

Neighborhood Improvement Team Meeting

General Meeting, Rancho Medanos Jr. High School

October 17, 2018, 6:30-8:30pm

City Staff Present: Joe Sbranti, Garrett Evans, Donna Mooney, Stacy Shell, Maria Aliotti, Fritz McKinley, Jill Hecht, Richard Abono, Ron Nevels, Kolette Simonton, Bruce Smargiasso, Laura Wright, Kristin Pollot, Bobby Joaquin, Lt. Adam Deplitch, Sgt. Nick Law, Ofc. Cory Smith, Toni Baldazo, Myla Rivers

Elected Officials: Alice Evenson, Merl Craft

Number of Residents attended: 25

WELCOME – Garrett Evans, Assistant City Manager

- Welcome
- Been with City since 1997
- City has been doing these neighborhood meetings for about 15 years now. The real goal here is we'd like to spend about two hours listening to you all...what's working, what's not working, how can we improve
- Some good things coming up
 - May was the opening of BART
 - Courtyard by Marriott is winding its way through the process to build a 125-room hotel on the NW corner of Hwy 4/Railroad Avenue
 - Amazing growth around that area
 - Substantial improvement to the Water Treatment Plant
 - Crime is at a 50-year low – or really close to it
 - Unemployment in this City is at a 30-year low
- We have a lot of challenges too
 - Grocery stores is a topic and how do we get more of that for the community, as well as retail
 - Homeless issues – what are we doing or what can we do?
 - Traffic
 - Keller Canyon
 - General Plan is coming up – we want to start getting feedback from you all, what are things that will make Pittsburg better over the next 20 years
- You, the citizens, are so important.
 - The citizens of Pittsburg help guide us in the what the City is looking for
 - Help guide us in what the City can do and how it can be put onto paper
- The City has about 72,000 people and only 275 employees, we need your help to be the eyes/ears and need your help to know what is going on
- City employees can be reached through forums like this, when you see us on the street, entering concerns in our Go Cities App, or on our website – it helps us make the City better

- Some people that are here:
 - Council Member Merl Craft
 - City Clerk Alice Evenson
 - We also have our new City Attorney here Donna Mooney

What we are going to do next is a little different than previous meetings. We really want to jump into your questions, so I am going to briefly explain what everybody does

- Jill Hecht – looks over Community Development
 - Planning
 - Engineering
 - Building
- Kristin Pollot – Planning Manager
- Richard Abono – City Engineer
- Ron Nevels – Engineer
 - In charge of Capital Improvement Projects
- Fritz McKinley – Public Works Director
- Bobby Joaquin – Public Works Supervisor
- Kolette Simonton – Assistant Director Parks and Recreation
- Laura Wright – Environmental Affairs
 - Coordinates NIT meetings
 - Keller Canyon
- Maria Allioti – Community Services
- Bruce Smargiasso – Housing Manager
- Police Department – Lt. Deplitch, Sgt. Law, Ofc. Smith, Toni Baldazo, Myla Rivers
- Stacy Shell – HR Director

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

- I live on Wedgewood, behind the school, and lots of times I hear cars coming on Range Road and doing donuts. One day someone is going to get killed. One day I was on my way home and I saw them doing donuts and I tried to get a license plate. Another big problem is dumping on Range

Road with people throwing mattresses and other things. I'm always calling Code Enforcement, but I wish the City would put cameras up.

**First, thank you very much for calling. If you see dumping, if you see donuts, great, please call that in. From an Engineering perspective the only thing that we can really do is sometimes put delineators in the roadway to prohibit donuts but there are very few cases when we can do that. We will go out to that location and take a look to see if there is an opportunity to put something up.

- I've been here since 1984 and it's always been a problem.

**I'm Ofc. Smith assigned to the Traffic Division. I've been with the Traffic Division for about 5 years and have been with the Department a little over 12 years. To piggyback off of what Dick Abono was saying, from an enforcement standpoint, I love the fact that you guys call us. You hear it, but you don't necessarily see it, don't feel like you can't call the Police Department. Go ahead and call us and say hey in this general area I'm hearing screeching/donuts. You're absolutely right, it can cause fatal accidents.

