

Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition
Board Meeting
7:00 p.m., April 20, 2017
The Children's Institute
1405 Shady Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15217

MINUTES

Attendees:

Board: Jim Burnham, Vivian Didomenico, Rich Feder, Barb Grover, Steve Hawkins, Marshall Hershberg, Mardi Isler, Cindy Morelock, Lisa Murphy, Mary Shaw

Staff: Marian Lien, Executive Director

Guests: Dalia Belinkoff, SHUC Development Committee; Mary McGinley, Squirrel Hill resident; Alex Phillips, Dept. of City Planning; Ernest Rajakone, Office of Community Affairs, City of Pittsburgh; Helen Wilson, Squirrel Hill Historical Society.

Meeting began at 7:04 pm. Mardi moved and Cindy seconded a motion to approve the March minutes; unanimously approved.

Financial Report – 2016-2017: (see attached report for details)

Cash flow continues to be a problem: we are currently in the black but will need an infusion of cash in the next month to take us through the summer. The Treasures Dinner profits provide strong revenue through the late fall and winter. Our Challenge Grant will start in May this year and should provide reasonable revenue to maintain operating expenses for the next several months. The Development Committee is working on membership renewals. Dalia Belinkoff will assist with this effort.

Development Committee: (see attached report for details)

Board members are asked to commit funds to the best of their ability (for the board match, \$500 contributions are encouraged, lesser amounts will be applied to membership match total). Board giving deadline is April 28 for the Challenge Campaign. By May 2 a letter will be mailed to our current donors encouraging them to participate in the May 23 SHUC Day of Giving Challenge Campaign. Goal is that every donated dollar will be matched by the Board members.

Update on Downtown-Oakland-East End BRT project:

Discussion occurred on the City's Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) proposal presented at an April 3rd public meeting and previously discussed at the April 20, 2017 SHUC board meeting. Issues discussed were the location of the stations in Squirrel Hill, design of shelters, mini-ramps, bike parking, fare-paying stations, development opportunities, public input, and SHUC's involvement in these plans. Rich will create a statement

identifying SHUC's position on the BRT that will be circulated among the Board for comment. Additional discussion on this position will occur at our May 17 meeting.

Natural Environment:

Marian distributed a flyer about the Multi-Community Meeting on 4 Mile Run Watershed scheduled for Thursday, 4/2/17, from 7-8:30pm at the Jewish Community Center. Tim Duggan, who has been involved in preparing the City's Storm Water Control plans, will be the featured speaker.

Storm Water Control Issues:

- Schenley Park: possibly lower the pond prior to storm events so that it can accept more water during those events;
- Wightman School Park project: Storm water control is needed to make the park more usable and conversely in helping with the overall storm water issues. Concerns were raised about the safety of the equipment in the park and the possibility of closing the park down for awhile to remove that equipment;
- Electric cables under the streets in Squirrel Hill are a serious factor in solutions being considered to control storm water.

Planning for May 17 open board meeting:

Insufficient time to plan for an Open Board meeting by May 17 resulted in the need to postpone the Open Board meeting to early October. Discussion indicated that there is support for postponing the meeting. The multi-table information/issue format used last October worked well and probably will be used again. Marian will contact the JCC for availability of dates and space to hold this event.

Pedestrian-Bicycle Committee: (see attached report for details)

Healthy Ride will have a table at the April 23 Community Clean Up and at the June 17 Night Market. This provides an opportunity to inform our residents of the possibility of bike stations in Squirrel Hill and for residents to provide Healthy Ride with their views and/or concerns, without holding a separate event.

The committee is shifting some of their focus to pedestrian concerns (e.g., uneven sidewalks, non-existent sidewalks in some places, dangerous buckling for people with wheelchairs/strollers). Suggesting that residents living in the same block band together to hire a contractor to repair their sidewalks. This approach lowers the cost per household. Residents should be directed to contact Mardi and Cindy who have experience with this approach. They will write an article about this approach for the summer issue of the Squirrel Hill Magazine. The article will include a Flow Chart to help residents through the process of repairing sidewalks.

