

# MPNA News

## The Melrose Park Neighbors Association

Volume 2 – Number 78

From MPNA President – Andy Rudin

Saturday, August 29, 2009

### **We The People of Cheltenham Meeting**

Next Meeting will be Tuesday, September 1, 7:30pm at the Calvary Presbyterian Church, 217 Fernbrook Ave, Wyncote. The agenda will include update & overview, individual sign-up, calendar, fundraising & more.

They emailed me with the following:

Three weeks have now passed since filing the petition to have a question placed on November's ballot to amend the Cheltenham Township Home Rule Charter with a Bill of Rights. Although progress has been slow and we still do not have a worded question for the ballot, things are happening.

The petitions were submitted with the sections of the Cheltenham Township Charter and Home Rule Charter Handbook stating the laws which allows us to make amendments to our charter, along with a request for the Board of Elections to draft the question. Everything was looked over by the solicitor for the Montgomery County Board of Elections to see that all requirements for filing were accurate and done according to the law -- which, of course, they were. However, the petition seemed to cause a fair amount of stir and confusion in the County seat.

We called regularly to inquire about possible challenges to the signatures and when we might know what the wording for the question would be.

Our lawyer, Thomas Linzey, from the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund, had been in contact with the solicitor at the Board of Elections, several times about the confusion which seemed to be arising. The solicitor was reminded that it was not the job of the County Commissioners to block the question from being on the ballot, but rather it was their job, acting as the Board of Elections, to ultimately agree to the wording of it.

Although the signatures were qualified with no challenge presented, nor were we contacted about any alleged "defect" in the petition, the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners, acting as the Board of Elections voted unilaterally to block the question from being placed on the ballot on Thursday, August 20. The actual motion was, "I move that the Board refuse to place any question on the ballot that is based upon the petition that was presented to the Board on the basis of the illegality of the petition contents."

If the legality of the content was in question it should have been decided upon by a judge. The authority to make a judgment on the legality of the petition is in the jurisdiction of the court in question.

In our opinion this vote was a misuse of both power and authority by the County Board of Commissioners. We believe they acted beyond their authority when blocking the question to be placed on the ballot, and therefore disenfranchising voters.

Since there was no request for a declaratory judgment made by the County Board of Commissioners, We The People of Cheltenham filed a complaint seeking declaratory and mandamus relief in Common

Pleas Court to challenge the decision made by the Montgomery County Board of Elections on Tuesday, August 25. This filing requires the county court to make the decision as to whether the question gets placed on the ballot or not.

Will it? Won't it? We shall see....

Meanwhile, as a group we are carrying on with organizational meetings and preparing for November 3rd. We are filing for 501(c)(3) status, putting together literature and arranging a schedule of events to include and inform.

Visit our website [www.wethepeopleofcheltenham.com](http://www.wethepeopleofcheltenham.com) for information about upcoming meetings and events, how to get involved and how to make a donation. Feel free to contact us with any questions.

Thank you for your support.  
We The People of Cheltenham.

**MPNA**

## Friends of High School Park Open House

Caroline Stritzinger of the Friends of High School Park emailed the following:

### **Save the Date! Office Open House on September 13, 2009 from 3-5pm**

The public is invited to join the Friends of High School Park to celebrate the opening of its first office across the street from High School Park and meet our staff:

Diana Weiner, our new Park Restoration Manager; and Gina Craigo, Operations Manager.

Learn more about the 10-year Ecological Master Plan for native plant restoration of High School Park. Light refreshments will be served. For more information or to RSVP contact Gina Craigo at 215-782-8082 or [info@fhsp.org](mailto:info@fhsp.org). **MPNA**

## This Newsletter

If you have any suggestions for items for this newsletter, feel free to email them to me at [andrewrudin@earthlink.net](mailto:andrewrudin@earthlink.net) **MPNA**

## MPNA memberships

Membership in MPNA helps pay for plantings, signage, and many other things. Annual dues are \$10 per individual, \$20 per household. Send your contribution to MPNA Board member Jim Muldoon, 106 Parkview Road, Cheltenham, PA 19012. The membership cycle is the calendar year. **MPNA**

## MPNA Board

Members of the MPNA Board are Andrew Rudin, Phil Kates, Michael Sheckman, Jim Muldoon and Albert Fried-Cassorla. If you are interested in helping out with MPNA, please email me at [andrewrudin@earthlink.net](mailto:andrewrudin@earthlink.net). This newsletter is available or will be soon on our website – [www.melroseparkneighbors.org](http://www.melroseparkneighbors.org) **MPNA**

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