

**Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition**

Board Meeting

7:00 p.m., February 16, 2017

The Children's Institute

1405 Shady Avenue

Pittsburgh, PA 15217

**MINUTES**

**Attendees:**

**Board:** Ray Baum, Jim Burnham, Vivian Didomenico, Rich Feder, Lori Fitzgerald, Barb Grover, Steve Hawkins, Michael Henderson, Mardi Isler, Lois Lieberman, Lisa Murphy, Josh Sayles, Erica Strassburger, Mary Shaw, Chris Zurawsky

**Staff:** Marian Lien, Executive Director; Britt Reints, Squirrel Hill Magazine Editor

**Guests:** Jamie Glasser, Sen. Jay Costa's office; Molly Onufer, City of Pittsburgh; Barry L. Stein, resident; Helen Wilson, Squirrel Hill Historical Society

Meeting began at 7:00pm with announcements and acceptance of the January 2017 minutes.

Mardi Isler announced that John Katz is providing very generous funds to contribute to our neighborhood: He donated \$1000 to SHUC, will be purchasing five additional Squirrel bike racks, and donated funds to Uncover Squirrel Hill to replace the banners. Mr. Katz is very community minded, cares about the properties he owns, has renovated many buildings, and appreciates the work of SHUC. We are very fortunate to have him in our neighborhood.

**Financial Report:**

Jim Burnham provided hard copies of the January Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss statement as well as a Year-to-Date Profit and Loss Statement from June 1, 2016 through January 31, 2017. The End-of-Year solicitation letter netted \$11,000. We are in a good financial position.

**Litter Patrol -April 23 Community Clean-Up (*see written report for details*):**

Barb requested assistance from the Board for volunteers to staff the SHUC table at the April 23 Community Clean-Up as well as the Night Markets. A sign-up sheet was passed around.

**PennDOT's Parkway E. Transportation Study (*see written report for details*):**

Lisa Murphy reviewed three options (30C, 30D, and 31D – images in the written reports) offered by PennDOT for the Squirrel Hill Parkway East interchange. These changes are designed to address two major traffic problems: 1) Current on and off ramps weaving together and 2) the short distance between entering the Parkway East and the entrance to the Squirrel Hill Tunnel. Plan 31D is the least expensive (\$18 million) but solves only the weaving problem: 30C and 30D, each solve both problems for ~ \$44 million. Discussion of the pros and cons of the three options occurred. The bike/ped path route and roundabout design at the Buncher property intersection were highlighted. SHUC is on the stakeholders committee. Public meetings will be held as part of the process. The general consensus was that PennDOT's construction will be about a 10-year time line to completion.

**Natural Environment (parks, storm water, golf clubhouse etc.)(see written report for details):**

Chris Zurawsky described Squirrel Hill resident Sara Melo de Weber's ~~concerns~~ proposal about making Prospect Drive a safer place for children to play. She and a group of neighbors and friends would like the street closed to car traffic, except for a short section near Hobart to be used for parking. Her written proposal about this issue was circulated to the Board. This project is not a SHUC project but SHUC will help with the public dialogue. Data related to the use of this area (e.g., traffic, shelter use) and the impact of closing the street are needed. One suggestion was to close the street on a few occasions during the summer to test Ms. Weber's street-closing proposal. Information will be gathered to determine how some of the plans will affect storm water control and the Green First Campaign.

**Pedestrian-Bicycle Committee:**

The committee will submit their requests for capital funds in March to meet the deadline set by the city for such requests.

**Development Committee:**

Rich presented his ideas for the development of the Murray/Poccusset/Beechwood Blvd area. His ideas included a hotel at the Forward/Murray corner and offices for tech companies and services. Discussion ensued. Highlights of the issues raised included:

- Need to identify whom we are trying to attract
- Need to have more diversity in use of properties
- Extent to which buildings would need to be ready for occupancy
- Identify the positives and negatives of this geographic area. Jim Burnham might ask his contact to walk the area and solicit his opinion
- Zoning issues must be addressed FIRST before other plans can be implemented.
- Ped/Bike trail, the hotel, and the intersection need to take priority after zoning.

**Commercial Development and Residential Quality:** *(see above PennDot report as presented by Lisa Murphy)*

**Magazine Report Winter and Spring Issues:**

Marian and Britt have interviewed several people for the Magazine Ad position. They have a well-qualified finalist and will be recommending forward to Magazine Committee for approval. Britt is working on collecting ad money due us from prior issues.

All Board Chairs need to update their section of the website. Check for Meghan's 19-page set of instructions.

SHUC Night Out is scheduled for March 30 at Northwood Realty.

