

## What's Inside

Lynn Miller

**O**ur Council president, **Theresa Kowalski**, devotes most of her column to explaining how the three final possible choices for a new HVAC system for our building were reduced to one. She also tells us how the process is likely to go forward from this point, including the all-important determination of costs. As she notes, the entire project will likely take some three-and-a-half years from beginning at the design stage to the end of construction. She discusses as well the launch of our new electronic communications system for residents.

**Erica Alles**, our manager, adds her own comments on the capabilities of the forthcoming BuildingLink communications system. She also notes how important it is that residents pick up packages delivered for them as soon as possible from the Resident Services Desk. She adds useful advice on what to do in the event of a medical emergency.

Hopkinson House is already well underway with another upgrade to its infrastructure. As **Joseph Quinn** explains, our staff is busy replacing all the conventional fluorescent and incandescent light bulbs in the building with LED lights. You may be surprised to read how much has already been done in this regard. You'll learn how this project commits our building to achieve the environmental goals of the City of Philadelphia and what, at least until recently,

was also the goal of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

At a time when much of the news we get seems unusually dire, it may bring you a sigh of relief to read **Martha Cornog's** article explaining where you can find good news in the media. Some of what is upbeat is produced right here in Philly. Follow the links she provides to find out for yourself.

In both the most recent spring and summer issues of *on the House*, I looked at two different threats to Philadelphia's artistic, cultural, and architectural heritage. Now I have updates on both the Philadelphia History Museum and the Painted Bride Art Center. The plots for both have thickened in recent weeks.

# on the House

The Newsletter of  
Hopkinson House • Fall 2019



The subject of one of my two updates leads directly to an essay by a guest contributor. **Paul Steinke**, Executive Director of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia, has kindly allowed us to publish his argument calling for space to be found in City Hall for a permanent exhibit drawn from the enormous archive of the Philadelphia History Museum. He makes an excellent case. We are delighted to hear from him.

We anticipated including an article on the fine work of our Hopkinson House landscape committee. But that now must wait for our winter issue. As a sort of teaser, we have included several photographs of the plantings—both trees and flowers—that we see every day from our front door, and as they look both in summer and autumn. We thank **Dennis McGlade** and **Joseph Quinn** for these contributions.

**Martha Cornog** reminds us of the importance of volunteering, both for the charity being helped and the well-being of the volunteer. She focuses on her own experience as a volunteer for Martin Luther King Day, but provides information about other worthy causes as well.

Appropriate to the season, **Jane Hickman** gives us, first, a recipe for a delicious and elegant dish that's a perfect solution for that left-over Thanksgiving turkey. She then conjures up a fantastic dessert course: old fashioned pumpkin cheese pie. See her Chef's Corner and enjoy.

Happy holiday! ■

Occasional Photo of Washington Square by Joseph Quinn



# on the HOUSE

## Newsletter Committee

Nelly Childress, editor,  
Committee Chair  
Lynn Miller, co-editor  
Concha Alborg  
Martha Cornog  
Jane Hickman  
Theresa Kowalski  
Joseph Quinn

## Council Liaison

Theresa Kowalski

## Graphic Design

Parallel-Design.com

## Advertising

Theresa Kowalski  
484-557-0945  
TMK.19081@gmail.com

## Photography

Janet Burnham  
Bari Shor

## Issue Contributors

Erica Alles  
Martha Cornog  
Jane Hickman  
Theresa Kowalski  
Dennis McGlade  
Lynn Miller  
Joseph Quinn  
Paul Steinke

## Hopkinson House Council

hhoacouncil@hotmail.com

## Website

Find past issues of  
*on the House* at  
[www.thehopkinsonhouse.com](http://www.thehopkinsonhouse.com)

## Message from Council

Theresa Kowalski



### The HVAC Project to Date

In April 2019, the HHOA engineering committee and the engineering consultant from Urban Engineers, David Parmiter, conducted a town hall meeting to discuss their work to date on the HVAC project. They had been charged with developing different possible options for HVAC replacement. They presented seven options they had considered, but they narrowed the number to three of the most feasible options that would be more closely evaluated.

### October 2019 Town Hall Meeting

A town hall meeting was held in early October 2019. The engineering committee and Parmiter provided more detailed information

and analysis of the three options under consideration:

- 1 A completely upgraded two-pipe system with new, more functional fan coil units (FCU) and new piping;
- 2 PTACs (packaged terminal air conditioners); or
- 3 WSHPs (water-sourced heat pumps).

Pros and cons on each of the three systems were reviewed in detail, and are available to study in the copies of the slides from the presentation which were emailed to all owners. They are largely self-explanatory.

