

**Penn Branch Community Association
Officer Transition Meeting
December 5, 2020**

Meeting opened at 9:05am and adjourned at 12:13pm.

Opening

- Correspondence Secretary opened and welcomed everyone, shared agenda and noted that first hour will be dedicated to hearing from past officers about what they have learned and wished they'd known in five-minute rounds
- Then past Board members will depart and current and future Board members will discuss the administrative procedures and next steps followed by a break at 11am
- The final section will be forward planning for the upcoming year, to include discussing running the election, as well as wrap-up and closing
- The group proceeded to introduce everyone: Elson Nash, outgoing Corresponding Secretary; Stan Benton, President-Elect; Kyle Murphy, 1VP-Elect; Marie Fritz, Secretary-Elect; Natiya Curtis, Parliamentarian-Elect; Cicily Hampton, 2VP-Elect; Paul Grant, Communications Director-Elect; Alberta Paul, former President of 10 years and former Block Captain of 30 years, champion for parks and O Street Wall; LaVerne Thomas, outgoing Parliamentarian and resident since 1965; Ayanna Smith, former Vice President; Jacquelyn Cannon, outgoing President; Towana Banks, outgoing Treasurer; Veronica Beverly, Membership Committee chair; Kweku Toure, past President; Marcia Jones-Ferguson, past officer; Mo Williams, Treasurer-Elect; Darrell Baker, past ; Jimmie Williams, past President

Past Officer Reflections

- Marcia Jones-Ferguson (2009-2013; secretary for several years and husband James was President): neighborhood has changed so much; leadership is a hard job, and the association leadership was challenging and rewarding; as long as neighbors feel some sense of inclusiveness and that their opinions are being heard is most important; when this does not happen it can create some challenges; always communicate with the neighborhood to find out their needs; at time we participated, there were always funding challenges, and much time spent focused on building the treasury; worked with community members to conduct fundraisers, which resulted in good-will and camaraderie in the neighborhood; have been able to keep up with happenings since moving in 2013 thanks to Ayanna; smile at the progress that the neighborhood has made; continued with neighborhood as secret gem for affordable, nice homes; continue to promote the neighborhood and the work that has been done to keep growth going
 - Stan question: for fundraisers, were any more successful than the others? Answer: baked sale/yard sale with low overhead was especially good at bringing-in revenue; also had a men's cooking event in partnership with Anne Beers wherein some funds were donated to the school
- Alberta Paul, past President: have a challenge before you that I think you all can meet; Block Captains did not exist at time of her taking over, and the O Street Wall collapse spurred her involvement and leadership; Block Captains carried burden of bringing in neighbor ideas and issues, as well as communicating out to them; fundraisers did not make a lot of money, but they gave everyone choices; yard sales brought in \$600-800 per year; annual dinner dance with

everyone having a role in fundraising and administration, which averaged \$1200-1800 annually; incentivized Block Captains with gift cards to Home Depot/Lowe's for getting their blocks signed-up for the dinner dance; the printed newsletters in peoples doors gave Block Captains an opportunity to talk with their neighbors and generate ideas and solve issues; no idea too small for fundraising; Block Captains are critical and some blocks are very long and hilly; formula is to start with a lead and then encourage captains to have co-captains to split blocks; economies of scale and working together to secure discounts on maintenance activities, book of ideas of contractors to generate funds

