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## CHCA holds annual meeting on ZOOM, makes community awards to essential workers

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(<https://www.chestnuthilllocal.com/2020/07/28/chca-holds-annual-meeting-on-zoom-makes-community-awards-to-essential-workers/>) by Pete Mazzaccaro (<https://www.chestnuthilllocal.com/author/pete/>)

### By Kate Dolan

The Chestnut Hill Community Association held its annual meeting on Thursday, July 23, delivering State of the Union addresses, recognizing the area's essential workers and the impact of the pandemic to the community at large.

"It has been a quiet, yet unusual, year in our organization's 72-year history," said Laura Lucas, CHCHA President giving the CHCA's address on Thursday July 23 via Zoom. Originally scheduled as an in-person socially distanced meeting at Springside Chestnut Hill Academy, the event was moved to a virtual format due to weather and heat.

Lucas listed the CHCA's achievements of the past year, including the "Passport" campaign launched with the Chestnut Hill Local to offer "members-only discounts and experiences, valued at more than \$1,000." The Greenspace Initiatives Committee was revived over the past year, promoting the area's parks, trees and green spaces, and is currently working on a project with the Friends of Pastorius Park.

Lucas highlighted the work of the CHCA's Development Review Committee, Land Use, Planning and Zoning committee and the Streetscape committee for their exemplary direction and leadership in zoning matters as conditions through the pandemic led to "unchartered times."

Partnerships with the Chestnut Hill Conservancy, Friends of the Wissahickon, Chestnut Hill Hospital, Morris Arboretum and many others were celebrated as being integral parts to Chestnut Hill's history, present sense of community and future vision.

"These partnerships allow us to work with like-minded groups and make our messages stronger," said Lucas. "Together we really can accomplish more for our community."

Chestnut Hill Local publisher John Derr delivered the newspaper's state of the union, acknowledging the "eventful year" the newspaper has had, beginning with a successful start involving the Passport campaign and promising ad revenues to abruptly meeting the challenges of COVID-19.

"I believe this pandemic was an opportunity for the *Local* to show its value to the community and I believe we seized that opportunity," said Derr. "I can't think of one major Chestnut Hill institution that did not look to us over the time to get their message out to the community at large."

Traffic to the *Local's* website increased more than 30% through the pandemic and Derr acknowledged the work of editor Pete Mazzaccaro and writer Len Lear for leading "some the *Local's* best work ever" and reporting many stories of the crisis. While the *Local* received various sources of financial support, including the PPE loan, donations and grants, Derr presented what would need to be done to get back on track, including continuing to partner with the CHCA on initiatives and increasing membership and announced the debut of a new website in the coming few weeks.

"We will continue to work hard to serve our readers and ad and hopefully the support of local people and businesses will ensure that this is a community in which a newspaper like the *Local* will always belong," said Derr.

Anne McNiff, CHCA Executive Director, introduced Cathi Clayton to offer the annual awards. Clayton announced that the board voted unanimously to give the CHCA Meritorious Award 2020 to the area's essential workers.

"The essential workers have transported and treated countless sick infectious patients, comforted loved ones, stocked our food stores, cooked and delivered food, treated our sick pets, delivered our mail and packages, drove trucks and essential buses, taught students of all ages virtually," said Clayton. "Tech workers worked diligently to improve all our communications, just look what we are doing right now on Zoom..."

An award presentation was scheduled had the meeting continued in person, however, individuals and organizations in the area will now be recognized for their essential work over the next weeks and months, as the *Local* and the CHCA work together to report their stories of work during the pandemic.

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