Commercial Development and Residential Quality:

- Duquesne Light Company (DLC) electrical system repairs: DLC needs to shut down the commercial district in sporadic spots for 2 weekends. As a result of Mardi's meetings with managers and owners of restaurants in the business district, DLC agreed to shut down power and closing streets on a Sunday evening from 9 pm through 1pm Monday—the preferred time of the businesses. Duquesne will be replacing the electrical system to prevent power outages in the future, a serious problem recently. Exact dates should be known by May 1.
- Pedestrian safety at 5-points intersection: Mardi met with Corey O'Connor and Amanda Purcell, Municipal Traffic Engineer City of Pittsburgh, Department of Public Works, to identify some possible solutions to making crossing at the Forward/Pocusset/Murray 5-point intersection safer for pedestrians.
- Sustainable Restaurant Project: Uncover Squirrel Hill received a grant to help our restaurants become more sustainable, including funding to help with equipment replacements to decrease their use of water and electricity. Restaurants will be evaluated by the nonprofit Sustainable Pittsburgh. Advertisement expenses are included in the Grant and will be spent on ads in Squirrel Hill Magazine. The committee is researching 'Green' Wines to recommend to the restaurants. Nine neighborhoods are currently participants in this program.
- Sewer project: between Shady and Murray on Darlington. Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority is working on ways to have sewer lines connect to the Darlington Sewer Line.
- Memory Garden Planting - May 20 9am: Volunteers needed.
- Post Office Parklet: Weeders and Seeders will be planting and maintaining annuals this spring. Artist will be installing the tiles for the cubes, hopefully by June 17. A \$1800 grant from Grable Foundation was given to help purchase the tiles from Europe for installing on the cubes.
- Sidewalk complaints along Forbes between Murray and Shady: Corey O'Connor will bring leaders of the Department of Permits, Licenses and Inspections (PLI) to walk the area to identify merchants who could be fined.
- Smoke Stack at Murray/Forward corner: No current solution to this problem. Will cost \$100,000 to remove the stack. An old power plant lies underneath and issues related to that situation are unclear. Maeburn Street in the area is caving in. The city maintains it does now own the property, the Krifchers who own the private property adjacent maintains the land is the city's.

- Residential Parking Permit Program: Since the city is reevaluating this program, we will wait to move forward on this issue on Denniston. Alex Phillips will keep us updated.

Magazine Report Spring-Summer Issues: (see attached report)

A new intern is focusing on Social Media issues. Four new advertisers have committed to the summer issue. Each Committee Chair should send updates to Britt for the SHUC Snapshot pages.

Executive Director's Report: (see attached report for details)

Because our website was hacked, it was down for 2.5 weeks. The public comments sections has been disabled. The public can still send comments to info@shuc.org

All Committee Chairs are encouraged to send information about their activities to Britt and Marian for the website.

Community Pride Day Event. At the April 23 Community Clean Up, we will have a table designated for the Public Art Contest, “Belonging”. Volunteers and others will be encouraged to use our paper and markers to make posters that reflect our welcoming ALL people to our community and city. The posters will be judged and the winner will receive \$3000 and about 15 additional prizes of \$100 will be awarded. SHUC will receive \$400 mini-grant for our participation.

Squirrel Hill may be a focused case study by New American Economy, a Washington policy think tank of mayors and business leaders interested in the impact of immigrants on our nation's economy. Squirrel Hill is being considered because of our wide immigration dominance in the city (1 in 4 are foreign born currently (from 2016 numbers), crime rate has decreased 86% since the year previous.

Announcements:

The Litter Patrol sent around a sign up sheet for volunteers to staff the SHUC table at the April 23 clean up and the June 17 Night Market.

