

Park Place/Underhill Avenue Block Association

Approved Minutes

11/18/2020

Attendees:

Stephanie Rooker	Robin Ketchum	Sharon Combs
Diana Regan	Ed Regan	Gillian Frasier
Marc Gordon	Den Gordon	Phyllis Brody
Mary Dale	Richard Roth	Brother Thomas Barton
Stacey Weinstein	Ben Tyree	Sister Lillian Burley
Tobias Campbell	Marcia Kresge	

The meeting was held via Zoom and called to order by Marc Gordon, co-president at 7:30 PM.

Marc Gordon asked the representatives of the three invited organizations to speak about their activities to combat food insecurity in our neighborhood and how PPUABA can assist them. The three organizations are Community Help in Park Slope aka CHIPS (Brother Thomas Barton, director), Chance for Children (Sister Lillian Burley, director) and Greater Prospect Heights Mutual Aid (Tobias Campbell, administrator.)

Brother Thomas Barton spoke about CHIPS. They provide housing for homeless mothers with newborns and feed 150 -170 men daily, many of whom are pensioners or immigrants. They are supported by many volunteers from the neighborhood. The Covid epidemic has interrupted the ability of volunteers to help and of CHIPS to cook on their premises but they manage to serve daily hot meals as well as fruit and snacks to the needy. Marc asked how we could help and Brother Thomas responded new sweatshirts to give to men who do not have warm clothing would be welcome.

Sister Burley thanked us for our previous contribution of food and then talked about the history of Chance for Children. They began in 1995 providing breakfast to hungry children in public schools. They have evolved to providing a wide range of social services to people regardless of religion or immigration status. Their mission is to educate families to become self-sufficient. She spoke about the challenges of trying to stop gang violence and of helping homeless youth as a volunteer organization. Chance for Children operates a food pantry which both delivers food to those in need as well as distributing to families from their facility. They closed temporarily due to Covid and find social distancing issues to be an operational problem. When asked how PPUABA could assist Sister Burley said they would welcome food donations as well as support with food deliveries.

Tobias Campbell of Greater Prospect Heights Mutual Aid spoke. GPHMA is an ad hoc neighborhood network which has a goal of helping residents in need in Prospect Heights. People can reach out if they need help with errands such as trips to the supermarket. Volunteers can assist occasionally, on a regular basis such as every week or help financially. There are currently approximately 15 neighbors who participate. One of their goals is to create relationships among the people who live in Prospect Heights. They have no employees nor specific geographic boundaries for service. In addition, GPHMA funnels volunteers and financial resources to other organizations in the area. Tobias says the organization would like to expand its reach and would like to have a closer relation with PPUABA as it seeks more volunteers as well as more people in need of services. Den Gordon asked how people can contact the organization for services as not everyone has access to its website on the internet. Tobias responded they have a phone and answering machine and have tried leafletting for outreach.

Marc thanked the guest speakers.

Den Gordon spoke about Growing our Community

Crushed red pepper was applied to bulbs planted in the Underhill Playground to deter squirrels.

Composting is available at the PH Community Farm (St Marks between Vanderbilt and Underhill) from 12-2 each Sunday. Compost is only accepted in brown paper bags. Leaves are only accepted through November.

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New Business

Ed Regen presented a treasurer's report. Income this year was \$721 compared to \$1560 for 2019. Because PPUABA is not printing its newsletter or holding many activities the outflow of money has been lower this year. The current bank balance is \$5,452. Spending for grants will be evaluated in January.

A motion to approve the minutes for the October meeting as presented on the website was approved unanimously.

Marc Gordon announced that the **January** meeting will be on the 4th Wednesday (Jan 27) instead of the 3rd Wednesday, to avoid conflict with members' interest in Inauguration Day activities.

Marc requested that households make their membership contributions. 22% of households have contributed this year.

Regarding Vanderbilt Avenue Marc asked members to consider donating to the appeal to help fund Vanderbilt Avenue holiday lights. Instructions explaining how to donate are on the www.ppuaba.org website. Open Street for restaurants on Vanderbilt ends on November 22'nd. It will resume in the spring.

Marc announced that the NYC Department of Design and Construction informed us that a one year water main and sewer replacement project on Park Place and Underhill Avenue will start in late 2020 or early 2021. A presentation will be scheduled soon at CB8 and details will be shared with the membership when known.

Mary Dale requested that an email that she received from the Brooklyn Botanic Garden regarding Fight for Sunlight be shared with the PPUABA membership. The BBG is asking for help in organizing opposition to a massive development proposed for 960 Franklin Avenue.

Mary Dale and Jill Frasier requested that the Zoom link to the PPUABA monthly meeting be distributed right before the meeting via email.

As Brother Thomas had stated there is a great need for warm sweatshirts as the weather turns colder, it was suggested that we ask the PPUABA membership for donations and buy a bulk order to deliver to CHIPS. Marc Gordon will send an email to the membership about this initiative.

The meeting adjourned at 9:29 PM.