

Inside New Kensington

2515 Frankford Avenue Philadelphia PA 19125 (215) 427-0350 www.nkcdc.org



*Serving Fishtown, East Kensington
and Port Richmond since 1985*

Spring 2006



Casino Update

The Delaware River waterfront is one of our community's greatest assets. Each of the developers vying for Philadelphia's proposed gaming licenses recognizes that. As early as December of this year, the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board (PGCB) could grant two licenses to operate slot parlors (a.k.a. casinos) in the city. Four have been proposed along the waterfront, three of which are located in our immediate vicinity:

- Sugar House, HSP Gaming, Delaware & Shackamaxon (former Jack Frost site)
- Pinnacle Entertainment, PNK, Beach Street (former Cramp Shipyard);
- Riverwalk, Planet Hollywood, Delaware & Spring Garden (former incinerator)

More background & proposals can be found at:
<http://www.gophilly.com/slots>

Impact reports can be viewed online at:
<http://www.pgcb.state.pa.us/impact.HTM>

Philadelphia's Gaming Advisory Task Force site:
<http://www.phila.gov/gamingadvisory/>

In January, New Kensington Community Development Corporation (NKCDC) and the Fishtown Neighbors Association (FNA) began meeting with a coalition of riverward organizations around slot parlors. In February and March, community meetings were held to discuss potential impacts and to strategize. Residents also met with developers of the Sugar House and Pinnacle sites to view plans, voice concerns, and prepare for PGCB's public hearings at Drexel University.

In April, NKCDC's Executive Director, Sandy Salzman testified at the public hearings. Her testimony emphasized our community's history and tight-knit, residential nature, with inadequate infrastructure to absorb the increased traffic, crime, property devaluation, and other impacts of one, much less two, nearby slot parlors.

Similar concerns expressed throughout the community, have led to the formation of the **Fishtown Casino Committee which meets on Wednesdays**. The committee is broken into smaller groups which handle Communication, Impact and

Outreach. Location varies, check FNA's website www.fishtownlife.org, www.fishtown.us, the Spirit or the Star.

Community leaders have been negotiating Community Benefit Agreements with the prospective developers to help mitigate potential impacts. These include public waterfront access, safety measures, supporting local businesses, improvements to local recreation & education facilities, with dedicated funding provided by the casino or a foundation. A Special Services District, similar to the one created for the communities surrounding South Philadelphia's stadiums, is also being explored.

Neighbors Allied for the Best Riverfront (NABR— pronounced "neighbor") meets 6pm Mondays at Old Brick Church, Richmond and Marlborough Streets. According to their website, www.NABRhood.org, the group "will work proactively to bring together Fishtown residents and small businesses to envision, plan and develop our waterfront and surrounding area to meet our goals and needs." To this end, NABR is opposing the proposed casinos, and asking for an extension for communities and residents to review proposals and impact reports before submitting comments.

As of press time, according to the PGCB website, **Friday, June 2nd remains the deadline** to include input in the public record. Written comments must be mailed to:

**Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board
P.O. Box 69060
Harrisburg, PA 17106-9060
Attn: Public Comment**

To be included you must submit:

- Your Full Name**
- Mailing Address***
- Organization (if appropriate)**
- County**
- Telephone Number***
- e-mail address (if available)***
- Topic Discussed**

** for verification purposes, will not be made public*

CALENDAR

Philadelphia Neighborhood Tours highlight the Arts & Industry of Fishtown & Kensington, visiting Coral St. Arts House, Yards Brewery & Greensgrow Farms. By trolley, Departing 9:30am from 5th & Market Sts., first Saturdays through October. More info & advance tickets available at 215-389-TOUR or www.gophila.com/neighborhoodtours

EDENS LOST & FOUND Premiere Thurs., May 25th, 10pm on WHYY Channel 12

A 4-part mini-series on urban renewal in Philadelphia, Chicago, Seattle & L.A., featuring NKCDC, Greensgrow, Belgrade Garden, Norris Square & Pennsylvania Horticultural Society. Narrated by David Morse. Watch for a local screening later this year!

Fri, June 2nd, 7-10pm: FNA's 3rd annual Meet the Neighbors night. Enjoy local food, drink & conversation with old friends and new transplants, at NKCDC's Garden Center, 1825 Frankford @ Berks.

Sat, June 3rd: Homebuyer Expo (see pg 2)

Friday, June 16th, 6pm-9pm: reception for Visions of a Community @ CSAH

In collaboration with Taller Puertorriqueno, Inc. exploring the influence of environment on the work of 9 North Philadelphia artists, including live music & dance performance.

Street Movies Friday, August 18th, 8:30p: independent films & animation under the stars (or inside in case of rain), presented by Scribe Video Center at CSAH.