- Sometimes we hear it at 3:00 in the morning.

**We have a police department that works 24 hours a day. The PD will absolutely respond to those calls to assist. The last thing we want is a fatality from it. Even if you don't get a license plate, don't feel like you can't call us. Please call. We will send officers out there when priority dictates that, when they are able to respond. I'm coming from an enforcement standpoint so that we can try and catch them in the act. There are things that we can do to mitigate that by if it leads to an arrest, or towing their car, or even them getting a citation.

- What if it is one of our neighbors and we know where they live?

**If the people doing donuts are your neighbors, the PD doesn't want to cause any neighbor disputes by letting them know who told on them. Just give us a time frame – if you know it's happening on Saturday nights at 8:00 p.m. the Traffic Division will come out and do a special detail of enforcement at that location. For instance, today the Traffic Division started at 5:00 a.m. to do a special enforcement by the BART station. The Traffic Division can adjust schedules to come out at special times noted at certain locations. Let us know when it's happening. Don't let it go on for six months. The PD would like to get out there as soon as possible.

- Sometimes you don't see or hear the donuts being done because you're asleep but when you wake up in the morning and come to a particular intersection you see the fresh marks from the night before. That's the intersection at Brickyard and Polaris. The marks fade during the week but every Friday and Saturday night there are new, fresh marks made.

**The City is broken down by beats and if that is an issue then let the Beat Officers know it's happening at a certain time of day. Unfortunately, the officers are also responding to other calls for service as well.

**It might be something where on Friday nights the Traffic Division focuses on the Polaris Corridor. We do the same thing with about 13 schools in the City that the Traffic Division will focus on for enforcement. There are 5 officers in the Traffic Division, and we try to move around so that everyone

gets attention. There are certain areas that require more attention than others, like the San Marco area, which has a huge issue in the morning.

**To also piggyback on your comment on cameras and dumping – certainly tell us where dumping comes in. The Code Enforcement team is working to try and curb that as much as possible. We try not to have Public Works pick everything up. Last year the City averaged picking up 2 mattresses and 1 couch a day. That doesn't even include everything else. We have certain cameras we can move and install in places for a couple of months. Obviously, we prioritize where we can do that. We have over 250 cameras. One of those cameras was used to catch someone doing donuts by Riverview Park. The cameras can capture license plates, even if you can't get a license plate number. As long as we can identify the driver of a vehicle, we can send these police reports to the District Attorney's office for prosecution.

- There is a small stretch of road at Range Road and Wedgewood Drive that doesn't have lights. It's dark so people dump there. Is it possible to put more lights or something brighter?

**When it comes to lights, it's a little bit tricky. We work on converting the lights to LED lighting which does make the community brighter. Certain areas though, because of infrastructure, it's difficult to either add lighting or convert lighting to LED. It really just depends. It's also dependent on whether the light pole belongs to the City or PG&E. The City is keeping a list of areas that do need to be addressed as far as lighting. If it's a priority the City will take care of it as soon as possible. You can email Richard Abono in regard to the area that needs lighting rabono@ci.pittsburg.ca.us

**In regards to illegal dumping citizens can use GoGov which is actually GoRequest which is an app the City uses for issues or complaints. If you see something out there as far as illegal dumping, report it through GoGov. Every single item in the GoGov list is assigned to a City staff person and when we don't answer that particular item the City Manager and Asst. City Manager come back to the staff and ask why the issue has not been resolved. There is a timeline of when there needs to be a response by. This app is also a way for the City to track items that come in. It can be used for everything from potholes, to shopping carts, light out or many other types of things.

**With that said if there is an issue you need immediate assistance with from the Police Department do not enter the complaint into GoGov. Instead call Non-emergency Dispatch (925) 646-2441 if, in fact, it is not an emergency. In the event of an emergency call 911. If you have a noise complaint that is happening at 3:00 a.m. for instance and you are in need of an officer to come and address the issue, if you enter the complaint into GoGov the Police Department or Code Enforcement may not see the complaint for many days later.