- Ayanna Smith, past VP: you cannot please everyone; very committed to not leaving behind long-time neighbors even as the neighborhood was changing rapidly; making sure long-time neighbors knew they still had a place and a voice in the community; did not make a lot of changes that they discussed quite often, but they did start to change the branding with new logo and proposed moving to digital newsletter; focused on branding but tried to maintain events and build on what was previously in place; Ayanna had many ideas and she and Kweku fought often about whether the community was ready and need to be careful not to push on long-time residents; now realizes that we definitely do not want our long-term neighbors to feel left out as community progresses
 - Stan question: what activities proposing? Answer: moving many things to digital to save on printing, and this was one example of potential opportunity to exclude seniors
- Darrell Baker, past education committee member and wife Lisa was Recording Secretary; cool what everyone is doing, including holding this meeting to gather inputs from past officers; kudos to Ayanna for acknowledging that she learned lessons from past experience and hindsight; as the new board do your thing; encourage folks to try very hard to get along; this is a volunteer effort, everyone lives in the community, and if our goal is to make the community better than we should be working together not fighting each other; too easy to lose sight of simply being neighbors and we all want a decent neighborhood where everyone gets along; hope that this is something constantly in the forefront of our minds; right in the middle of the rat race in DC, and this can extend outward into community activities; be careful with tendencies to run-over neighbors in effort to advance their own path; continue to value the unique elements of what we have in our community
 - Stan comment: this whole idea for bringing folks together was Ayanna's, and it was a good one
- Kweku Toure, past President: Ayanna was right and I agree with her comments; many decisions were made because of lack of funds or the time wasn't right for the community; Darrell was correct, and because we are in DC, it's a political town near to Capitol Hill and competing communities, and sometimes we bring our work attitude to our volunteer positions and this can get in the way; people participating in the community do not want to come to meetings when there is a lot of drama between personalities, and I hope this has dissipated; old ideas about raising money, including use of block parties, dinner dances, raffles, but these things phased out over time and we need to find new ways; glad to see PBCA has a website; support whole effort
- Jimmie Williams, past President: lots of important advancements have taken place in the past, including using new media; many visits by the Mayor and City Council members; we wanted to make sure that people had a reason to be joining meetings with key guests and food; some liked this and others did not, but it helped remove reasons that people did not join meetings; did whatever we could to professionalize the association; there are changes that have to be made and some folks were unhappy about the changes; need to be willing to listen to advice of those who came before but also continue to make things relevant to new generation but meaningful for long-term residents; need to prevent people from dominating and leading from the back;

need mentorship not negativity from long-time residents and past leaders; new Bylaws and structure will help drive a less individually-dominated approach and instead bring together a collaborative community effort; have some very strong folks taking over in leadership roles makes a significant difference and a solid foundation

- Ayanna addition: when she started, there were no children there; Darrell and Lisa would bring their girls who would watch Ayanna's daughter; people with young children were trying to find ways to incorporate these young families and make things more family friendly; setting up a craft table, providing food, and giving young folks something to do was an important evolution
- Ms. Paul addition: concur with Jimmie and Ayanna, but also need to come up with creative ways to continue doing fundraising to be able to pay for those meals; it was the parents who took the lead in bringing the crafts and took the lead to helping include children; if we are going to feed people need to fund it, and raffles still work; still need to be creative with inclusive fundraisers; on membership card, would ask them to put month of birthdate and have committee send birthday cards

Administrative Procedures Discussion

- President noted that like Marcia said, this is a hard gig, and that is true; Ayanna said you can't please everyone, and that is also very true; need to do best thinking and then stand behind decisions; Jimmie said Penn Branch is premier organization, and we have tremendous respect; important to stay engaged and stay involved in what is happening and maintaining stature in Ward 7 and beyond; whether we want to be or not, we will be involved in politics because everything is political
- Executive Committee meetings:
 - President taken leadership to schedule and coordinate meetings in concert with other members of the Board and community; planned schedule for meetings and speakers; used a basic and repeatable format for meetings around Robert's Rules of Order, Secretary read the minutes from the last meeting, planning for next week's general body meeting, confirm outreach to speakers including Sgt Marable, coordinating the facilities and/or technology needed for upcoming meeting, took initial committee reports from committee chairs and heard ideas from them for Board consideration and took any appropriate actions, discussed any other business and ideas among the Board; President presides and concludes with firm agenda for general body meeting, and everyone has clear roles; ensuring that everyone's gifts and talents are celebrated and encouraged to contribute; everyone needs to bring their A game and make sure that the responsibilities don't fall disproportionately on others because some are not contributing fully
 - Treasurer preparations: on a monthly basis, go into Wells Fargo account and pull report for monthly deposits and withdrawals; coordinate with membership chair for any last inputs; pull together simple Excel sheet with opening balance, monthly deposits and withdrawals, and closeout balance; maintains a permanent record of all expenses and deposits; seeks approval from Board leadership for all expenses to be incurred; outgoing and incoming Treasurers will work together to complete physical hand-over at the bank and elsewhere
 - President added that there are many back-end systems such as Paypal and the website forms that send information directly to the Treasurer; we will need to make sure these are redirected to new Treasurer; President was receiving membership notifications and would transfer them to the Membership Chair and Treasurer

