

Meeting: Monday, April 26th, 2021 7:00 PM

– Virtual Meeting > Join <https://meet.google.com/yvj-eggr-zdf> (US) +1 409-698-0145 PIN: 387292368# - 15 Attending

Agenda:

1. Call to Order and Introductions – 7:04 PM

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting – Motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting by Bryon, seconded by Carlos. Motion approved by members present.

3. Treasurer's Report

- a. The beginning balance for the month of April was \$4,093.54. There was one expense for the renewal fee of the CGNA Post Office box of \$162.00, leaving an ending balance of \$3,931.54.
- b. We have not heard back from the state about the grant for the reimbursement of the consultant to update the neighborhood plan. We did submit a report for Bread & Roses for the first \$10,000 of the grant money.
- c. Motion to accept the treasurer's report as presented by Mr. Yoder by Carlos, seconded by Tamie. Motion approved by members present.

4. Neighborhood Safety and Security

- a. Any recent issues? You must call 911 and get a report number for an incident be officially reported.
 - i. Sgt. Levy on the call along with several other officers of the Camden County Metro PD (CCMPD). Sgt. Levy – he received an email from Jonathan about an incident (criminal sexual contact at 5th and Lawrence) a few days ago. Camden Metro has been assisting Rutgers PD but not leading the investigation. Rutgers PD pretty much knows who the perpetrator is but needs to do additional verification on the suspect and then he will be taken into custody. The investigation is a joint effort between Rutgers PD and CCMPD. Additionally, there was another incident at 3rd/Cooper about a month ago – there was an assault. CGNA asked about any updates? The detective is working on it and they should have all the video footage by now.
 - ii. There was an issue with cars pulling into the Cooper's Poynt Park north of the bridge and parking/driving on the bike path. Barriers were put up to prevent cars from driving on the bike path.
 - iii. Recent late-night activity of people checking for unlocked car doors. Neighbors reported that it seemed like a group of teenagers were pulling on car door handles and checking for unlocked car doors two nights in a row. Neighbors related that it seemed like teenagers checking on car doors and they appeared to be too young to be out that late. Neighbors are asking that if officers are around, can they drive through the area and check on the community? Sgt. Levy notified the RTTOIC to do virtual patrols with the cameras as well in response to this issue. CCMPD is in the process of updating their camera system. Some cameras are being removed to be replaced by better cameras. The old cameras are being updated to be 360 degree cameras and therefore they won't have to be manually moved. They will also be recording 24/7. Unknown time frame of how long it will take to update the RTTOIC camera system in the community.
 - iv. Neighbor mentioned that there is a lot of activity late at night at the Friend's Café area – not necessarily immediate police response worthy but just people being loud, cars honking, and sometimes loud verbal arguments. Asking if patrols can roll through the area every once in a while? It happens pretty late at night (after midnight) throughout the week – loud enough to wake people up. Sgt. Levy will also pass this along to Rutgers.
- b. Asked about bike patrols? CCMPD bike patrols started up again last week and will be riding around the waterfront area as well as other designated areas.
- c. Neighbor asked about CCMPD's relationship to code violations? According to Sgt. Levy, CCMPD just manages the code enforcement division but they are not hands on with the operations. There have been a few houses on Linden Street that haven't been putting out their trash. A Linden Street neighbor called Public Works last week for a house on Linden Street with the trash spilling out from the hallway. The residence at 112 Linden Street also has a lot of trash in the front of the house and hasn't been put out. Neighbors think the subcontractor is just putting the trash in front of the house but the

trash isn't being put on the curb. Tamie mentioned that she will reach out to the owner of 112 Linden Street to see if she can help and coordinate a conversation between the neighbors on Linden Street.

