

# Manayunk Neighborhood Council



Next Meeting:  
September 3, 2008

September  
2008

PO Box 4667, Philadelphia, PA 19127

## the council crier

### Red Bull Soap Box Derby

The Derby is coming to the wall Saturday September 6. The event will run from 11am to about 4pm. Setup for the event starts Thursday at 10am. Cleanup should be completed by noon on Sunday. For street closures, parking and other details, see

<http://www.manayunkcouncil.org/redbull-2008>



**Rec Center Closing** – The VI Rec Center is slated to be demolished in the late fall to make way for the storm water storage tank and the planned new Rec Department performance center. The closing date is not certain but we are still good for the September meeting. We will need a new home for the next two years (or so). Contact MNC with an ideas or suggestions.

**Manayunk Canal, The Movie** – We have been selected to be part of Scribe Video's Precious Places. In 2004 we did a video about the Manayunk Club. This video will be about the Manayunk Canal.

This great treasure, upon which an industrial community was built, was left to decay for nearly a century. It became a hidden haven for fishermen and bird watchers and recently cyclists and hikers. It is regarded as a cesspool by many visitors and residents. Already \$8 million in improvements have been made and another \$11 million is projected. \$24 million is slated for watershed and recreational improvements to the tip of Venice Island.

After the Canal was completed in 1819, Philadelphia grew rapidly, especially Manayunk, which became the largest industrial area of the U.S. Shortly, railroads were built. The last freight boat entered Manayunk in 1916. This is the only complete canal section of the Schuylkill Navigation System left. A system that in-

cluded 51 miles of canals, 114 locks, a tunnel, and 32 dams from 3 to 23 feet high, overcoming a total fall of 610 feet.

If you would like to help with this project please let us know. We need people with stories, historical documents and photos, and folks to help with the shooting.

**A Day In The Park** – No, not Pretzel Park. On September 9, the parking space in front of Latitudes and the Manayunk Design Group (4325-4327 Main Street) will become a Park for a day. Come by and help us feed the meter! Andropogon Associates, landscape architects, will be Park(ing) in front of Winnie's LeBus. There will be over 25 Park's throughout the city for National PARK(ing) Day Philadelphia. See <http://www.parkingday.org> or <http://www.manayunkcouncil.org/events/events.html>

**Oldest Train Station In America** – Shawmont Station is now officially on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The next goal is to be listed on the National Register as the oldest passenger station in the U.S.



### Shawmont

**Pump House** – The Shawmont pump house (bottom of Shawmont Street and the bike path) is due to be demolished (It may have already happened). Some elements will be left including a wall, the front steps, and parts of the old garden.

**In Again Out Again** – Fran Burns, after less than a year as Manayunk Development Corporation Executive Director, is headed off to greener pastures as Commissioner of Licenses and Inspections for the City of Philadelphia. A search is on for her replacement.

## ZONING

**Venice One** – Our appeal against Venice One is progressing slowly. Our brief is due at the end of October and the hearing is in December.



**Sheldon Crossing** – The saga continues for the proposed 16 houses on Cross and Sheldon Streets. The developers finally had their day in court (OK, the Zoning Board) August 13. MNC, the Planning Commission and Councilman Jones support the project. Representatives from Ridge Park Civic Association asked for a continuance, claiming they had insufficient time to review recent changes to the project. According to the developers, the first floor height was reduced from 10 feet to 9 feet, the peaked roof was eliminated from the pilot house (access to the green roof) and the grading was changed, reducing the height from 47 feet to 42 feet. The hearing was held but the record was left open to allow RPCA to review and comment on the plans. On August 27<sup>th</sup>, RPCA held a members only meeting to discuss the project.

**4328 Dexter** – This project is two homes at the corner of Dexter and Grape. It was initially opposed by a neighbor in dispute of property boundaries. MNC objected to the front garages and driveways and insufficient lot sizes. We recommend a single home with parking in the rear, off Grape. If two homes are built, they should be up to the sidewalk, with parking off Grape St. The case was complicated by the developer rushing to pour foundations despite the opposition. The developer received erroneous permits. L&I issued a stop work order when the realized the discrepancies. The developer recently retained an attorney and the case was continued.

**224 Krams Ave.** – The developer proposed a 33 unit condo/apartment building on Krams Ave. at the bottom of steps from Silverwood. MNC objected that the project was too dense and too tall. The featureless design and lack of amenities were inconsistent in the neigh-

borhood. We suggested that eight single family homes would be appropriate. The project was approved for 24 units. This is an improvement but we don't know what effect it will have on the height or design of the building. A recent check of the zoning and L&I files did not reveal any new plans.

**132-134 Gay Street** – The developer was proposing three homes at the corner of Gay and St. Davids. The homes would face St. Davids, with garages. MNC objected to the overcrowding of the lot. We suggested two homes facing Gay Street consistent with the existing row houses on Gay. The zoning board approved the three homes with some minor changes to accommodate the next door neighbor on Gay.



**4137-4141 Main/Sapphire Grill** – Sapphire Grill is seeking to build a three story addition in place of their back patio. The addition will substantially increase the existing bar/restaurant space. We are in a preliminary phase but the initial sense is that this is an expansion of a bar and overcrowding of the site.

**Channel 48** – Development is coming to the old Channel 48 site on lower Main (near the CVS). We have not seen plans but development will be a multi story (7-9 story) residential building. We will be working with Wissahickon Neighbors Civic Association on this project.

