

TACONY CIVIC ASSOCIATION

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Volume 9, Issue I

A Nonprofit Corporation to Serve the Community

March 2011

Tacony Civic Association General Meeting

★ **March 8, 2011** ★

- ♦ Starting Time: **7:00PM**
- ♦ Disston Memorial Presbyterian Church, located at 4500 Tyson Ave. (Please use side entrance on Glenloch St.)
- ♦ Guests: Fire Commissioner **Lloyd Ayers**, DRCC's new Executive Director **Thomas J. Branigan**, and Community Planner **Ian Litwin**
- ♦ All are welcome!

Future 2011 TCA meetings:

- ♦ May 10th
- ♦ September 13th
- ♦ November 8th

Renew Your Membership for 2011!

If a 2011 membership renewal form is enclosed, please complete it and return to the address specified on form. Only \$5 a year! What a bargain!

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New Park Coming to Tacony!

Picnickers and hikers may soon join the fisherfolk at Lardner's Point in Tacony.

Sometime this summer or early fall, construction will begin on a new, 4.5-acre park that will replace the current "cracked pavement and weeds" with greenery, wetlands, benches, picnic tables, solar lighting and composting restroom facility, said Tom Branigan, executive director of Delaware River City Corp., the non-profit organization that works to reconnect communities with the river along Philadelphia's northern Delaware River waterfront.

A lot of the river's edge will be restored to a natural state, which will yield wildlife habitat. The small pier – the place where fishing happens – stays, Branigan said. It will receive some repair work.

The spot sits next to the Tacony-Palmyra bridge, and offers excellent views of the bridge and the Palmyra Cove Nature Park across the river.

Earlier this week, City Council's Rules Committee sent on to full council legislation that would change the zoning designation for the area bounded by Milnor, Levick and Robbins Streets and the Delaware River from C-3 commercial to recreational. The property is owned by the city water department. The legislation, proposed by Councilwoman Joan Krajewski, "will permit the proposed park uses while preserving the land from unwanted development," William Kramer, director of the Philadelphia City Planning Commission's division of development planning, told the committee. Last week, PCPC gave the bill its support.

Plans for the park were developed by Baltimore's Biohabitats, the same landscape architecture firm that designed Washington Avenue Green in South Philadelphia. Just as Washington Avenue Green is part of a multi-purpose trail along the central portion of the Delaware, Lardner's Point Park is to serve as a trail head for the North Delaware Riverfront Greenway and Trail. The city hopes that eventually, the north and central portions of trail along the Delaware will connect – and be part of the East Coast Greenway, a trail that will run from Main to Florida.

Construction of the project has not gone out to bid yet, Branigan said, but it is expected to cost about \$1.5 million. All of the money has been raised, but paperwork is now being done to reclaim some of it. About half came from the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Branigan said. The original hope was to start construction last year. When that didn't happen, the grant timed out, he said. But Branigan is confident it will be re-issued. Other funding sources include the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the National Wildlife Fund.

February 23, 2011

By **Kellie Patrick Gates** For *PlanPhilly*

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Did You Know?

On the heels of an enlightening presentation at our last meeting by Prisons Commissioner Louis Giorla, did you know that Philadelphia's prison system is as old as the city itself? In 1683, a 7' x 5' detention cage was built for local "miscreants," the worst of which would be subject to execution by hanging. Minor offenders were merely subject to branding or public whipping. By the 18th century, work houses and "houses of correction" had replaced the haphazard cages which sprung up in the original city, and the death penalty was reserved only for those convicted of first degree murder. Those unable to pay debts were also housed with the criminals, a practice which continued until 1841. Executions, once grand public spectacles, began to take place within prison walls starting in 1834.

