

Neighborhood Improvement Team Meeting

Pittsburg Library Community Room

Saturday, October 20, 2018, 10:00 - Noon

Elected Officials: Council Member Jelani Killings Alice Evenson City Clerk, Nancy Parent City Treasurer

Welcome - Garrett Evans, Assistant City Manager

- Been with the City since 1997
- Acknowledged Elected Officials
- Meeting is being Live Streamed by Council Member Killings
- Inquired about new community members attending meeting and discussed format of the meeting
- 72,600 or so residents in Pittsburg and only 275 employees, community members are the eyes and ears
- “Go Cities” app promoted to help report issues in Pittsburg
- Court Yard by Marriot to be located on corner of Railroad & Hwy 4
- Crime is incredibly low when you look historically at this community.
- Unemployment lowest in Pittsburg since 1990 at 3.4 percent for this community
- City will be doing General Plan Update and want to hear from you for vision the City of Pittsburg over the next 20 years

Staff Self Introductions:

Community Development Director Jill Hecht:

Hello, I'm Jill Hecht some of you I have met before. I am the community development director. community dev. is a fancy term for building planning & Eng. So, we have a Senior planner here Jordan Davis, City Engineer Richard Abono, Senior Civil Engineer Ron Nevels who handles infrastructure projects. We are here to answer any question you might have. I have been with the City since 2007 and we are here for any questions.

Bryan Ballardo Public Works Supervisor.:

Hello, I am Bryan Ballardo I am public works supervisor I oversee streets, City Buildings, street striping, street lights. I have been with the City for 22years and I live in this community as well.

Kolette Simonton Kolette Simonton Assistant Director of Economic Development and Recreation:

Hi, Kolette Simonton Assistant Director of Economic Development and Recreation, what that means is I deal with our business community as well as all the residents to help provide quality activities, events and again trying to help keep our businesses here and making this community stronger.

Laura Wright Environmental Affairs Manager:

I know a lot of you so I will try and keep this brief. As you know I handle a lot of varies environmental issues here in the city, whether it be garbage, recycling, energy, sustainability, I handle a lot of those

items, we are a local enforcement agency which is basically a fancy term, we are an agency on behalf of the state that oversees transfer stations and other illegal dumping, as well as items that related to health and safety I also oversee some of the safety for the City that relate to public works, I also work on the Emergency Operations Center to help coordinate, today I am going to ask that all of you take a flyer because we are going to start a thing called "Alert Pittsburg" so that we can notify you through phone, through email, though voice, during emergency events, street closures, traffic alerts, there are varies categories on the application that you can chose from. Lastly, I help coordinate storm water items as well there's a lot of various things that I handle this is just a small smidge.
Next up is Maria Aliotti.

Maria Aliotti Director of Community Services:

Hi, Good morning I am Maria Aliotti director of Community Services. I've been with the City for 16 years. Under Community Services we have the Successor Agency, Pittsburg Power Company, Housing Authority, and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), which is administered by Melaine Venenciano who our Senior Analyst is who is here and sitting in the back. If you have any interest in any of the services, we provide please come see us, we'd be happy to chat with you.

Lt. Galer:

Good morning everyone my name is Les Galer I'm a lieutenant, I've been with the Pittsburg Police Department for 16 years and I currently run the Investigations Division and our Code Enforcement Division. If anyone has any questions for us this morning, we will be happy to answer them for you.

Introduced Officer Cory Smith and Toni Baldazo

- Police Department's Facebook Page followers and NextDoor

Introduced Ralph Cones Public Works Supervisor

Audience Questions:

****What is the name of the website to follow the Police Department?**

Toni Baldazo: On Facebook you can search for Pittsburg Police Department and you can also find us on Instagram and twitter.

Garrett Evans: We are now done with staff introductions and are ready to answer any and all questions you guys might have for us.

****I've heard that City Park will be moving to the old Golf Course, is that true?**

We've heard that too, we get a lot of interesting ideas from the community and at times these ideas get spread out throughout the community. This idea is something that the community would have to look at when we work on the 2020-2040 General Plan and they would need to give their input on it. There is no proposal, no plan, no studies, nothing besides it being talked about organically throughout the community. I think this is something that will take many, many years to happen if it ever does. As of today, no this is not something we are looking at doing.

