

Neighborhood Improvement Team Meeting

General Meeting, Pittsburg Library - Community Room

October 1, 2013 – 6:30pm

City Staff Present: Joe Sbranti, Garrett Evans, Leigha Schmidt, Kristin Pollot, Keith Halvorson, Don Buchanan, Sharon Jackson, Laura Wright, Officer Sarah Spires, Myla Rivers, Dick Abono

City council Member(s): Mayor Nancy Parent

Community Advisory Commission: Larry Wyrick, Jim Watkins

Approximately () Residents Attended

INTRODUCTION – Joe Sbranti, City Manager

- Thanks for coming
- End of our 10th Year doing these meetings – make sure sign in sheet is filled out with email address to get email blasts, meeting minutes, etc.
- Overview of each department
- Questions for all segments will be answered at the end of the presentation

ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER – Garrett Evans

- Been here 17 years and has seen amazing transformation, watching businesses grow from beginning to end
- Power Company put \$2 million towards development for park improvements, police officers, and city enhancement
- Works with different parts of the City: Planning, golf course, Waterfront (Dow, Posco, Energy/Energy and residential)
- Harbor Master at the Waterfront – name is Van
- Individual partners helped pay for July 4th Fireworks
- Sustainability/Economic Development
 - Grand opening of Sassy Sweets – October 25th
 - Century Plaza recently renovated
 - Harbor Freight Tools going into old Best Buy
- Culinary Crawl Downtown
 - \$5.00 gets you appetizers at 6 different restaurants
 - See what they each have to offer
- Coffee Shop going into the renovated library – should be finished in January
- Kite Boarding shop, book store, and California Theater all downtown

- Pittsburg Arts & Community Foundation has different events coming up:
 - Art & Wine Stroll – October 2nd downtown, tickets sold at book store
 - Pete Escovedo
 - Rubber Duck Race
 - Texas Hold'em Tournament
 - Car Show/Toy Drive
 - Other activities on their website

PLANNING – Leigha Schmidt/Kristin Pollot

- Small department, works hard
- First stop for individual homeowners, business owners, or large developers for all projects
 - Zoning
 - Setbacks
 - Residential projects
- Open 8:00am-5:00pm, Monday-Friday, don't close for lunch
- Works directly with the Planning Commission which is an appointed body of 7 Pittsburg residents that approve different projects
- Also works with Code Enforcement, Building and Engineering
- Does the Environmental Review of projects like the re-activation of West Pac, and writes staff reports
- In the Design & Development stage of a new downtown park – looking for public input
- Also working on San Marco Park (south-east corner of Leland and San Marco)
- Esperanza Apartments – 300 unit/multi-family complex

ENGINEERING – Keith Halvorson

- Oversees the development of projects by assuring what's built meets minimum standards of state laws, makes sure the construction is safe and built per their plans
- Makes sure each project has enough roads, parking, sewers, etc.
- Deals with noise complaints, dust, etc. of projects going on
- Works on Capital Improvement projects
 - They have an aggressive team to find money/grants to get work done
 - Street repairs, particularly the overlay of Power Avenue and surrounding streets
 - Bailey Road – currently have 4 grants for this project
 - Keller Canyon
 - Sewers to be built in Heights neighborhood
- Regional Projects
 - BART – trying to get a “kiss-and-ride” station built at Railroad Avenue
 - Looking for grants for the Buchanan Bypass project
 - Highway 4 work is almost done at Loveridge area

- Traffic Division works to keep streets safe
 - Working on improving parking in the downtown area

Joe Sbranti

- There are over 160 miles of roads to maintain and find funds to maintain them
- End of December they should wrap up the Pittsburg part of the Highway 4 project

PARKS AND RECREATION/STREET MAINTENANCE – Don Buchanan

- Street and Sidewalk maintenance
 - Streets
 - Lights
 - Trees
 - Gutters
 - Landscaping to include 22 parks
 - Maintains everything but Water & Sewer
- Looking to create a dog park at Highlands Ranch Park in the basin and hopefully in San Marco area – still in public outreach phase
- Small World Park
 - Halloween Bash & Pumpkin Patch – October 27th

