman Corp on the grounds that they had not produced viable plans. see attached Inquirer article

**Energy Hub:** Karen reported that there will be an economic conference at the Lowe's Hotel on Thursday on January 14. Philip Rinaldi and Pat Toomey are expected to speak about this project. Physicians for Social Responsibility may be organizing a demonstration outside the hotel.

### **New Business:**

**SPG Officers an Committee chairs:** Anne said she did not wish to remain as SPG Chair person. Anne recommended Jim who accepted. Jim said he would like SPG to be more productive in 2016 particularly in the suburban counties. He said he would present his ideas in an email.

**Dennis** will remain as **treasurer and vice chair**. **Jim** will remain **conservation chair** but try to delegate to chairs of subcommittees. **Bill** will continue to chair the **political committee** with **Karen Melton** as co-chair. Ann suggests that we have representatives from each county on this committee. Bill will continue as Education Chair. Pat will continue as Communications chair with Prasad as co-chair.

### **Announcements:**

Film: Cowspiracy; Jan. 07, 2016 King Of Prussia, PA, 7:30PM at UA King of Prussia Stadium  
Chapter meeting Saturday Jan 9.

### **Reminders:**

#### ***Conservation Committee Member Specialties:***

- MTR – Jim Wylie
- Energy Conservation & Efficiency – John Butler
- Wind – PTC support – Gillian Norris
- AEPS support – Karen Melton
- Water – Robin Mann
- Smog – Gary Lytle/Jackie Wilson
- Transportation – Dennis Winters
- Land Use – Dennis Winters

#### **Meeting Call-in Number:**

1-866-501-6174, PIN is 1004100#.

# Eastwick sees end of largest urban-renewal deal in U.S. history

*By Samantha Melamed, Staff Writer*

POSTED: DECEMBER 25, 2015

The largest urban renewal project in the nation's history has officially come to an end.

A half-century after beginning the remaking of Philadelphia's Eastwick section - over the protests of residents, more than 8,000 of whom were displaced in the process - the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority and a developer have reached a settlement to end that 1961 redevelopment deal.

Community members and environmental activists cheered at the close of a special meeting Wednesday, as PRA's board agreed to pay \$5 million to New Eastwick Corp., a joint venture of Korman Corp., to buy out its interest in the last 135 acres of vacant land.

That clears the way for what PRA Executive Director Brian Abernathy pledged would be a community-driven planning process - a first for the neighborhood.

"This gives us the opportunity to start over and get it right," PRA Board Chairman James Cuorato said.

The agreement granted Korman the option to build on more than 2,000 acres. It eventually built 3,000 homes, 1,100 apartments, two shopping centers, and an airport hotel complex - an overall success, according to Abernathy.

But during that process, the community was a "war zone," said Terry Williams, president of Eastwick Friends and Neighbors Coalition. He said his family was displaced from three homes in Eastwick when he was between the ages of 6 and 16.

"It was traumatic. I really saw the pressure my parents were under, being forced to find another place for us to live," he said.

It was in part because of that legacy that community members and environmentalists had protested Korman's most recent proposal, in 2013, to build an apartment complex on the last 135 acres.

They also feared it would exacerbate already significant flooding in the area, and harm the adjacent John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum. The neighborhood is within a floodplain, as much of it was marshland before it was filled and leveled for development. It also borders two Superfund sites, which means residents fear floodwaters from Cobbs and Darby Creeks could wash in untold toxins.

In August, Korman again sought to take title to the site, according to Abernathy. The PRA refused on the ground that Korman had not produced viable plans for the site, he said.

That set off settlement negotiations. The \$5 million, drawn from PRA's cash reserve, is less than some had expected.

"We think the number is below fair market value," Abernathy said.

Under the resolution adopted by PRA, the agency will convey any remaining wetlands to the city and embark on a planning process for the rest of the land.

That means residents will have a voice in their community - something they have been denied for decades, said Amy Laura Cahn of the Public Interest Law Center, which has been working on behalf of community members.

"This means the end of an injustice that began with seizing 2,300 acres of land and displacing 8,000 people, and creating what is a lovely, quiet community but also beset with huge environmental problems," she said.

There have been conversations in the past about whether some portion of the land could be incorporated into the wildlife refuge.

Lamar Gore, refuge manager at Heinz, could not confirm that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would be willing to purchase the land. But, he said, "we'd be interested to work with any party that has the land, and we'd like the community to be involved in what that looks like."

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