****What is the plan for the vacant land by Pentecostal Church on Central Avenue?**

The City has received a proposal for development of 57 Single Family homes on that vacant land. That project has been approved so you will probably see the developer out there grading within the next few weeks and construction of the homes should start shortly thereafter.

****what type of housing is it going to be?**

These homes will be Single family detached homes, similar to the project on Harbor and School Street by Pittsburg High School. They will have similar lot configuration, homes will be of similar size, and they will have the shared driveway.

****My question was regarding garbage pickup, I noticed that truck drivers are mixing garbage with recyclables, so what is the point of separating the two if they will go into the same truck on pickup day?**

Laura Wright: What you are witnessing are split body garbage trucks, these are new trucks that on one side of the truck store garbage and on the other it stores all the recyclables. When the truck goes into the transfer station after pick-up, they go through two stations one where they drop the garbage and the other where they drop the recyclable items. What they are trying to do with these split body trucks is minimize the number of vehicles on the road. As of now they are testing these split body trucks in our community to see if they will work in hopes that they can help reduce the number of vehicles on the road. Also, please stay tuned and be on the look out when you receive your garbage bills. If they end up switching to these split body trucks your pick day might change so you want to be on the look out for this type of change.

Bryan Ballardo: City staff works closely with Delta Diablo and Mt. Diablo Resource Recovery to coordinate street sweeping and trash pick-up services. At a meeting we held last week they were Proposing a street sweeping route change effective sometime around Feb 6, 2019. This change is due to these new split body trucks and the new routes they would be servicing. We do not like to have our street sweeping days to be the same as the garbage pick-up days and that is the reason, they are proposing to change the street sweeping schedule. They will notify those neighborhoods that will be affected by this change. If you do not receive a notification it is because your neighborhood was not affected by the change.

****When did the garbage company start using these split trucks, and are they on all City streets?**

Laura Wright: I want to say they bought these new trucks and started using them over a year ago, they are only being used on certain routes so not everyone has had the opportunity to witness their trash and recyclables being picked up by the same driver. This was a trial period for them because keep in mind that by splitting the truck they now have reduced spaced for both trash and recyclables. From what we have heard it seemed to have worked out for them.

Garrett Evans: They switched the fuel that is being used on these trucks, didn't they?

Laura Wright: Yes, they did. Just so everyone is aware the School District has converted their fuel to a cleaner burning fuel that is called Neste fuel it's a renewable fuel, it's not a diesel per say so the particulates should be reduced in our community eliminating strong odors, and less polluting. The

garbage company has switched over to this same type of fuel and it looks like the City will be converting their tanks as well.

****I'm not sure what the name of the project is but it's something that is going on in Alturas neighborhood, I was against this project and I just want to know if it was approved or not or what was the status?**

Jordan Davis: If I heard correctly you are asking about the properties on Alturas. There are 2 separate projects on Alturas that were both approved. In these projects, it is planned to build about a dozen houses along that stretch. The density those houses are being built at is less than what was previously there. We are hoping that this lower density will have a reduction in the amount of cars that could potentially be there. We are also hoping that a benefit of having this development there is, will have more eyes in the community to help with the illegal dumping that currently happens in the alley's and streets in this area. The projects have been approved so you will probably see those being built within the next year or so.

Garrett Evans: To follow up with that, Bryan and I have drove thru these ally's trying to find a solution to the ongoing illegal dumping. Whether it be by placing cameras in different directions or putting in gates that would only be accessible by residents or just trying to figure out a way to minimize the problem because it has really been a challenge.

****Do the cameras that are there currently work?**

Garrett Evans: Yes, the cameras do work, but we think it would be beneficial to add more so if someone decides to drive through these ally's and dump we could have a date stamp of when the vehicle entered and when the vehicle left so it makes it easier to go back and look when we get a call that someone has dumped their things. This might also help Police with enforcement.