- d. Emergency Call 911 or 24hr Tip Line: 856-757-7042 or STOPit Online Application (Code: CAMDENNJ). **If you need instant police response, call 911. Do not call/message the tip line or call Rutgers PD's direct line, please call 911.**

5. Old Business

- a. **Infrastructure/Roadway Projects (Cooper/Market/Federal/7th St/ North Camden)** – Kathy Cullen could not make it to the meeting tonight.
- i. The North Camden construction is wrapping up and nearly complete, they have a few punch list items. Couple issues that they ran into - someone trimmed all the new trees back pretty far along the main street and they don't know who did it. The lighting that was asked about – we have a yellow-tinged lighting in Cooper Grant but when you look north of the bridge, the lights are these bright, daylight LED lights and they didn't do any kind of tinge. Neighbors were commenting that these bright lights are making it hard to sleep at night because they're so bright. For future projects, we want to understand what type of lights they're putting in.
 - ii. Cooper Street – They are wrapping up the punch list. Construction is almost complete. The next part is looking for funding to pave the entire roadway Cooper Street and they are hoping to have this before the end of the year. It was not included in the Tiger Grant funding. Anyone who has issues with the timing of the traffic lights or the lights get stuck, please speak up. They're supposed to time those lights so that people can drive all the way down smoothly. Neighbor mentioned that the light on 5th and Broadway are not changing fast enough.
 - iii. North 7th street from Linden to Elm – They're waiting on the final approval to advertise for construction, this project has had a lot of delays.
 - iv. Market and Federal Street redevelopment – They're getting input from the city and possibly waiting for the administration to turn over to finalize the alternatives. It sounds like they may be using a hybrid of some of the alternatives – they may mesh a few of the top ideas together. These alternatives will be brought back up to the community for the final outreach. They have complete funds for the designs and construction of this project until it's finished. One of the big pieces is that they have to build the electrical infrastructure where Market and Federal meet each other and they may have to dig big trench ways on Market Street to run the conduit so that may cause disruptions down the line.
 - v. Some of the port roads (Kaighn, Atlantic, Ferry Avenue), they have county dollars to start working on those.
 - vi. Any potholes – contact the city and they will fill them in.
 - vii. Neighbor mentioned that even though there are Do Not Enter signs of 2nd/Vine, people are still driving the wrong way on that road to get to Elm Street.
- b. **Community Solar – Discounted PSEG Electric Billing** www.neighborhoodsun.solar/cgna - Still have PSEG electric billing right now but the solar project will help with energy discount by only paying portion of the PSEG bill (10% discount). Solar project is nearly full. Should be starting up within the month. Solar program open to any Camden, Burlington, Mercer county residents (owners or renters). Can sign up through the link above. CG residents who sign up get an incentive and the CGNA also gets an incentive.
- c. **Public Presentation by Camden County Officials:** Campbell's/Rutgers Field Update on the Community Access – They're working on the MOU now but have not shared it yet. They are making progress. The plan is to open the field sometime in August/early September. Some of the challenges we saw in the past month - They don't have the proper screening and there is dirt coming off the field and into the community. They didn't filter the drain ways and all the dirt's going into the combined sewer. They were supposed to address that but not sure if that happened. They are moving along with that project. We still have questions for the county for the surrounding infrastructure – such as paths, crosswalks, stop signs, parking, bus loading, etc. around the field. We have not heard back yet.
- i. Neighbor mentioned that DEP just had a full-day conference on the topic of fugitive dust and Camden was featured heavily on that – neighbor suggested bringing that up to the city/county.
 - ii. There is public access to the Rutgers-Camden Community Fields Monday through Friday from 10 AM – 6 PM. If the fields are open during that timeframe, residents can call 856-225-2470. If they don't give you access during that time, please let Jonathan know. They did say they will leave the gates open on Sundays for people to access the fields. We are trying to press them on more community access.
 - iii. Additionally, the playground at the community park does not have a gate or a latch at the entrance– neighbor was wondering if this can be fixed? Years ago, there was a gate there but the park was destroyed five years ago and several things were fixed. It's a safety issue so they don't run out of the playground area. Jonathan will look into it and see if they can fix.