Ernest from the Mayor's office announced the following City programs:

- Summer Youth Employment
- Summer Jobs Program Jobsforsummer.org
- 2700 kids in Pittsburgh Summer Opportunity Program For a full schedule go to: PGHsummer17.com
- PRC Household Chemical Collection – Go to PRC.org for details of dates, time, location, and what will be collected.

- Helen Wilson from the Squirrel Hill Historical Society: Their book, *Squirrel Hill: A Neighborhood History*, will debut its availability for purchase at our June 17 Night Market
- Congratulations to Marian on her appointment to the Human Relations Commission.

Next meeting May 17, 7-9 pm at the Children's Institute as usual.

Meeting adjourned at 8:57pm

Written Committee Reports Follow

Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition Board Meeting, April 20, 2017
SHUC Committee Chair Updates

SHUC Development Committee Notes, as submitted by Chair Erika Strassburger

1. Discussed possibility of co-chair for committee
2. Events
 - Need for chairs/coordinators for each event: SHUC Night Out, Lunar New Year (Marian is close to finalizing person she has in mind for this role), Night Markets, other events held
 - Need calendar of events, timeline
 - Idea to partner with Citiparks, Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy for event in park. Westinghouse memorial BBQ? Schenley park hike with info session on Panther Hollow Lake/4 Mile Run work? Citiparks movie night? Colleen to investigate
 - Wightman park community fundraiser kickoff this summer
3. Monthly renewal letters
 - Dalia to assist and help drive the office work associated
4. Challenge campaign
 - Our “day of giving” will be May 23rd
 - Board challenge match: Rich will send email to board, follow up at board meeting. Development Committee members will then follow up by phone (use google doc to track progress). Due date for board commitments: April 28th. Board encouraged to give \$500 now as part of challenge, or a different at a level they are comfortable with later to help match
 - Erika to revise old letter and send to committee for input
 - Letters sent May 2nd, with committee members to assist ahead of time with envelopes, etc.
 - We will then follow up to SHUC members with social media campaign to build momentum
5. Need for more quantitative analysis of members and money raised for next development committee meeting, create goals for next fiscal year
6. \$400 grant for Sprout Fund 100 days community art project as part of Sunday’s cleanup event

SHUC Litter Patrol Report, as submitted by Chair Barb Grover

1. On April 2, two groups of volunteers from the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, picked up litter in our neighborhood. One group focused on the playground on Hobart Street, the Verizon building, Murray Ave between Hobart and Pocusset, Pocusset between Murray and Wightman, and Wightman between Pocusset and Hobart. A second group picked up litter at the Wightman School Playground. Richard Goldszer met each of the groups, provided them with supplies and directions as to where to pick up litter. Litter was placed in the city trash bins at the park and along Murray.
2. On April 8, five volunteers from 1000+ organization, picked up litter along the 376W ramp on the Lifetime Auto Center side and the large grassy area on the left side of the ramp where the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy Garden is located. This trash was left by the Garden and the city’s Public Works Department picked up the bags. Barbara Jones met these volunteers, provided them with supplies and instructions.

3. I checked these areas on April 14 and all areas had less litter, but more litter has accumulated since those dates and we will assign people to these areas on April 23.
4. Plans for April 23 clean up are fairly complete. Volunteers are confirmed for registration and general operations. I'll be distributing a Sign Up sheet at the Board meeting for assistance at the SHUC Table and for June 17 Night Market. This Community Clean Up is part of our commitment for the Beautify Our 'Burgh grant.
5. Love Your [Resilient] Block Grant: Our Video Competition, Every Litter Bit Matters! Is about to be launched. Marian, Rita and I have completed the entry form, Release Form and general rules for the competition. July 10 is the deadline for entries of a 2-5 minute video that will educate viewers about the impact of litter on the environment, health, beautification, and litter's relationship to storm water control. We will have 3 categories; pre-teen, teen, and adult. Winners in each category will receive \$100. Details will be on our web page, FaceBook Page and other social media. Please publicize this competition. The official awards ceremony for the winners will be held at the September Night Market We are seeking 9 judges (3 for each category). If you know anyone who might be a knowledgeable and willing judge, please contact Barb (barbgrover1@gmail.com) or Rita (ritabotts@yahoo.com) with names and contact information.
6. On May 21, a group from the First Unitarian Church will be doing a litter clean up somewhere in the neighborhood. Details are being worked out now.

