



P.O. Box 63675 · Philadelphia, PA 19147  
Phone 215.413.3713 · Fax 215.627.7035  
[Website](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)

## **SSHD Board Meeting**

August 10th, 2022

10:00am

SSHD Office & Zoom

Board Members Present: Rick Millan, Adam Shapiro, Francesca Rivetti

SSHD Staff: Mike Harris, Dana Feinberg, Sarah Cowell

Other Attendees: Ryan Strand Greenberg, Lt. Michael Long, Jim Houser, John Foy

### **AGENDA**

**1. Call to Order:** 10:05 a.m.

**2. Acceptance of Prior Meeting Minutes:** Rick motioned to accept prior board meeting minutes, seconded by an attending board member.

**3. Board Chair's Report:** The Off Center is open as a storefront location for the SSHD. Upstairs, a meeting room is available for committees to use. A successful meeting was held the day prior. Passional has been holding classes on weekend evenings in the space. Audio and video equipment is being improved, and a new awning is in the works. Dana, Rick, Joel, and Duncan of Eyes Gallery are helping to make these improvements. The space will be a free resource for the community to use, as long as event holders have their own insurance. Though the bathroom is not, the rest of the space is ADA accessible. Francesca Rivetti is congratulated as a finalist in a London-based hair competition. She has made a video as part of her submission.

**4. Public Safety Update:** Lt. Long mentions that officers in plain clothing are on the street. A coordinated burglary of five different storefronts took place. Video evidence shows a car with someone who smashes the window and enters a business. There were some retail thefts and robberies. Parking issues and car vandalism are being addressed by the police department. Juveniles congregated on the weekend Made in America. There was a gun discharged and a shooting incident in other parts of the city. The police's goal is to keep juveniles from congregating in the area because they are typically not customers of any businesses. Dirt bikes are coming back in the district.

Adam speaks of some prior meetings with businesses addressing the policing in the district. Planning, beautification, and a long term plan for improving nightlife policing were the main topics. They would like increased communication from the police department regarding their excessive presence and street closures. He suggests that the police and the district share a goal: to increase the presence of customers in the district. Barricades could be more attractive, as some existing ones make the street look like a war zone. There was some discussion about future needs for entertainment districts and involvement from government officials. They would like officers who are more experienced with the challenges of nightlife environments or at least familiar with South Street. SSHD will work with the City's Night Manager and other agencies to solve problems that the police are not equipped to handle. September 20th, there will be a committee meeting on this subject.

An attendee mentions that policing is keeping quality customers away. Lt. Long responds that the numbered streets are open. The attendee notes that business owners must have difficult conversations with customers about why the police have created a militarized atmosphere. Lt. Long responds by detailing previous complaints that business owners have had, which he suggests have been addressed by his department, such as the timing of barricade placements and street closures. He mentions ATV and scooter usage as a reason for police choices surrounding barrier and officer distribution. Adam and Mike suggest vehicle management adaptations to promote parking lots and provide delivery driver zones. Dana will be meeting the next day to restart a program for businesses to buy into parking arrangements for their customers.

An attendee notes that constant street closures give the impression that the neighborhood is more dangerous than it actually is, driving customers away. Lt. Long mentions other districts where violent crime has risen. He says it is too early to remove the barricades and enhanced police presence. He implies that people who are repelled by police saturation are people who have criminal intent. An attendee recalls an incident in which a simple fight escalated to involve a gun. Lt. Long quotes statistics related to criminal activity and shootings. He believes there is a societal issue related to argument escalation which is causing gun violence. He sees a connection between vehicle usage and gun violence. Mike recalls a shooting that happened because a shooter was parked very close to a bar and had a gun in the car. Adam also addressed the idea that making parking at night more difficult through the closure of streets has an impact on how easily guns are accessed by shooters who leave their guns in their cars until an incident is sparked.

An attendee suggests beautifying the area when the streets are closed. Adam mentions the closures of two years ago. Last year, the police didn't close the street as much. The police have been closing the street at their will with little communication for business planning. When SSHD began closing the street, it was an effort to give consistency to police behavior regarding street closures. Now, SSHD would like to program the nights when the streets are closed in order to make the situation more attractive to pedestrians. Food trucks and entertainment are possibilities once permits have been acquired from the City. There had been outdoor dining in the closed street, but the police must be more communicative about when the streets will be closed in order to handle those permitting and planning issues. The City is less hesitant to support these types of initiatives after the intense events of this year in the district. There is time

to work on these issues before the spring. Phoenixville and West Chester are regional models of how to successfully program a business district.

**5. Marketing and Public Relations:** Sarah provides an update on the Meet Me On South Street initiative, which is going strong. The second phase is beginning as the initiative continues through the end of the year. October's themes are being put together with collaboration from local businesses. The goal is to foster a strong holiday shopping season and bring the initiative back in the new year. A few businesses have played a pivotal role so far, but other businesses are welcome to join in. Even if businesses don't fit the specific details of the initiative, they are welcome to still be a part of it by reposting information on social media. Media outlets have picked up the topic. Some business owners do not have the employee resources available to post as much as they should on social media. An attendee suggests a flier to raise awareness of the event. The overarching theme on Thursday nights is that there is something special for everyone visiting in the district. Thursday was chosen to avoid those who travel to the Jersey Shore on weekends in the summer. An attendee mentions that specials and discounts on those nights promote restaurants and bars and recommends making posts about the event on social media. An attendee suggests an incentive of some kind for visitors to the district to be rewarded for posting and using appropriate hashtags. Mike suggests these concerns be discussed at a Meet Me On South Street committee meeting.