6. New Business

- a. **City Invincible Farms Introduction** – Jonathan did invite City Invincible Farms to the meeting but they are not attending tonight. They are working on a project to bring fresh fruit to Camden. We would like them to come and do a presentation at one of our meetings. They have a business office and a phone number listed on their website – <https://invinciblecityfarms.com>. They are looking for people to sign up. The normal subscription is \$120/year but it seems like they are offering subscriptions for \$60 right now. They're growing food outside the city and bringing it in so neighbors have access to fresh food in the city through a delivery service.
- b. **CBID/CSSD Update – Caren Fishman** – They are focusing on several key issues this year – cleaning off streets and sidewalks within the district, providing landscape maintenance (primarily in the business corridor daily and in the neighborhood when time permits), and landscape beautification – working on planting annuals and perennials, mulching, weeding, and putting in planters. Looking to brighten and enliven the business corridor – looking into putting in new trash cans and recycling containers, removing and replacing dead trees, hanging banners, hanging planters, and putting in ground level planters and seasonal displays. Trying to make the downtown more vibrant for this year and in the future. They are also looking to establish a more intense marketing program to promote local business and local events.
- i. They are starting with two new shifts in May: the first shift from 6AM-2:30PM then second shift 11AM-7:30PM. The second shift is only during the weekdays and their hours will change during the season. Gives them a chance to keep all of the areas a little cleaner later in the day. There will be a special project team that will handle hotline calls. Hotline number will be starting early May. Someone will be answering the hotline from 6AM-4:30PM during the weekday – can call the hot line at 856-379-3389 to call for any emergency projects (tree falls down, trashcan needs emptying, etc.) They hired a new dispatcher (who is a Camden resident) to work this new program. Their team have grown this month from 10 to 16 people and they are looking to hire more people and grow the program to 26 people. Looking for more CSSD ambassadors so if anyone knows a Camden City resident looking for a job with CSSD – they are looking for a team leader (who has to be able to drive a truck) and some ambassadors. If any questions, reach out to Caren through Jonathan L.
 - ii. Neighbor mentions compliments to the yellow jackets that landscaped the sidewalks on 300 block of North Third Street a week ago and did a really nice job.
 - iii. Neighbor asked if there is a coordination with the city for persistent issues, particularly since a lot of the retail stores on Broadway continue to put their trash out every night in loose containers – every morning the neighbor notices that the trash is all over Broadway. It does get cleaned up at night but it keeps happening and therefore is time-consuming. Wondering if there was some type of enforcement so the resources aren't consistently used on cleaning up those areas on a daily basis.
 - 1 Caren mentioned that she feels his frustration and has reached out to DPW about this. She agreed that there needs to be more of a collaborative effort to prevent this from happening as frequently. Maybe there needs to be pressure on code enforcement to address this issue with these commercial properties? Caren mentioned that CSSD needs to work with the city on this.
 - iv. As far as the Cooper Grant neighborhood – they are trying to get out there two-three times a week – Monday, Wednesdays, Saturdays.
 - v. The trees on the entire west side of Point Street are dead and within the year and there will probably be more dead trees. PSEG did cut down several of the dead trees in the neighborhood recently. The truth is that it's the responsibility of the homeowner, not the city, to cut down the trees. We do get some the help from CSSD but homeowners don't necessarily have the means/resources to cut down the trees. There is a tree planting planned with NJ Tree Foundation but this can't happen until the stumps are grinded out. The ash trees have been dying for a while now. The NJ Tree Foundation promised about 20 trees for the tree-planting. There might be 30-40 trees that will probably with dead within the year. All the ash trees are dying so we need to diversify the foliage.
 - vi. Tamie asked if there can be a brochure/pamphlet for new neighbors as a welcome to the neighborhood and politely outlining the expectations/guidelines to help new residents be good neighbors – as like a little checklist to put in the welcome packet for her clients. She asked whether there should be so many trash cans in front of the house? Unfortunately, the city does not have more specific guidelines on this. Jonathan said you can put up to five items at a time but there isn't a specific number of cans. It's tough for the residents on Point Street because they don't have the option to put them in the back of the house.
 - 1 Neighbor mentioned that Rutgers has a nice handout that can be adapted for new residents/students/landlords. Jonathan and Sonia did put together something – like a good neighbor manual - a few years ago for Rutgers students/facility living in the neighborhood. Tamie would hand these flyers out during closing so new neighbors can read how to be a good neighbor.
 - vii. Graffiti on the church – CSSD is working with the pastor. Friends Café was closed so they didn't connect with them. They did clean up the graffiti in the park but there is new graffiti on the sidewalk/pathway in the north corner of the asphalt bike path on Cooper's Poynt Park that Jonathan noticed on Sunday. Caren will look into it.

