



{ The Chestnut Hill Local .com }

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Nimby, USA

Chestnut Hill must be the NIMBY capital of the world. There is always a ready and able group of citizens opposed to just about anything proposed. There is a lot to like about Chestnut Hill but when I observe the petty political squabbling and the instant opposition to business ventures or worthy projects like the Woodmere expansion, I'm glad to be running my business in Oreland.

We are in the midst of a severe recession and newly vacant stores appear on the avenue monthly, yet 72 neighbors are pushing their "sky is falling" line about the business Jennifer Zoga wants to start. Seventy-two neighbors sure seems like a lot... How far does the market's negative effect extend? Three blocks?

All this preemptive opposition because Ms. Zoga wants to invest her money in a business, rent an empty store in a building zoned for its purpose, employ people grateful for a job and pay taxes to a city starving for revenue. The same folks will complain the most when the reduced tax revenue closes libraries and firehouses. The one thing they won't do is rent the empty store themselves and start a business with their hard-earned money.

People move into a neighborhood with an active business corridor then complain about normal business activity. The usual hyperbole involves a litany of catastrophic issues. The "neighbors" complaints include damage to their lives, home values and even personal safety. The addition of traffic, noise, litter and the dreaded objectionable odors combine to create a "nightmare scenario."

Don't get me wrong, I won't claim that over-the-top rhetoric and automatic opponents are limited to the Hill. At a township meeting here in Springfield about the proposed Home Depot, a resident described the "utter chaos in the parking lot" she had observed at a visit to one. She assured us she "had pictures!"

So go for it neighbors, vacant stores, a shrinking economy and 10 percent unemployment are nothing compared to objectionable odors. The opponents better pace themselves and save some energy however. Whatever business Snowden has lined up for the McGarrity property will need some serious opposition before it destroys the very fabric of life in Chestnut Hill.

Brad Shapiro
Flourtown

Support for Good Food Market

We are writing in support of the Good Food Market opening in Chestnut Hill. From what we have seen on Jen Zoga's website — www.goodfoodmarket.net — she appears to be a very energetic, socially conscious business person as well as a Chestnut Hill resident. We believe that she will listen to residents concerns when they speak with her directly.

The space that she has chosen on Willow Grove Ave. means that there will be one less empty storefront in Chestnut Hill, which is a desire of both business people and residents.

I grew up in Mt Airy and may live in Chestnut Hill one day and know that the proximity to the business district is one of the main draws in residing here.

A market with good food only makes it more so.

Amy Edelman and John Millard
Night Kitchen Bakery

Spoiled American complainers!

I just read your article about the 72 neighbors who oppose the market.

Well, I can tell you there are quite a few neighbors, including me, who are looking forward to the market and that those opposed sound like a bunch of spoiled American complainers!

Unfortunately we live in a society where it is easier to bitch and moan about something than do something positive. I think Zoga is trying to do something interesting and something good for the community. These people should try supporting her, rather than knock her down before she evens starts.

I mean come on, we live in a free country where people can do what they want. Who is to say she can't open a store where she wants to? This is America, the land of the free and the home of the brave!

Zoga is obviously brave by taking a chance and investing in her own ideas. She is trying to make something out of nothing, but it seems as if the 72 would rather have nothing. I just don't get it. If all they can say is, "Oh, there will be noise from cars and construction" then maybe they should move away from Germantown Avenue.

Think long term! OK, so some minor construction to build the shop, then you might have good food or a cool place. You know she doesn't want the construction to run long. She wants to open up as soon as she get the place, I'm sure.

Finally, in these trying economic times, when loads of shops in Chestnut Hill and Mt. Airy are closing, I wholeheartedly support a new non-corporate business.

Greg Natali
Chestnut Hill

Who does the Local's Editor report to?

The letter/article entitled "Setting the record straight on the Local and related issues" (June 18 edition) raises an important question for those concerned about the Local's integrity and future — specifically in relation to process for evaluating the Local's editor. The crux of the controversy concerning the Local in recent years has been, for many, the protection of the independence of the editor's voice, and correspondingly the transparency and

independence of the evaluation process relating to the editor's performance.

The already-cited letter states that "Those evaluations are normally conducted in executive sessions." This means that members of the association not on the Executive Committee or board of the CHCA may not be present to witness or participate in these evaluations, and that the actions and discussions taking place in the evaluation may not be subsequently disclosed to the public.

