

## Neighborhood Improvement Team Meeting

General Meeting, Railroad Book Depot

May 6, 2015, 6:30pm

City Staff Present: Joe Sbranti, Garrett Evans, Kolette Simonton, Fritz McKinley, Richard Abono, Kristen Pollot, Ron Nevels, Lollie Gutierrez, Celina Palmer, Laura Wright, Maria Aliotti, Lisa Vela, Jill Hecht, Gina Haynes, Sergeant Tom Haase, Myla Rivers

Mayor: Pete Longmire

City Treasurer: Nancy Parent

CAC Members: Dennisha Marsh, Judy O'Connor, Stewart Gregerson, Larry Wirick and J. Faye Fields

Planning Commission Members: Bruce Ohlson

Approximately 61 Residents Attended

INTRODUCTION – Garrett Evans, Asst. City Manager

- Welcome – thank you for coming and taking time to come to this meeting
- With the City and part of this community for 18 ½ years
- Downtown has changed tremendously since 1997
- Introduced CAC members and others at meeting
- Because of you telling us what works and doesn't work, and giving us your input, we are always able to improve
- We know we can always do better and we want to do that, but we need you to be our eyes and ears
- Notes are taken at these meetings, we follow up with your concerns and questions and we post meeting notes on our website
- After meeting Gina Haynes will take you on a guided tour of the new downtown park

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – Kolette Simonton

- Grew up here in Pittsburg
- Three parts to Economic Development: Business Retention, Business Expansion, and Business Attraction – all work in helping to keep and/or create jobs in this city
  - Business Retention – how do we keep businesses in our city that we already have

- Business Expansion – Work with Planning Department, brokers, potential business owners, etc. and become a “matchmaker” between businesses and developers/property owners
- Business Attraction – listen to find out which businesses would be a good fit for our community
- Help find tax incentive based programs for new businesses and/or developers
- Country Skilletts – new restaurant in Marina Building serves breakfast and lunch and open 7 days a week
- CreAsian – new restaurant in Vidrio Building, should be open May 30<sup>th</sup> and will have outdoor seating

#### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR/CITY ENGINEER – Fritz McKinley

- Grew up in Pittsburgh
- Oversees the different parts of Community Development ie: Engineering, Building, Planning

#### ENGINEERING (Design Division) – Richard Abono

- With the City for 14 years, 5<sup>th</sup> Generation Pittsburgh
- 7 different items we are currently working on
- John Buckley Square – new downtown park, will have playground, shade structures, big trees and an event facility in the middle for ice rink, weddings, etc.
- San Marco Community Park – South-East corner of San Marco Boulevard and Hwy 4, Discovery Builders will be developing this 6 acre park and will include a ball field, basketball court, exercise area, and a picnic area
- James Donolan Extension – bypass from Antioch to Pittsburgh, will take another 5-10 years to come up with the money to pay for it, need about \$55 million
- Railroad Avenue e-BART Station – clean diesel trains, station will be in the median of the freeway, trains to go to Antioch e-BART station or out to Pittsburgh-Bay Point BART Station
- Kiss-n-Ride lot – North/East corner of Railroad Avenue and Hwy 4, complimentary to e-BART station
- Railroad Avenue Pavement Rehab Project – Lindscheid Drive north to Bliss Avenue, will also include any ADA improvements or drainage improvements
- Pittsburgh Schools Safety Area Project- adding better flashing beacons at crosswalks to 8 locations at 6 schools, beacons are more effective at alerting drivers to cross walkers

## PLANNING – Kristin Pollot

- New Planning Manager
- In charge of maintenance and enforcement of the City’s General Plan of Zoning ordinances
  - Commercial
  - Residential
  - Industrial
- First stop for new developments, review new projects from homeowners all the way up to big developers
- Oversees the construction and development of items including but not limited to:
  - the area of Railroad Avenue for E-BART station which will be high density residential and commercial development
  - Multi-tenant commercial building under construction by Mi Pueblo
  - Solar Farm off of Pitt-Antioch Highway – approximately 100 acres, previously contaminated land, so this is a good use for this land
  - Gas Station zoned for San Marco @ Leland
- Works with the Planning Commission which is made up of 7 Pittsburg residents, appointed by City Council, who make land use decision and development decisions for the City. Planning Department will review the plans and make recommendations to the Planning Commission according to the plans
- Full Project Pipeline list online

## RECREATION CO-ORDINATOR – Lollie Gutierrez

- Can find her at the Senior Center
- Worked for City since 1997, involved in many activities and events since then
- In charge of planning and implementing programs for Seniors, families and youth
- Would like to hear new ideas of what you’d like to see in the Recreation Department, what kinds of activities, programs, etc.