- c. **Clean Streets/Joint effort to get to the curb (City/DPW/AMWA/CCMUA/CGNA/Reyes-Morton/Parking Authority/CBID/WM)**
- i. Point Street is one of the toughest areas to clean in the Cooper Grant neighborhood. Jonathan was been working with American Water, who does the street sweeping. Street sweeping is hindered by cars not being moved, trees not being trimmed, and trash cans not being placed on the curb by waste management, etc. CSSD can't work on the trees and the tree pits if there are cars in the way. CSSD will shift their schedule to coincide with the street sweeping schedule so they can get to the trees after the cars are moved.
 - ii. In order to help clean up the streets, the plan is to increase parking enforcement on the designated street sweeping days (Wednesday and Friday on opposite sides of the street). We only get street sweeping once a month and the next scheduled street sweeping is next week. Public Works did come out and trim the trees on Point Street that were overhanging to help the street sweeper come through and get to the curb.
 - iii. The Parking Authority will be coming to the May meeting. They have new technology to drive around and ping license plates with cameras so that's going to speed up their enforcement in the community. But we think they should inform the community before they use this new technology. Since Rutgers hasn't been in full session, parking really hasn't been an issue lately but it will be once more students return. Technically every Wednesday and Friday are street sweeping days and we're supposed to move our cars each week. Right now, we only move our cars once a month and the problem is that people forget and don't move their cars so they get a ticket. The idea is that over the month of May or June, to warn people to move their cars every Wednesday and Friday morning on alternate sides of the street according to the signs and then by July, the Parking Authority would actually start enforcing it every week, not just the first week of the month. This way, we can work with CSSD to help clean up the neighborhood every Wednesday and Friday on non-street sweeping days to trim the curbs, clean up the tree pits, etc. This would help Point Street tremendously.
 - iv. Motion to enforce no parking for street sweeping every Wednesday and Friday from 8AM-12PM on alternate sides of the street starting July 2021 and have residents move their cars otherwise parking enforcement will be ticketing by Jonathan, seconded by Sonia. Motion carries by members present.
- d. **EJ Challenges:** [EMR Fire](#) / Covanta / [Camden for Clean Air](#) / [1-877-WarnDEP](#) / [COVID Vaccines](#) / [Food Access](#)–
- i. There is Camden for Clean Air that still meets and talks about air quality challenges – Covanta, fugitive dust, etc. If you see something that's happening or if you smell something odd, then call 1-877-WarnDEP. They have to respond within a reasonable amount of time.
 - ii. COVID Vaccines - Jonathan submitted over 30 names from the community for COVID vaccines. If anyone still needs a COVID vaccine, please let Jonathan know.
- e. **Arts Committee Report** (Vacant Chair Position) / C-G Book Ark (free book library in the Community Garden) –
- i. Nothing specific. Jonathan did attend some IDEA center events. They interviewed a few dozen community members outside the building in Johnson Park and put together a video that they will be publishing soon. They are trying to decide what to do with the mosaic that is currently covered on the Walt Whitman Arts Center.
 - ii. There is now the Cooper Grant Book Ark in the CGNA community garden, which is a free library. People are taking books. If you have books to donate or want to take a book, please feel free to take advantage.
 - iii. If you're looking to garden, there are a couple of spots open and available in the CG community garden – let Jonathan know if you're interested.
- f. **Planning Committee** (Grants: Bread & Roses, NRTC, Cooper Foundation)
- i. Bread & Roses Update/ Phase 2 of Grant – Jonathan submitted the first year report about how the first \$10k was spent. The majority of that funding went to hiring a graduate student to do a bunch of ground research on Johnson Park, Walt Whitman Arts Center, Cooper Library, 67 Penn Street, Rutgers-Community Fields – researching ownership and MOUs in reference to understand the chain of custody regarding how Rutgers owns and controls those properties and what limitations there are. He also interviewed at least a dozen community members about their perceptions of community access to those spaces. If we are awarded the second \$10k, this will be used to create plans to get access to these spaces.
 1. One idea to use one of these spaces was to start having social distance movie nights in Johnson Park. We have a movie screen and we could buy rights to movies to show in the park. Hoping in the new future to start doing things like that.
 - ii. NRTC – Still trying to win our grants funds from a year ago. We have to submit our NRTC applications for these funds by the end of June in order to be in the pool to be awarded. We are working to get that together. We've had trouble working with Cooper's Ferry Partnership to get that submitted but we're still hoping to get that done in time.
 - iii. **Cooper Foundation** – We still have a \$5,000 grant and we have not pivoted with that yet due to COVID. We have some things in mind.
- g. **Development Committee Report**