Our office & Garden Center will be closed:
Monday, May 25th (Memorial Day)
Thursday, June 22nd (Staff Retreat)
Tuesday, July 4th (Independence Day)

Local resources for more info:

- www.fishtown.us
- www.phillyblog.com
- www.fishtownlife.com
- www.bambiproject.com
- www.positivespace.net
- www.yardsbrewing.com
- www.kennethmilano.com

Coral Street Arts House News

Closeknit

(Apr 28-May 21)

an exploration of Kensington and CSAH's place in the history of the textile industry, opened Friday, April 28th. Curators J. Meredith Warner and Carrie Cook received proposals from as far as Florida, as near as Coral Street. Projects included film, photography, recycled spools, knitted goods, a personalized souvenir sewing station, 2 separate installations utilizing lint, and a walking tour with local historian Ken Milano. For more information on Closeknit, the artists represented, and Coral Street Arts House, visit: www.knittingcommunity.org/CSAH/closeknit.html



On May 3rd, a delegation of NKCDC staff, board members and supporters attended the **2006 Preservation Alliance Awards**, accepting an achievement award on behalf of Coral Street Arts house for its "adaptive re-use of... a symbol of Philadelphia's industrial past" to provide affordable housing. We are thrilled to be recognized among this year's other honorees, including Mary Carolyn Pitts, Smith Playground, The Oaks Cloister, Mount Pleasant, John Bartram House, Paul Steinke, Councilman DiCicco, Society Hill Civic, Kate's Place, and Congregation Rodeph Shalom.

We share this honor with our partners who helped bring this project to fruition: Domus, Diamond & Associates, Kevin Maguire, Kitchen & Associates, MMA Financial, Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, Philadelphia Office of Housing & Community Development, Philadelphia Commerce Dept., Powers & Company, and Regional Housing Legal Services.

Contributions to NKCDC are tax-deductible & can be made by mail or through United Way to Donor Choice #6066. Thank you!

Housing Counseling & Energy News

Philadelphia Homebuyer Expo Sat, June 3rd, 10am-3pm Holiday Inn, 9th & Packer Sts.

NKCDC joins more than 50 housing counseling organizations, lenders, and realtors covering all aspects of the homebuying process. Workshops include Financing Your First Home, Identity Theft, Improving Finances, Credit Boot Camp, Maximizing Your Credit Score, Real Estate Scams, Buying a Sheriff Sale or HUD Property, Home Inspections, Down Payment & Closing Cost Programs. Plus door-prizes, a \$1,000 closing cost raffle, and document shredding service. Sponsored by the Homeownership Counseling Association of the Delaware Valley. Free admission & parking. Pre-register at 215-731-1723.

Energy Assistance Programs

Although winter is over, NKCDC can help those struggling with higher energy costs:

Weatherization

Recipients of SSI, LIHEAP or Crisis are eligible for Pennsylvania's free Weatherization program. There is a wait for the service, but fuel costs are not expected to decrease, so get on the list now to prepare for future winters. Storm windows and doors are not provided, but depending on the results of a free energy audit, conservation measures can include:

- Sealing windows, doors, crawlspaces & cracks;
- Wrapping water heaters;
- Roof insulation;
- Repairs & modifications to heating systems;
- Programmable thermostats;
- Conservation education

Owner or tenant occupied households can make a weatherization appointment at 215-427-0350.

Utility Emergency Services Fund (UESF)

provides assistance to help pay gas, electric and water bills. The maximum grant is \$500, and applicants must pay any remaining balance before it can be applied to the account. Applicants can apply only once every two years, and must reside in Philadelphia. A shut-off notice is required, as well as social security cards and proof of income for every household member. Households can not be on a payment plan with the utility, and must earn 175% or less of the federal poverty income guidelines: \$16,748 for the first person, and \$5,705 for each additional household member. Philadelphia is served by 13 in-take centers including NKCDC, which accept a limited number of applications per week. To begin the process, please call NKCDC, Monday through Friday, 9am-5pm at 215-427-0350.

NEWS BRIEFS

NKCDC's Board of Directors has elected Richard Levins as President and Mark Sauer as Vice President. The Board also welcomes new member Kerry Nelson.

Welcome back to Mario Garcia.

Welcome Gregory Mackins to the Land Use Management crew.

Farewell & thanks to Frank Wilson for his work with the LUM crew.



Congratulations to Board Member Pastor Maggie Ainslie, husband Matt & big brother Ben, on the birth of Isaac Edward, Feb. 11th.

Congratulations to Lorraine Lautos on the April 24th arrival of her first grandchild, Marlaina Elizabeth.



Best wishes to Anne Czajka's daughter Luba & husband Steve on their January wedding.



Congratulations to board member Maryanne Womelsdorf on the birth of granddaughter Makayla Grace.



NKCDC's staff and board of directors wish Executive Director Sandy Salzman a quick and comfortable recovery.

Inside New Kensington Spring 2006

Editor: Noelle Dames

Contributors: Lauri Kochis,
Shanta Schachter, Sarah Thompson,
James Wright

To subscribe or unsubscribe, email
info@nkcdc.org
or call 215-427-0350 ext 126

Neighborhood Advisory Committee NEWS

Housing Forum a Success!

