

PHRA Board Meeting – August 13, 2020

Minutes

Attending were board members Kathryn Buckley, Claudia Espinoza, Shantell James, Hettie Jordan-Vilanova, Martha Mercedes, Marilee Scheuneman, Wilson Terrero, Lucy Vigilant-Smith and Jenifer Young. Guests: City Council President Mike Khader, Councilwoman Tasha Diaz and her aide, Gabby Sage, County Legislator José Alvarado and his aide, Millie Guterrez, and, via Zoom, DPW Commissioner Thomas Meier.

Park Hill residents had been invited to report to the PHRA Board any concerns, specifically about litter, trash, safety and security in our neighborhood, to be addressed at this meeting.

In general, Mr Khader urges residents to contact the above officials directly to report any problems that city officials may be unaware of.

Abandoned houses (*zombie homes*) – Local law requires the property owner pay a fee to be on the abandoned registry, and to cover openings with Plexiglass and keep the grass cut. This is the purview of the Yonkers Building Department, but enforcement is difficult. If the house looks abandoned, but is occupied, phone 377-help (4357) to report someone needs help.

Trees: The Parks Department has three teams attending to their trimming and removing, and they're dealing with a backlog. Trees on curbs are the shared responsibility between city and property owner, but owner must maintain them. City will repair sidewalk if tree damages it. City will pick up branches in front of houses. Con Ed is responsible if wires are down.

Wall along Van Cortlandt Park Avenue abutting Leslie Sutherland Park. It's unfinished because of dumping from above. This is Engineering Department's purview.

Speeding: This is a major issue. Mr. Khader recommends installing unmanned radar equipment at critical junctures. Ms. Diaz will call for more police presence.

Parking: Traffic and Engineering Departments need to address this issue. The Mayor and Council representatives should be contacted, too.

Safety and Theft. Park Hill will partner with City, and address this again when we meet with the Police Captain of the 3rd Precinct.

Dumping: Yonkers has only twelve (very expensive) cameras in use to catch illegal dumping. Dumping at parkway exits are often a County responsibility. Lucy suggested requesting from the City and County that "No Dumping" signs be installed at critical areas.

Litter: The Downtown Bid hires Rangers for litter removal around Getty Square. PHRA should ask Commissioner Meier if we can hire them to work in PH for a few days per week, and also request a dumpster be available for our neighborhood periodically. PHRA needs to work with the

high school about involving students in litter pickup. The County has a *Pride in Westchester** program.

Trash/Litter Receptacles: They are needed in Park Hill and on McLean Avenue. We are advised to contact the Mayor for this.

Shelter on Elm Street and VCPA. Claudia is concerned about the impact of this facility on PH. Mr. Khader will talk to the head of Westhab about this.

Rats: Ms Diaz reported on a project to deal with rat infestation by a company named Marino. She could arrange a demonstration for PH. Tasha Diaz is getting funding for a trial program and will encourage the Mayor to allot the money from the budget to make it a city wide program.

Airbnb: It is legal to rent out part of your home if the homeowner also resides there.

Thank you to city officials for meeting with us today.

*** Pride in Westchester: Adopt-A-Road.** All across the country, members of community organizations have signaled their commitment to keeping America beautiful by “adopting” stretches of roadway and pledging to keep them litter-free. Westchester County has enacted a similar program entitled, “Pride in Westchester: Adopt-A-Road”. We encourage you to join in by pledging your organization's participation in the program. In doing so, you and your organization will be setting a good example of protecting the environment and keeping our county roads clean.