The SHUC Pedestrian-Bicycle Committee's monthly meeting (4/17/2017), as submitted by Chair Marshall Hershberg

1. Meeting with Healthy Ride – Marshall Hershberg reported on a March 22 meeting of Committee representatives and SHUC leadership with the leadership of Healthy Ride/Pittsburgh Bike Share (“H.R.”), which followed up on earlier contacts on the subject of introducing bike-share stations into Squirrel Hill. H.R.’s reaction was enthusiastically positive. SHUC and the Committee will support and facilitate their process of encouraging awareness of H.R. in the neighborhood and for residents/visitors to provide ideas and concerns to them regarding their general vision and goals, as well as their thoughts to-date about entering S.H. H.R.’s outreach process in S.H. will consist of appearances for information and feedback at several planned events here, including: April 23rd Clean Up Day; meeting with representatives of Uncover Squirrel Hill; the May “open” SHUC Board meeting; the June 17 Night Market.
 We expect that, as a result of this outreach and further contact with SHUC/the Committee, and H.R.’s analysis, 1-3 bike-share stations will be installed in appropriate S.H. locations, beginning in Fall 2017.
2. Bus Rapid Transit – Discussion of response and reactions by community members to information provided by the Port Authority and the City of Pittsburgh at two meetings on a proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system between Downtown and Oakland, with possible extensions to S.H. and Highland Park. This proposal also offers potentially significant economic development near the locations of their proposed “stops.” Rich Feder reported that reaction of the attendees was quite positive, as was also reflected in a recent article about these meetings in the Pgh Post-Gazette. The Committee expressed its support for the proposal, and a draft position statement of SHUC Board support of BRT, including the S.H. and Highland Park extensions, will be presented for Board consideration at its April meeting.

3. Submission to City Capital Budget – Discussion of the Committee’s and SHUC’s proposed submission to the City’s capital budget process regarding S.H. (in-and-through) bicycle routes and infrastructure for 2018 and beyond. The submission builds on the work and interactive bike routes map previously discussed by the Committee and by the SHUC Board (at last month’s meeting). The submission also includes request for the Public Works-based engineering study required to evaluate and cost-estimate our much-discussed bike route alternatives in the F-M-P-Greenfield area.
4. Pedestrian Issues – Discussion of pedestrian issues of current and ongoing concern, particularly “unwalkable” sidewalks – uneven; in disrepair (or non-existent in some places); snowy/icy in Winter. Attendees suggested the value and efficacy of a neighborhood/”community organizing” approach whereby a group (or groups) of residents could work together to bring specific problems in their areas to the attention of City/DPW and to private property owners responsible for unsafe sidewalks. This and other creative approaches may also help achieve 3rd party funding support for particular projects. The Committee reaffirmed its commitment to pedestrian as well as bicycle safety and accessibility, offered to help facilitate a resident-focused approach to particular projects, and requested names of additional residents to help us increase and improve our focus on pedestrian issues.
5. Next Committee Meeting – Thursday, May 11.