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS – Laura Wright

- All a part of Team Pittsburg
 - E-news blasts, GO requests/service requests, pay water bill online
- Garbage and Recycling for businesses and residents
- Household Hazardous Waste Program
 - Paint
 - Mattresses
 - Batteries
- NPDES, Storm Water Program
- Adopt-a-Spot
- Green Footprint Festival – Small World Park – bring the kids, 13 vendors
- Pittsburg Go Green
- Energy Conservation/Efficiency
 - LED Lights/Sustainability
- Local Enforcement Agency – solid waste inspection

- Safety Programs
 - Environmental Compliance inspections
- Cable/Wireless
- Library Support
- Green Campus Challenge/Battle of the Classes with Pittsburg High School
- 4th Grade Education
- Come check out the newly renovated Library
- CERT – encourage participants
- 2 Facebook pages – Pittsburg Living Green and Pittsburg Neighborhood Improvement Team

HOUSING AUTHORITY – Sharon Jackson, Housing Manager

- Provides rental assistance to approximately 1000 households through U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development
- Main focus right now is homeless veterans
- Can also assist veterans who own their homes that need repair with low interest rates that are forgiven after 5 years
- Staff of 6

POLICE DEPARTMENT – Officer Sarah Spires

- Crime rate is at a 50 year low
- Budgeted for 72 police officers
- Restructured our beat system from 9 beats to 5 beats
- Civilian Employees trained to take “cold” calls/reports (stolen vehicles, residential burglaries, etc.)
 - Helps in response time
 - Lower priority calls get handled faster
 - Can process for prints and take reports
- Detective Division investigates everything from property crimes to violent crimes
 - In-house DA now which expedites our process – neighboring police departments come to our department to talk to this DA
 - In-house Probation Officer to help with AB109 releases
 - In-house Victim Advocacy
- Traffic unit
 - Deploys speed trailers
 - Can focus patrol on specific areas
- K-9 unit has 3 brand new trained dogs, Belgian Malinois
 - Aide in missing adults

- Aide in narcotics searches
- Can help find small children
- Assist neighboring police departments
- SCU – Street Crimes Unit
 - Strictly proactive
 - Don't respond to calls for service
 - Focus on drugs and guns
- Code Enforcement
 - Due to low staffing, not as proactive
 - Citizens can enter complaints into GoCities
 - get the application on your iPhone
 - find it on the City website
 - can enter complaints for all departments
 - gives us a due date/you can give feedback
 - #1 priority is GoCities
- SRO – School Resource Officers
 - Have 3 now – High School, Jr. High, Elementary
 - Can report bullying online now
 - Working with teachers to make it easier and safer to report bullying
- CASE officer
 - 1 officer
 - 3 year assignment
 - First assignment retrieved 30 weapons from 1 home in Bay Point
- City Cameras
 - 150 cameras
 - Parks and major intersections
 - Shopping centers
 - Officers can access footage from smart phones for vehicle descriptions, etc.
- Officer Spires deals with Business Licenses, illegal businesses and long term quality of life issues
 - Business Licenses/Illegal Businesses – works with Planning for compliance
 - Social Host Ordinance – fines and jail time for adults giving minors access to alcohol
 - Long term quality of life issues
 - Aided in the implementation of Nixel – text to phone for community related updates

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

- Will Range Road ever open up? Having it closed causes wear and tear on our vehicles because we have to go all the way around.

** (Joe Sbranti) There is no funding source – it's difficult to come up with the money needed, it's also a Planning issue

- Whose idea was it to block off Power Avenue? Everyone seems to go through the City Hall parking lot now.

** (Joe Sbranti) blame him for it – hoping the construction of Civic Tower coming will take up space, forcing everyone to go around the parking lot. Speed humps in the parking lot cause wear and tear on the vehicles so they should be going around anyway.

- California Avenue/Loveridge Road intersection – Southbound on Loveridge, making a right turn onto California Avenue, can we post “No Turn on Red” sign, people make it difficult in that intersection when they don't time their right turn correctly.