**Executive Director's Report:**

Lunar New Year parade was very successful-- 300 participants and 1500-3000 attendees. The PA Governor's Advisory Board on Asian American Affairs will be held in Pittsburgh in March, with emphasis in showcasing Squirrel Hill. The choice is partly a result of our Lunar New Year activities. All the Squirrel Hill businesses did very well. SHUC website has photos. The event definitely generates good publicity for our neighborhood. See below updates and highlights for more details.

**Other business:**

Molly Onufer is replacing Lex Jane as the mayor's office representative. Molly distributed information about the Civic Leadership Academy to be held March 29 through May 31. This Academy is a FREE 10-week course designed to build leadership skills. See [CLA.Pittsburghpa.gov](http://CLA.Pittsburghpa.gov) for details.

Helen Wilson, Squirrel Hill Historical Society, will send an electronic copy of their newsletter to Rich Feder for distribution. Their website, [squirrelhillhistory.org](http://squirrelhillhistory.org), has details about their purpose and activities.

Meeting adjourned 8:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Barb Grover, Secretary

## Updates and Notes from SHUC Committee Chairs for February 2017 Board Meeting:

### **Parks and Open Spaces Committee Submitted by Chair Chris Zurawsky**

#### **January 18**

Rich Feder and Chris Zurawsky (briefly) attended a workshop sponsored by the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority (PWSA) and the Climate and Urban Systems Partnership, titled: **Green Infrastructure Communication Workshop Part 2: What do people Think?** Engaging community members in understanding projects, decision making, and problem solving using group deliberation

The workshop demonstrated strategies for eliciting what people know and how they are feeling about local green infrastructure (GI). Using these tools, and insight shared by community groups and communication experts, GI groups can develop long-term community investment in new projects, or solutions for problematic implementations.

#### **January 24**

Chris attended the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy's **Four Mile Run Watershed Community Meeting**, at Pitt's Connolly Ballroom (Alumni Hall). The presentation was similar to PPC's recent presentations in Greenfield (November 15, 2016, which Chris attended), and its presentation to SHUC's board at the January 19 board meeting.

Consultants, led by the landscape architecture firm Phronesis, are refining a concept plan for green infrastructure in Four Mile Run and Panther Hollow through on-the-ground technical surveys, cost analysis, and continuing community engagement. The plan includes major GI projects for the Forbes and Murray business district, Forbes Avenue to Wightman Street and Wightman to Beacon Street. Details on the meeting's presentation are online at this address (<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B7otwg5Qq862dl9JbzUtLXAwOEK>).

#### **February 3**

Chris and Rich attended a seminar hosted by Pitt's University Center for Social and Urban Research (UCSUR): "**Parcel Scale Green Infrastructure Siting and Cost Effectiveness Analysis for Pittsburgh**" (<http://sb.ucsur.pitt.edu/steve/green/index.html>), presented by Michael Blackhurst, PhD, Research Development Manager at UCSUR.

Dr. Blackhurst reviewed a map of recommended siting of green infrastructure by type in Allegheny County, including many locations in Squirrel Hill for green roof, rain gardens, permeable pavement, and downspout disconnections from the water and sewer system.

Chris subsequently corresponded with Dr. Blackhurst regarding both a book he is reading about the development of the sewer system in Paris, France ("Paris Sewers and Sewermen - Realities and Representations", by Donald Reid), and SHUC's June 1, 2016 public meeting at Carnegie Library regarding GI in Squirrel Hill and Schenley Park, including SHUC's PWSA mini-grant.

#### **February 15**

SHUC Parks and Open Space Committee Meeting  
Draft agenda

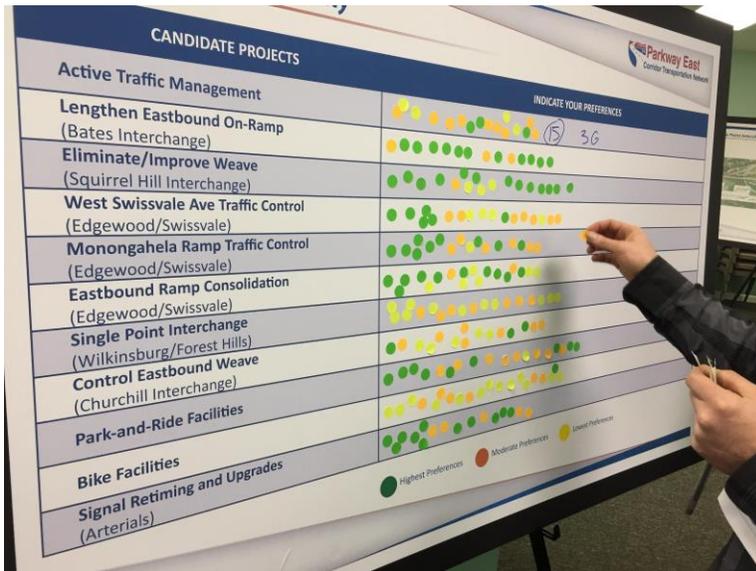
- 1) Welcome, introductions, overview of SHUC and committee
- 2) Presentation about Prospect Drive proposal (Sara Weber, Guarino Rd. resident)
- 3) Update on Schenley golf clubhouse and Four Mile Run Watershed green infrastructure proposal
- 4) Open discussion of other issues that the committee might address