- Incoming Communications Director question regarding how membership cards factor into the back-end processes: Treasurer had 2021 cards made with simple 1-100 numbers
- Incoming President asked about purpose of membership cards: Treasurer responded that this was necessary for residents to get discounts at local businesses
- Corresponding Secretary noted that he checked the info@pennbranchdc.org email box and the physical PO box before the meeting to ensure they could be discussed at the Board meeting
- President suggested using info@pennbranchdc.org to send out official communications and direct responses back to the general inbox
- General body meeting:
 - Communications Director uses various digital means including direct email, NextDoor, etc to publicize upcoming meeting; also used the hard-copy newsletter to reach people before COVID, and this is something older residents really appreciate; need to coordinate with and confirm that speakers will join the group
 - President noted that newsletter is a heavy lift, particularly if you have many other tasks to juggle; President took it on because others couldn't do it, and she has said there's great feedback from the community on it
 - President spends countless hours preparing for facilitation of general body meeting, including preparing agenda and speaker introductions, ensuring notifications are sent, etc; week between Board meeting and membership meeting goes quickly and requires attention; on day-of meeting it's important to get logged-in early and be prepared for technology challenges; role of Parliamentarian is critical in general body meeting because time management and facilitating discussions broke down and we lacked the clear guidelines needed to operate
 - President spoke about everyone doing roles in meeting: President facilitates and introduces with any announcements, then crime report, Secretary reads past meeting minutes, any guest speakers, then officer reports including Treasurer and committee reports, open discussion with members, and then closing
 - Parliamentarian: this role is very important and should be in close relationship with President to know agenda, be there for backup with sticky notes to cue procedural and other steps, make sure President and association looks good and in control by being ready for curves; almost like being an official in a game in that you need to know everything about the agenda, the players, bylaws, etc.; share this knowledge with the Board and community and need to be impartial, patient, and fair at all times; ensure views of the community are always heard and everything should be scrutinized; do not make motions, debate, or vote but instead facilitate; Corresponding Secretary suggested we consider Robert's Rules pocket guides; President noted that Councilmember Gray promised training and education on Robert's Rules
 - Recording Secretary: noted that it's important to take detailed notes but then to be able to verbally summarize them so as to not take up too much time in rereading the minutes; also noted that Secretary is occupied throughout entire meetings and needs to work with rest of Board to have help capturing notes when s/he is speaking or otherwise occupied
 - Name change: need to update the website, logos, and other areas in which the former association name is included; much of this required update anyway since officers are changing out, and we can rely on volunteer creatives in our community; incoming 1VP

noted he has ideas to discuss with the Board regarding how we can roll-out updated name and vision for community with new branding

Forward Planning, Annual Calendar and Next Election

- Kyle Murphy discussed calendar (see calendar): Shifted fiscal year to align with calendar year; months between Jan-May are normal operations, but do previous year close out (tax year, close out, etc.); file form 9-90; discussed important dates; Roy Ward filed with DCRA and needs to transfer over—still trying to learn deadlines; discussed officer elections; later part of year, membership drive; transition to new administration in December, holiday party, new officers are sworn in.
- Elson Nash: mentioned what to cover from January to May and what the board wants to take up as initiatives. Ideas: thrown out to membership and give a menu of topics to see what they are interested in, pre-program such as development of the shopping mall, the work of small area plan, education, senior services; new board should consider.
 - J. Cannon asked if all topics got covered this year.
 - E. Nash discussed a potential meeting about public works, utilities and services, internet, Washington Gas; did not get a chance to do last year; health and wellness.
 - J. Cannon talked about Penn Ave SE plan and shopping center update and CVS. Had meetings with Friends of O Street recently.
 - E. Nash thought we should add something around senior services. Seabury Connector and others.
 - Senior services might have changed operationally under COVID19, such as meals on meals.
 - K. Murphy discussed the survey feedback from last year; struggle to keep meetings shorter; may need more time and space for general community discussion; being judicious about time they receive, but so that residents get to discuss and can raise new business.
 - E. Nash said speakers are told they get a set period; should not stack up multiple speakers.
 - K. Murphy said nature of topic means in cases when we have a few speakers put them on a panel to save time.
 - M. Fritz suggested bringing new at-large CM Christina Henderson to speak to community, J. Cannon agreed.
 - J. Cannon said Penn Branch residents led to the founding of the Pennsylvania Ave East Community Coalition which includes board members of neighborhood associations, discussed funds through CM Gray office. Hope to bring attention to lack of development along the Pennsylvania Avenue SE East Corridor. Penn Branch led the efforts. Getting structured as 501(c)3; Marshall Heights won grant and working to launch new effort; spoke to Ward 7 Business Partnership representatives and started Advisory Council. Local association presidents have a seat on the Advisory Council.
 - M. Fritz mentioned that Latisha Atkins will be the director of the project. J. Cannon responded that hope they will present their ideas for the project.
 - S. Benton has been in contact with Latisha Atkins and plans to meet with her next week, along with K. Murphy and J. Cannon; others may attend.
- Discussed ideas for meetings, months Jan-May/June:
 - E. Nash: Should have more updates from Pennsylvania Ave East Community Coalition; have six topics already. How do we space out the topics? Shared ideas: CM Henderson,

economic development, health and wellness, shopping mall, public works, senior services; best to pre-program so know ahead of time what is needed. Decide now or thrown out to membership.