In 1828, a House of Refuge was established at the northwest corner of Ridge and Fairmount Avenues so that experienced adult offenders would be separated from juvenile delinquents. Residents' structured days began promptly at 4:45 A.M. and included worship, labor, school and 8:00 P.M. bedtime. The original House of Correction in Northeast Philadelphia opened in 1874 at State Road and the Pennypack Creek which housed non-violent offenders and juveniles. The original facility had eight (8) extensive wings converging on a central chapel which held about 2,500. By this time, each community had smaller holding jails at their respective police stations. In Tacony this was located at State Road and Longshore Avenue, housed in Tacony's original stone schoolhouse once named in honor of Henry Disston and rebuilt at Ditman Street. Holmesburg's jail was housed in the former Columbia Elementary School on Moro Street, north of Rhawn Street.

The sprawling Holmesburg Prison was built on Torresdale Avenue north of Rhawn Street in 1894. This fortress featured a spoke-and-wheel prison design with ten (10) appendages radiating from the center. Traditional modes of reform centered around solitary confinement, work and religion had slowly evolved to focus more on education, social services and recreation. By 1910, solitary confinement was deemed ineffective as a reform tool and this practice was abandoned. The original House of Correction on State Road was rebuilt in 1927 using original Holmesburg Quarry stones, and was later joined by the Industrial Correction Center, Detention Centers and the Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility. In 1995, Holmesburg Prison on Torresdale Avenue closed its doors, plagued by aging infrastructure and stigmatized by reports of human experimentation during the mid-20th century.

The Philadelphia Prison system is now program-oriented, featuring expanded educational and recreational programs as well as vocational training and work-release activities. A collaboration with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society has resulted in a productive organic garden on the grounds of the House of Correction. A new "green" initiative adopted by the Prison System constantly educates employees regarding the importance of initiatives to reduce pollution and improve efficiency. Philadelphia has laid the groundwork to become the most environmentally friendly municipal correctional facility in the United States.

Please Attend the TCA Quarterly Meeting on Tuesday, March 8th, 2011

at 7:00 PM at Disston Memorial Presbyterian Church

- ◆ We're pleased to announce that **Fire Commissioner Lloyd Ayers** will be joining us to give an update on construction of Engine 38.
- ◆ **Thomas J. Branigan, P.E., P.L.S.** is Delaware River City Corp's new Executive Director. He will join us to give an overall update on DRCC as well as more detailed updates on the Lardner's Point Park & K&T trail projects. Branigan recently completed his tenure in the Philadelphia Streets Department as Engineering Manager in the Transportation Engineering and Planning Section, Engineering Division.
- ◆ **Ian Litwin LEED-AP** is the new Community Planner with the Philadelphia City Planning Commission for our section of the city. He will give us an update on what the Planning Commission is doing to help Tacony, the Northeast, and the City as whole. They are crafting the Philadelphia2035 Comprehensive Plan for the City and will be writing 18 district plans that will guide future growth and development in the City. In tandem with these efforts, they are also working with the Zoning Code Commission on a complete rewrite of the City's Zoning Code.

At the Tacony Library...

CPR Workshops for Adults & Teenagers

Learn how to save a life in these free workshops provided by the American Red Cross

CPR for Adults Saturday April 9 at 1:00 pm

CPR for Teenagers (for ages 12 and up) Wednesday April 20 at 1:00 pm

These 3 ½ hour workshops will train responders to overcome any reluctance to act in emergency situations and to recognize and care for life-threatening or cardiac emergencies.

Participants in both workshops will earn Red Cross Certification in CPR. Space is limited. **Pre-registration is required.**

An Evening of Local History

Wednesday, April 13 from 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Tacony Branch Library invites you to a celebration of our unique local history in three different ways. Join us for screenings of the short film about Tacony "**Bridging Yesterday with Tomorrow**", made by the Tacony Civic Association, to be followed by the pilot episode for Sam Katz's "**Philadelphia: The Great Experiment**", a documentary film on the history of Philadelphia.