Over 100 residents filled Shissler Recreation Center to attend the NAC's spring community briefing: **Value in Your Neighborhood.**

The NAC partnered with the Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD) and Kensington South NAC to present this informative event. The housing forum was conceived to highlight resources and to address concerns, especially those which have evolved as a result of the extensive development occurring city-wide.

Duane Wilcox, NKCDC's Community Organizer, introduced the six featured speakers and encouraged everyone to stop by the information tables afterward.



Kevin Hanna, Secretary of the Office of Housing and Neighborhood Preservation, credited the city's Neighborhood Transformation Initiative with increased community investment.

Barry Mescolotto from the Board of Revision of Taxes (BRT), explained that Philadelphia is moving to a full value assessment system by 2007. He assured the crowd that full value will not be approved until legislative measures are implemented to protect people who may not be able to afford any increases.

Sharon Humble of Linebarger, Goggan Blair & Sampson, LLP, discussed the Tax Forgiveness Program currently offered to Philadelphia homeowners whose property taxes are in arrears.

Anne Czajka, NKCDC Director of Housing Services, discussed first-time home buyer programs.

Don Kelly, of Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition, detailed the city's offerings of loan programs for home repair and debt consolidation.

A representative of PNC Bank discussed different loan products.

Michael M. Jones, of West Insurance Group, discussed home insurance and stressed the importance of maintaining your policy even after your mortgage is paid.

Afterward, residents had an opportunity to speak directly with representatives from PHDC, the Water Dept., Licenses and Inspections, Legal Services, NKCDC, PNC Bank, PGW, the BRT, West Insurance Group, and the Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition. Written evaluations and verbal feedback yielded favorable comments and indicated that attendees found the forum useful.



Candidates' Night

The East Kensington Neighbors Association sponsored a Candidates' Night April 19th at Yards Brewery. EKNA members, area residents and local media came to hear what the three democrats running for State Representative of the 175th District have to say.

Michael O'Brien, Terry Graboyes, and Anne Dicker are each vying for Marie Lederer's seat. Each one had time to present their platform and outline their history and experience before fielding questions. The audience expressed concerns regarding the need for educational reform, the proposed casinos, the recent windfall of development in their community, and the likely increase in property tax assessments.

EKNA was formed in 2003, elected officers in 2005 and has been working to improve the community ever since. One thing the organization seeks is improvement in the provision of city services. This event was designed to encourage both voter registration and voter turnout which would increase neighborhood presence amongst city agencies and therefore lead to better responses from those agencies. EKNA meets the third Monday of the month at 6:30pm (usually at Yards Brewery) and is ALWAYS looking for new members. Call New Kensington CDC to confirm the meeting location or to be added to EKNA's mailing list. 215.425.0350 Ext. 116

*Don't forget to file your
**2005 Property Tax or
Rent Rebate application!**
(Deadline: June 30, 2006)*

*You are eligible for the program if
you (or your spouse) is 65 or older*

-OR-

*You were a widow or widower during
all or part of 2005 and age 50 or
older*

-OR-

*You are permanently disabled and
18 or older.*

*For all applicants, 2005 Property
Taxes or Rent must have been paid*

-And-

*2005 household income
(including spouse or dependents)*

*must be **less** than \$15,000*

*(Count only **HALF** of your*

Social Security or SSI income

when calculating this amount.)

*Applications can be picked up at
NKCDC's office. If you need help
completing the form, please call
Lauri at 215.427.0350 Ext. 116 for
hours & required paperwork.*

*You can also call the PA. Dept. of
Revenue at 215.560.2056.*

GARDEN Center

1825 Frankford Avenue @ Berks Street
215-739-6910

Summer Hours:

Thursday & Friday 1pm-6pm

Saturday 9am-4pm

Sunday (May only) 10am-4pm

Offering high-quality, low-cost annuals & perennials, free compost & mulch, workshops, festivals, clean-ups & a lending library, since 1997. All proceeds are reinvested in the community via NKCDC's Land Use Management Program.



Al Schenzle makes his 4th trip this season from the Garden Center to his home on Shackamaxon Street, with the help of his improvised garden cart.

According to a Food Trust poll, over 70% of Philadelphians shop at farmers markets, citing freshness & a sense of community as top reasons. Our area boasts 2 local purveyors of home-grown vegetables, fruits, naturally-raised meats, artisanal cheeses, baked goods, preserves, honey, and more:

Greensgrow Farms

2501 E. Cumberland St. (btw. Gaul & Almond)
215-427-2702 www.greengrow.org

The CSA (community-supported agriculture) is full, but Greensgrow's Market Stand is open through Thanksgiving:

Thursday 12n-7pm

Saturday 10am-3pm

Palmer Park Farmers' Market

1733 Frankford Ave. (btw. Palmer & Columbia)

www.thefoodtrust.org

Thursday afternoons 2pm-6pm

June 1st through Fall

New Kensington CDC
2515 Frankford Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19125

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