

REPORT ON ACTIVITIES OF CENTER CITY COALITION, 040121

CCRA board members Matt Fontana and Steve Huntington continue to work with Jane Green as part of a group dubbed The Center City Coalition which sprang up to address quality of life issues. On Jan 21, the CCC sent a letter (LINK) to Council and the administration requesting additional police manpower, increased social services and a mobile ministration. In February, the three CCC point people have Zoomed with 5 Council people (Domb, Green, Johnson, Richardson, and Squilla,) and participated in a meeting with 8 city agencies and a Center City District representative which led to a March 4 follow up meeting with the Director of the Commerce Dept and his deputy.

At the March 4 Commerce Dept Zoom, the "Ready Set Philadelphia" initiative was discussed. It was announced on Mar 25. As part of that effort, the CCC asked for the Mayor and Police Commissioner to use their respective "bully pulpits" by appearing in the downtown shopping district. The goal: to boost the morale of the street front merchants who signed the Jan 21 letter and who believe the City does not have their back.

SEE RESOLUTION AND LETTER ON THE NEXT PAGE RELATED TO CCRA SUPPORTING READY SET PHILADELPHIA

At a CCC meeting the same day, the Police Dept. representative from the 9th District advised that the police department leadership did not see the introduction of a minstation in the foreseeable future. However the 9th Police district representative did advise that Center City West would be one of 4 areas where the Dept .would be implementing "co responder" teams of police and social service personnel to deal with street people issues.

On March 9, the CCC representatives Zoomed with Council President Clarke and staffers. The Council President listened to the concerns expressed in the letter but offered no concrete suggestions as to the requests for the ministration and additional police/social services support.

On March 16, the Avenue of the Arts, a CCC participant, convened a meeting with the City's Director of Homeless Services focused on the homeless encampment situated in the PATCO concourse near Broad and Locust. The City plans to replicate the removal program that was executed last year at 22nd and the Parkway where social service staffers identified placement plans for residents and, having done so, closed down the encampment. As of March 16, there was no target date for the implementation of the encampment shutdown.

On March 17, the CCC hosted a Zoom question and answer session with Carlos Vega, Democratic candidate for District Attorney and the group hopes to schedule a similar session with the incumbent, Larry Krasner.

As described below, the CCC ask supports Ready Set.

RESOLUTION

CCRA should add its name to others in the Center City Coalition to a letter to the Director of Commerce asking him to act on his promise to have Mayor Kenney and Commissioner Outlaw engage in a PR initiative to support a restoration of the vitality of our shopping district, joining signatories like Logan Square Neighborhood Assn, Di Brunos, Joan Shepp, Sansom Street Oyster House, Boyds, Sherman Brothers Shoes, and Tria

Dear Commissioner Rashid

When the three Center City Coalition representatives met with you, we exchanged promises. You promised to ask Mayor Kenney and Commissioner Outlaw to use their “bully pulpits” to assure the commercial corridor merchants and residents in our membership that the City has their back in efforts to effect a post Covid reopen. As we stated, only two people can deliver that needed message – the Mayor and the Commissioner.

In turn, at your request, we agreed to propose the outline of a “bully pulpit” initiative and therefore, to start the ball rolling, offer the following suggestions for your consideration:

- 1. "WEDNESDAYS WITH KENNEY" a la Tuesdays with Toomey.*
- 2. CELEBRITY PARTNERS: The presentation could include another "draw" Maybe the Eagles coach Sirianni or Yanick or Amy Gutman, Gritty, the Phanatic etc.*
- 3. POPUPS: Singers (Curtis? Acad. Of Vocal Arts?) mingle with the crowds and break out in song per the many U Tube videos OR a Lantern thespian reciting Shakespeare, Mummies etc.*
- 4. PRIZES FOR WEDNESDAY . PATRONS: The Mayor draws from a hat filled with the names of Wednesday evening shoppers and the “winners” receive merchant gift certificates.*

It's likely that other City shopping areas need similar assurances and suggest that this type of outreach is called for in the City's other communities.

Please let us hear as to your success in making this proposal to the Mayor and Police Commissioner.

Signed Center City Coalition (followed by a list of merchants)