Chris, Rich or Marian will report further at the February 16 board meeting.

**Long Range Planning Committee**  
**Submitted by Committee and Board Member Lisa Murphy**

I attended PennDOT Parkway East Corridor on Jan. 21, and learned they have a solution to the Squirrel Hill interchange that would solve most of the issues with it. I have attached pictures of three posters showing alternative alignments for the interchange - the poster "Underpass Off-Ramp New On-Ramp" is the one that I think is best, for reasons I can detail if you like. I also included a picture of the group's "dot-voting" of the various projects for prioritization. Note that the Squirrel Hill interchange ended up with the greatest number of "high priority" dots.

None of the proposed interchange alignments affect the Buncher site or the trail connections we have been discussing there. The presentation did include bike/ped trails as one group of projects, with the connection from Eliza Furnace to Forward Avenue listed as one of the items. They mentioned that the cost benefit analysis on the trails is not great, with the caveat that applying to trails the CBA normally used for roads is problematic for many reasons. You can see on the dot-voting poster that the bike/ped trails did not get a high priority from the group.



For more about the Parkway East Corridor Study:  
[http://www.i376parkwayeast.com/docs/Phase\\_2\\_Alternatives\\_analysis\\_summary\\_report.pdf](http://www.i376parkwayeast.com/docs/Phase_2_Alternatives_analysis_summary_report.pdf)

### Underpass Off-Ramp – Existing On-Ramp



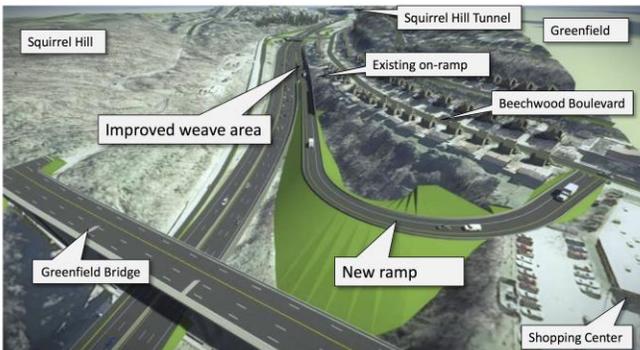
Concept 30B

### Underpass Off-Ramp – New On-Ramp



Concept 30C

### New Eastbound On-Ramp



Concept 31D

## **Litter Patrol Committee**

### **Submitted By Board and Committee Member Rita Botts**

Gene Stenger, Deb Pacoe, and I filled many small bags with trash from 10-12. The three of us were able to get all the way from Phillips to Forbes and we moved quickly enough to keep ahead of the parade after it started at 11:15ish. Afterward, though it wasn't terribly necessary since the parade created little trash, Lois Liberman, Bob Danenberg, and I filled a few more bags. I suppose total of small bags was 10. We had many passersby express their thanks, to which I responded with information about our April cleanup.

A few notes:

-next time, it would be better to have the second crew arrive at 12 instead of 1, since the parade is pretty much over in less than an hour

-Bob was very put off by the state of the tree wells and the planting beds outside of Giant Eagle. They are giant ashtrays. Bob, Lois, and I approached the customer services counter, identified ourselves as litter patrol members, and asked who was available to clean those areas. A staff member came out and Bob showed him the areas. He agreed to clean them, though I can't say if he actually did. Bob was very polite but firm, and I think we could stop in to businesses more often. Rite Aid, anyone?

-Shannon, the videographer, did not attend. She was called to her job at the last minute on Sunday. She'll try to film the April cleanup.

Executive Director's Highlights and Updates.

Submitted by Marian Lien

February 17, 2017

\$10K+ in donations prompted by End of Year letter continues to come in.

Awarded Love Your (Resilient) Block Grant \$1500: proposal by SH Litter Patrol to buy more cigarette butt receptacles, recycling and trash cans, and contest for best short video on anti-litter campaign to be shown at first Night Market.

