

## **Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition**

Board Meeting

7:00 p.m., June 20, 2017

The Children's Institute

1405 Shady Avenue

Pittsburgh, PA 15217

### **MINUTES**

#### **Attendees:**

**Board:** Ray Baum, Rita Botts, Jim Burnham, Vivian Didomenico, Rich Feder, Lori Fitzgerald, Barb Grover, Michael Henderson, Marshall Hershberg, Mardi Isler, Lois Liberman, Josh Sayles, Erika Strassburger, Chris Zurawsky

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

**Guests:** Jean Binstock, Squirrel Hill Historical Society Board member; Curt Conrad, Councilman O'Connor's office; Jamie Glasser, Sen. Jay Costa's office; Commander Herrmann, Pittsburgh Police Zone 4; Ernest Rajakone, Office of Community Affairs; Kathryn Schlesinger, Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group; Officer David Shifren, Pittsburgh Police Zone 4; Helen Wilson, Squirrel Hill Historical Society; Eveline Young, resident

Meeting began at 7:03 pm. Marshall moved and Erika seconded a motion to approve the May minutes; Unanimously approved.

#### **Police Department Update:**

Commander Herrmann and Officer Shifren reported that a "mobile office" (i.e., lap top computers and cell phones) will now be available to police officers to use to attend community meetings and other events. The bicycle police will continue. Officers are continuing to be involved with residents (e.g. playing soccer with residents; hosting Wiffle Ball games for 6-12 year olds) to improve police/community relationships. Jim Burnham thanked them for their weekly snapshot reports. Anyone who wishes to receive Zone 4's Weekly Snapshots should send their email address to [Shannon.leshen@pittsburghpa.gov](mailto:Shannon.leshen@pittsburghpa.gov) or [david.shifren@pittsburghpa.gov](mailto:david.shifren@pittsburghpa.gov) and put "Please add me to the weekly snapshot mailing list" in the Subject line. The officers strongly recommended that cyclists lock their bikes to reduce the likelihood of them being stolen.

#### **Financial Report:**

Jim presented a fiscal year-end report (June 1, 2016 – May 31, 2017). Although we have a \$9,000 deficit for the year, it is important to note that some revenue (especially grants) collected prior to June 1, 2016 meant for 2016-2017 budget is not reflected in this report (hence the deficit). It is also far less than the \$29,000 deficit projected last year. (I must have missed this one. And Jim is not here to clarify. I just pulled the same reports and I see that we showed \$13,800 beyond budget for Fiscal 16-17. We will be switching to PayPal for on-line SHUC charges since

Merchant services fees for Credit Card processing are so high. Gina and Jim will present a 2017-18 budget for consideration at the July Board meeting.

**Commercial Development and Residential Quality:** *(See Committee Updates at end of these minutes for details)*

- Forward-Murray (Gateway District) proposed medical marijuana dispensary: The Greenfield Association is aligned with us about the Keystone Dispensary Project; Keystone accepted all of our conditions; A report will be issued at end of month by the Zoning Board.
- Proposal for 5800 Forward Ave. (former movie theater+corner site): Gateway and Commercial Development Committees have seen Developer Herky Pollock's plans and the plans appear to be well thought out to this preliminary point in the process. Preliminary building design plans were passed around. The design includes 110 units with retail space on 1<sup>st</sup> and partially 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, apartments above, 110 parking spaces between 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. Developer is thinking of adding one more floor of apartments and parking to make venture more economically feasible. Developer is currently negotiating with the city through Councilman O'Connor about Maeburn Street. Many issues still to be worked out (e.g., zoning variances; heating plant underneath Maeburn, removal of smoke stack prior to Action Housing construction, finances, storm water control, tree plantings). State Representative Dan Frankel and State Senator Jay Costa may seek financing for the public right-of-way portions and the disposal of lead paint and dismantling of the smokestack of this project. Jamie Glasser from Sen. Costa's office will keep us apprised of progress. A Public Meeting will be held and the results of the meeting will be part of our discussion. A City traffic engineer will look at site and consider what the City might do to help this project.
- Update on Downtown-Oakland-East End BRT project (upcoming 6/27/17 public meeting): Kathryn Schlesinger from the Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group distributed flyers about the 5 public meetings that will be held to share with the public and obtain input about the Bus Rapid Transit plans. No financing for construction of the project has been secured as yet. A Grant Application will be submitted to the Federal Transit Administration.