## Garrett Evans

- There are many different things our Recreation Department oversees
  - Senior Center
  - Small World Park
  - Culinary Crawl
  - Car Shows
  - Fourth of July Fireworks
  - Kite Board Race – watersport on a board, with a kite, “new generation’s golf”
    - *Kite Bar* opening soon on the Marina
    - Owner is ranked #2 in the world for kite boarding

- Kite ramp installed at Riverview Park – worked with Kite Board Association to install it correctly
- *Kite Bar* will offer lessons and equipment as well as coffee and smoothies

#### ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS – Laura Wright

- This is the largest crowd in 12 years! Touched and honored by all of you being here tonight
- Sign-in sheet going around, please make sure you sign in
- We believe in “Team Pittsburg”
  - Takes everyone to work together
  - 250 of us and almost 68,000 of you
  - Call in for pot holes, graffiti, etc.
  - Use our GoGov online reporting system
  - Grab a flyer before you go which has important phone numbers for different City departments
- Garbage/Recycling
  - School programs
  - Pittsburg HS green challenge – teaches about recycling/sustainability, received an award through Sustainable Contra Costa
  - Junior High has a reusable bottles program
- Will have a bin at City Hall for the collection of unwanted/expired medicine
- Household Hazardous Waste
  - Free facility for you to drop off excess oil, paint, fats, oil, grease, and electronics
  - Open Thursday – Saturday 9:00am-4:00pm
  - Easy – you drive up and they will even remove it from your vehicle
- NPDES (National Pollution Discharge Elimination System), Storm Water Program – we monitor to make sure it’s just rain water
  - New garden at City Hall
  - Drought tolerant plants
  - Integrated plant maintenance – does not use pesticides
  - Water conservation
- Adopt-a-Spot
- Water education program
- Energy efficiency – LED Lights
  - PG&E lights all converted to LED, finishing up parks and streets
- LEA – Local Enforcement Agency
  - We do our own inspections
    - Transfer stations
    - Tires

- Safety Program – environmental compliance
- Cable/Wireless
  - Re-activating Community Access Channel called Delta TV
- In charge of many Facebook sites
- EOC – Emergency Operations Center
  - CERT – 6 week course to help citizens prepare for a catastrophic event and how to respond

#### GARRET EVANS

- We are very fortunate to have Laura for all of the things she is in charge of

#### DEVELOPMENT MANAGER FOR THE SUCCESSOR AGENCY – Maria Aliotti

- Been with the City for 13 years
- Oversees Successor Agency for the City of Pittsburg and its properties (previously Redevelopment Agency which was dissolved in 2012 by the State)
  - Originally started with 63 properties, still have 58 properties to sell
- Oversees CDBG funds – Federal funds to assist programs to improve the community, ie: St. Vincent de Paul Rotacare (free medical attention to those without medical insurance), Opportunity Junction (job training and placement), Code Enforcement, Infrastructure projects (construction of handicap ramps)
- Oversees Housing Authority
- Housing Rehab Program - low interest loans available for low income households for home improvements – see her

#### HOUSING AUTHORITY– Lisa Vela

- Run a Section 8 program which we currently hold 948 vouchers
- Three parts to Housing Authority
  - Section 8
  - VASH – Support for Homeless Vets, 160 vouchers, work directly with VA in Martinez
  - Homeownership Program – low income families that purchase their own homes, Housing help pay their mortgage
- Located at 916 Cumberland Street

Maria Aliotti – “feel good” Housing Authority Story

- Former Section 8 client from Afghanistan
  - single mother of 4 children ages 5-11 years old
  - no husband/father – killed in war
  - she encouraged her children to improve themselves and educate themselves as they were growing up
  - All graduated college, with one completing a PHD
  - Son purchased a home for her and the rest of the family and came back in front of City Council to say “Thank you!”

