

Neighborhood Improvement Team Meeting

General Meeting, Rancho Medanos Junior High School

September 28, 2013 – 10:00am

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

City council Member(s):

Community Advisory Commission: Larry Wyrick, Judith O'Conner

Board 5 Trustee for Jr. College: Greg Enholm

Approximately () Residents Attended

INTRODUCTION – Joe Sbranti, City Manager

- Thanks for coming
- Overview of each department
- Questions for all segments will be answered at the end of the presentation

ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER – Garrett Evans

- Best job in the City
- Works with different parts of the City: Planning, golf course, Waterfront (Dow, Posco, Energy/Energy and residential)
- Helped put July 4th Fireworks together
- 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
- Kite Boarding shop downtown
- Pittsburg Arts & Community Foundation has different events coming up:
 - Art & Wine Stroll
 - Pete Escovedo
 - Rubber Duck Race

- Texas Hold'em Tournament
- Car Show/Toy Drive

PLANNING – Leigha Schmidt

- Been with Planning for 8 years
- First stop for any businesses/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
- 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)

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
- Works on Capital Improvement projects
 - Street repairs, particularly the overlay of Power Avenue and surrounding streets
 - Bailey Road
 - Keller Canyon
- 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

Joe Sbranti

- End of December they should wrap up the Pittsburg part of the Highway 4 project
- No funding yet for the Railroad Avenue station, still in the first phase, but should hopefully be open in 2017
- Introduced Larry Wyrick and Judith O'Conner from the Community Advisory Commission

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 – still in public outreach phase
- Small World Park
 - Halloween Pumpkin Patch – October 27th
 - New facilities
 - Offered passes to anyone who has not been there yet

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS – Laura Wright

- Garbage and Recycling for businesses and residents
- Household Hazardous Waste Program
- MPDS, Storm Water Program
- Green Footprint Festival – Small World Park – bring the kids, 13 vendors
- Pittsburg Go Green
- Energy Conservation/Efficiency
- Local Enforcement Agency – solid waste inspection
- Safety Programs
 - Environmental Compliance inspections
- Cable/Wireless
- Library Support
- Working on mattress recycling to eliminate illegal dumping of mattresses
- Green Campus Challenge/Battle of the Classes with Pittsburg High School
- Come check out the newly renovated Library
- CERT
- 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

Joe Sbranti

- Approximately 200 employees for 65,000 people, we need the help of citizens to be the eyes and ears of the City
- We want to hear about the problems, what needs improvement, what we're doing good

POLICE DEPARTMENT – Officer Sarah Spires

- Budgeted for 72 police officers
- Restructured our beat system from 9 beats to 5 beats
- Detective Division investigates everything from property crimes to violent crimes
 - In-house DA now which expedites our process
 - 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, Belgium Malamwas
 - Aide in missing adults
 - Aide in narcotics searches
 - Can help find small children
- SCU – Street Crimes Unit
 - Strictly proactive
 - Don't respond to calls for service
 - Focus on drugs and guns
- Code Enforcement
 - 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
 - Long term quality of life issues
 - Aided in the implementation of Nixel – text to phone

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

- What is AB109?

** (Officer Spires) non-violent offender releases, special supervised release

- Citizen lives on Paula Court – odor from Keller Canyon Dump: in the evening sometimes, when it's not windy

** (Laura Wright) it's critical to contact the County LEA/Air Board, they will come to monitor, the more calls, the better

- Did they use an upgraded method of pavement on Bailey Road?

** (Joe Sbranti) They did not use different materials but they re-built with thicker asphalt to withstand more. Keller Canyon to continue to pay for maintenance with new fee: from Highway 4 to their driveway –also with different funds in addition to.

- Citizen tipped hat to Public Works for keeping most of the city clean. Had a concern about Century Blvd and N. Park Blvd where it looks like plastic bags “grow out of the ground”. Also find lots of bags on and around landfill and by BART.
- Power Avenue is immaculate from the National Guard up to the side strip of the freeway, but is a mess past the apartment complex and by the strip mall.

** (Joe Sbranti) communicate concerns to the City, don't wait until these meetings, in the past people have communicated graffiti concerns at 6:00pm and by 11:00am the next day Public Works has the concerns addressed

** (Laura Wright) 9/16/13 was the first public hearing regarding the Plastic Bag Ordinance. 10/21/13 it will go before City Council again and be open for comments on whether to pass the ordinance or not. We will do everything we can to prepare residents like give out reusable bags and reminder tools for cars. If it passes it will go into effect 01/15/14.

- Citizen suggested to advertise this as clean up of the city rather than ban on plastic bags.
- Many homes taken over by banks and look like “crap” – what can be done because they are lowering the property value

** Give us specific addresses and we can address the issues.

- Citizen stated they received a late soliciting phone call requesting money for the police department – is there a drive to raise money for the P.D?

** (Officer Spires) P.D. will not solicit money over the phone, be leery of donating over the phone period. If these issues happen often Nixel may be able to send an alert/advisory out about them.

- Senator DeSaulnier's office put on a scam overview class, will the city be doing anything like this?

**Make sure you sign up for the City's email blast today and if something gets put on, then they'll get the information.

- On Mae Avenue sidewalks are being repaired/replaced. There is one particular part not done and this citizen now has nerve damage from her fall. She put a claim in with the City but the City said it was not responsible for that portion of the sidewalk. The sidewalk buckle is at 140 Mae Avenue, she lives next door.