**Development Committee/Events (Treasures Dinner, Night Market):**

- The Challenge Grant secured about \$10,000. Thanks very much to Board members who participated.
- The June 17 Night Market included 95 vendors; good attendance again and many reluctant to leave at 10pm. Nine Allderdice students and five CMU students helped set up and tear down; water blocks/barriers rather than 'saw horses' were used at Forbes and Murray and Bartlett and Murray to

prevent anyone from attempting to crash the barriers. Treasure Dinner raffle ticket sales netted \$70. All nine of the food trucks sold out by 9pm; Eat n Park, 61C and Silk Elephant were among many places packed with customers. Very positive feedback from attendees, especially from people who had just moved in to the neighborhood.

- Treasure Dinner – Ray Baum, chair of the committee, encouraged all Board members to seek sponsors, sell raffle tickets and attend the dinner. Our goal is 200 attendees. We need more sponsors, a Program Book coordinator, a Raffle Ticket Coordinator, and a coordinator to supervise 2 interns. Anyone interested in helping with these aspects of the dinner should contact Ray.

**Natural Environment (Parks, storm water, etc.):**

- Tree Pittsburgh has one intern who will be going door-to-door recruiting residents to be willing to have a free tree planted in front of their home. To obtain free trees from the city, they need to identify a set of continuous blocks on which 10 trees could be planted. A web page will be dedicated to the resident recruitment.
- Chris participated in a walk around Schenley Park with 2 people from the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy ending at Prospect Dr. The second or third weekend in August are tentatively planned to be dates to clean up Prospect Drive. Issues related to opening a bike path through this area to Poccusset and how that aligns with the new Greenfield Bridge (scheduled to be reopened in late August or September) still need to be addressed.
- An architecture firm has been selected for the design of the Bob O'Connor Club House. Public meetings with the architects, the city, and First Tee for input about the design of the new Golf Clubhouse will be scheduled this summer and fall.

**Pedestrian-Bicycle Committee:** *(See Committee Updates at end of these minutes for details)*

The Squirrel Hill Bike Ride held on Sunday, June 18, was successful. Great weather, safe and successful ride. About 30 riders including 7 children participated. At the Ped/Bike committee meeting, Debra Brown of Braddock Borough explained the process that was used in attempting to get a connecting bike path through 5 boroughs east of Pittsburgh. Liability insurance was undertaken by Western Wheelman of PA (WWP) for Sunday's ride, but any further excursions of this type will need to be addressed prior to the next scheduled ride, as we've exhausted the limit from WWP (available just to first time riders).

**Administrative:**

- New Board Member: Rich nominated Lisa Steindel to be a Board Member. She's a career counselor and was director of the Pittsburgh Area Jewish Committee. She has worked on inter-faith and inter-community relations. She started the Squirrel Hill Food Pantry and is interested in working with us. She is an appointed member of Pennsylvania's Judicial Conduct Board. Ray moved and Josh seconded the nomination; Unanimously approved.
- Policies- Financial & Fiduciary, Interests  
Conflict of Interest issue forms were distributed for each of the Board members to be completed and returned to Marian. These forms must be completed annually. Marian will keep a spreadsheet of the Conflict of Interest information and monitor that information as issues come before the Board. Mardi moved and Rita seconded a motion to accept the Conflict of Interest Policy. 12 in favor; 2 abstentions, 0 opposed

**Magazine Report Summer Issue: (See Committee Updates at end of these minutes for details)**

- Website Updates:  
Some additions: Under Donate, click on Volunteer to indicate events you are interested in donating your time;  
All Committee pages, Calendar and recent posts have all been updated; All Committee chairs should please send Britt any updates;  
Sustaining Membership forms are being updated so anyone can complete and mail in.
- Magazine -  
\$12,000 collected from Spring Issue ads; \$1400 is currently outstanding.

The Fall Issue's theme is Focus on Educational Options and will be published in early September. All Committee Chairs should send her updates for the magazine.

**Executive Director's Report: (See Committee Updates at end of these minutes for details)**

- Eveline Young, a resident for 30+ years, is interested in the Board and working with us.
- Marian is now on the Board of the Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group (PCRG). She recently attended the PCRG Leadership Summit and learned new resources for fundraising.
- Anna Wang, our summer intern, is working on planning the Lunar New Year activities and has already designed the program.

- Four CMU students are working on 5 different projects. They will have a report for us in September. They collected about 100 surveys re: visitor interest in Squirrel Hill during the June Night Market.

**Announcements**

- Helen Wilson promoted the Squirrel Hill Historical Society's new book, *Squirrel Hill: A neighborhood History*.
- Jean Binstock distributed flyers about educational outdoor programs sponsored jointly by Senior Connections and Venture Outdoors. These activities are FREE and designed to encourage people aged 50 and older to get out and move.

Meeting adjourned 8:53pm.

Respectfully submitted  
Barb Grover, Secretary