### Obituaries

- Attorney Robert Sugarman died last June at the age of 70. Bob represented Manayunk Neighborhood Council in our appeals against the Venice Lofts and Cotton Street Landing residential projects on Venice Island (2000-2004). Bob also defended us against the 2001 developer led takeover attempt (<http://www.manayunkcouncil.org/hostile/hostile.html>). Bob was well known for his part in stopping the infamous cross town expressway proposed in the 60's and 70's (<http://tinyurl.com/5qsvyj>). Our condolences to Bob's family and friends.
- Andy Rosini, board member and past president of Central Roxborough Civic Association died last month (August). Our condolences to Andy's family and friends.
- Judith Eden, civic activist, attorney, and zoning board member, died recently (<http://tinyurl.com/5ease7>). She was a welcome voice on the zoning board. She understood community problems and issues. She respected us as a civic and she respected the voices of the people. Our condolences to Judith's family and friends.

**JUST A FEW MINUTES . . .**

July 3, 2008

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 pm. Last month's minutes were not read due to technical difficulties.

Jon Campisi was introduced and announced a new weekly newspaper. "The Star" will launch in August and be devoted to the Manayunk, Roxborough and East Falls' communities.

Jane Glenn introduced PARKing Day, a national program begun in San Francisco in 2005. Metered parking spaces are taken for "no-car" spots for the day. The spaces included environmental messages, whimsical fancies, and park like settings. Sept. 19 will be th first time Philadelphia will join this event. It was proposed MNC use the spot in front of Manayunk Design Group. Folks interested in helping should contact Jane.

4723 Umbria St – Harry Feigel sought community support to bring his plot into compliance. It will combine 4 plots into 3 parcels. He also plans to roof over an existing "room" of walls. The zoning will allow him to continue to store construction equipment on site. A motion to support was made, seconded and confirmed.

227 Krams Ave – Kevin received the traffic study for the proposed 33 apartments. The study concluded that the addition of 21 cars would not adversely impact the traffic patterns. Discussion ensued. Kevin will post the study.

228 Hermitage St – The proposal for conversion to two apartments has been withdrawn.

132-134 Gay St – (corner of Gay and St. David's) Three single-family dwellings have been approved.

106-110 Grape St – The Historical Commission did not approve the project. The Manayunk code does not allow for demolition. It was noted that a "hardship" application is permissible under existing regulations.

105-107 Cotton St – New plans were presented and approved by MNC. However, the plans do not yet have Historic Commission approval.

Bourbon Blue – Councilman Curtis Jones introduced legislation to allow Fairmount Park to rent the air space over the

towpath to Bourbon Blue for a 2<sup>nd</sup> story deck. In 2005, MNC worked with MDC on guidelines for properties along the towpath. Bourbon Blue's proposed deck is within the guidelines. Prior to the City Council hearing, MNC and Sean Coyle (owner of Bourbon Blue) worked out an agreement to restrict operating hours, liquor service and seating capacity. However, the owner of the building, Dan Neduccsin, testified that any restrictions were unfair and so they were not included.

4328-32 Dexter St – Permits were issued without the appropriate zoning compliance. Variances should have been required for parking pads and lot size. A neighbor filed and appeal over the property line. MNC then filed an application to intervene to review the plans. L&I issued a "Stop Work Order" due to insufficient set backs. The developer and the neighbor reached an agreement and the appeal was withdrawn. At this time, the zoning ruling is unclear.

214 Wendover St – The developers will meet with MNC at the July 10<sup>th</sup> Zoning Committee meeting.

Sapphire – Proposed a three-story addition to include an expansion of the first floor restaurant and add a two-story set of apartments at the back of the property. A discussion ensued. A meeting will be set up.

Arts Festival – A discussion ensued about the success, size of crowd, and overall impact of the event.

Quality of Life Committee – Ericka Orsulak reported that they met with Fran Burns from the Manayunk Development Corp. They discussed several areas of mutual interest with the promise to explore specific plans.

August Meeting – A motion passed to not meet in August. It was noted that September begins the reconstruction of the Rec Center. Several venues were suggested and discussed.

Other Business: Questions were raised about the Wilde Mill building and the VFW Post on Manayunk Ave. A suggestion that MNC take a proactive stance was applauded. However, no such angel is known at this time.

**MANAYUNK NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP FORM  
January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2008**

___ \$5 Student/Senior	___ \$15 Household	___ \$100 Patron
___ \$10 Individual	___ \$50 Business or Supporter	\$_____ Other
Name:		Phone:
Address:		Email:
City, State, Zip:		Date:
Signature:		

Please make check payable to Manayunk Neighborhood Council & mail to PO Box 4667, Philadelphia, PA 19127

**Events**

**September 3** - MNC meeting, 7:30 pm VI  
**September 6** - Red Bull Soapbox Derby. Teams will race down "The Wall". Gates open 11am; First race 1pm. Admission is free.

**September 19** - PARKing Day, 4327 Main Street, 11 AM to 8 PM

**October 1** - MNC meeting, 7:30 pm

**MNC BOARD**

Kevin Smith, President	Rob Lamendola, Sgt/Arms
John Hunter, Vice President	Charlie Hewins, Trustee
Mark Turtle, Treasurer	Hilary Langer, Trustee
Keith Newman, Rec. Secretary	Erica Orsulak, Trustee
Jane Glenn, Corres. Secretary	Susan Shimp Trustee

**215-482-5528 - mail@manayuncouncil.org  
www.manayuncouncil.org**

courtesy while visiting our neighborhood

thank you for your

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HISTORIC  
MANAYUNK

Manayunk Neighborhood Council  
www.manayuncouncil.org

**Please Read and Pass along to Your Neighbor**

AND



Next Meeting:  
**Wednesday, September 3**  
7:30 PM  
Venice Island Rec Center

PO BOX 4667, PHILADELPHIA, PA 19127