PITTSBURG ARTS & COMMUNITY FOUNDATION – NON-PROFIT FOUNDATION – Jill Hecht

- Shout out to CAC Commissioners
- PACF owns and operates Railroad Book Depot – all profits stay in the community
  - Book groups
  - Tutoring
  - School fieldtrips
  - Supporter of Bay Area Children’s Theater
- Focus on Literacy and Performing Arts
- PACF runs Art Shack at the Marina – year round classes – 31 Marina Blvd.
- California Theatre – take time to check it out, it’s a beautiful building, owned by the City, \$8 million renovation done
  - [www.PittsburgCaliforniaTheatre.com](http://www.PittsburgCaliforniaTheatre.com)
  - Pittsburg Community Theater – home theater company
  - Youth theater program – kids learn to sing, dance and act and then put on free performances
  - Lots of upcoming shows, musicals
- Farmers Market starting back up this Saturday morning, May 9<sup>th</sup>

POLICE DEPARTMENT – Sergeant Tom Haase

- Born and raised in Pittsburg
- Been with department for 16 years
- Has been involved with/in charge of – SWAT, Firearms, Code Enforcement, Training
- Shift change, May 8<sup>th</sup>, will be day time Patrol Sergeant
- Budgeted for 74 officers
  - Have a new Reserve Program – first time in his 16 years the PD has had Reserve police officers
    - Go through the same background checks and training as regular police officers

- When working, have their own patrol beat, except they don't get paid, it's all volunteer
    - 3 sworn in this past Monday
  - 4 new officers starting the Academy in July, 2 of which will be Reserves
  - 4 School Resource Officers
  - Traffic Division
    - 3 Motor officers effective Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup>
  - 4 K9 Officers in patrol – usually used as “float” cars, don't always have a specific beat area
  - CASE – works with Department of Justice to remove illegal fire arms from the street
  - New specialized division called MET Officer, Officer Spires will be host officer
    - Mental Health Evaluation Team – works with mental health clinicians and gets them from behind the desk, out into the field to help people
    - Goes to various parts of Contra Costa County, from Bay Point to Discovery Bay (not just Pittsburg) and provides resources to the mentally ill
    - Will track mentally ill citizens in all cities
    - Pittsburg is the first to offer this program
  - Code Enforcement
    - 1 officer will soon be dedicated to this division
      - Officer Lambert
      - Will assist/head up homeless encampment issues
    - Responds to Go Cities complaints
    - Addresses abandoned vehicles and blight issues as well as gives parking cites
- New online reporting – non-violent crime reports with no suspect information
  - City of Pittsburg Website under Police Department
  - Fill out the report and will get a report number
  - Once we see the report we will contact you if necessary
- New Citizens Police Academy
  - Must apply for it and meet specific criteria
  - 9 week program, 2 times a year
  - Learn about what police officers do and go thru to become an officer
  - Currently 15 students

*QUESTIONS/ANSWERS (answers marked with \*\* in blue)*

- How many of your sworn staff (Police Officers) speak a second language?

\*\*about 15% of the staff is fluent in a second language, whether it be Spanish, Tagalog, etc. Two officers even know sign language.

- There is a major drug problem, prostitution, car thefts, and burglaries in Sienna Court Senior Apartments. The manager is aware of what is going on, there is video footage, everyone knows and nothing is being done. We try to call 911 but don't always know the apartment number we're calling about and we are getting nowhere. Can we have police presence at the complex to deter this activity?

\*\*This is the first time I, personally, (Sgt. Haase) have heard about this. If I don't know, I can't address it. If you see things going on, call dispatch so an officer can be sent out.

- It's not just tenants, but it is also tenants' guests committing these crimes. These crimes usually happen between 2:30am-5:00am. There is a meeting set up with Capt. Raman on May 12<sup>th</sup> to talk about this.

\*\*(Sgt. Haase) I will be the Patrol Sergeant at the time of the meeting so I will try and attend the meeting also. We are currently putting a Bike Team back in place so that might be something they may be patrolling as well.

\*\*We will take this seriously and get this under control. (Garrett Evans)

- With the drought, what are the new requirements for watering, restrictions, including commercial properties?

\*\*June 15, 2015 City Council will consider what to do with upcoming rates. They will consider up-charging those who are wasting water. Currently you should not be watering your lawn more than a couple of times a week, there should be no run-off when watering your lawn, you should not water 48 hours after a rain. Los Vaqueros Reservoir has enough reserves to help us through the drought this next year, but next year we may have problems.