** Traffic and Engineering will do a study and take a look at that intersection to see if it's necessary.

**E-BART will start construction next year – should be done in 2017. Our goal is to start building our station along with it.

- West Pac Project – EIR ended, what's the process now?

** (Joe Sbranti) Staff won't recommend anything that will pose a threat to the community

** (Kristin Pollot) We have a consultant working on a response to each letter (question) put into the report, finding and identifying concerns. Then they'll do a review of the environmental impact report to see if mitigation is adequate. Then they'll have to pull a use permit for specific finding relating to safety. End of November there will be a presentation to City Counsel to include the 67 letters with multiple questions/comments.

**This is a typical approach to a project this size. Did the same for the chlorine plant, K2, went through a similar process. West Pac is proposed to be located adjacent to the old PG&E plant.

- Citizen states she's been here for a long time and will stay here. West Pac is taking the best real estate in the City. There are lots of other run down places in the city – they have no realization what it does to an area. Is this a large source of funds for the City? Will they have a responsibility to improve the community over and above what they are doing?
- The output product is not safe and can't even be used in this county.

** (Joe Sbranti) This project is from a private developer. They sought us out. At the end of the process there will be a level of contribution, but first we need to make sure the project will be safe. The EIR will

look into the types of crudes they will be using. We don't have all of the specifics of crudes coming in but there will be a response in the EIR. We've had a power plant since 2000 and they have contributed to towards parks and other city improvements as well as property tax revenue.

- The new Loveridge/California intersection is fabulous, but the road in front of Praxair still needs repair, any idea when that will happen?

**Redevelopment Agency money has been taken by the state. That money was used for pavement projects. We've been aggressive in finding/getting grants for some projects and passed the ½ cent sales tax. We've got city-wide pavement projects that need to be done and we're trying to stretch the funds we have to do as much as possible. Also using the money from our waterfront resources – these businesses pay a fee as part of their lease – roadway maintenance can now be paid for with these fees and we're trying to find other solutions.

- Will we ever get a right turn lane from PA Highway onto Loveridge Road southbound?

** (Keith Halvorson) We have design teams still looking into this.

- Re West Pac – at the end of W. 8th Street at Herb White Way there used to be a walking trail that went behind the Catholic School . If an oil company comes in, should they be responsible for making sure the trail stays beautiful, and the upkeep of it to the river?

** (Joe Sbranti) This is part of the Marina Walk Project – 80+ Mariner Walk homes are to be built. There will be public meeting on this where citizens can comment.

- Great job on new library infrastructure, but the interior of the library still has a 1960s setting. If you look at the layout, the interior furniture is old. Improvements need to be made.
- Will there ever be a skate park? A segment of our population has no place to go.

**We have a downtown park coming that we have \$1 million for. A skate park requires funding on top of other parks, they compete for funding and they have not risen to a level of priority yet.

- Does Code Enforcement come out and check the Heights area for violations?

** (Joe Sbranti) Call CE or email them and let them know where the violations are, anything you give them an address for will become a priority.

** (Ofc. Spires) make sure you call Code Enforcement and not the police department. The PD will not address Code Enforcement issues.

- Why re-pave now in Heights area if trucks are still coming through for elementary?

**Trucks are not supposed to come through the neighborhood – they have specific routes to follow. The Police Department is having conversations with the truckers and advising them to follow the routes. We don't want the pavement to get messed up either.

- Ramona/Madoline/Lindschied – some drivers don't stop at crosswalks, they give a false sense of security for the pedestrians.

** (Joe Sbranti) we'll have staff revisit for traffic calming measures

- It's been a year since elections, how has sales tax affected things?

**Things have been better than we expected. Measure J return is higher than we thought it would be. Funds are back to use and excess funds get put into a special account for infrastructure. Measure P passed and it enables 72 sworn officers.

**Team Pittsburg includes citizens as well!

- How can we build up more to create a bigger surplus?