****Would the City consider the intersection of Railroad and Buchanan and add a light up strip to the crosswalk to help make it a safer place to cross. Currently this is not a safe place to cross, drivers are not acknowledging pedestrians when they cross the street, they are driving crazy and I am concerned for the safety of pedestrians and bicyclist that use this intersection.**

Richard Abono: Thank you for your suggestion and for bringing this to our attention, we will definitely take a look at the intersection of Railroad and Buchanan to see what we can do to improve the safety of that crosswalk. We appreciate your suggestions; it's a very good suggestion and we have noticed that a lot of people really like those blinking lights at crosswalks, and we find that they have been effective.

****Thank you for looking into that, I would like to say one more thing. I'd like to say thank you to the Police Department, the Fire District and the EMT's. They have helped my family and I in many situations throughout the years. They are very professional, patient, understanding, and kind and I say THANK YOU and HOORAY to all of you for your hard work.**

Lt. Galer: I want to thank you for Sharing this and I will make sure that your gratitude is passed on to all.

Garrett Evans: I just want to say thank you for your comment about the crosswalk on Buchanan. Your point is very well taken. Officer Smith is on the other side of Buchanan right now dealing with an incident.

**** I just want to express my concern with speeding by Pittsburg High School, drivers are not yielding to pedestrians. It is dangerous out there I feel like it doesn't matter how many stoplights we have here in Pittsburg, people are always racing to get to the next one.**

Officer Smith: To touch on this and give a little background, my name is Corey Smith I've been with the Police Department for 12 years, 8 years on Patrol and the last 4 years with our traffic division. Just so you all know every year we get an OTS grant so we can work specific spots, one of those is pedestrian safety and we are currently working this on the spot you mentioned, we go there every day. We also work with Engineering as part of this grant, to get all our crosswalks repainted. But we appreciate your comment and we will continue to target these spots that are known for vehicles not yielding to pedestrians.

****Is there a possibility of having a turn signal on Harbor and School street to avoid back up traffic when vehicles are trying to make a turn?**

Officer Smith: I am part of a Traffic Committee and topics that we discuss at these meetings are ways to improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety. I will bring your comment up at our next meeting to see what we can do. Keep in mind that the more Traffic lights that go up and the closer they are from one another the more traffic back up there will be. But this is something that we definitely talk about specially in areas near our schools. We have about 13 schools in our City as well as over 300 miles of road way that we have to take care of, and we have 5 traffic officers to do so. We do have patrolmen out in the streets to enforce traffic laws however their priority is to respond to calls for service.

Richard Abono: I just wanted to follow up on the Traffic Signal at Railroad and School Street. That is a warranted signal, we have a list of about 10 signals and as money comes around, we look at higher priority signals and this is definitely one of them.

****What is the City planning to do with the vacant property by Safeway on Bailey Rd?**

Jordan Davis: We have a few vacant parcels in that vicinity. There is a strip of land behind Safeway that is owned by BART and we do not know what they plan to do with it. There is a larger area owned by two different Developers the western most part of the land that is closest to the houses that were just built on the northeast corner of San Marco and Leland Rd. there is a proposal to build there, and that proposal includes 346 Single Family houses as well as a 12 acre commercial parcel. That 12-acre commercial parcel is where the City envisions developing 140-2000 sq. ft. of commercial buildings including a grocery store.

****Who would the developer be for this proposed project?**

Jordan Davis: We don't know for the commercial portion of the project but for the 346 homes it will be William Lyon homes.

****Will the project be advertised on the City's Facebook page when it gets approved or ready to be built?**

Jill Hecht: The City's website actual has a map and list of all current projects and their status; this list can be found under Community Development-Planning Division. This is a handy tool as you can always access this Pipe Line project list and see what is going on around the City, I know people get nervous or want to know what is happening when they see dirt being moved around and construction starting so

this tool will help you see what is happening. We are also trying to get something similar for our Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) projects to help people know when streets will be worked on throughout the City.

