

Troy Hill Citizens General Meeting 4/10/19

Welcome and General Updates: Patrick Duffey

Patrick: Thanks everyone for coming. We released a new newsletter. Please grab one on your way out, it mentions a couple highlights. We were approved for a City Steps Grant and we will have an events committee that you can see Abby Vanim about.

We're starting community gardens up again this year. You can have a plot to grow vegetables! See Lenore in the back or let us know and we can get you set up.

Northside Leadership is looking for 12th graders who do community service. **[Post meeting update: now past deadline to apply].**

Third annual house tour is June 8th—you'll hear more about that later.

Troy Hill Citizens has two volunteer events coming up. On Saturday April 27th we will be doing tree planting. Meet at the Lookout Street garden at 9 am. Then, tentatively, we will have a community garden day on April 20th at 10 am. **[Post meeting update: both events have already occurred]**

Does anyone have any questions pertaining to Troy Hill Citizens before we turn it over to the Parks Committee? Also, don't forget to sign the sheet

Question: Why is the office never open?

Patrick: Well, we all have day jobs. We typically don't have office hours. The best way to contact us is through email or to come to these meetings. Unfortunately, we don't have the capacity to do office hours.

Question: Citizens Park lighting update? **[Post meeting update: All park lights are now back on!]**

Patrick: Pat Campbell is dealing with the city to get lights for the Troy Hill Citizens park. The history is that we used to have a maintenance agreement with the city and we were paying for lights and utilities for the city. We are waiting for a response on the timeline for replacement.

Question: What is going on with the sidewalk cave in behind Cowley Rec Center?

Patrick: Yes, it's been 311'd and it is on the list to be worked on. There is a hole and it's currently covered with plywood.

Question: Does anyone know Nelson Tree Service?

Answer: Apparently they were on the roads. They were trimming trees, according to Henry, at the behest of the Western PA Conservancy. We don't have any more info.

Patrick: Before we get into anything else, here is Kirk Rys. He is running for school board. He just wants to introduce himself and remind everyone about the upcoming election.

Hi, I am Kirk Rys. I am running for school board. I just want you to be informed. Tuesday May 21st is the election. Educate yourself on the four of us—you'll be well-served with any of the four people running. I will stick around after the meeting but I have to leave a bit after 7 so I left some materials.

Henry P.: Is there a candidate forum?

Kirk: Yes, A+ is doing one on April 24th.

City of Pittsburgh update with Molly Onufer:

Molly: Hi everyone, I am your community liaison for the city. Couple announcements:

- Park Rangers program: We have park rangers in the bigger parks. We are starting stargazing parties. They are running April through October.
- Christmas Tree Recycling Program: They collected 21 tons of pine mulch and it's being given away for free on Saturdays during April in Highland Park to get free mulch. While supplies last so go sooner rather than later!
- City-wide public safety meeting will be Wednesday the 17th at the Teamsters Temple in L-ville. Dinner is included, topic will be recognizing and reporting hate groups and extremism.
- Learn and Earn: Age 14-21 can work over the summer and they gain some workforce skills. Open to any youth in Allegheny County. We're also looking for placement sites. If you're looking for someone to help at your workplace, you can contact us. Jobs4Summer.org
- Census: Are we all familiar with this? Next one is 2020. It's very important. It determines representation in DC and determines money from the federal government. They all rely on this data. The census is hiring field and office positions for this. Go to 2020census.gov/jobs or 1 855 JOB 2020.
- Housing Opportunity Fund: We have a fund that is operated out of the URA from the affordable housing task force. What does affordability mean to you? We have four programs that will help people buy and stay in their homes or rental properties. Down payment and Closing Cost Assistance fund is the first one up and running. You can receive \$7,500 for closing costs and down payment. They're having a celebration at the end of the month. It'll be a resource fair. April 30th from 5:30 – 7:30 at 412 Blvd of the Allies.
- Please take a business card and sign up for our news letter! And follow us on Social Media.

Update from our City Councilwoman, Darlene Harris:

Darlene: I probably have more landslides than any other council member. I've been getting a number of calls on landslides. I heard calls about 20 units being built on Gardener Street—and I want the city to make sure that the hill will support that. The hill is sliding and once it starts that's it.

Patrick: For 1300 Gardener Street, we do have a regular dialogue with the developer and owner. They've been in City Planning and they are working on it. We're keeping in the loop but from our standpoint they are going through the permitting city planning dept. It's 20 units, 1 bedroom.