Council had been presented with the results of the analysis a few weeks earlier and had discussed the results with both the engineering committee, the engineering consultant and then again, on its own with management and building engineering representatives. Some of the many factors that were taken into consideration on all options were:

- disruption to unit owners
- initial costs and lifecycle costs
- construction issues

- ability to control heat and air-conditioning at any time
- noise inside and outside of the units during operation
- need for additional square footage to be taken out of use in existing units.

When the engineering presentation concluded, on behalf of the Council,

I announced that the Council had chosen the first option, a completely upgraded two-pipe system with new, more functional fan coil units. After much deliberation, the Council had felt that this system gave the best trade-off between cost and functionality. It was familiar to most people, caused the least disruption in terms of space and remodeled features, and was by far the least expensive in terms of its life-cycle costs.

### Cost Estimates

The cost “guess-timates” provided by Urban Engineers were very preliminary and represented a screening or first-pass cost based only a broad concept. Because of this, it was not possible to speak with any certainty about the real cost of this project, financing options and the like until we moved further along in design development.

### Next Steps

Now that the decision has been for Hopkinson House to replace its current HVAC system with a similar but completely new two pipe system, the following steps will be:

- 1 Developing a Request for Proposal (RFP) and hiring a design firm for the HVAC system;
- 2 Developing an RFP and hiring a Construction Manager (CM) for the entire project;
- 3 Developing an RFP and hiring a Contractor for construction.

## Residents Corner

Residents wishing to make comments/observations on the current issue may send them to: “The Editor,” [nsmcdchildze@comcast.net](mailto:nsmcdchildze@comcast.net). Those who do not have a computer can place their comment in an envelope addressed to “Editor, *on the House*” and give the envelope to the employee at the Resident Services

Desk. Your comments will be published in the next issue of the newsletter.

Anonymous comments will not be accepted.

The editor reserves the right to reject opinions/comments, etc., if they are deemed inappropriate or can involve the association in legal troubles.

## Message from Council

continued from page 2

It is expected that from the beginning of the design of the system until end of construction, the project will take around 40 months. At the meeting, there were some concerns expressed about displacement of homeowners from their units during the daytime working hours. Management advised that they would be setting up lounges similar to what was done during the window replacement.

### Other Council Work

At the same time Council was involved in the HVAC evaluation and decision, other work has continued.

The operating and capital budgets for 2020 are under development, currently by management and the Council's Finance committee, and will be taken to the Council this month with recommendations. The Finance committee is aware of the need for healthy reserves to help fund the HVAC project, and will begin to work with the Council on the development of financing options as costs become more realistic during design.

In the middle of the upcoming month, the electronic resident

communication system, BuildingLink, will become operational, and residents will begin to receive communications and package notifications by text or email. Also, when the HVAC project begins its construction phase, BuildingLink will be used to send timed and specific notices to each homeowner as their unit is scheduled for work. Grazina Crisman, who headed up this project for the Council, will be sending out more notifications about exactly when BuildingLink will become operational, which modules will be introduced

and used first, and how to sign on to your own account.

So, it's been a very productive summer for the Council and the engineering committee, with the HVAC solution having been decided, new communication systems being instituted, a revamped Finance committee gearing up, and plans for the next year already under development. Thank you all for your cooperation, your thank-you notes and your enthusiasm for the prospect of moving on with the HVAC project. ■

## Message from Management

Erica Alles



**H**appy Fall! Cooler weather signals the coming of fall and winter holidays, as the end of 2019 approaches.

With BuildingLink implemented on time for the holidays, the program should help with processing the hundreds of packages (more during holidays!) that come through the Resident Services Desk

daily. Please remember to pick up your package within 48 hours as we simply do not have storage room. If you are ordering in advance of a holiday, please be prepared to bring your package/gift to your unit as it **may not be stored** by HHOA for more than 48 hours.

**If you have not yet given us your email address, please do**, so you may enjoy the capabilities of BuildingLink. You can notify the Resident Services Desk or Management Office so you will be included in blast communications about the building. If you prefer text messages, let us know. BuildingLink can be configured to send either a text or an email.

Also, an important reminder about emergency services: **If you are experiencing a medical emergency and need an ambulance, please call 911 directly.** Do not call the front desk to make this emergency call for you. This wastes valuable time. The dispatcher will ask certain questions about symptoms being experienced that the front desk staff would not be able to answer, and this would delay the ambulance arriving at the building.

Our popular, annual **shredding event** will be held Saturday, October 26th! Take the opportunity to rid your home of un-needed paper and electronics. Timing of the event will be posted soon.