- The road outside of Pittsburg Library need lighting pretty bad, especially during the wintertime.

**The entire area will be redesigned with new parking and new building structure because of the new Marriott Hotel coming in as well as an office building structure.

**The City recently installed LED upgrades around the library. There are other projects around the City and upgraded lighting will be included in the projects.

- My neighbor has lived in her house since the early 1960s and at some point, the City moved lighting from the pole in front of her house to two houses away. Because I hang around with City people every time, she sees me she complains about how 30 years ago the streetlight got moved. Is it possible to somehow get two streetlights in a row in front of our homes? This is on Los Altos Place near Ventura and Harbor.

**If you can send the pole number the City will take a look at it.

- I'm curious about the update on the retail in the San Marco/Oak Hills/Vista Del Mar area.

**At the corner of San Marco/Leland there was going to be a 6 ½ acre park. The City finished phase I and then talked with community to let them know there could be an opportunity to do retail there. The City owns the parcel right now but might be at a point where the City could get some retail there. The builder made a proposal that included a small grocery store, a pad for a small juice shop and then a larger pad for a restaurant. The City liked the idea and is now still waiting for the formal Planning application to go through. The City is working with property owner to expedite the process as much as possible.

**As far as what is north of Vista Del Mar, the Alves Ranch area, that was previously approved in the Master Plan for about 530 homes plus commercial development, mainly office space. The City was able to work with a new developer who would come in and build on this site and reduce the number of residential units to about 360 homes. The City is working with the builder to change the office space to actual retail development. The City is now looking at a new plan for less homes and about 12 plus or minus acres of retail development. The residential side of it the builder wants to get started on right away. The City is going to try and get the builder to get the retail portion of it in sooner, rather than later.

- Why would you let them build more houses without doing the other stuff they're supposed to be doing?

**Unfortunately, there is a development agreement in place that has vested rights for that development. That's why luckily the City got them to reduce the number of homes from what there previously was supposed to be.

- If there was a whole plan to develop the site, how is it that now it is somebody else's property? I thought it was the City's property and it was a matter of rezoning it for commercial. Now it sounds like you're letting a property owner hold you up as well.

**Generally, when we have developments like that and parks, the developer puts in the park and then will maintain it through the warranty period and then they'll give it back to the City. In this case there was a stop and we haven't had the point yet where the builder has handed over the land. The land has already been agreed upon, the builder will give the City fair market value and build the other park over on Santa Theresa. Just to be clear, the City controls that land. It is either going to be park or retail, but it will not be housing. The City is just determining which will work best.

- Are you close to knowing what the population is in the San Marco area?

**The City ran numbers from everything from Bailey Road west. When that build-out is at 100% and all the homes are filled. The number of people in that area could be as high as 25,000 people. It's a city in itself. For that reason the City is very committed to making a grocery store a reality out there because that area alone can support it. The City has been very diligent in forcing that to go forward.

- What about schools?

**Bailey Road westward is Mt. Diablo Unified School District. There are three school districts in the City of Pittsburg – there is Pittsburg Unified, Mt. Diablo Unified and Antioch. Residents are going over the hill. They have one school and they're supposed to have another school. Mt. Diablo has land dedicated for a school in that area. The City is working with the district to try and keep them on track to build a school. The new school will serve the resident out there. There Pittsburg residents. Mt. Diablo has to go through a process and do a study to look at what is the growth in trying to predict how many kids they will have. The City will work with the school district to make sure they build on that vacant lot. There are parents in the area that have been attending the Mt. Diablo School Board meeting just to keep track of what the school district is doing.

**The City has joint use agreements with the school districts for use of the school fields. The City works with the school districts in sharing the maintenance of the fields and scheduling use of the fields so they aren't locked up during summer break and holidays.

- What is the location of the school?