Darlene: I'll be watching if I see anything coming up through the permit department. I don't want to get anyone stirred up before the City tells you what they're going to do with Cowley, which I had \$120k sitting there for 12 years. Oh, and I'm running for my seat on city council again. There were two guys who were out there and they're out so it's just me and two other guys.

Q Crowd: There is a lot of traffic on Rialto, people speeding up Rialto and speeding on Rialto.

Darlene: I had the buses and trucks sign put up. I report the buses and trucks I see. Please watch for numbers of vehicles. We have had the police sitting up here. If there is a time of the day that is worse we can get a traffic officer sitting up here. We used them at the Firehouse and they even ticketed a biker! I like to have motorcycle cops.

Henry: I see lots of traffic between 3 and 5 pm on weekdays. They are usually contractors leaving and headed out to the suburbs. I could even name a few companies.

Darlene: Yes, I can get a cop up there. And give me the names of the companies. Traffic is its own little entity, and they know me real well.

Question: I'm seeing cyclists riding on Lowrie with no lights, dark clothing, riding on the sidewalk. I almost got hit on my ramp.

Darlene: I get brochures with laws in it for bikers and hand them out. My husband will scream out the window at them. I know they're not supposed to hit the bikes but I don't care if it's a motorcycle or a bike or truck... then... [trails off] Bikes are allowed to ride on the street.

Henry: Bike Pittsburgh has a light giveaway! We could try to do that. That could solve part of the problem.

Patrick: If you have any other questions for Darlene, please stick around to the end of the meeting.

Cowley Recreation Center Update: [Post Meeting Update: All audience requests were submitted to the city, THC waiting for replies as of 5/12/2019]

Molly: I'm passing around a signup sheet. We will send notes, updates, etc. Tonight we are talking about demolition strictly, no design.

Chris Weinstein, Assistant Director of Public Works

Joe Attatori Jr, Associate Project Manager

Kas Pelligrini, Architect with the City

Grant Gitland, Assistant Chief of Staff for Mayor

Review building condition and discuss optimization:

Built in 1939. Last face lift in 1980s. Condemned by Allegheny County Health Department. We hired a contractor to look at all city buildings and make recommendations for all buildings. Our inspectors won't even go in due to safety issues. [some questions about photos themselves, Bean wants to know why the walls can't be saved.]

The rehab cost is just too much. We want to create a new facility that is going to meet the values of the community at this time.

Discuss things that can be salvaged:

It is recommended that we salvage the stone work. All the inscriptions, etc. They will also salvage the gym floors. There are some really cool copper signs from when it was built. There is a wall mosaic too, banners, etc. There are various other pieces of equipment. Is there anything else you can think of that we should save?

Bean: Where did the gym free-weights go?

Answer: They were likely repurposed to another rec center.

Demo process:

We are currently in engineering. The first floor is below the street and serves as a retaining wall so it is a complicated demo. Next, we will turn off utilities and cap the utilities and get demo permit. Demo itself will take 12 to 18 weeks, in fall. We don't want to interfere with spray parks. Mitigation efforts include noise, air quality, pest control, safety, etc. 9 am to 6 pm is the noise window. They're tenting the building for dust suppression. The contractor will not crush bricks on-site either. We are hiring an exterminator. A fence will be installed around the building during work. There will be an engineered slope for the retaining wall. Contractor is Dappolonia.

Demo funding:

We have 1.7 million total. \$280k is separate for demo alone.

General Cowley Recreation Center Q&A:

Patrick: Is there any way to share all the photos from the building in case people have forgotten and want to refresh our memories?

Question: What does salvage mean?

City Answer: We'd like to re-use these materials in the Cowley facility, pending design.

Question: Can the gym floor be a gym floor again?

City Answer: It's in rough shape and it's cost prohibitive. We can use it for lots of other things. The auction site is Dovedeals.com.

Question: Is it going to be the same footprint?

City Answer: We're not moving fields or spray parks around. So same size or smaller.

Question: There is a current shift behind the park now!

City Answer: We're asking the contractor to do core sampling. We're having an engineering study done to make sure it's safe.

Question: Is it possible to keep the foundation?

City Answer: I'd be concerned that the foundation would get damaged during the demo.

Ray: I don't think that building actually can't be salvaged.

Kas: One of the goals of the optimization plan is to also look at what the size of the building is. We can't fill it to occupancy like we did. This is more than we'll ever use. It's configured badly inside. We can make it more open, glassy, and flexible.