October 1st is a day of many events. Spring Fest will take place after being rescheduled months prior. Brauhaus will have their Oktoberfest, and Philly AIDS Thrift will be throwing their anniversary party. The weather is expected to be clear. There is still time for businesses to participate. At the end of the month, Pumpkin Fest will be held for children at the Shambles, followed by trick or treating. Halloween is on a Monday this year, but will be celebrated on the preceding weekend. SSHD would like to start a Halloween parade on that Monday. It would be mainly for adults, including a costume crawl in the vein of the Easter Promenade. There isn't one of these already in the City, and it's expected to be small in its first year.

A grant is in progress with Commerce to combine businesses in a display at Center City's Christmas Village. Though it is yet to be confirmed, six businesses from the district as a group are in the final three who may be awarded this grant. Vendors are looking forward to the opportunity, and the results of the grant will be announced Friday. In addition to showcasing the six involved businesses, the display will also promote the district as a whole. Retails and Christmas-oriented vendors are involved, but no food and beverage because of additional regulations and complications.

**6. Strategic Design and Planning:** The district is working toward a Keystone Planning Grant from the State for five years of strategic planning. The idea is a robust civic engagement involving Bella Vista and deciding on goals for the business community. Rick mentions prior conflict between residents and businesses and how that plays out in local initiatives.

Jim Houser, a mural artist, is working on a mural on the side of Nocturnal's building. Ryan Strand Greenberg presents via Zoom as curatorial advisor for Mural Arts Philadelphia. He is present to get feedback from the local business community about the mural in progress. Given the location, the mural will be themed around skateboarding history. The wall was repaired in July to accommodate the work. Jim Houser tells the story of the mural. Nocturnal

reached out to Jim specifically because of his notoriety as a skateboarder as well as an artist. The work will be a tribute to one of his role models, Roger Brown. He recalls an instance from his youth of watching him instead of fireworks on the Fourth of July. Roger Brown will be honored in the mural. Skate videos were a common medium for learning about skateboarding in decades past. Roger Brown was featured in these popular videos, skateboarding in Philadelphia. He used a video clip as inspiration for the mural's content and presents a sketch of what the mural will look like on the wall. Rick and the board give their support to this project, and Mike thanks Jim for his involvement.

Mike mentions that there is art all over the district. There is a lot of yarn-bombing on display currently. An attendee, Kate, announces plans for another art-related committee that will be meeting soon.

**7. Real Estate:** Planning is in progress for the former Healing Arts building. Patty Wong's upstairs Airbnb is discussed. There will be a real estate related meeting on September 28th. The former Vegan Tree restaurant at 740 South Street is discussed. Zoning doesn't allow smoking, but smoking shops are granted special exceptions in most commercial corridors. Some licenses are obtained through prepared food regulations. The health department awarded a license, but in an example of the City's inconsistency, zoning did not allow for it to be enacted. As of March, landlords are required to disclose zoning restrictions before a lease is signed, though application of this law is spotty. SSHD will post this law online as a resource for the local business community to raise awareness and prevent further issues such as the one being discussed. Queen Village Neighbors Association will hold a meeting on the night of this board meeting about properties and zoning. A meeting regarding Meg Saligman's ongoing project will be held on the coming Tuesday.

**8. Finance:** Mike credits Rhonda with her work on assessments. SSHD is at 78% of collections for the year and 189% of budget for prior year assessments. Over the past month, Rhonda has gotten about \$40,000 collected in owed back assessments. Revenue stands at 76% of budget at this point this year. Expenses are at 62% of the budget, so SSHD is in a position of revenue ahead of expenses. Reports were made available at this board meeting.

**9. New Business:**

- A former bar will become a salon whose name is not known at 523 South 4th Street. Dana welcomes attendees to provide any further updates about new businesses in the district.
- Rick, Mike, and Adam discuss a commercial building with residences above it.
- A barbecue restaurant is opening at 326 South Street.
- An ice cream establishment is opening next door to Loomen Labs on South 5th Street. They expect their ice cream machine to arrive this week, and there will be a health inspection shortly.
- 501 South will be a retail store. Many new businesses are coming in the next few weeks.
- There is a restaurant with a one year lease coming to the area.

- Permits for the demolition of Downey's Irish Pub have been issued, but the project has not begun. There will be a residential apartment building with a restaurant on the first floor at this address. The development package has been approved.
- There is discussion about the possibility of a Trader Joe's in the district. Trader Joe's require parking at all of their locations, so the possibility of an upper level park garage is discussed.
- Mike spoke with someone named Harvey about permits for a seven-story building with apartments and retail spaces.

**10. Adjournment:** Rick motions to adjourn the meeting at 11:26 a.m., seconded by Mike.