

MINUTES FOR NEW WEST 123RD STREET BLOCK ASSOCIATION & COMMUNITY GARDEN GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

April 19, 2012

- Financial Report
 - Treasurer Aaron Albano gave a report on the current finances of the Block Association and Garden:
 - The BA bank account currently has \$7,466.50, mainly from dues paid by Block and Garden members, as well as past donations from film crews
 - Membership retention has been 100% minus people who have moved away and we hope to gain 30% more members for both the garden and block association
 - If anyone would like to look at the financial statements, please email or call Aaron
- Grants
 - Jackie provided an update on the MBPO tree guards grant application – the BA has made it to the second round; she was told by the MBPO that the garden and our high membership numbers in both the BA and the garden were all a significant advantage for us and a big factor in moving us forward.
 - The MBPO will be sending out representatives from the Parks Dept. to inspect and assess blocks up for consideration so please help us keep the block clean!
 - Jason spoke later about his efforts in reaching out to the Capacity Fund park grant; trying to determine if the garden is considered a park or a garden and if it matters with the Capacity Fund grant.
- Precinct meeting
 - Jackie attended the 28th Precinct Community Board meeting and asked about solutions for reporting noise complaints to 311 or calling the precinct directly
 - Call the precinct directly if the noise is on the street, as 311 requires building location numbers
 - Jackie also said she would make contact information for various officers at the precinct available in the garden and via email
- Speed bump efforts
 - Despite a really well coordinated effort led by Jason Price, the DOT denied our request to install speed bumps on 123rd street, citing an average speed for cars below what would prompt the DOT to consider speeding an issue on our block.
- Updates from Youth Program
 - Lamont Alston provided updates on several 123rd Street Youth Program activities including:
 - Mohegan Sun trip on 5th
 - A dinner sale on June 9th
 - Dorney Park trip on June 15th
 - Youth Day on August 25th
 - Starting at 9am, the block will be closed and the YP will hold a block clean up
 - Youth Day starts at noon and music goes until 7pm
 - The street will reopen at 8pm
 - All proceeds from the sale of tickets or dinners will go to the Youth Program. If you are interested in participating in any Youth Day events, please contact Lamont directly.
 - Scott Ahlborn requested to get more involved with the YP by creating garden programs for the youth.
- Ephesus Church announcements
 - This year's Health fair will be held the day after the Youth Day party, on August 26th
 - West 123rd street will also be closed
 - Everyone is welcome to attend there will be lots of health and wellness activities including screenings, nutrition counselors, skin care lessons, fitness classes, etc.
 - Tuesday fitness class at the Church, all are welcome.
- Quality of life issues
 - Jackie raised several recent incidents that we all should be aware of, including:

- The impromptu block party on the corner of 123rd and ACP. The police broke up a party of at least 200 people gathered on the corner. Apparently a local musician hosted the party and it got out of hand rather quickly, which prompted the police to break up the party;
 - There was a shooting in Mount Morris Park on April 14th in which a young man was shot in the stomach and returned to his home at 135 west 123rd street. Police showed up and took the young man to the hospital and stayed for several hours questioning people.
 - With the warmer weather, there has been an increase in people both from the block and from elsewhere hanging out on the street until late at night, drinking and doing drugs. Jackie requested that if it gets out of hand or becomes a quality of life issue, to call the precinct directly.
 - There has been an increase of garbage on the block recently, a lot of it due to construction. Please be mindful to take put your garbage in the trashcan at either ends of the block.
 - There have also been people spotted urinating and defecating between cars on our block, which is not only disgusting but attracts vermin and invites disease. If you see people doing this, please call the cops and/or tell them to leave.
 - Drug dealing and drinking on the corners has also increased with the warm weather; if you see this, please call the precinct as we do not want to invite this element onto our block.
- Rats on the block
 - Greg from 118-22 shared his activities in stamping out the rat problem on our block. Greg has been working overtime to eradicate rats from several areas on our street and has trapped over 90 rats in the past few months. There has been a definitive decrease in the number of rats spotted on the street thanks to Greg's efforts.
 - The Block Association will reimburse/buy traps for Greg to support his efforts, as he has paid for his supplies out of his own pocket.
 - Greg made a few recommendations for things we can do to help mitigate the rat problem:
 - Rather than leaving trash in bags on the street, buildings should buy several 50 gallon trashcans to place in front of buildings so rats cannot get into the trash
 - Alternatively, Scott suggested looking into bags that are mint-scented, which apparently helps deter rats
- Garden updates
 - We had a big block and garden clean up on April 1st, so thanks to all who came out to participate. Thus far, work in the garden includes:
 - All boxes have been fixed including the replacement of the four retaining walls of Ms. Lee's box
 - One new box has been created with a second on the way
 - We have completed a box audit to assess which vegetable and plants boxes are available to those who are interested; a map will be completed by this coming weekend
 - The walkway in the front of the garden was extended and will be completed soon
 - Jason purchased new gardening gloves and plastic bags for anyone to use and Aaron will be replacing the hoses
 - Lots of areas in the garden were weeded and as usual, will need constant attention throughout the summer including the pathway in the middle and on the east side of the garden, the patio, around the vegetable boxes, and along the stone paths through the vegetable boxes
 - We are looking for volunteers to take on watering responsibilities; please let us know if you have time
 - Scott Ahlborn is arranging a soil delivery as a donation to the garden on behalf Scott and Jim.
 - Jim Streacker volunteered to maintain the heritage rose bed.
- Construction on the block
 - There are currently seven buildings under construction on the block and several dumpsters parked there for what will likely be an extended period of time.
 - We're also probably seeing more rats due to the construction
- Updates from the Steering Committee
 - Jason Price talked about current efforts underway in introducing BBQing into the garden

- They have submitted a number of recommendations to the Board of Directors for BBQing in the garden
- BA Board of Directors are compiling questions that need to be answered prior to presenting this request to the general BA membership
- This issue will most likely require a separate meeting between the BA and SC to answer the preliminary questions
- All members and non-members will have the opportunity to comment