Darlene: Give me a break—I'll show you waste!

Kas: This is a beautiful building, it's served its purpose in the day, and now we need something that is right-sized for community and living.

Darlene: We still need bathrooms. And why don't we have senior center there? And a cafeteria for where we gave out lunches? This neighborhood hasn't downsized so I don't see why....

There has been money to put a new roof on when there was only damage in the gym and the city didn't do it. I had \$150k, it's still sitting there. The gym floor was brand new.

Henry: We used to have a population of 7,400. Now we have 2,000.

Darlene: What about spring hill?

Henry: There are less people.

Penny: My husband was a coach there, until the city abandoned it. We used it. I think we need to have a meeting separate from these general meetings.

Molly: Yes, we had a design-related meeting but we can continue to have more meetings.

Lenore: Isn't it true that new contraction now would be more energy efficient, etc? If you're looking at it?

City Answer: Yes, per city standards.

Molly: We've already talked about bringing in Spring Garden, Spring Hill, etc.

Grant: To go back, the City is making a 1.7 million commitment to make the facility work for the community. Prior to a year ago, we didn't have a decision on this. We are not rebuilding facilities like this. We have a lot of money and we want it to be nice.

Henry: We have a great opportunity.

Patrick: The past is the past and we don't have a time machine. The discussion is how we can move forward, what can we salvage. I understand that people are upset. Arguing about it will do nothing to move forward with this opportunity. We have money and we have the chance to make it what we want. The frustration is not productive.

Joe: Who has the newest facility? Greenfield?

City Answer: No, that was a rehab.

Question: Are there any areas that have a new building in the last five years that we can see?

Grant: We're really looking at Hill District as another spot for this. Used for private events, it will have a different use. These are the first two that we are doing.

Question: What does Greenfield still have?

City Answer: Gym, fitness center, etc.

Grant: This is one of two very big projects.

Kas: We have more square footage than we need. We have to reduce the square footage, and other resources that we can share.

Grant: If we build a nice place, people will come here. Spray park already gets people outside. We're going to have a tough time getting back to the way it was in the 30s and 40s with the senior center, etc.

Joe: I understand that we can't rehab, but I want to know what 1.7 will get us. It doesn't seem like we'll get a lot.

Penny: I think there are people up here who would help to staff it. Maybe not all of it but some of it.

Molly: Yes, we will program around this building.

Darlene: If you take one of the positions out of the 5th floor... or 3rd floor... we could afford to staff it!

Lindsay: If there is a fall demo and all winter is that site empty ground, are you going to stabilize the site over winter during freeze/thaw? Plant anything?

City Answer: Yes, we'll work with the engineers for this.

Question: Has it been tested for asbestos?

City Answer: Oh yes, there is lots of it. The contractor will test again.

Question: Getting back to salvaging, can we get a couple people to go in and look for things?

City Answer: It's a safety hazard.

Darlene: What, is the roof going to fall in?!

City Answer: Yes that is a possibility.

[meeting dissolves in chaos... :)]

Steph: For the road, and big trucks leaving for demo and materials, are there going to be restrictions to Troy Hill/Goettman?

City Answer: Road restrictions will be minimum, just right around the building. The roads have to be possible to the neighborhood.

Pastor Ann: Goettman street itself... when you do the land study can you look... lets be very careful. Thinking about damages from landslides?

Question: Why the Cowley name?

Answer: Darlene knows the story but she won't tell it. (she doesn't know)

Question: Why don't we gut it and do abatement and then look at it to see if we can see if we can salvage it?

Darlene: So you really don't want to hear what the community has to say. You just want to come in and knock down the building!

Molly: We will get the next meeting together. We will continue working with the troy hill citizens group.

PGH Parks: Listening Tour

Director of Community Projects

This is a great segway to this presentation because we're looking at we really do not have a ton of resources for our parks and rec system. That really speaks to the discussion we were having. This presentation is about the parks and rec system. What we know, what we think we need, where we go next.

We're working with the city. We are glad to have our DPW people here too. As questions arise, we should have people to answer those.

[message from the mayor video]

Each of you received a survey, which I hope you take the time to fill out. There are a couple of things to note. Please give us your contact; we'd love to stay in touch. That info also helps locate where in the City you live so we have accurate data for different areas. Front is system as a whole, and the back is questions about specific local parks. You can take it home or you can do the survey online!