*SHUC - USH Winter Mixer* at Squirrel Hill Ctr for Rehabilitation and Healing, March 8 (Wednesday) 5:30pm to 8:00pm: SHUC to co-host this networking event for businesses, entrepreneurs, and professionals. Guest speaker: Regina Abel of US Small Businesses Administration, Pittsburgh.

*SHUC Night Out!* At Northwood Realty, March 30 (Thursday) 5:30pm to 8:00pm: Celebrating Northwood's newly renovated office space with interactive monitors. SHUC will sell Tsingdao Beer (donated) and cocktails from Wigle Whisky (donated). Northwood to provide hors 'd'oeuvres.

Interviews and meetings:

2/7: Sara Melo Weber, Prospect Drive Repurposing proposal

2/7: Dalia Belinoff, BOD candidate

2/11: Shannon Ewing for Mag Ad person

Assisting Minadeo to apply for formal designation as PPS Community School: Purpose is to address existing needs and to create partnerships between the school and community resources that focus on academics, enrichment, health and social services, and family engagement and supports,

2017 Lunar New Year Roundup: By the Numbers

1500 -2000 attendees at Parade  
647 flyers taken door to door  
750 attendees at JCC  
121 No Parking signs hung on Murray and Philips Parking lot  
126 performers on JCC stage (14 acts)  
396 participants marched/performed in Parade (34 groups entrants: over 10 new)  
46 volunteers  
12 officially participating Asian restaurants  
10 bags of trash collected before and after parade  
3 news interviews  
2 television news coverage  
5 print news stories  
3 Front pages  
32 Marching Band members in brand new “Dice Dragons” uniforms  
\$10,517 sponsorship and donations  
\$7061 costs and expenses

Sponsors ~\$10,500 (if marked “p” below, means paid)

Tsingdao \$1500 (p)  
Erie Insurance \$3000 (p)  
OCA Advocates for Asian Pacific Americans, Pittsburgh Chapter \$1000 (p)  
Zip Car \$1016  
Jewish Federation Community Relations office \$508 (p)  
Pittsburgh International Airport \$400  
University of Pittsburgh \$288 (p)  
Confucius Institute \$300  
Pittsburgh Chinese School \$288  
Chinese Restaurant Association \$150  
Littles \$150  
Evelyn James Interiors \$38  
Framework \$38  
Chocolate Moose \$38  
Margaret’s Fine Imports \$38  
Sciullo Ins \$88 (P)  
13 Chinese Restaurants and shops \$38 each = 494  
T-shirt Sales \$1145 (p)

Costs >\$8000

\$2000 for JCC (in kind donation)  
\$380 for police on 1/28  
\$747 for 200 posters and 600 programs  
\$350 for banner  
\$1000 of \$4000 for police on 2/12

\$900 in purchases  
\$2000 to hang/take down lanterns on Murray  
\$900 for T-shirts  
\$520 for advertisement in Jewish Chronicle and Facebook boost  
\$200 for special events permit and no parking signs

Indirect benefits:

Picked up 6 new members specifically because of the parade: donating \$100, \$100 and \$500.

Complimentary Voicemail from 76-year old resident Mr. Hong Leong:

“I have been a resident of Squirrel Hill for over 20 years and I’ve never seen anything like this in our city that gave me so much hope, pride, and pleasure. Everything was authentic, I know because I am Chinese. You have done great work and I wanted to commend you. I was so moved, that I became a member of your organization. Keep this up, year after year. We need it!”

Forged new connections:

1. Filipino American Association of Pittsburgh (president lives in Sq Hill)
2. BCAP (members live and/or travel to JFCS offices for career training and counseling).
3. Bibhuti Aryal and Sannu Kahni, 2 commissioners from Governor’s Advisory Commission on Asian American Affairs were very impressed with LNY-Pgh and are convening their quarterly Commissioners meeting in Pittsburgh in March. They are thinking of doing so in Squirrel Hill.
4. Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh would like to coordinate efforts for next year’s festivities. Encouraged on their website to attend Sq Hill LNY events.

**Burgh Eye view**

2/15: Burgh's Eye View presents multiple city data streams on an interactive web map, allowing anyone to view an interactive map of Pittsburgh and instantly see public safety data, 311 requests, public safety, building code violations, building permits, and city facility information all in a single place. In the works to add: capital projects.

The website is accessible on both computers and mobile devices. [www.pittsburghpa.gov](http://www.pittsburghpa.gov) and search BurghsEyeView.

PCRG Members Meeting on 2/15: Aquired list of 18 grant opportunities. Will be examining more for application details.