If you have boxes to discard, please do not leave them in the trash room. Call the resident services desk at 215-923-1776 to have housekeeping pick up the boxes. ■

*Council,  
Management  
and Staff at  
Hopkinson House  
wish you a safe  
and healthy  
holiday season.*





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# Of Lights and LEDs: Hopkinson House Project Saves Energy

Joseph Quinn

The project to convert existing light fixtures throughout our building from conventional incandescent and fluorescent to LED bulbs is now seventy-five percent complete.

According to Chief Engineer Tony Kelly, all of the common areas have been converted. This includes over 1,800 fixtures in the main and lower lobbies, solarium, corridors, fire towers, trash, laundry, and machine rooms, utility closets, and the exterior grounds. Converting of the parking level is the responsibility of the garage owner.

First, a little background information. LED stands for Light Emitting Diode.

Traditional incandescent bulbs produce light using a heated filament that can “burn out” due to end-of-life use or an unexpected power surge. To simplify, LED bulbs contain a microchip that processes electrical power to produce light. Most of them fit into the same fixtures and use the same power source as traditional bulbs. When used correctly, LED bulbs have a much longer lifespan and can consume up to seventy-five percent less energy than incandescent bulbs, resulting in lower electrical costs.

The changeover here at Hopkinson House is being done by in-house maintenance staff during regular

working hours when they are not busy with scheduled or emergency work. This has kept labor costs to a minimum. The engineering team looked at various LED products. They chose ones they believe are the most compatible with the existing fixtures and wiring, maintain a high level of safe visibility in all areas, and provide a pleasant aesthetic environment virtually indistinguishable from what we had before.

According to General Manager Erica Alles, the biggest impact is expected to show up on the bottom line in two ways. There will be noticeable savings in the cost of electrical power once the building is completely

converted. The LED replacement initiative has already been a contributing factor in HHOA's continued reduction in utility costs. Lower maintenance costs are also to be expected, as LED bulbs have an average ten-year life span and require replacement less often than traditional bulbs. While the initial cost of LED bulbs is higher than for traditional bulbs, it is gradually coming down with widespread usage.

While residents of Hopkinson House will see both financial and environmental benefits from this initiative inside the building, conserving energy involves cooperation with partners outside. For example, as you continued on page 7

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## Of Lights and LEDs

continued from page 5

may be aware, management and maintenance have been working with PECO to upgrade our internal power infrastructure and its links to the larger urban power grid. This will ensure an adequate supply of efficient, reliable power for ongoing and backup requirements.

This outside cooperation includes measuring up to environmental standards set by both the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the City of Philadelphia. In 1992, the EPA established the Energy Star program as part of the Clean Air Act. The purpose was to implement “a voluntary program to identify and promote energy-efficient products and buildings in order to reduce energy consumption, improve

energy security, and reduce pollution.” New appliances like refrigerators, washers, and dryers are required to have Energy Star rating sheets attached. See the link below for more on the Energy Star program.

Yes, it’s sadly true that the current federal administration is doing its best to block or even eliminate mandated environmental protection efforts. But all is not lost. The City of Philadelphia has an energy benchmarking program and disclosure law that requires commercial and residential buildings of over 50,000 square feet to report their energy usage using the EPA’s Energy Star Portfolio Manager. Benchmarking tracks the total electricity,

natural gas, steam, and/or water used in a building. CAMCO gathers this information for buildings it manages and submits it to the city. See the link below for more information about the city’s energy benchmarking program.

Based on the most recent data, Philly’s Energy Star score was 65 versus a national median of 50. The city also publishes a map based on benchmarking information that allows you to enter a specific address and see a building’s rating and compare it with comparable buildings (see the map’s link below). Using the map, you’ll find that Hopkinson House has a top Energy Star rating of 100. Credit for this

achievement is due to the combined efforts of engineering, maintenance, management and council teams, all working together. What about the rest of us?

Tony points out that a future phase of the conservation program here at Hopkinson House will involve informing residents about steps we can take in our own homes to support building-wide efforts to conserve energy and improve the bottom line. Look for a future residents’ meeting on this subject. In the meantime, you can contact PECO directly to arrange an in-home evaluation and learn about ways to conserve, starting with LED bulbs. See the PECO link below. ■



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### Safety Note

Switching bulbs on your own is not as easy as it may seem. It depends on the fixtures and wiring in your unit, the types of lighting you use—incandescent, fluorescent, and/or halogen—the kind of switches, e.g., conventional or dimmable, as well as the amount of illumination required in different areas of your unit.

