

Park Place - Underhill Avenue Block Association

Approved Minutes
09/22/2021

Attendees:

Phyllis Brody	Michelle Hewryk	Emily Rudder
Matt Campbell	Peter Ketchum	Ben Silver
Sharon Combs	Robin Ketchum	Bennett Stein
Mary Dale	Bruce McInnes	Teddy Theoharis
Hadi Elhashash	Ethan Mulligan	Gib Veconi
Jill Frasier	Diana Regan	Patti Veconi
Den Gordon	Ed Regan	Stacey Weinstein
Marc Gordon	Rick Roth	

The meeting was held via Zoom and called to order by Marc Gordon, co-president at 7:35 PM.

Featured Speaker

Marc Gordon introduced Hadi Elhashash, chief engineer for the sewer replacement project currently taking place on our blocks. The project scope involves replacing sewer pipes and water mains: on Park Place from Carlton to Underhill Ave, on Vanderbilt Ave. from Park Place to Sterling Place, on Underhill from Park Place to Sterling Place. In addition catch basins for storm water will be installed at some locations (More general information on the project is available at ppuaba.org, in the Water and Sewer Main Replacement section). He said residents have complained about frequent water shutoffs, and that these shutoffs are because the valves on the very old pipes often do not work well and that DEP did not have the manpower to replace the valves promptly. Dealing with these issues have caused more water shutoffs and slower progress for the project. The project is scheduled to continue through August, 2022.

Mr Elhashash took questions from the group as follows:

Why are some blocks, for example Park Place from Underhill Ave. to Washington Ave. out of scope of the project? He replied that he did not set the scope for the project and we should contact our elected officials if we want more blocks included.

In heavy rain, why do some buildings' sewer pipes back up and some not? He responded that it depends where the pipe comes into the sewer, high or low. In any case the larger sewer pipe will address the problem once installed.

Can Mr Elhashash coordinate with the Sanitation Department so that closed streets are open for street sweepers, as the streets are currently not being cleaned? He said he would. He also promised to address issues with the contractors such as messiness at the job site and contractors parking in front of fire hydrants.

How will trash be picked up during the installation of the sewers, when one side of the street has sections fenced off? He answered that the contractor will provide workers to carry the trash from the front of homes to the collection sites. The work will be done in sections so only part will be fenced off at one time.

Will the entrance to the parking lot on the south side of Park Place between Vanderbilt and Underhill be accessible to people who park there?

He will give us advance notice when the sewer replacement will cause the driveway to be inaccessible. It will be accessible to people who park there all evenings and weekends.

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Jill Frasier gave an update on Nourishing our Committee which has been in existence since October, 2020. She asked for donations of money and especially people with cars to drive to CHIPS and Chance for Children. Stacey Weinstein and Patti Veconi said they would be willing to participate.

Den Gordon spoke about Growing our Community and its goal of sponsoring activities to support the environment but also to bring neighbors together. The current focus is on the James Forten playground, where this coming Saturday there will be a shrub planting event starting at 9:30AM. Everyone is invited to attend and participate.

The minutes of the June 2021 meeting were approved unanimously.

Marc announced PPUABA will be sending out a survey on communications that will try to identify what is working and what can be done to improve outreach and meet the needs of the people of our neighborhood.

He also announced the City Planning Board rejected the controversial rezoning of the 960 Franklin Avenue site.

Robin Ketchum announced that curbside composting has been reinstated, but our district is not included in the program. Robin suggested that people write to the Department of Sanitation to request composting in our district, by going to PPUABA.org, selecting Growing our Community and clicking the link in the Update section.

Stacey Weinstein added that the Prospect Heights Community Farm located at 252 St Marks Avenue between Vanderbilt and Underhill Aves is another composting option. Their current hours for food waste drop-off are Sundays, 11am to 2pm.

Also, Teddy Theoharis said that the Department of Sanitation does outreach, and you can request a hot box (small household composter) from them.

The Fall Stoop Sale is set for Saturday, October 2nd.

Meet your Neighbors is scheduled for Wednesday October 6th on Underhill between Prospect Place and Park Place. After discussion, it was agreed the best time is 4:30 – 6:30. Neighbors are asked to bring their own drinks, snacks and chairs. Marc Gordon asked Gib Veconi to play guitar for the event. Megan Mustafa will organize an activity for children.

Marc Gordon announced that one of our mail carriers, John, got married recently. Some people wanted to give him a wedding gift and there was a discussion of how to organize it. It was complicated by the USPS regulations on gifts and the fact that he is not the mail carrier for everyone in PPUABA, so solicitation would have to take that into account.

Marc Gordon said that there was no guest speaker chosen for the October meeting and asked the attendees to suggest ideas or names for speakers that would be of interest.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM.