

**East Allentown Rittersville
Neighborhood Association**

MINUTES

The October 16, 2017 meeting of the East Allentown Rittersville Neighborhood Association was called to order at 7:03 PM President Dennis Pearson and Treasurer Robert Jacoby were present ... Secretary David Schell and Vice President Robert Pandaleon were not present ... Schell was recuperating from an injury and Pandaleon had a business commitment. Also in attendance were 9 neighbors with one of these neighbors Robert Smith Jr. being a candidate for Lehigh County Commissioner for District 3 ... The other candidates present were Nate Hyman for Allentown Mayor, John Ingram for Allentown Mayor, Amy Zanelli for Lehigh County Commissioner for District 3 and Courtney Robinson for the 2-year term for Allentown City Council.

Given the absence of the Secretary the reading of the minutes was deferred to November. Treasurer Robert Jacoby reported that there were no deposits and withdrawals from our bank account for the month of September

President Pearson next gave the floor to Police Officer Michael Beidelman.

Beidelman said:

- 1) The issue reported by a neighbor living on 900 block of E. Sycamore in regard to possible illegal car maintenance has been solved... The individual doing such illegal car maintenance has been caught in the act and was told to cease and desist.
- 2) Allentown Police have been dealing with a reported gang of roaming youth in the area between Carlisle Street and Albert Street on the most western end of the East Side ... The Police officer said alleged gang members go into hiding when police are present....
- 3) A car flipped over on its side after an accident at Hanover & Graham Street where the Dollar Store was located ... A woman and her son were slightly injured in the accident ... A man from Lehighon was also involved in the accident.

In response to a neighbor's question --- Beidelman said that solicitations from door to door people or telephone surveys asking people to take surveys about PPL electric service are often scams and many of these people doing it don't have permits to do it... They definitely don't have the permission from the PPL to do it and if they are telling you that PPL rates are raising that is not currently so,

Beidelman added upon another question that there is currently a problem with the Juvenile prosecution and remedial system ... The rules are too vague and the County system is under financed ... AND also added roving gangs of kids on bicycles remain a problem.

President Pearson informed the gathered group that:

- 1) The City which has been locking the basketball nets at Andre Reed Park at 9 PM daily and reopening them at 8:00 AM will discontinue that practice as of October 31 for the fall and winter months...
- 2) Lindsay Taylor the director of the Recreation Bureau that neighborhood people will receive an invitation to participate on a steering committee that would help the City look at renovations at Andre Reed Park including the issue of a Spray Park at Irving Street Pool.

Pearson pointed out that a study by Williams Aquatics Pros Consulting, LLC encourages the discontinuance of the swimming pool at the Park and its replacement with a spray park City Council has approved the Park and Recreation's bureau request to apply for a State grant to pay for the Spray Park ... Council which allegedly wants to refurbish the pool also approved the grant quest as is when assured by Taylor that it could be changed to include the pool later ... But as it turned out Taylor later learned that the change order could not be done if the City accepts the grant.

Mayor Pawlowski is on record as wanting to replace the Irving Pool with a Spray Park ... But his Recreation Commission takes the opposite view ...

Police note it has become rare for individuals lately to skip over the fence and swim after hours ... But when such an event did occur the youths from both the East Side, Center City and the Fountain Pool area complained that the City's action would leave no swimming pools on the East side and accused the City of taking away their swimming pools ... The kids from Fountain Park noting that their swimming pool is already closed permanently.

Pearson next noting that the Project Haas display items has been removed from storage to the Irving Street Pool bathhouse in preparation for the 2017-2018 Project Haas Christmas display perhaps the last display we might be able to do should the Irving Street pool be demolished in preparation for a spray park. So, the fate of Project Haas is unknown at this moment.... One neighbor asked whether we need help to install the project. The answer is we do.

Bob Jacoby, his son and Pearson removed the items from storage.

The display no longer has a center piece of a lighted Christmas tree because the 70-foot flagpole made of steel and concrete which hosted the display was torn down in 2016... So far there has been no replacement of the flag pole at Andre Reed Park ... We want the Flagpole replaced so that a flag once again can be flown ... Indeed, we like it to be 70-foot-tall and be able to host a structure for a lighted Christmas tree display. But if for some reason that cannot be achieved we want a flagpole of lesser size installed but as we said that is not our preference... We also want a monument placed there to remember the East Side kids who died for their country in war.

Candidates whom came to our meeting were next allowed to speak.