If you have questions, contact PECO or a qualified electrician. When it comes to conserving energy and protecting the environment, it’s possible to trace a direct line of impact—from a light bulb, to a building, to a city, to a country, and ultimately, all the way to our entire planet—if we all do our share.

### Links

Information about Energy Star can be found at:  
[www.energystar.gov/about](http://www.energystar.gov/about)  
[www.energystar.gov/products/lighting\\_fans/light\\_bulbs/learn\\_about\\_led\\_bulbs](http://www.energystar.gov/products/lighting_fans/light_bulbs/learn_about_led_bulbs)

Information on Philadelphia’s energy benchmarking program at be found at: [www.phillybuildingbenchmarking.com/](http://www.phillybuildingbenchmarking.com/)

Philadelphia’s Energy Benchmarking map can be found at: [www.visualization.phillybuildingbenchmarking.com/#/](http://www.visualization.phillybuildingbenchmarking.com/#/)

Find info about PECO’s energy assessment services at: [www.peco.com/WaysToSave/ForYourHome/Pages/Assessment.aspx](http://www.peco.com/WaysToSave/ForYourHome/Pages/Assessment.aspx)

Jody & Johanna

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# Some News Is Good News

Martha Cornog

Where can we read news that won't make us want to slit our wrists? Apart from all the political chicanery, climate catastrophes, and criminal villainy cannibalizing the headlines, there flourishes a garden of inspiring articles. In *Enlightenment Now* (2018), cognitive psychologist Steven Pinker argues that humanistic values have tended to rise worldwide throughout history. These news stories can help us see hope in Pinker's conclusions.

Philadelphia's *Inquirer.com* (formerly *Philly.com*) hosts three "good news" sections, while the *Philadelphia Tribune*, the region's largest newspaper serving the African-American community, has an educational feature that's similarly inspiring.

## THE UPSIDE

Good news. Good stories.

### ***Inquirer.com: The UpSide: Good News. Good Stories***

"I've received many inquiries," wrote Executive Editor Stan Wischnowski, "from readers requesting more positive stories. They want something to help offset what they see as a constant barrage of polarizing news that overshadows so many good things happening in our region." Since April 7th, The UpSide appears as a section in the Sunday paper and online that's "filled with stories of people and groups in our region who are connecting communities, advocating for positive change, and seeking solutions to challenges large and small." Recent articles spotlight a nine-year-old who used the Heimlich maneuver to save her best friend's life; Philly's deluxe laundromat chain, the Laundry Café; and a traveling version of Washington's Vietnam Veterans Memorial that visits communities around the country.

[www.inquirer.com/topic/upside/](http://www.inquirer.com/topic/upside/)



### ***Inquirer.com: Made in Philly***

"Too often stories of everyday Philadelphians have been ignored by local media... We want

to highlight millennials who are working to address community challenges. These are the people who make Philly what it is, and are driving change for the future." Learn about the Jumpbutton Studio, a tech start-up for young developers (especially of color); the Safe Bars Philly project that trains bar workers how to stop sexual harassment among patrons; and a West Philly organization that uses pizza and sessions with police to empower youth.

[www.inquirer.com/life/inq/made-in-philly-20181210.html](http://www.inquirer.com/life/inq/made-in-philly-20181210.html)

### ***Inquirer.com: We the People***

These unique Philadelphians have taken interesting life paths; many are involved with social service or arts/culture work. Meet a street poet who will write you a poem on any topic, a jeweler who made his own prosthetic thumb out of silver (he admits to "shameless self-promotion"), and a recovering addict who takes out his frustrations on glamifying his cars—with a gleeful bricolage of colanders, spoons, gravy boats, candelabras, and such.

[www.inquirer.com/topic/we-the-people/](http://www.inquirer.com/topic/we-the-people/)



### ***The Philadelphia Tribune: The Learning Key***

The Learning Key is an educational supplement to the newspaper, directed to students, parents, and teachers that highlights schools, programs of special interest, and student achievement. Distributed 40 weeks of the academic year, it's provided to Philadelphia schools. Fortunately, we can also read online about a student who raised funds for water purification in a

Nigerian clinic and school, tips for teaching kids about savings, and a group of high-schoolers who attended a leadership conference established by a major league baseball star. There's a "Good News in the [School] District" feature, as well.

[www.phillytrib.com/the\\_learning\\_key/](http://www.phillytrib.com/the_learning_key/)

The bigger news outlets, too, have been adding good-news news to their rosters.

Opinion



Fixes

Fixes looks at solutions to social problems and why they work.