- There is graffiti on the sound wall of Canal Road at Bailey Road. Five years ago I originally called to get it removed and felt like I got the run-around. Pittsburg said it's not theirs and County said it's not theirs. Eventually it was removed but it seems to be a "habit" graffiti spot and it's coming back. In the interest of protecting property values, how can we keep that area from the continued graffiti? There is also a homeless encampment in that area that has been cleaned up, but the transients seem to be coming back.

\*\*For graffiti in Pittsburg our crews usually go out and take care of it right away. If it's not in our jurisdiction, we have contacts to get graffiti removed.



\*\*I've been (Sgt. Haase) dealing with the homeless problem for the past year, writing new policies, etc. Call us and we can help get the area(s) cleaned up. Per our new policy we can generally just post with a 72 hour notice, in which they have that time to remove their belongings and after 72 hours we have the right to clean up.

- Are carvings in the cement considered graffiti? I ride my bike over a swastika carved into the cement, every day.

\*\*Call us, let us know the location and we will get it removed. Fritz McKinley gave her his card so he can get it ground out.

- At the new park downtown, there is a lot of green going in. I hear there are also plans for Bocce Ball courts. Is this true and if so, how is this consistent with all of the green?

\*\*There is a proposal for a Bocce Ball area. It will go in a corner of the park and we are working out the design and construction of it.

- Vidrio tenants do not have the capacity to BBQ, where citizen lives. Will there be BBQ pits placed in the new park for people to use? Will there be a play structure?

\*\* No pits will go in for BBQing, the closest park will be Marina Park. You will be able to bring portable low gas or "clean" BBQs by the picnic tables. There will be a play structure geared for ages 3-7 years old.

- How do I request stop lights where stop signs are?

\*\*Fritz McKinley gave her his card. You can fill out a request and the traffic committee will take a look at the location, see what is out there and decide if it will be a necessity. We will need to find funding for new stop lights.

- Is the solar farm City owned?

\*\*Posco owns the land that the solar farm is on. It's about 115 acres farming about 20 megawatts of power. This is a privately owned company, called Hanergy. Hanergy is the largest Chinese manufacturing company in the world. Hanergy sells the renewable power to PG&E.

- Will lighting be on all night in the park?

\*\*Yes, some of the lighting will go off at dusk, but there will be limited lighting on all night.

- Will reclaimed water be used for irrigation?

\*\*The park is prepped to use reclaimed water and there is a connection for it to Marina Park, which is fairly close. We are working to get that water to the park, but in addition, we are using drought tolerant grass.

- Will the park have restrooms?

\*\*No, we'll have port-o-potties available for big events only.

- How will you monitor illegal activities at this new park? We already have problems with illegal activities at the Marina as it is.

\*\*If you see issues, call the police, call dispatch. If we don't know what is going on, we can't fix it.

As far as the Marina issues, we are fully aware and have recently started a Marina Patrol Unit, which is stationed at the Marina. But again, if you see something happening, then call the police.

\*\*We also have a great City camera system. 100 cameras placed throughout the community. We actually have someone monitoring the cameras when he is on duty.

- Are the plans for commercial development on the West side of town, by the BART station? Tons of new houses have been built, but you have to stand a half hour in line at Safeway because there is no place else to shop.

\*\*On the north side of Leland between Safeway and San Marco Boulevard there are about 14 acres of land that are zoned for commercial uses. There is also a Master Plan that has been approved where the current Pittsburg-Bay Point BART parking lot is located, which will include a parking structure immediately behind the Safeway shopping center and a mix of high density commercial and residential development where current surface lot is located.

\*\*Kolette meets with site selectors and assists in bringing them to private property developers for things such as this.

- How will you maintain the safety of the kite boarders with all of the boat traffic at the harbor?

\*\*The kite boarders navigate themselves through all of the traffic. They have good control of what they are doing. The owner is confident that it is a prime location for the business.

- What is the plan for the old John Mansville property? What about the north side of E. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street?

\*\*Majority of it is designated medium density residential with the E. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street portion designated commercial. The north side is designated Waterfront Commercial.

- If you put vines up along the sound walls it eliminates people being able to graffiti.
- How do I get information about the California Theater and what is going on in the City? People go elsewhere and spend their money because we don't really know what's new going on in the City. Web pages aren't always updated and not everyone has access to internet. Especially people on the Buchanan side of town need information. There is a sign on Railroad Avenue by the freeway, but it's really not in a great spot, there is not enough time to read it.

