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Serving the University Community & West Philadelphia Neighborhoods

University City REVIEW

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West Powelton celebrates national neighborhoods month

Jeane Parker
Special to the UC Review

UC Green mobilized 150 volunteers to plant 40 new street trees on October 21 in the West Powelton neighborhood from North 40th to 42nd Streets. This event was one of more than 100 greening efforts throughout the country during October, which has been declared National NeighborWoods Month by the national nonprofit, the Alliance for Community Trees (ACT). UCGreen is a member of ACT's NeighborWoods Network.

With help from the West Powelton neighbors, Drexel University and other local students, and Tree Tenders, UC Green planted these 40 new street trees to help restore tree canopy, build community, and offer a volunteer event to improve the health and vitality of the neighborhood. Robert Ferguson, a long time West Powelton resident, recalls the neighborhood of his youth. "It will be nice to see more trees. I remember when the streets used



With help from the West Powelton neighbors, Drexel University and other local students, and Tree Tenders, UC Green planted these 40 new street trees, Carolyn Smith, Jean Mitchell, Joe Shapiro, Mike Hardy, Elizabeth Waring, Lauren Leatherbarrow

to be tree-lined."

"It's great to be working on an important greening effort at the

same time as other organizations," said Winnie Harris, UC Green's volunteer coordinator. "Part of our

goal is to draw attention to the work being done at the grassroots

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Coalition for media diversity stands in support of Reynolds-Brown resolution

By John Parssinen
Special to the UC Review

Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds-Brown introduced a resolution last Thursday at City Hall urging the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to dismiss proposals that would give corporations greater control over media outlets.

The resolution, which passed unanimously, called for the FCC to reject proposals that weaken media ownership limits, and to have the FCC hold public hearings in Philadelphia on this subject. It also asks the Pennsylvania Congressional delegation to use its authority to block any decision by the FCC that is not in the public interest of Pennsylvanians.

The resolution came as a response to the FCC's consideration of lifting current ownership caps, which, if approved, would allow one company to own up to three television stations, eight radio stations, and a major newspaper in a single market. As of now, a single entity is banned from cross-ownership of electronic and print media, with regulations on

Friends of Kathy Change remember her on the 10th anniversary of her passing

By Mark Brakeman
Special to the UC Review

For ten years, Philadelphia, and more locally, the campus of the University of Pennsylvania, has been without the well-rhymed songs,

Chang, a.k.a. Kathy Change, in her unquenchable drive to transform the current society into a more loving one less driven to make loads of money for an elite class than focused on making life more livable for everybody.

She was a familiar fixture beside the "Change button" sculpture at the



Bob Harris



Lamont Steptoe



Mary Gabriel

Museum of Art, waving home made flags proclaiming her goals. But ten years ago, on October 22,

setting herself on fire near Penn's Peace Sign.

In a suicide note she left taped

Reynolds-Brown resolution

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ceed and keep the FCC's media ownership laws intact. The FCC had attempted to loosen media ownership laws in 2003 but failed due to strong opposition.

"As one of the nation's largest cities with a diverse population, and a thriving cultural community, our views on media ownership count," said Reynolds-Brown. "If adopted, this resolution will urge the FCC to again reject weakening media ownership limits, and call on the agency to hold public hearings."

The councilwoman was joined by several consumer, civic, labor, and community groups in support of localism and diversity in media markets. They feel that weakening ownership rules would allow large media corporations to monopolize the industry.

Beth McConnell, director of PennPIRG, a public interest advocate group, stressed the importance of keeping Philadelphia's media ownership laws intact.

"Philadelphians are very fortunate to have many locally owned, independent, and publicly run media outlets that produce excellent content, coverage of critical

local issues, and giving exposure to local artists," said McConnell. "But many of those outlets struggle to survive and compete in an increasingly consolidated market. We don't want the FCC to do to our local media what Wal-Mart did to local neighborhood stores."

Currently, Viacom, Disney, Time-Warner, News Corporation, and NBC control 70% of the prime time television market share.

Ownership of most media outlets does not reflect the ethnic populations the outlets serve, according to Joel Kelsey, a grassroots coordinator for Consumers Union, a non-profit publisher of consumer reports.

In a national survey conducted by Free Press, a non-profit based out of Washington D.C., Kelsey found that 1,033 out of 1,300 media outlets were run by non-hispanic whites while minorities held a very small percentage of the pie.

"The fact is, the people who ultimately decide what news gets covered, which opinions get aired, and who reports the news are very unrepresentative of the consumers that they serve," said Kelsey. "Media outlets that are owned and operated by people that do not come from a diverse array of cultural backgrounds simply mean that it's much less likely that a diverse amount of viewpoints are going to be covered in a

community media market." The FCC, who could not be reached for comment, has held one public hearing in Los Angeles in concerns with media ownership rules and is currently accepting public comments; the agency will be visiting

five other locations to receive feedback from the public, but has not included Philadelphia on its list of stops.

You can comment on FCC media ownership regulations at pennpirg.com/mediaownership.

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level all across the country to improve urban and community forests." UC Green seeks to promote, coordinate, and support local volunteer community greening projects in University City neighborhoods by collaborating with community and religious organizations, neighborhood residents, students, institutions, city agencies, businesses, and other nonprofits.

"Having local organizations like UC Green participate in National NeighborWoods Month helps us show the cumulative effect of a burgeoning urban and community forestry movement," said ACT Executive Director Alice Ewen Walker. Founded in 1993, the Alliance for Community Trees is a national coalition of 97 nonprofit organizations engaged in urban and community forestry. Its members are dedicated to grassroots community greening, public education, policymaking, job training, environmental design, and other activities that support better urban forest stewardship.

Strategically planted trees contribute to energy conservation, improved children's health, increase property values, lower crime rates, save municipalities money through savings in stormwater management infrastructure, and encourage shoppers to linger longer. For example, children in neighborhoods with fewer trees have five times less lung function and higher school absences. Shaded streets require about 60% less sealant roadwork than unshaded streets. It is estimated that for every \$1 a city invests in trees, it receives up to \$3.74 in benefits.

NeighborWoods Month is sponsored through a generous grant from The Home Depot Foundation. "National NeighborWoods Month offers a unique opportunity for people to understand the contributions of trees to the health, beauty and livability of their communities," said Kelly Caffarelli, executive director of The Home Depot Foundation. "By partnering with ACT and local NeighborWoods organizations like UC Green, The Foundation is able to further its goals of investing in the overall health and success of our communities."

There are more opportunities to help plant trees in the community with UC Green the next three Saturdays and volunteers are welcome to help. For more information go to www.ucgreen.org



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