**South of Leland on Alves Ranch Road.

- It's not big enough for a high school?

**They're telling us it's not big enough for a high school.

- At what point in time is the City of Pittsburg going to say, "enough is enough, we are going to get rid of you and we are going to take over the schools and get you out of here?" It's such a pain that kids from here can't go to Pittsburg High School. They have to go over the hill into Mt. Diablo, Concord, Ygnacio and there is no bussing, so they have to get their own way to school. Mt. Diablo School District can't service the schools out here. They are run down.

**When Mt. Diablo School District came out to meet with the City, one of the things they said was they don't know that there is any growth happening in Pittsburg. So City staff members were disappointed they had to educate the administrators and let them know there are thousands of homes still planned for this area and growth is coming. Vista Del Mar area school must be built as soon as possible because by the time they get the architects and start building the kids in the area are going to be in the sixth grade. Pittsburg needs their attention, the more folks that can communicate with them the better. There is a small number of staff who does make contact with the school district regularly, but that's a park for us, a school for our kids, it's something we need and we need it soon. Any help the City can be we will continue to be that but the City is not going to be able to take over a school district and start our own school district. The City can't do that and PUSD would have challenges doing that as well. The districts are controlled by the state not the city.

- If enough people petition or speak up, we can stop paying our taxes to Mt. Diablo and start paying them to Pittsburg.

**It's a little more complicated than that but the more everyone gets together and makes sure that we are heard the better.

- Striping of the roads near the new BART station. Southbound Railroad Avenue and the Freeway intersection, just some sort of direction so we can get into the right lane and go where we want to go. Then at California Avenue and Loveridge Road if you're going west and trying to cross the bridge to get onto California just kind of make it clearer to get/keep us in the correct lane and go where we want to go. The road striping needs to be clearer.

**We will go out and ensure the striping is redone, as well as look at signage to ensure it makes it easy for drivers

- I have a concern with the traffic that has come along with the grand opening of Sonic on Loveridge Rd, I wanted to know if the City could take traffic into consideration when approving projects like this. It appears the problem has been resolved but I want to make sure I bring this up for future approved projects.

**We do have a zoning code that references how long a queue lane for cars could be, we don't disagree that Sonic might have exceeded this when they first opened, but we do try to plan ahead when it comes to traffic that might come with any grand opening/ business in the City. We believe that the traffic will die down and we were proactive in having our Public Works Department go out and putting in "Keep Clear" signage to help the businesses that were being affected by it.

- Our Homeless population is increasing, and I know that other cities partner with churches to house them, I want to know what the City is doing for them. They are human and should not be living like rats in the winter where they have to crawl under bridges or buildings to stay warm and dry.

**The City of Pittsburg recently declared a Crisis for housing, declaring a crisis helps get funding for our homeless community, in addition we have a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program where we receive money from HUD and we then turn around and fund various service providers such as Loaves and fishes who feed the homeless and St. Vincent De Paul who provide health care services for the homeless. We also participate in STAND which is program for homeless or battered women with children who are housed for three (3) months. The Police Department does outreach and helps on a case by case basis, working with the County, State, and Cities to help the homeless community by providing them information of services available to them.

- What can be done about the homeless community that go around town in their mobile homes, can their mobile home be towed? Also, I suggest maybe picking a park that the City can donate for their use when the park is not in use so they can use it overnight to sleep or shower.

**This issue is tricky because if they keep moving it is almost impossible to keep up with them, and realistically towing their vehicles does not fix the problem, it makes it worse as they don't have nowhere

to go and will end up in the street. Your suggestion about the park use is something that has been discussed many times at round tables in different meetings and the reality is that this is difficult because most homeless people do not want to be confined to one area, also some suffer from mental illness or addiction and they don't want the help. We will continue to work on efforts to minimize the impact on the community, but this is a Statewide issue that cannot be solved overnight.

- I want to know what is going on with the Golf Course, and why it closed.