****Who should be contacted when there are vehicles with expired tags on the street? We are having issues in my neighborhood by the Community College with vehicles that are not being moved on Street sweeping days, these vehicles have expired tags and they should be moved or towed away! At the light on Leland Rd going towards Century Blvd there are some big potholes that need to be taken care of. Lastly, is the City in charge of BART station? I ask because I want to know why the Center Station does not have a blinking light that warns riders when the train is about to arrive. The Pittsburg/Bay point Bart station has a light that blinks every time the train is approaching the station to let riders know.**

Lt. Galer: Code Enforcement would be the contact for vehicles with expired tags, Code enforcement is comprised of 3 officers and the City is divided into 3 sections each officer is assigned to an area to respond to complaints, we also hire college interns to come and help out in our Code Enforcement Division, currently we have an intern whose sole responsibility is to respond to these types of complaints. Please continue to report these issues I know this might feel like a daunting task, but we will respond accordingly and as soon as we possible can since this is an issue that we are constantly targeting.

Bryan Ballardo: I will contact the City of Antioch first thing tomorrow morning to discuss the potholes you just described. That area is not within City limits therefore City of Antioch will be contacted.

Richard Abono: Regarding the blinking light at the BART station, that is a great suggestion, and this is something we weren't aware of so now that you mentioned it I will be contacting BART to ask what can be done in order for our station to get a light installed as well. Thank you for that comment it's great to hear these suggestions.

****Could the City install cameras on Leland on Leland to help identify those that are speedy?**

Lt. Galer: That would make it easy, but I do want to say that this is highly contested in Courts, so until this is figured out in the Courts it is not an option.

****I have great concern about the crosswalk at Marina Vista, I have witnessed within the last few weeks about 20 cars not stopping when the cross guard has pulled up her sign and the lights are flashing indicating to vehicles that people are crossing and they should stop. My granddaughter almost got hit. We need more Police presence; I Have seen Police present but I would recommend they get out of their vehicles and stand by the crosswalk so these drivers can see that the Police is present and hopefully they will be more careful and drive safely near schools. I also recommend that the Police come out during school arrival and dismissal. The hours I suggest are from 7:30am-8am and dismissal time on Wednesday 1:20pm and on regular days 2:20pm**

Officer Smith: The way the Traffic Division works is we have 5 officers; we have a supervisor and me and three other officers. We break up our times, so we can address different areas of concern. So, I start at 6am, I work from 6am-4pm, there is another officer that works from 7am-5pm, another 8am-6pm and one works weekends. Weekday officers start their work week on a different day, and we try to hit all 13 schools, so it might seem as though we aren't out enough, but we truly are, and we definitely make it a

priority to have presence at all 13 schools throughout the City. We would hate for an innocent child to get hit by a careless driver so we can assure you that we will do our best to have more presence in that area.

****Can we use a technique like other states do where they place an empty police vehicle just to make people think there is Police present?**

Lt. Galer: We do use those techniques and in addition to the 5 traffic officers the Pittsburg Police Department also has 5 school resource officers. The Police department is heavily committed to the youth of this community. So, we will take these suggestions back and make some accommodation for the specific area you have brought up.

****Can a cross guard be added so there are two cross guards instead of one person trying to watch all four corners.**

Garrett Evans: That is something we can talk to the School District about; it is a great suggestion.

****Can a big yellow speed hump be installed in all crosswalks around schools. This might help slow people down because they won't want their cars to get**

Richard Abono: The raised speed humps that you are recommending is something we have looked at to incorporate in our city, other Cities already use something similar and we have been doing our own research. Stayed tuned to see what comes out of the research we are doing.

****Why hasn't the City built a parking garage for BART users in the lot adjacent to it or in the fenced off lot behind Chase bank?**

Jill Hecht: We don't have control over the land that is adjacent to BART, that is privately owned, but there is a park and ride on Bliss Avenue that BART riders can use. As far as the fenced off lot behind Chase Bank, Jordan with Planning can give you some background information on what was proposed at a recent Land Use Subcommittee.

Jordan Davis: I'll go over that proposal very briefly, we have a proposal to build a multi-Family market rate project with 100-120 units that will also include parking. As far as parking for BART users the City has no intent on building any parking garages at the moment, this might be something that Developers will look at when the need is greater, we aren't there yet but I have a feeling we will be there soon.

