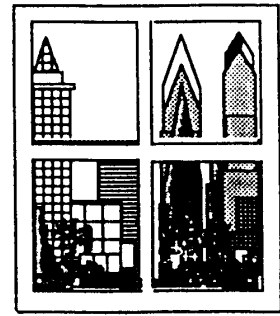


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**S O S N A**

Neighborhood Advisory Council  
General Meeting  
January 12, 2005

-- APPROVED MINUTES --

Vice Chair Ted Lee opened the meeting and welcomed everyone in attendance.

**Minutes:** The minutes from the October, November and December meetings were unanimously approved.

**Economic Development Panel Discussion:** Interim Executive Director David Feldman opened the panel discussion on Economic Development by announcing that Pathmark has made a commitment to fund economic development activities in our area through the City's Tax Credit Program. The intent is to begin what is planned to be a ten-year commitment in the spring or summer of 2005. This funding is restricted to economic development activities and more information on this program will be shared once it is available.

Mr. Feldman thanked SOSNA Treasurer Tony Moretti for his efforts in publicizing the meeting to the business community, then he introduced the panel of speakers.

Dwayne Bumb, from the City's Commerce Department, began the presentations by discussing the various services that the City can provide to small businesses. He noted that the Commerce Department has many resources and that their purpose is to strengthen commercial corridors and help them grow. He commented that the Philadelphia Commercial Development Corporation has worked with the South Street West Business Association to improve building facades. They can provide grants to businesses for exterior improvements. In addition, they provide grants for neighborhood planning and have been working with the Planning Commission on the plan for the SOSNA area.

The next presenter was Chris Johansen, a consultant who works with communities and businesses to conduct market research and advise them on mechanisms for strengthening their commercial corridors. He commented on a number of business obstacles including crime, unclean streets, deteriorating infrastructures, uninviting stores, under-performing businesses, job loss, empty commercial buildings, and general disorganization and identified potential solutions including advocating for change, clustering and promoting businesses, attracting complimentary businesses to create a destination, public improvements including improved lights and sidewalks, and private improvements including facades and windows.

Jim Flaherty presented information on the Renewal Communities program which includes the SOSNA service area. The Renewal Communities program provides incentives for existing businesses as well as incentives to attract new businesses to the area. Many of these incentives involve Federal tax deductions and credits. These include a Commercial Revitalization Deduction with accelerated depreciation; Employment Credits for businesses

employing residents of the Renewal Community zone on either a full-time, part-time, or seasonal basis; a Zero percent Capital Gains tax for property held for more than five years, and an increased Section 179 deduction. More information on this program and any applicable restrictions is available through the Empowerment Zone office.

Andrew Toy of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), a non-profit funder and supporter of community development corporations across the country, spoke on how community organizations can help businesses to organize and work together with residents to develop neighborhoods. He noted that LISC supports a four-pronged approach of design, organization, promotion, and economic restructuring. He added that in urban areas it is also important to include safety and cleanliness and commented that organizations must deal with both perceptions and reality. He suggested that a committee structure is one way to work on the various components and that the best way to deal with change is to plan ahead so that the changes can be directed. He noted that planning requires a broad-based consensus and unified priorities among numerous partners. He felt that community groups have a strong ability to bring about the necessary partnerships.

Jessie Frisby, owner of Jessie's Ladies Shop located on South Street for 36 years, represented the South Street West Business Association. She discussed the mission of the organization and its desire to promote the area. She asked for the community's support of both the business association and the individual businesses located on South Street.

Jamer Hunt, Director of the Graduate Program in Industrial Design at the University of the Arts, discussed how design can be used to bring excitement, energy and opportunities to neighborhoods. He cited work that his department had done with Hawthorne to develop plans for open space. He also pointed out that his students had created a set of four projects to add design elements and enhance the identity of the South Street streetscape that were low-cost. Presentation boards of these design concepts were available for viewing at the end of the meeting.

After the presentations, there was an extensive question and answer session. Comments and concerns included the following:

- Washington Avenue represents an opportunity for niche marketing to the home improvement industry
- We should look for a mechanism for uniting our commercial corridors especially South Street and Grays Ferry Avenue
- The Royal Theatre represents an excellent opportunity to become an entertainment draw
- The South Street area lacks a supermarket at the eastern end near Broad Street, creating a gap in neighborhood services
- South Street has serious parking issues
- Young people should be involved in improvement efforts to instill a sense of pride in place
- Communication mechanisms between various organizations need to be improved
- SOSNA outreach efforts to residents need to be improved

**Announcements:** Larry Shaeffer reported that the SOSNA board had approved formation of a committee for Streetscaping and Traffic Calming and asked anyone interested in serving on this committee to contact Eve Lewis. The first meeting will likely be held in early February.

Eve Lewis announced that the February 9, 2005 SOSNA General Meeting would be held at St. Anthony's Senior Center and the agenda would focus on trash and street cleaning. There would also be an update from the Schuylkill River Development Corporation. She also announced that SOSNA was working with the Philadelphia More Beautiful Committee to arrange alley clean-ups and asked anyone with problem alleyways to get in touch with her. Finally, Ms. Lewis announced that there would be two zoning meetings in January and that leaflets/agendas were available.

Ted Lee adjourned the meeting and residents enjoyed refreshments generously provide by Ten Stone Restaurant.

*Respectfully submitted*  
*Soledad Perez Gillespie*  
*Interim Recording Secretary*