**This was a challenge as the City subsidized the golf course for the last 20 years on average \$250,000 a year. The former operator started getting hit with lawsuits and that was a tipping point for them, the city was dragged into one of the lawsuits which was an ADA case because the golf course itself was not compliant with ADA regulations, for example their carts and pathways were not per regulations. When the operator decided to part ways, it was opened for options of use. There is currently a technology park interested in developing there. We are also looking at developing a community center and sports fields.

- Keller Canyon concern, what can the City do about the rules not being followed for example accepting hazardous material from Hunters Point.

**Unfortunately, we are stuck with Keller Canyon, however the City has been proactive to help the community be heard by attending the Board meeting at the County. We are also very glad the community has come together to attend those meetings and have their voices heard. We will continue to be proactive and ensure that the rules are being followed.

- I don't have a question; I just want to thank the Police Department for all their hard work in helping clean up the City throughout the years.

**We agree that the Police Department has done an outstanding job over the years, and we all thank them for their hard work and dedication to help keep this City safe.

- There are suspicious cars that have been parking in my neighborhood, they park near the mailbox and stay overnight. I've seen them get out at times and often carry a black bag or large paper bag. I've called the police but when they've responded the car was gone. What can be done.

**We encourage you to keep calling, I know this is not the best answer but eventually Police will respond when these individuals are present, and we can take it from there. Our response time can be delayed because we must prioritize our calls for service.

- I've lived here for many years and I think this is a beautiful city that can be esthetically fixed, for example on San Marco Blvd, the medians have overgrown weeds, there are overgrown trees that prevent you from seeing traffic signage. The bushes just before you get on Highway 4 are also overgrown.

**We will put in a service request to our Public Works crew to go out and maintain that area, as for the bushes just before Highway 4, we will contact the County to take care of it. We will also contact Caltrans to come out and take care of any portion that might be their responsibility.

- The NRG site that has been closed for years; do you have an idea of what will be happening with that space?

**NRG is currently filing for Bankruptcy and that area is a prime area for our revisioning plan, when we redo our general plan that will be an area of focus for us to get community input on what they would like to see there.

- James Donlons Extension has been in the works for years, how will you deal with the traffic trying to get onto Kirker Pass.

**There will be a signalized traffic light.

- There is always gridlock on Army street from parents using this street as an alternative for dropping off students at the High School, there is also a lot of speeding that happens, could stop signs or speed humps be installed.

**This area always comes up at meetings because of the traffic, for this reason Police presence is routine. We have an internal meeting that consists of different departments within the city where we discuss traffic concerns and try to come up with solutions. This will be brought up, but please note that there are certain requirements a street must meet in order to have speed humps or stop signs installed.

- Could a crosswalk be installed on Harbor Street between Buchanan Rd and Yosemite Dr. I see a lot of kids running across the road to get to their parents which is not safe at all.

**There are currently crosswalks at Buchanan and Harbor as well as Yosemite Dr and Harbor, we go out to elementary schools every year and discuss safety with parents and students. Parents need to understand that this is a 4-lane road and it is not safe to wait for their children across the road and have them run to their cars.

- The bike path going East on Railroad before the Delta De Anza trail has been marked with white paint for proposed excavation to service utilities, is this route safe to use?

**Underground utilities are marked for precautionary measures, so contractors are aware of how close utilities are around their work area. It is safe to use this route, don't worry if you go over the white marking.

- Old town Pittsburg is attractive, but there are a lot of vacant properties, why haven't these been rented out.

**The vacant buildings in downtown are privately owned and the owners have to want to sell or lease. Those are old buildings and need a lot of money put into them to make them useable for interested parties.

- What is going on with the old Sassy Sweets building.

**They are having delays with their equipment but should be opening soon. One side will be pizza cones and the other will be a Mexican Bakery (La Flor de Mexico).

- Where did sassy sweets go?

**We do not know where they relocated to, all we know is they are not in Pittsburg.

** We have come to the end of the scheduled meeting time; we want to thank everyone for coming out tonight. City staff will hang around a little longer if you had any questions you wanted to ask one on one, we would be happy to do that.