

ATV Public Meeting, 5/4/2021

Last week, as documented by [CBS Philadelphia](#), South Street and its environs was the latest neighborhood to **be invaded by a plethora of ATVs, dirt bikes and motorcycles, many of which caused havoc, extreme noise and frightened both neighbors and local businesses**. Hosted by Queen Village Neighbors Association, CCRA joined with over 35 local civic groups and business districts for an urgent meeting with city officials about stopping this plague on our city, post-haste.

This online meeting took place on May 5 and was attended by over 1,100 citizens, as well as City Council members (Squilla, Domb and Green). Also attending were representatives from the Managing Director's office, Philadelphia Police Department, District Attorney's office, and Streets Department. Moderated by Eleanor Ingersoll of QVNA, the goal of the meeting was to urge the city to create a **fully funded action plan for curbing the abuse of our city streets and sidewalks by unlicensed and unregulated off road vehicles**.

Highlights of the meeting included:

- Training and reallocation of police details to curb this city-wide problem, even with admittedly inadequate resources to effectively combat the problem. More funding and training (police riding off road vehicles to pursue violators) is planned.
- DA's admission that they have made very few arrests, as there are limited charges that can be brought, serious injuries are rare, and judges tend to only give probation as punishment.
- City Council will be immediately considering clarifying legislation that will enable police officers to not only confiscate and destroy ATVs, but also other unlicensed dirt-bikes, etc. Significant fines and penalties will also be added to deter conduct.
- Streets Dept is evaluating use of traffic calming devices and temporary street closures.
- New federal dollars are available now. Budget hearings are currently underway and more funds need to be allocated to deter this illegal, dangerous, and destructive conduct. It affects quality of life in the city and discourages much needed tourism.

What's next? It's clear that a comprehensive plan needs to take shape. Some new ideas - a designated play park, requiring licensing of all motorized vehicles, L&I enforcement against illegal storage facilities, cooperation on a state and federal level. More intake operators at 911 will help responders act quicker. A review of what other cities are doing to combat the problem is also ongoing since this appears to be a nationwide issue. A citywide follow up meeting is anticipated within the next 30 days to keep the city's feet to the fire.

CCRA will continue to push the city to create a well-funded and coordinated citywide plan to eliminate this scourge on our neighborhoods. Budget testimony has been prepared by CCRA to reflect the needs and concerns of our residents and will be submitted at upcoming City Council budget hearings. We will keep you informed and engaged. Let us know if you have other ideas that have not been considered...we will pass them along to our representatives.

Submitted by Barbara Halpern