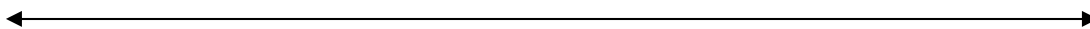
The evening will also feature an exhibition of the excellent photographs from the recent "**Tacony in the Frame**" photography contest, featuring Tacony students' own ideas of their community through a camera lens.

The Schedule:

6:00-7:00pm "Tacony in the Frame" student photography exhibit

7:00pm Screenings of "Bridging Yesterday with Tomorrow" followed by the pilot episode of "Philadelphia: The Great Experiment" and concluding with a short discussion of the film project with producer Sam Katz.

Tacony Library, 6742 Torresdale Avenue, 215-685-8755.



Disston Park Clean-up - April 16, 2011 - Volunteers Needed

On Saturday April 16th, the Tacony Civic Association and PHS Philadelphia Green are hosting a park cleanup at Disston Park as part of "*Love Your Park: Spring Edition*". The cleanup will run from 9am until 12 noon. We will be meeting at the corner of Longshore and Disston Streets. All gloves and snacks will be provided.

We welcome high school and college students who may have community service hours to complete. If interested in helping out, please contact the civic at taconycivic@gmail.com.

Zoning Variances

Louis M. Iatarola, Tacony Civic Zoning Committee Chair

6534 Torresdale Avenue - legalization of 6 foot high fence as part of a single family dwelling. Meeting was held with TCA and neighbors on November 22 for a hearing on December 7, 2010. TCA did not oppose with various provisos. ZBA denied variance. Applicant is expected to appeal. Will be discussed at meeting

6247 Keystone Street - permit to allow body and fender work and paint spray booth as part of an existing automobile service facility. TCA did not oppose with various provisos. ZBA granted variance with provisos on December 15, 2010.

4106 Robbins Avenue - permit to allow a day care facility for no more than six (6) children. Meeting was held with TCA and neighbors on December 16th for a ZBA hearing on December 22, 2010. Based on outcome of meeting, TCA did not oppose with provisos. ZBA denied variance.

7013 Hegerman Street - legalization of a 2-family dwelling. Meeting was held with TCA and neighbors on February 2. Based on outcome of meeting, TCA did not oppose. ZBA granted variance on February 8.

4900 Levick Street - meeting with TCA was requested before formal application to ZBA. Potential development calls for seven (7) attached 2-family dwellings for a total of fourteen (14) apartment units at the site. Zoned C-2 Commercial and R-9 Residential. Meeting will be held on February 28 at McDonald's Restaurant with neighbors and TCA to provide feedback to applicant.

6440 Marsden Street - permit for a 3-family dwelling (triplex). First ZBA hearing on January 18 was continued until March 15 due to lack of communication with TCA by applicant. TCA still waiting for applicant to schedule meeting with neighbors and Zoning Committee.

Tree Tenders Basic Training Course

Tree Tenders is a nine-hour training course that empowers concerned residents to make dramatic strides towards restoring and caring for their local tree canopy. Help beautify your neighborhood and region by planting trees.

Pre-registration is required: Please register online at www.phsonline.org Fee: \$25

2011 Philadelphia Classes:

SPRING: Thurs., May 5, 12, & 19, 5:45-8:45 PM at PHS, 100 N. 20th St. Philadelphia

FALL: Wed., October 12, 19 & 26, 5:45-8:45 PM at PHS, 100 N. 20th St. Philadelphia

For more information, contact Mindy Maslin at 215-988-8844/mmaslin@pennhort.org (Philadelphia)

Tacony Town Watch, Inc. is looking for new members to help us patrol our neighborhood. We are working with the Civic in handling crime and narcotics complaints. Feel free to visit us on our website at www.tactw.org and fill out the complaint form. Your complaint will be answered within 48 hours. Please consider joining the Town Watch; we could really use your help! You can find out more information about Tacony Town Watch, Inc. on our website at www.tactw.org.