Every park has a story! Cliffside Park in the Hill was re-done; they should look and feel as good as possible. We're gathering data and public input. We're partnering with Public Works too. What are the individual neighborhood parks? We've had over 100 meetings! We want an investment strategy that is open and transparent and ethical.

The Parks Conservancy is a non-profit; the city is also responsible through a couple offices, like Public Works, Budget, Public Safety, etc. Public Works really carries the lions' share of the responsibility. The City relies on the tax general fund, Allegheny county regional asset district,

grants, sponsorships, etc. The Parks conservancy receives grants, corporate gifts, donations, endowment, and fundraising. The Parks does capital projects, restoration, public events, etc.

Parks Conservancy has raised over \$122 million, active in 22 parks, 20 major projects, etc! They're allowed to work anywhere in the system—there are 165 parks in the system!!

Hays Woods was recently acquired by the URA and will become a park!

The purpose of this whole endeavor is to restore all parks to a high level of quality. High quality means restoration, modernizing facilities, maintaining all assets in a timely manner.

We looked at a couple other cities who tackled this issue: NYC, Philadelphia, and Minneapolis.

Characteristics that rose to the top of previous plans are: equity, children, community, water quality, etc.

First, we look at park needs based on quality. Then we looked at community context. A capital project is defined by the city as \$50,000 with lasting impact of 5 or more years. Most parks do not have a master plan or community vision. To just sustain the parks at current level: \$125 mil. District 1: is about \$14.7 million. Overall, \$400 million capital need overall.

More than 50% of parks rate as Fair or Poor condition. There are basic upgrades, partial makeovers, that are 40%. The city is spending less than half of what it should be on maintenance for the parks. It's creating a lot of system stress.

Next, we looked at neighborhood conditions. People, community, environment, health. We created a "walk shed" – 10 minute walk to park or recreation facility. Each walk shed is a little different! Larger parks have walk sheds that are broken up by neighborhood. With all the data, they created a score. They can rank all the locations in the city!! I won't reveal that tonight because we are still gathering surveys because we want your input! There is objective data and then there is your needs and input. It will be blended together to create a Priority Matrix. We will have that in June!!

Visit the site: www.pittsburghparks.org/listening-tour

Question: Do you know what % of the city that is covered by the walk shed?

Answer: 84%

Question: What about if it was 15 minute walk shed?

Answer: There are a couple pockets. If you include greenways, cemeteries, etc, we may get closer, but we are just looking at parks. We're going to add greenways to at least look at the data.

Kyle: I think this is a great analysis. The data is awesome.

Sam: Troy Hill should be top of the list. We have high poverty, no parks, etc!

Answer: Yes, we will definitely look at that.

Question: What about the Gardner Park, which is just a baseball field?

Answer: We're hoping to group by usage, size, etc.

Question: Is there a convo about the size of the park and what the programming use would be?

Answer: Yes, the open space plan that the city did 10 years ago, they are making recommendations. We're also looking at places where there are small parks that are in close proximity, how can they be considered as a unit so we aren't duplicating? That's another layer. This is the first scan of the system as a whole. We welcome your thoughts.

Question: 38 years ago we played tennis on Spring Garden Ave. That park is bad! What can we do about that?

Answer: Great question. First, put that in the survey, that specific park along with the history. The city has a planning process and we're going into it right now and if there are immediate needs you see to get the ball rolling, let's do it. In places where citizens are active, there are real changes taking place. I would invite you to mark that you want to get more involved on the form. We're creating a Parks Champions program. We've had many people say that they want to be involved and we are definitely going to use that.

DPW: Is that Michael Flynn? My name is Keith Younger, a foreman out of Riverview, we take care of 39 parks.

Question: What about kids from 10 to 15? They cause problems because they have nothing to do.

Answer: That's a great point. We are actually doing a lot in the process to work with teens and middle schoolers. We are visiting schools. The reason we highlighted youth and seniors is that youth includes that age range: 18 and under. Please put it on the survey!

Question: Where does Riverview park rank on the list?

Answer: I can't tell you how it shakes out and it's not finalized. In terms of regional parks, it's def the park that has the least investment and highest need.

General Info: We've had events but they are not well-advertized. Is there a way to get programs up there in the summer and then to advertise? I can't honestly speak to park programming and advertising, but that's a great point. One thing we lack is that there isn't a one-stop shop for everything in the city. That's another need. I don't know the answer.

Comment: the North side Chronicle is a great resource! Also put up signs in uni-mart ☺