### ***The New York Times: Fixes***

"Fixes looks at solutions to social problems and why they work." One of the writers is Tina Rosenberg, author of *Join the Club: How Peer Pressure Can Transform the World* (2012). She is also co-founder of the Solutions Journalism Network ([www.solutionsjournalism.org](http://www.solutionsjournalism.org)), which supports rigorous reporting about responses to social problems. Sample stories highlight the nearly 50 percent of caregivers who are men, the Friendship Bench program of ThriveNYC, and how Lawyers Against Abuse in South Africa provides victims of sex crimes with advocates and legal assistance.

[www.nytimes.com/column/fixes](http://www.nytimes.com/column/fixes)

The Optimist



### ***The Washington Post: The Optimist***

"A selection of inspiring stories to help you disconnect, hit refresh

and start the week off right, delivered every Sunday." Recent issues of this weekly newsletter include:

"A Cure for the Common Cold? 'It's Possible,' Scientists Say"

"Meet the New Wave of Female Builders"—that is, women in construction

continued on page 11



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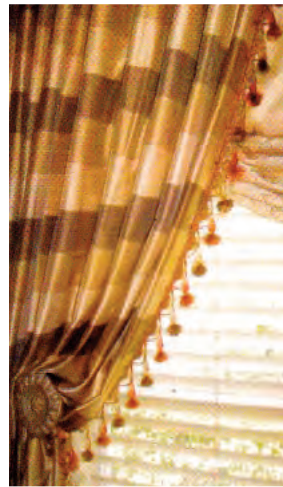
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## Some News is Good News

continued from page 9

"The Maid of Honor Who Wore a T. Rex Costume"

"The Muslim Engineer Who Rebuilt the Pentagon Crash Site as a Chapel"

[www.subscribe.washingtonpost.com/news/letters/#/bundle/optimist](http://www.subscribe.washingtonpost.com/news/letters/#/bundle/optimist)



### CNN: The Good Stuff

This is another newsletter, but you can also read some stories online. "Every Saturday, we'll bring you the big headlines that make you smile, plus stories of fascinating discoveries, everyday heroes, inspiring movements and great things happening right in your backyard." Sample articles and videos:

"Backstreet Boys Hold a Surprise Meet-and-Greet with a Group of People with Downs Syndrome"

"A Nurse Stopped to Help a Motorcycle Group in a Terrible Accident. A Year Later They Showed Up to Support her Daughter"

"Hurricane Heroes, a Football Brotherhood and an Adventurous Sloth"

[www.cnn.com/specials/us/the-good-stuff](http://www.cnn.com/specials/us/the-good-stuff)

Beyond these efforts of the country's free press to augment our news diet with added vitamins, a handful of independent Philadelphia websites provide perspectives of their own.



### Hidden City of Philadelphia Culture Trust

This organization aims to "pull back the curtain on the city's most remarkable places and connects them to new people, functions, and resources [and to] celebrate the power of place and inspire social action." Sample articles from its online publication:

"Bootleggers & Back Alley Bars: Philadelphia During Prohibition"

"New Exhibit Invites Visitors Inside the Life of Row Houses"

"Until Death Do Us Part: An Ode to Philadelphia Book Collecting"

Note also tours and events, one combining our own Washington Square area with Pennsylvania Hospital.

[www.hiddencityphila.org/](http://www.hiddencityphila.org/)



### The Philadelphia Citizen

"Media that only chronicles what's wrong without considering how to fix things is only doing half a job." This online newsletter aims to report "what happened, what it means, and what you can do about it" through articles and podcasts.

[www.thephiladelphiacitizen.org/](http://www.thephiladelphiacitizen.org/)



### Billy Penn

Part of the WHYY public media organization, this other Philadelphia approach to solutions-based journalism "has a mission to engage, connect and give voice to Philadelphia residents and communities by highlighting wins, pointing out shortcomings, and asking questions about issues that impact the region." A recent story:

"'El Inquirer': Philly's paper of record rolls out a Spanish-language news site"

[www.bilypenn.com/](http://www.bilypenn.com/)

And when we're all fed up with news in general, we can still count on one bunch of folks to keep us laughing:



### The Onion

Behold America's infamous satirical media organization, churning out honestly fake news since 1988. Even some of the ads are hilariously bogus. Sample stories:

"Vatican Forced to Revoke Dozens of Sainthoods After Discovering Miracles Performed with Eldritch Magic"

"Adoption Agency Gives Couple Who Waited a Long Time an Extra Kid Free of Charge"

[www.theonion.com](http://www.theonion.com)

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|---|--|

Occasional Photos of Washington Square by Joseph Quinn

Joseph Quinn reminds us of last summer's beauty in Washington Square with these photos of our front yard.