Nate Hyman a Republican candidate for Mayor said that he wants to increase communications between the Office of the Mayor and City Council as well as the Police Force and Fire Department and the people ... He also wants to maximize the benefits of the NIZ Zone for the City which he calls the Golden Goose for future City Revenues ... Asserting that there is a time limit to maximize the benefit of NIZ amortization...Hyman went on to assert that his administration would be pro-active in eliminating the scourge of blighted property...And finally, he promised to work with the School District to improve conditions there ... Hyman wants to create more activities to keep young people busy and provide incentives to keep more kids in school to graduate. In regard to the grounds of the Allentown State Hospital he wants it to be developed according to the wishes of East Siders, One neighbor said that ESYC wants to use part of the Hospital grounds for a football field ... Another neighbor said that we need a VA Hospital in the area, Another neighbor said that the School District wants to use 20 acres for a Middle School which President Pearson replied, Maybe it would be better to build a new Dieruff High School there containing what is needed for a new school including a modern learning center for a planetarium.

John Ingram an Independent Candidate for Mayor next spoke ... He started out by saying that Nate Hyman had stole his thunder, and then asserting that one of the problems of Allentown is the perception that the City has a serious crime problem ... A perception he wants to eradicate, As far as education is concerned ... He wants high risk kids in the lower grades to voluntarily take classes to improve etiquette, behavior, discipline and class Calling the School district dysfunctional and costly He wants the School District to keep costs down citing the fact that he believes the School district spent too much money on Building 21 ... Ingram calls the high School District property tax as a problem ... Because people may want to buy a home in Allentown but finds it better to buy elsewhere because of lower property tax... And additionally criticized the fact that Allentown's earned income tax rate is higher than other communities as well. Ingram too wants to develop the entire 200 acres of the former Allentown State hospital grounds calling its development essential to improve the City's tax base ... Then too he wants to develop the Queen City Airport as well ... Sometime that Pawlowski wants as well

The next speaker was Amy Zanelli candidate for Lehigh County Commissioner District 3 Amy wants to end the scourge of the opiate epidemic which is causing much death and pain ... Wanting to create half-way houses and infrastructure to meet the crisis. Her next emphasis is senior citizens citing the fact that a Senior Fair sponsored by Dan McNeil and Lisa Boscola gave her the opportunity to meet senior citizens especially those from West Bethlehem which she alleged helped solve a traffic problem requiring a pedestrian light (Editorial note --- McNeil and Boscola gave Zanelli the permission to speak at that PA paid event to promote her candidacy ... Dennis Pearson a senior citizen himself attended that event but was not accorded the permission to speak nor was he allowed to give out his material Zanelli was)

The Next speaker was Robert Smith Jr and East Side and a School Board member Smith defended his years on the School Board especially the purchase of Building 21 He said the school district does want to build a new Middle School on the grounds of the former Allentown State Hospital but wants to obtain the property for free, If the state wants payment the school district will probably build on Mitzpah Grove behind the Mosser Elementary School ... A piece of land the school district currently owns that has been used as an environmental reserve for some classes. Smith a Republican candidate also is running for Lehigh County Commissioner District 3 ... Smith says as a School Board Director he has to work with people of other parties to get things done ... He will do the same on the Lehigh County Commissioners... Currently the County Commissioners is 6 Republicans and 3 Democrats ...Countering Zanelli citing the endorsements of Schlossberg and Pete Schweyer ... Smith says he is endorsed by Pat Browne and Charlie Dent.

Finally, Courtney Robinson, candidate for City Council spoke He promised to adequately staff the police, fire department and the paramedics To keep abreast with every section as he was able in regard their concerns ... As a City Councilman, he would not approve any grant for Andre Reed Park that would completely eliminate the swimming pool in favor of a spray park ... That he would favor an amendment to the City Charter allowing for district representation so that each section of the City was represented. It should be noted that of all candidates running Robinson made the most visits to our meeting and to Midways Manors meeting.

In the waning moments of the meeting President Pearson noted that he neglected to mention that a Brooklyn manufacturer intends to locate a factory on Plymouth Street south of E. Congress Street employing 80 workers.

Then he noted that our bylaws require us to hold an election next month ... For now, the current officers will be placed in nomination but others if they wish can have their names placed in nomination before and on the same night ... Pearson informed the group that events in the last year like a marriage, have changed things for him. But he is willing to serve at least another year as President because his term as resident of the President's Council of the Allentown Crime Watch does not end until next December.

Pearson notes it is really time for a new generation to emerge to take over the reign of the neighborhood association ... It perhaps is time for this new generation to bring about new activities for the group and assure the continuance of the existence of this group for many many more years.

Submitted by Dennis Pearson