- i. **ABC Barrel Lot RFP Posted** – The RFP was out until the beginning of April. Jonathan has not heard back from the CRA about the RFP and so it's unknown if anyone went to the bid.
 - 1 If nobody bids on this for a housing project, do we pivot and rethink what this space is to the community? Maybe Linden Street residents would like an alleyway behind their houses for parking and trash cans in that space? We have the opportunity to do something unique with that space that can balance the sustainability, something for community usage.. If we don't hear news that they are moving forward with a housing project for that space, maybe we suggest an alternative to use the space that would benefit the community. Neighbors don't want to look at a vacant lot for another 10-20 years. Resident mentioned that maybe the community would consider adjusting the plan to make that housing higher density to make it more attractive as a development property? Jonathan mentioned reaching out to EMR and American Water about the possibility of workforce housing for local businesses in the area?
- ii. M&M Partnership @ The Pierre building (<https://hestaliving.com/thepierre/>) – They are renting spaces out. We have a partnership with that building. There is parking in the back.
- h. Stacey Pierce (EMR) is the new community liaison with EMR and has been working in community engagement positions for over twenty-five years. She has been on the job for about two weeks with EMR. Focus the conversations that have been had so that EMR can become a more effective neighbor. Want to build the community relationship and be more proactive with their resources to share with the neighborhood. Right now, Stacey and Will Davis have been just getting acclimated to their position with EMR. They are looking forward to working with Cooper Grant and other neighborhoods that are in close proximity to EMR facilities and making EMR more accessible to the community.
- i. Tamie asked if there is a way to do a donation to CGNA? Since we haven't had in person meetings in a while. Jonathan mentioned the possibility of an outdoor meeting sometimes in July.

7. Announcements

- a. From Tamie(ReMAX) - 339 Point Street is on the market - there are students currently in there and their lease effective until 2022.
- b. Ben mentioned that 124 North Third Street is a small commercial property (about 650 sq.ft.) available for rent. Property used to be a laundromat and is currently university zoning (same as our neighborhood). If anyone is interested or knows someone who is interested, contact Ben Saracco or Tamie Pettigrew from ReMax. Tamie will be there this Wednesday, April 28th from about 12:30 PM to 2:30 PM if anyone wants to come check out the property. Her contact number is 856-952-7679.
- c. Trash returns to twice a week starting this Saturday, May 1st, 2021 – Wednesday and Saturday AM
- d. [Virtua Farmer's Market](#) Tuesdays: 12-1:30pm 520 Market St (Roosevelt Park)
- e. Free Tax Return Prep Assistance: <https://cwfphilly.org/> ; (215) 454-6483
- f. Rutgers-Camden Community Fields Access: 856-225-2470. Monday through Friday from 10 AM- 6 PM.
- d. 2021 Zone 1 Parking Passes are available / Enforcement happening www.camdenparking.net
- e. Street Sweeping first full week of the month (Wed. May 5th and Fri. May 7th) – please move your vehicles otherwise you'll get ticketed!
- f. Pizza and Poetry will be happening on Wednesday, April 28th at the Slice of NY
- g. Next CGNA Meeting will be held **Monday, May 24th, 2021** at 7:00 PM (online)

- 8. **Adjournment** – 8:18PM. Motion to adjourn meeting by Sonia, seconded by Mr. Vasquez. Motion approved by members present.

The area served by CGNA: "Cooper-Grant" is defined as the area contained within the following boundaries: Northern Boundary – the Ben Franklin Bridge; East - Friends Avenue (extended) south to Cooper Street, extending east to the West side of Fourth Street; South - the south side of Market Street; Western Boundary: the Delaware River.

For more information, e-mail CGNA Board at info@coopergrant.org

*****This is our 39th year as an organization*** Cannot attend the CGNA Meeting?**

Want updates, meeting minutes and agendas? Email: secretary@coopergrant.org & like our Facebook page: @coopergrantneighbors www.coopergrant.org