Since the association's bylaws provide, as the letter indicates, that "The editor reports to the association, the Publisher of the Local," this raises the question of why the editor, in practice, apparently reports only to certain members of the association, and not to others. Is a member of the association who is not on the Executive Committee any less a part of the association than one who is?

The answer is certainly "No." In saying that the editor reports to the association, the bylaws directly provide that the editor reports to every member of the association, not just to those members in leadership positions. This is in keeping with the Local's mission to be a community forum, and is an appropriate protection against the Local's manipulation by those in a position to do so discreetly and anonymously.

I have heard it said, at CHCA meetings, where members of the association not on the board were requested to leave so that the editor could be evaluated, that it would be unfair to the editor to have such a public evaluation — after all, salaries are discussed and other sensitive matters. I never heard the editor say this, however.

Accountability to the community is the price to be paid, and should also be the reward earned, for being editor of a community-owned paper.

Eric Spaeth
Chestnut Hill

'Good news' paper?

I thought Chestnut Hill was a Democratic and progressive neighborhood. We hated George W. Bush, despise Fox News, and would prefer the mountain bikers in Fairmount Park to make way for deer.

Yet, what did we see from the new president of the Chestnut Hill Community Association? Mr. Sullivan wrote a possibly (he used "may" a lot) threatening piece regarding the Local, its editor, and staff. It was the sort of copy that one could imagine Rupert Murdoch putting in a memo to the news department of the Fox network (minus the "mays"). And the reason for closer attention to the Local appears to be that it does not announce sufficiently the optimism and uplift for which Ronald Reagan was legendary.

It may just be me, but the Local is one of the best things the community association does. To be sure, it is curious that most residents appreciate the Local more than the CHCA board members. But I would have thought that if the community association was truly concerned about its image, it would stop meddling with one of its most successful vehicles rather than sacrificing yet another editor on the altar of "good news."

Darryl Hart
Chestnut Hill

Welcome to CHCA!

In his inaugural column in the Local last week, as newly elected president of the Chestnut Hill Community Association, Walter Sullivan writes, "Some of what I now write may if not properly understood provoke disagreement. I therefore ask you to understand that what I write here I write most carefully, and to read it carefully drawing no inferences beyond what I explicitly write."

Welcome to the CHCA; you've been warned.

Brian Rudnick
Chestnut Hill

Cheers for park concerts

The first of the Pastorius Park concerts was great in spite of the liquid sunshine! And a big "thank you" to Janine Dwyer and Grant MacAvoy for arranging an opening concert that was so entertaining. Andy Maher and Danny Fisher worked under difficult conditions but the show went on and was enjoyed by one and all. I look forward to the remaining schedule of concerts.

Cheryl Massaro
Chestnut Hill

Fisher & Maher were great

Danny Fisher and Andy Maher's Irish group was a super show during the bad weather. Danny and Andy were great!

Thomas Walsh
Chestnut Hill

Well cared for

Recently I had an occasion to be in the emergency room at Chestnut Hill Hospital.

It took six hours, but there was a constant coming and going in and out of my "room."

The ending result was that, for me, I felt as if the time was well spent, the care excellent and left experiencing that all bases had been covered.

My daughter, Liz Lyons, took me and would agree that although six hours was long, the care was good.

The ER care provider was Gilbert Palley M.D.

Pat Leaming
A loyal CHH user for many years

Unmoved by 'Slumdog'

Not feeling the need to be the first on my block to view Slumdog Millionaire, I waited four months before Netflix made a copy available to me. This was the best movie of the year? Not to me. I saw it as something of a horror film. Ugly things kept happening to orphan children who were left on the street to fend for themselves.

They had to steal to eat, and adults were constantly being mean to them. I watched one horrendous scene where two men blinded a child while attempting to build up an army of beggars. This is entertainment?

The quizmeister whose show profited wildly from the audience attracted by his charming and charismatic contestant, tried to trick the young man with the wrong answer. The adults in this movie were nasty and even evil.

Of course, the young man triumphed in the end; that was a given. But considering all the mean adults in this story, it is clear that by continuing in this story line, this unworldly and uneducated young man would be scammed out of his winnings within a year.

So he got the girl, also a given. I don't for a minute think they lived happily ever after. The cards were stacked against them. I wish I could be more upbeat in my outlook, but Slumdog Millionaire did not leave me tingly with goose bumps and a smile.

Maggie Wollman
Mt. Airy