\*\*We will find other ways to get information out to the citizens, maybe create a “hot sheet” of what’s happening in the city.

- There are at least 3 people at the Marina that come on a consistent basis and let their dogs (Pitbulls) off their leash to swim, but when the dogs are done swimming they are free to run loose. One followed me and my dog all the way to the Art Shack and even though it didn’t do anything, I felt threatened. What can be done about that?

\*\*Let the PD know, call dispatch, let the Harbor Master know, call Animal Control, they may be able to set up patrol there on a regular basis and they can cite on the spot. Countywide, all dogs must be on a leash unless they are in designated areas where it is not required. The City will also look into posting signs.

- Can we spruce up the buildings behind La Veranda? Once the park is done people will have to look at these ugly buildings. They WERE nice businesses and it would be an ideal area for new ones.

\*\*The problem is getting these private property owners to spend their money to remodel. We will try and work with them to create better facades or paint the buildings.

- When will the kite board shop open?

\*\*The retail aspect of it will open mid-Summer, the coffee shop/smoothie aspect will open shortly after that.

- How do we find out about new businesses? Is there a way to improve advertisement? I get emails about other things but not new businesses or ribbon cuttings. Can you put a “hot sheet” out just like you do the sheet for City phone numbers?

\*\*The Chamber of Commerce also has an email blast and mailing blast. They are in charge of ribbon cuttings so getting on those mailings lists would be good. Country Skilletts is doing their Grand Opening in a couple of weeks and Creasian will do their Grand Opening during one of the Culinary Crawls.

\*\*There is also a Hometown Business Association through the Chamber of Commerce and for social media you can search #keepitlocalPittsburg

- Why is the traffic so bad on Railroad Avenue going northbound from Leland towards the freeway?

\*\*It all depends on the timing of the signals. We also can look at improvement of left and turn signals.

- Citizen gave “kudos” to City of Pittsburg. She has subscribed to the City’s mailing lists and feels they work great. She recommends everyone does it. Once you start getting items you can pick and choose what information you want to continue receiving or not. That’s how she knew a new recreation guide was coming out, when the City Council meetings are, when new

restaurants are opening, etc. Feels this will help immensely for those that have no idea what is going on in this City. Also feels her neighborhood is good so she is happy!

- What is the plan for the storage tanks by Willow Pass Road, the petroleum pond?

\*\*Shell Ponds – this is an ongoing project. PG&E purchased the land and found some contamination. They are in the process of getting it cleaned up safely.

- Does the City have a liaison for dilapidated fences? Sometimes neighbors don't want to up keep common fences or we aren't always sure of property lines.

\*\*You can use us as a resource for property lines although we are not always exact. We try to keep private matters private as far as common fences go but we may be able to help with the process of facilitating a conversation.

- Will there be parking at e-BART?

\*\*There will only be short term parking, no long term parking at this location right now, but we are looking at options.

\*\*The Railroad Avenue specific plans calls for an infill station, like for an urban area. There is Park-n-Ride parking on Bliss Avenue with 188 stalls and 6 Handicapped stalls. Eventually there will be a shuttle from there to e-BART.

- Why don't they use the old U-Haul location, on Bliss Avenue, for parking?

\*\*The Railroad Avenue specific plan will come to life there. We are currently looking at purchasing that property for high density residential.

\*\*Joe Sbranti – close meeting – we want to thank everyone for coming out tonight. We still have the walking tour portion of the meeting to the new downtown park. Your guide will be Gina Haynes, please ask any other questions about the park then. Mayor Longmire would like to say a few words.

\*\*Mayor Pete Longmire: Thank you for coming to this NIT meeting. We get good info to you and from you at these meetings. I want to commend the City staff for putting these meetings on to make Pittsburg the best City it can be. They get input from the citizens, take their own time for these meetings, conduct surveys, and look at best practices from not only the surrounding cities, but cities around the country. They do all that to make Pittsburg a good, affordable place to live and shop. The drug and prostitution problem at Sienna Court is not a new problem to this City. This information is not new. The police department knows how to deal with these issues and with the meeting coming up, they will deal with it. If you don't let us know about things, we can't fix them.