**Use any opportunity to shop local. Target will be making a bigger store and the plaza has done façade upgrades. Everyone is working together to make great shopping centers. We're playing "matchmaker" to make sure stores coming into plazas fit. There is the new auto mall and there will be retail opportunity in the San Marco area in the works. We are doing our best to provide a safe environment for shoppers. There are 170 city cameras which are all recording and are used to solve crimes. We are trying to make it uncomfortable for bad guys to be here. Our Community Service Specialists are doing more parking enforcement in the shopping centers for more a presence.

**People don't waste much time doing graffiti in Pittsburg anymore. We try to stay on top of graffiti, whether it's on public or private property. Our public works department will take care of it at no cost to the property owner.

- Does Pittsburg have an ordinance against panhandling?

**They are not allowed in Pittsburg. Some of the CSSs will move them along, as well as police officers. There are lots of services to assist them and we try to make them aware of that.

- What do I do if I see loitering in the Meadowbrook area?

**Call the non-emergency dispatch line for loitering or anything that looks suspicious. 646-2441

- Plastic Bag ordinance sounds like a wonderful program. Sometimes it looks like Christmas in July with plastic bags "decorating" Pittsburg. Will this help reduce Public Work costs and sewer clean up?
- "Green" business owner in Pittsburg – is there a potential for businesses to be penalized by the ordinance? Will we be forced to charge customers that we are providing a service to?

** (Laura Wright) This ordinance was introduced to City Council for removing plastic bags, "banning" them. It's been passed by other counties/cities trying to encourage the use of reusable bags. The use of paper bags is even more environmentally harmful. We want them to use reusable bags instead of paper

or plastic. Promote reusable and charge for paper, if there is no dis-incentive than paper will be used all of the time.

- When people come to smaller businesses and impulse buy, they may not have a bag with them, will businesses suffer because now we're charging for bags?

**There may be a small number of people that will protest. Veggie bags, fast food, pastry bags and garment bags are exempt from the ordinance.

** (Nancy Parent) Some businesses pay you to bring in your own bag. Grocers Association of California support this ordinance.

** (Joe Sbranti) This is just an adjustment that needs to be made. People will get used to the adjustment for consumers/businesses. City Council will take some things into consideration.

- Is Harbor Freight Tools going into Best Buy?

** Yes, but not into the whole building. There are improvements being done to the façade, and they are hoping to be open by Christmas.

- With plastic bag ordinance, will stores be required to charge for paper bags? We get more plastic coming in for wrapped pallets, etc. to just get dumped. Will there be a barcode scanned for each bag?

**We will work with Walmart, Safeway, Target, etc. for environmental sustainability.

- The field by the auto mall is full of plastic bags, what is the plan for that field?

** (Joe Sbranti) this area is earmarked for expansion of the auto mall. There are also bags that collect in the empty lots by Staples and Mike's Auto Body. They are in the proximity of Winco, but the bags come from all over town. They are future development sites, they get plowed and then bags collect. A church has offered to clean some of the sites up, but there is a liability issue.

- I use these grocery bags to line my cans, what will I do now?

** Recommended she buy liners for her cans

- What's going into the old Ford dealership on Railroad Avenue?

** It's an ideal location for a future senior housing complex because it is on the outskirts for future E-BART construction

- Can the City put a Dog Park on the lot at the corner of Railroad Avenue and California Avenue?

** There is a large dog park going in at Highlands Ranch, it may even be split for big and small dogs, there are lots of possibilities for that park

- Is there a plan for the old Save Mart property?

** There is a challenge with the property owner for development; they have different ideas of the worth of the property

- What's going on with the Johns Manville lot – is it private property?

** The property was purchased and cleaned up by Renova at the peak of the housing market and then the market went down. It's a big site with lots of room for houses, but there is no buyer to finish the project.

- How well mitigated was the lot? Is there still bad stuff underneath? An outdoor market would be nice there.

** The "stuff" was a by-product of Asbestos. It was cleaned up or buried sufficient to DTSC. It's a viable location for development; the right buyer just hasn't showed up.

- Did the City make a contribution to the high school band for their trip to London?

** The band is still about \$70k short. The city hires them for events to help them raise money. The Rubber Duck Race helps support the band and they've been hired to march at the Culinary Crawl. We won't be surprised if they come to the city for an actual donation.