Magazine Committee update, as submitted by Editor Britt Reints

- We collected \$8,890 in March
- 60% of Spring Issue already paid
- Currently sold \$10,265 for Summer Issue
- Already sold \$8,555 for Fall Issue
- Added 4 brand new advertisers
- Hired an intern from Pitt writing department for summer semester

Other Communications Updates

- Started scheduling social media - Facebook, Twitter & Instagram
 - NEED CONTENT! If your committee is working on a project or attending meetings, let me know. Send an email to breints@shuc.org.
- Still updating website, currently rebuilding each committee’s page with personalized sidebar to include relevant calendar and posts.
 - Please add all committee meetings to the calendar on shuc.org so they will show up on the main page of the website and your committee page.
 - If you would like to update the overview of your committee, send to breints@shuc.org.
 - Please email me the list of your committee members.
- Had a blog post with a summary of the BRT meeting & shared on social media.

No April updates were received from following SHUC committees:

Commercial Development and Residential Quality
 Gateway
 Master Planning
 Parks and Open Spaces

Education
Citizens Patrol
Finance

Executive Director's Report and Updates, submitted by Marian Lien

Website and virus update: It seems Wordpress plug-ins were not updated in a timely fashion and made the website vulnerable for “blunt force attacks” from hackers. Cost to the repair from Pair Network (our host) and Steve Cohen (our web master) comes to \$610 and renewal of our domain name www.shuc.org with Network Solutions for another 9 years is \$355. Britt will be systematically updating the plugins weekly as well as purging spam and running live link updates daily. As a precaution, we have disabled public comments for the time being. The public can still inquire about committee work via info@shuc.org as well as email chairs directly.

Going forward, I will convene the Tech task force and discuss best alternatives including less expensive means to secure the website from further such issues.

We received \$200 from Port Authority in March for our help in convening a public meeting on BRT.

As one of 14 partners with Sprout Fund and the city, we will be encouraging our community members to participate in the “Belonging” community art project, to positively affirm the notion that we all belong. Residents of all ages in Allegheny County to submit original works of art that express the concept of “belonging.” The grand winner will take home \$3000 cash prize and 15 will receive honorable mentions of \$100 each. The Grand winner’s work will be converted into yard art and reproduced for free distribution through the partner’s offices. Residents in Squirrel Hill can come out on April 23rd (10am to 2pm) and participate in Squirrel Hill Community Pride Day. Work to clean up and beautify the physical aspects of our neighborhood, then stay (eat a Jimmy John sandwich donated by European Wax), meet and get to know neighbor and maybe try your hand artistically to express why you think Squirrel Hill is a neighborhood that welcomes all its friends and neighbors and sincerely practices inclusion. We will be receiving \$400 mini-grant for this partnership.

Sustainable Restaurants of Pittsburgh: Uncover Squirrel Hill successfully gets Squirrel Hill to be next neighborhood on list. Grant to encourage restaurants to practice sustainable methods as well as monies to carry out the grant. SHUC has been asked to assist (and paid) to promote (via SHM) as well as assist with Asian Restaurants to sign on. Ongoing.

Interviewed by New American Economy, a policy think tank in Washington D.C. They are interested in featuring Squirrel Hill as case study of immigration and low crime relationships. As of 2016, SH is now 1 foreign born in 4. Crime continues to drop in SH by another 87% since last year.

Invited to be on panel at Robert Morris University (600 Saudi students) to speak on opportunities for immigrants in the city, particularly Squirrel Hill. Expounded on the diversity found in the neighborhood as well as low crime, beautiful green areas, close proximity to the employer groups, universities, UPMC research and hospital systems et al.

Working with volunteer Bobbie Marks to send out member renewals.

Meetings in March/April:

3/22 – Healthy Ride Office to discuss two share stations in the fall

3/22 –PCRG update on BRT and extension to East End

3/24 – Anupama Jain of Inlusant, a Squirrel Hill resident who'd like to do some event
volunteering and neighborhood "Togetherness"
3/24—GSPIA internship panel
3/30—SHUC Night Out @Northwood Realty
4/3—BRT Public Meeting @Children's Institute
4/5—RMU's Immigrants in Pittsburgh panel
4/6—Ryan Ricarte, Mellon Foundation
4/11—Jennifer Hribar/WescoBank
4/13—Bayer Nonprofit Wordpress class