****What about the vacant land on Bailey across the street from Safeway, it's just sitting there, and people use that as parking all the time.**

Garrett Evans: That is County land, they had an RFP out for Development, they received a proposal which they are negotiating for 325 units plus 40,000 sq. ft. of commercial.

****Are there any plans or anything in the near future for the Golf Course?**

Garrett Evans: Yes, we have received a proposal for a Technology park. There is no proposal for homes in the golf course. I just want to get that out there, as this is something we hear is spread throughout the community. The proposal consists of developing 100 acres of the Golf Course. There would be 25 one-acre parcels for technology related, office like buildings. On the other 75 acres we are looking at options for a community center with Sports Facilities.

****I live in the New York Landing subdivision; I am going to bring up the recent homicide at a parking lot next to Pineda's bar. I am really concerned with the activity that goes on after people leave their business. They hang out in the parking lot of Mechanics bank and adjacent businesses and continue drinking, they are loud and throw trash all over the place. What is going on, why isn't something done about this? One other thing, Cumberland has become a speedy lane, cars go up and down speedy cold there be speed bumps installed?**

Lt. Galer: I want to start with Pineda's Bar, there two avenues one avenue is our Code Enforcement we are very familiar with Pineda's Bar we have issued a lot of citations to them and we continue to respond to complaints. We also make sure our weekend grave yard shifts patrol the area as much as possible. As far as the homicide I won't get too far into it, but I will say that these two individuals had a long history and it had nothing to do with being at Pineda's Bar, they just so happened to be at that place at the same time. As far as the people that hang out at Mechanics Bank parking lot after they have been at Pineda's, Pineda's Bar is not responsible for that activity. Mechanics Bank is responsible for their parking lot.

Richard Abono: Regarding your concern with speeding on Cumberland, please stayed tuned as there will be a change of character on that roadway, on Cumberland between 3rd street and Harbor.

****With all the growth in this community what is the City doing to make sure there are enough officers and backup to make this a safe community?**

Garrett Evans: That is an excellent question, right now there are 83 approved officers, which is a ratio of 1.15 when typically the ratio is 1.1 per 1,000 people, 83 is the most we've ever been approved for in this Community, plus this past budget additional non-sworn staff were approved to help with work load. These are ways we looked at to improve efficiency.

Jill Hecht: Pittsburg also has Community Facilities Districts. New Developments that come to our City have to pay in to a fund that goes to Police, fire, Parks, and Park maintenance. It's like a pay as you go so, we can keep up.

Joe Sbranti: The new developments are paying their fair share into these Districts; however, we've grown significantly therefore we are doing our best to grow our Police Department as well as funds to permit this growth. I want to thank our partners because we have to give credit where credit is due. We partner with the School District and they share the cost of 5 school resource officers. Just want to make sure everyone understands we are getting better and better in terms of Police coverage. Before I go back to my chair, I want to talk briefly about the Railroad Avenue specific plan. The vision that Council handed down to Planning Commission and staff about 9-10 years ago was to create a transit oriented development in this ½ mile radius around the BART and intensified in a ¼ mile radius, what that means is there is going to be more development, we talked briefly about the proposed development in this area, that's coming we are not going to shy away from it. Yes, it will come along with traffic but will also bring amenities that we have long awaited. Like a much asked for grocery store. It will eventually evolve into a transit-oriented development like Pleasant Hill, and Walnut Creek. It took them 20 years so be patient and anticipate that it will happen in this area, it will come with challenges but will also bring amenities that we have long awaited.

****Has staff been to the BART area lately, because it is terrible, very dirty all around even on the trail that takes you to BART.**

Jill Hecht: The City has been a \$4.5 million dollar grant to help with improvements along our trails near BART, we will also be talking our Public Works Department to figure out what part belong to Caltrans and what belongs to us to we can have someone go out there and pick up all the trash. Thank you for bringing this up, we will work on getting this taken care of.

Richard Abono: With these grant dollars we have 4 big projects coming your way that are pedestrian and bicycle friendly, I have an exhibit that shows the projects for anyone who is interested in looking at locations and talking to me about them.

