

## Highlands Civic Association (HCA)

- To strengthen the sense of community, responsibility, and livability in the Highlands for all residents.
- To protect, preserve, and further the residential quality of the Highlands area.
- To maintain an open line of communication among the Highlands neighborhood, the Borough of State College, the University community, and other Borough neighborhoods and agencies.
- To facilitate the exchange of information among HCA residents.

### MINUTES

Wednesday, April 12, 2023  
6:00pm at E Fairmount Park

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Meeting convened at 6:00pm

1. Introductions: Mark Huncik, Eric White, Margaret Sebastianelli, Vinnie Scanlon, Theresa Lafer, Jim Shincovich, Susan Shincovich, Leif Jensen, Kirsten Jensen, Dave Stone, Anne Messner, John Messner, Svitlana Jones, Gloria Rosenberger, Jim Rosenberger. Ann Pangborn, Rob Pangborn, Tom Gesell, Josh Portney, Paul Scanlon, Nina White
2. Treasury Report: \$1,589.57
3. E. Fairmount Park – Neighborhood Program Ideas and Discussion:
  - Role of HCA in park renewal: secure grant monies to assist the Borough in landscaping, playground equipment selection and general park maintenance
  - Electrical service to park: electrical service is common to all Borough parks; key access to electrical boxes is housed with the Borough; no park lighting will be provided; the park closes at 6:00pm
  - Programming suggestions supported through grant funding:
    1. Sustainability programs, annual HCA covered dish meetings, programs for children (e.g., Rita's of State College mobile ice cream)
    2. Community gardens
    3. Block parties
    4. Little library book exchange
    5. Game boards (e.g., Chess, Checkers - players expected to bring game pieces/timers)
    6. Weekly coffee in the park to stimulate neighbor engagement (no cost to partakers; funded by donations); a suggestion was made to gather more often to encourage a stronger sense of community among the neighbors
  - Safety and sanitation: provide doggy poop bag dispenser(s) with ordinance notice for non-compliance; approve dogs on leash in the park

- Maintaining park health: post signs to ‘keep off grass’ until roots are well established and grass is growing; keep bikes and other methods of transportation off the grass and stored in the proper receptors; all concerns to the contrary are to be shared with Mark Huncik, HCA President
- Neighbors speak: a request was made that any future change/addition to the park proceed in a way that neighbors are not blindsided and are given a chance to provide feedback
- All attendees were reminded that E. Fairmount Park, while in our backyards, is not the Highlands’ responsibility but as concerned citizens can be good stewards in its use

#### 4. Borough Updates:

- Short-term rental ordinance: to-date, 66 licenses have been issued out of 180 -200 letters requesting review; the largest number of approvals reside in College Heights and State College South housing districts; the ordinance has been on the books for 2 years but enforcement of regulations seems to be just beginning; residents are asked to keep an eye on code enforcement activity in their areas
- Zoning: Committee charged to edit/re-write zoning codes will meet the week of April 17<sup>th</sup>; of concern is language such as ‘transitional housing between downtown and Highlands residents’ and how the changes will affect quality of life and how much the threat of litigation will affect enforcement
- Borough “Council’s goal is to disincentivize companies from buying homes for the sole purpose of operating them like hotels, renting them out a few days at a time on websites such as Airbnb and Vrbo”. (Read more at: <https://www.centredaily.com/news/local/community/state-college/article264556361.html#storylink=cpy>)
- Changes to ordinance language includes requiring an off-street parking space located on the property per bedroom rented, creating a limit of nine rooms a property can rent, upping the cost of rental license to \$300 and requiring owner living on site, in the house at least 8 months/year
- Non-compliance violations will range from \$300 to \$1,000
- Department of Transportation update: Residents are to take note of changes to traffic patterns through neighborhoods and let Mark Huncik, HCA President, know the impact of re-routed traffic on daily life
- Liquor licenses: within the Borough - College Sports Bar located in the previous Amazon space on Allen Street, Spats in litigation between the Borough and owner, Town Center across from the Borough Building to be a hotel and upscale restaurant; out-of-the Borough - transfer from Luna 2 to the Standard for the new Italian restaurant

#### 5. Other items and open discussion:

- Svitlana provided a Sister’s Sister resolution update - following Borough Council’s approval final signature from Mayor Ezra Nanes is needed; funding to bring Nizhyn’s

mayor to State College to celebrate the successful partnership has been received awaiting the Mayor's signature; a Zoom meeting between mayors is forthcoming; a free classical concert will be held June 5<sup>th</sup> at Grace Lutheran Church (donations gratefully accepted) – a flyer will be available to help spread the word; \$8,000 in generous contributions has been received to-date; Nizhyn's greatest immediate need is for sterilizers in the maternity ward (purchase of 15 sterilizers will be Ukrainian made and serviced)

- Request was made to compile a neighborhood address listing to be shared among the group (posted to the HCA web site); no discussion as to how or when the request will be managed
- Sidewalk repair: given the amount of foot traffic on sidewalks around Garner Street and other high traffic areas and the number of Borough trees with roots dislocating sections of concrete, a suggestion was made that the Borough fund the replacement/repair of sidewalks; a comment was made that residents will pay one way or the other either through Borough taxes or out-of-pocket expenses
- Josh Portney has agreed to be the new IT person to help HCA with Heart's in the Highlands article submissions and web sites updates; Anne Corneal and Gary Miller are available to help with editorial reviews if needed

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm

Minutes submitted by Margaret Sebastianelli, April 2023