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## Back to business

The stadium district finally has an executive director, and members now hope to focus on issues like demolition of the Vet.

By [R. Jonathan Tuleya](#)  
January 23, 2003

The organization entrusted with making life in the stadium-area neighborhoods more bearable during arena events -- and with \$1 million of the city's money -- ended months of delays and hired an executive director last week.



Members of the Stadium Complex Special Services District voted five to one last Tuesday to offer the job to Shawn Jalosinski, a traffic engineer currently working for the city's Streets Department.

Negotiations with Jalosinski were ongoing as of Monday.

The decision ended months of fighting between the four members of the seven-person board of directors representing the stadium-area neighborhoods. Some of those who supported Jalosinski had accused their opponents of being manipulated by outside forces, particularly state Sen. Vince Fumo. Those members responded during Tuesday's meeting.

Ted Scairato, who represents the Broad Street West Civic Association neighborhoods and is vice president of the SCSSD, said he was no one's "pawn."

"My only interest in being here is for the community," he said. "I'm my own man, have been and always will be."

Scairato chose to abstain from voting for an executive director because, he explained, the job needed to be more clearly defined before board members selected a candidate.

"What are his duties? I don't know what they are. What's on his daily agenda?" Scairato posed. "You're going to be paying somebody money for doing nothing until we set him up. To me this sounds wrong."

Both Scairato and John Sfrisi, representative for the South Philadelphia Communities Civic Association and SCSSD's treasurer, intentionally skipped the last SCSSD meeting in November, preventing the board from voting on an executive director. The district's bylaws state that at least three of the four community representatives must be present to hold an official vote.

Other members disagreed with Scairato's plea to postpone the vote again and nominations were taken. Barbara Capozzi, Packer Park's district representative, nominated Jalosinski. He was seconded by Judy Cerrone, of Veterans Neighbors Civic Association and the Stadium Community Council.

The Eagles, Phillies and Comcast Spectacor also voted for Jalosinski. Sfrisi logged the lone vote against him.

He said afterwards it had less to do with his qualifications than where Jalosinski, of Roxborough, lived. Sfrisi wanted someone from South Philly because he believes such a person "understands the problems of living right

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near Vet Stadium for 30 years."

Sfrisi supported local resident Jeffery Travelina, a Traffic Court employee who is Sfrisi's second cousin and the nephew of Fumo aide Rosanne Pauciello.

"It wasn't that fact that he was my cousin," Sfrisi said, "so much as he was the only local person selected for interviews."

From a pool of 80 applicants, the district's board members selected seven to interview in November.

Sfrisi denied allegations made by other members that Fumo or anyone else had influenced whom he supported.

"It's not that I'm a puppet of anybody," he said.

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**Cerrone was happy** with the result, albeit overdue.

"I think he was the best qualified," she said of Jalousinski. "I'm sure he is going to try very hard to show that he is capable."

Capozzi said she's willing to put the contentious search for an executive director behind her in favor of the district addressing more neighborhood-oriented problems.

"We have a whole set of issues for our new executive director to start working on," she said.

One of the first will be preparing for the demolition of Veterans Stadium. That could take place in just more than a year, and Capozzi and Cerrone both said that tops their to-do lists. Some of the homes in Cerrone's neighborhood sit as close as 150 feet from the Vet.

The Phillies are responsible for knocking down the stadium at the end of their season. It has not yet been determined whether it will be demolished by implosion or pneumatic hammers and wrecking balls.

Michael Stiles, the Phillies' representative to the special services district, indicated at last Tuesday's meeting that the team would prefer the stadium be imploded, but they are studying the situation. The Phillies have hired a project manager to determine if the arena can be blown up safely without damaging nearby homes, the subway line running below Broad Street or their new ballpark.

Cerrone and her neighbors have a list of concerns about the demolition process, especially if the Vet is imploded.

"The experts are going to have to explain to us why it's better," she said.

A demolition contractor has not yet been hired, Stiles said.

Shortly after the Phillies' season ends, the team will pack up its offices in the Vet and relocate to the new stadium. Around the same time, said Stiles, crews will begin a process called soft stripping -- the removal of all non-structural items from the building, like seats.

The Vet should be demolished next February or March if all goes as planned. When more information is available, Cerrone said, at least three community meetings will be held to brief residents about the process.

The Phillies sent officials to watch the implosion of Cinergy Field in Cincinnati -- an architecturally similar arena to Veterans Stadium -- which that city demolished on Dec. 30. It took 1,275 pounds of explosives to bring it down. Roadways around the stadium reopened to traffic 30 minutes after the blast. Though no residential neighborhoods bordered that stadium, portions of the Cincinnati Reds' new ballpark sat just 60 feet away.

Upon inspection, team officials found the rumbling did not break any of the windows in the new stadium. The only reported damage was caused by a projectile that shot a small hole through part of the ballpark's steel framing.

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**Mayor Street promised** South Philly that a special services district would be formed two years ago. The district became the lynchpin in the stadium deal and ultimately convinced the civic associations to agree to allow the city to build both the Eagles and Phillies stadiums here.

The district covers the blocks between Oregon Avenue and Interstate 95 from Seventh through 20th streets. A seven-person board comprised of four community directors and three directors representing the Eagles, Phillies and Comcast Spectacor governs the district. Board members are responsible for hiring the executive director.

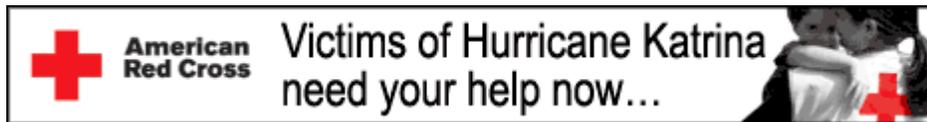
Three of the four community directors were elected from the neighborhoods presented by the Packer Park Civic (District 2), South Philadelphia Communities Civic (District 3), and Broad Street West Civic Association (District 4). Residents represented by Veterans Neighbor Civic and Stadium Community Council comprised District 1.

The city is funding the district's \$1-million budget for the first year. Next year, the teams will split the bill.

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