****Is there a plan to connect Pittsburg Trails to N. Concord BART station?**

Richard Abono: This is a regional problem and the City has met with Concord City Staff to discuss this and we are trying to work on a solution.

Joe Sbranti: City has a subcommittee that involves staff members from both Pittsburg and Concord as well as two Council Members from each, this is a great topic to bring up at our next meeting. Your timing was great with this question and I will bring it up for discussion at our next meeting.

****This is my first time here and I see an exhibit about James Donlon, and I would love to hear about that.**

Jill Hecht: James Donlon Blvd Extension for those of you who are not aware James Donlon is in Antioch. The purpose of this extension is to get those commuters from Buchanan Road off Buchanan and on to this road. It will be two lanes and will connect to Kirker Pass Road. This is meant to encourage traffic from Brentwood, Oakley and Antioch to use James Donlon which will connect directly with Kirker Pass road, alleviating the traffic in our City specifically Buchanan Road.

****Why are people allowed to have live bands in their homes? I know for block parties a permit is required so why doesn't the police do anything to stop these loud house parties that don't have permits?**

Jordan Davis: Please let Police know as it is happening, but also inform the planning department what we can do is send out a letter informing these residents of what is and isn't allowed. We keep information confidential so your information will never be released to them and typically this helps alleviate the occurrences of issues because they do not want to be cited.

Lt. Galer: If you call the police department and we respond but when we arrive nothing is happening; we can't do much. What I want you to know if we rely heavily on the community to let us know what is going on so please continue to call, continue to inform us of what is happening and allow me the time to go back to my patrol sergeants to make them aware of what is happening in Bell Ave and the entire Alturas area.

****Can Speed Humps be installed on Bell Drive?**

Richard Abono: I will give you my card so you can contact me regarding the Speed Hump request application.

****This past 4th of July was terrible for those of us near the Marina, the fireworks went on until 3am, I called the Police department and it kept on going.**

Lt. Galer: We do have more staff scheduled that day for that reason, we have noticed an increase in people not following the law and lighting fireworks which are illegal.

Toni Baldazo: We also start posting information about 4th of July on our social media pages so residents are aware that they are illegal and could be cited if caught with them. I can assure you that we had a lot of patrol officers out and they were literally chasing fireworks to find the neighborhood they came from to cite people or confiscate the fireworks.

****Why do we have another proposition on the ballot, Prop. P this is the 5th one in a few years?**

Garrett Evans: That is a proposition from the school district we do not have information on it, but I am sure they would be able to provide with information about it.

****I just want to thank the graffiti crew; they are a great crew. I call them and their response is excellent.**

****What happened to the Food trucks?**

Kolette Simonton: We had partnered with Off the Grid; however, they have a requirement that food trucks run year-round. This wasn't very successful and on the second year they decided not to return. We then tried to partner with Taste of the world who struggled to get food trucks and decided not to return. This has not been taken off the table completely we are still working to see where would be the best fit for these food trucks. We would love to have them back and we will work on the How, When, & where to try and make it work.

****Can the City do something about the traffic signals on Railroad Avenue going north? It seems as if these signals are not synchronized and the traffic backs up to Bliss.**

Richard Abono: We are working with Caltrans to adjust these signals; these are actually their lights therefore we are constantly in contact with them making adjustments, so they synchronized properly. Thank you for your input I will contact Caltrans, so they are aware that we need to make more adjustments.

****Can the City Strip the lanes on California Ave going West at the corner of California and Railroad, there is no direction as to what lanes are Right Turn Lanes.**

Richard Abono: There are two Right Turn lanes at this intersection. We have also posted "No Turn on Red" signs.

Officer Smith: Please be cautious as you drive and look for signage that might prevent you from getting a traffic citation. Currently this intersection is a hot spot for the Police Department, we constantly get drivers who are not obeying the posted signs and are making illegal turns on red.

Garrett Evans: We have hit our scheduled end time for this meeting. Again, I want to thank everyone who made it out this Saturday Morning. Thank you for the great comments, never hesitate to contact us if you have any concerns, I look forward to seeing you again at a future meeting. We will be sticking around a little longer for those of you who would like to come talk to us one on one.