

Park Slope Civic Council Committee Reports for February, 2015

Historic District Committee: Peter Bray, Chair

David Alquist, Bob Braun and I had a meeting at the Landmarks Preservation Commission on January 8, 2015. When we arrived, we were informed that Sarah Carroll, the LPC's new Executive Director, was sick and that the meeting would have to be rescheduled. We met briefly nonetheless with Michael Owen and Jenny Fernandez, two LPC staff, and presented them with copies of the Survey Report prepared last fall by the LPC intern who was funded by PSCC, digital copies of the primary resource materials culled from Department of Building files for hundreds of buildings in the Center Slope (Phase 3 area) and petitions signed by owners within this area. Shortly after the meeting, we contacted the LPC to reschedule the meeting and were informed that Ms. Carroll will review the provided materials and will contact us in February to set up a new meeting date.

Finance and Investment Committee: Peter Bray, Committee Member

Following the Board of Trustees approval in January of the Corporate Resolution required by Fidelity Investments to change account signatories on PSCC's Fidelity account, the requisite documents were filed with Fidelity on January 26th. Monthly statements will be sent to Tom Miskel and Jeff Roth in their capacity, respectively, as Finance Committee member and Treasurer. Once the committee has an opportunity to review the statements, the committee will meet to determine what steps are necessary to bring the existing Fidelity investments in line with PSCC's Finance and Investment Policy.

Committee on Trustees: Peter Bray and SJ Avery, Co-Chairs

The trustee recruitment letter sent to PSCC's membership following the January Trustees meeting elicited was well received according to feedback from some Civic Council members. To date, four members have submitted nominations on their own behalf. The COT also reached out to every Trustee by telephone to solicit recommendations for potential members, and based on their feedback, we expect to receive additional nominations. We would ask Trustees to continue to review the members list and their networks to identify potential candidates, both for the current year and later years. The committee will meet following the February nominations deadline (February 15) to screen and interview candidates and to present our findings and recommendations to the Executive Committee. A list of candidates will subsequently be presented to the Board of Trustees and each trustee will be able to vote on an individual basis for candidates up to the number of vacancies that will have to be filled at the June Annual Meeting.

House Tour Committee: Candace Woodward and Darryl Cook, Co-Chairs

The 2015 Park Slope House Tour will take place Sunday, May 17, 12 noon to 5:30 pm in all sections of Park Slope. Poly Prep Lower School will serve as the Tour starting point; four vans will transport ticket-holders to pick-up/drop-off points still to be decided. Two homes have been selected for the Tour so far. Fundraising letters have been distributed and our usual ticket sellers are on board.

Sustainability Committee Report: Chandru Murthi, Chair

Mulchfest was a great success, with 1,495 trees mulched at the 3rd Street entrance to Prospect Park. Our thanks to the sixteen volunteers from the Park Slope Food Co-op who did a great job pulling trees to corners for pick-up. Thanks also to all our environmentally responsible neighbors who participated. Next year we plan to hire a U-Haul to collect trees left at corners, since we have not had good luck with the trucking companies who have volunteered their services in picking up trees from corners.

The Spring Civic Sweep will take place Sunday, April 26, 10am to 2pm, on 5th Avenue between 3rd and 4th Streets on the sidewalk in front of JJ Byrne Park. The Lower East Side Ecology Center will once again collect unwanted electronics for recycling.

FOFA: SJ Avery and Grace Freedman, Co-Chairs

Notes from Tuesday, January 13, FOFA meeting

I. Report on “Christmas tree Drag”

Judy reported that GCC had chopped roughly 600 trees. FOFA members were out and tree-dragging at the Butler to Bergen stretch of 4th and around 8th St and 4th Ave. Notes for next year: GCC needs more trucks for pick-up; FOFA now has a poster template so we can get the word out earlier, and we could better assign cross street sweeps for trees. Great coverage from Park Slope Stoop

2. Accessibility on 4th Avenue

Joan Peters, Executive Director of Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled (BCID), spoke about the history and goals of her organization, which has been in Brooklyn for 56 years, and how FOFA activities could engage with BCID.

In terms of 4th Avenue, Joan spoke about the concept of “Universal Design”, a practice in which all spaces are inherently accessible to as wide a range of people as possible. BCID has worked with the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities, which has been very responsive to issues raised with them when they are site-specific (ie, problems with curb cuts on an identified stretch of a street), since that approach creates measurable goals.

Some of the things BCID advocates for are clear signage (at least 18 point) and better location of informative signs, good lighting, and more careful placement of “street furniture” (such as sandwich-board signs), which can often be obstacles to people with disabilities.

In response to the discussion about possible improvements on 4th Ave, representatives from *PSCC’s Livable Streets Committee* advised about their plans for a by-invitation meeting on March 22 to launch new initiatives and decide directions. Three of the general topic areas they are examining are street safety, aging in place, and street art. Committee members noted that there had been many changes since the early “Walk-Abouts” that led to the formation of Forth on Fourth and they were continuing to use actual observations to help shape priorities; to that end (creating committee action priorities). Participation by BCID was welcomed.

Action Items:

- Possibly schedule walking tour of 4th Ave in the Spring, focused on impediments - **responsibility:** BCID to take lead; would be BCID-directed, with FOFA participating as requested.
- Make sure BCID is aware of street related issues FOFA is involved with (ie discussions about Times Plaza rebuild - **responsibility:** FOFA (partially through list serve)
- Join forces on area issues - **responsibility:** BCID to advise FOFA/PSCC when support could be useful
- Share information about bench placement in past 2 years - **responsibility:** SJ for 4th Avenue; will contact Josh Lenin about larger Park Slope area.
- Provide information from PSCC walkabouts - **responsibility:** Michael Cairl to research reports

FOFA: SJ Avery and Grace Freedman, Co-Chairs (Continued)

3. Art on 4th

Action item: Grace will schedule a meeting with Gowanus Arts to follow up on the work Joe and Ken have done identifying spaces.

Grace also mentioned that she had been approached by a member of Lander's participatory budgeting team regarding art installation at the 4thAve/9th St transit station. Additionally, FOFA will be represented at the Old Stone House discussion about Gowanus art

4. Follow-up on #FixThisPublic Space - 4thAve/9thStreet Transit hub

Members were urged to attend Feb 5 PSCC meeting (The Novo, at 4th Ave, 5th Street) where Andrew Inglesby of the MTA will provide an update on the 4thAve/9thSt station. **FixThisPublicSpace** partners will be invited to the meeting (Grace and SJ)

Next FOFA meeting

Tuesday, February 10 7:45 AM

Fifth Avenue Committee Conference Room - 621 Degraw Street