- K. Murphy: Mentioned that a draft calendar of monthly meetings that Elson drafted; interest related to National Park Service regarding keeping it clean and maintaining; transportation; need to balance issues in our neighborhood versus citywide issues and may need to partner with other organizations; perhaps co-host a particular meeting with ANC; RE: NPS, EHL does a quarterly meeting and may consider joining that.
- S. Benton: Discussed health and wellness and stress from pandemic. Unsure if we should have a speaker or enough to cover without a speaker.
- E. Nash: Perhaps introduce new board and the general direction of the year, have a physician in community, possible speaker about general health and wellness, a few exercises, including mental health and physical health, then updates. Ask members of community to attend, say, NPS meetings. At end of meeting have call to action to get other members to attend meetings and bring information back to meeting.
- P. Grant: Said Dr. Lisa Fitzpatrick is engaged in vaccine trials and might be a good speaker. E. Nash can contact Dr. Fitzpatrick about joining next general association meeting.
- J. Cannon: FitDC is sponsoring weekly sessions via Zoom leading participants through basic exercises from their homes; reach out to have them discuss.
- Natiya Curtis: Mentioned that her spouse is a psychologist and could talk about mental health and quarantine.
- E. Nash: Sounds like first month is covered. Elson will send ideas for other months to K. Murphy. Now have a jumpstart on months and topics.
- Cicily Hampton: Incoming board should meet to set broad goals and then be laser focused on how to achieve and to support our president. Keep agenda focused and remain strategic for meetings.
- K. Murphy: Good to have topic to start the year and then board could set broad goals and articulate vision, get stamp of approval, then execute.
- L. Thomas: C. Hampton expressed well, based on Roberts Rules of Order, how to start the year with broad goals.
- S. Benton: His goals are our goals; as president he wants everyone to come together on what to accomplish; would like to keep people in check and focused; he tries to be up front with people working with us and against us.
- J. Cannon: Need to keep armor on.
- S. Benton: Challenging neighbors sometimes come around.
- J. Cannon: Need to stand up to bullies, push back, nobody is volunteering to be harassed; need more respect of leaders who are doing the work; don't tolerate bullies.
- L. Thomas: Don't mistake compassion for criticism. Has learned that sometimes need to listen and let people be heard; let them know their input is valued; don't dismiss; everyone can contribute someone, especially those with historical knowledge; every office needs to get to know the history; know what's in the files and know where we are going; try to take away what challenging neighbors contribute. Many neighbors have resources across city that we can access.
- J. Cannon: She welcomes neighbor's passion and everyone has something to offer—skills, gifts, passion—but none deserve to be disrespected, bullied; should not engage or tolerate harassing behavior; remain professional and expect others to remain professional.

- E. Nash: Asked if retreat was helpful and something to be implemented yearly.
- L. Thomas: Parliamentarian is critical, need to know agenda, work as advisor and consultant to president and board; will send notes and resources to N. Curtis; suggested that everyone purchase Roberts Rules of Order.
- C. Hampton: Likes to talk about next steps at end of meetings. What are the next steps? Encouraged scheduling next board meeting.
- Outgoing and incoming board discussed dates for executive committee meeting.
- Incoming Board set Executive Committee meeting for Wednesday, December 16 at 7pm.
- Group discussed Zoom access; M. Fritz offered to set up Zoom meeting for December.
- N. Curtis: Asked about whether there is a PBCA listserve.
- K. Murphy: Need to clarify communications in the next year.
- J. Cannon: Her admin inherited a google group which included previous members, currents, friends, and many others, but there are more focused distribution lists that have been carved out to keep communications focused, such as elections and topics in the community; those lists are accessible through the info@pennbranch.org email.
- N. Curtis: Could not get on the google group and does not receive communication from listserve.
- Thanks all around.