** (Joe Sbranti) I need to see the specific location, maintenance of sidewalks in general are the responsibility of the property owner. The exception would be if a City tree was causing the buckling of the sidewalk, then it would be the responsibility of the City. Some sidewalk cuts/curb cuts were being done for handicap access, but we'll have to look into it.

- Someone was going around breaking/vandalizing car windows on this citizen's street and the citizen said the police department would not come out.

** (Officer Spires) In order for the P.D. to know what is going on, you must call. We need your help, but we may not get out right away. All calls are on a priority level – Priority 1 is a crime in progress with a suspect, Priority 2 is a crime that has already taken place and there is some suspect information, Priority 3 is a crime that has occurred, no suspect information and no one has been harmed. The police department has retrained some of the civilian employees to help out with some of the Priority 3 calls so the police officers can take the higher priority calls and so that the citizens don't have such a long waiting time.

- There are faded orange markings on Thomas Way that were left there from a sidewalk repair project by the City. Why were some sections replaced and not others?

** (Don Buchanan) We only replaced the sections of sidewalk that were buckled by street trees. I will come take a look today at those sections you have concerns about – 188 and 249 Thomas Way. Don Buchanan also offered to take a look at the complaint at 134 Mae Avenue.

- There are very few places to go to in Pittsburg on a daily basis. Downtown only has a cupcake bakery, book depot, and places to eat dinner. What is in planning, other than the park, for downtown.

** (Garrett Evans) Sienna court, across from the bakery, is planning on having retail shops. The city is aiding in the reform of the building to make it easier for the new businesses to come in. There is a pharmacy open that will even put your daily pack of medications together.

** (Joe Sbranti) we are working hard on filling spaces, we even had to pay for improvements to get someone in

- Pittsburg is 8 miles long – can we move to encourage neighborhood retail, rather than just focus on downtown?

** (Joe Sbranti) we agree 100%, we are even pushing for some of the San Marco land to be zoned for retail

- Can the city do some kind of cultural awareness? Citizen is from out of state, not a long time resident, knows the focus was on the 10th Street clean up when they first moved here and the element downtown has changed over the years, for the better. She supports neighborhood retail, but would also like to see good customer service. She has experienced some negative situations by staff and management repeatedly in some of the newer businesses. She feels some of the businesses are looking for “certain types of customers”. With Pittsburg being so diverse she didn’t expect that kind of service. She went to Chamber of Commerce to find these businesses were not a part of the Chamber, she wasn’t sure where to go to “complain” about the situation. She’s even has some friends and family experience the same thing.

** (Joe Sbranti) Pittsburg is very divers with approximately 40% of its citizens Hispanic and the balance is a good mix of other cultures. We expect a high level of tolerance. He will speak to Garrett Evans and they’ll have a conversation with the businesses that are city backed and encourage them to be receptive to various types of ethnicities.

- What’s going on with the downtown redevelopment projects?

** (Joe Sbranti) The government took our RDA money. With no money now we have to find different ways to get things done. Measure P passed which helps with P.D. and C.E. but still no RDA money. Garrett Evans has other tools to offset RDA money.

** (Garrett Evans) Enterprise Zone ends 12/31/13 and Muni Power Co. helps with income. We have an Economic Development Program that provides job training. We’d like input from neighborhoods that need help, some businesses may not fit downtown or in Century Plaza, but may fit in your neighborhood.

- Citizen has lived in Pittsburg for 4 ½ years
 - Will we be getting an indoor pool like South San Francisco? Her HOA only has a community pool and the pool at Bailey has no lap swim for adults.
 - Her wall is by her neighbor’s patio and they make a lot of noise and pile garbage up which is a fire hazard.
 - Will BART have covered parking, not just be a drop-off location?
 - The library needs longer hours
 - Why can’t we have shops like Macy’s in Walnut Creek, and 24 Hour Fitness?

- Can we put smokers all in one part of the City?
- I'm trying to rent a room out and nobody will rent from me, even though I live in a gated community, because they all say the crime in Pittsburg is really high.
- I graduated from the San Mateo Citizens Academy – they taught you about who lives in the city, how they run it and how they make decisions. Does Pittsburg have anything like that?

** (Joe Sbranti) the cost of an indoor pool is what prohibits us from having one, but we will look into it

** (Don Buchanan) Buchanan Pool is open on weekends only right now from 11:00am-5:00pm through October. Starting Spring the hours will be longer. He has a meeting with Paul Carter who is the Olympic Director for San Francisco. They will discuss programs and ideas for the pool.

** (Joe Sbranti)

- There is an indoor pool at In Shape.
- Crime rate is at its lowest level in recorded history which is due to the citizens, the P.D.s targeted teams and communication as a group. The crime rate is the same as Walnut Creek, less than Pleasant Hill and Concord and Antioch's crime rate is triple ours. We need the citizens to help spread the word. Businesses will thrive better if you do. We have no tolerance for pan handling and the gang issue has dissipated. The police department is also using the Community Service Specialists to help "patrol" the shopping centers.
- Smokers – we're not there yet/stay tuned
- Library's short hours are due to County cut backs, the City would have to pay for longer hours. Greg Enholm was on the Library Commission. You'd have to communicate to politicians and look for grants.
- We're working on more places to shop.
- E-BART parking – Railroad Station is not funded yet, still looking for funding. Can hopefully start construction next year if we find funding, bid will open next year for the project. Plan for the parking lot will not be big, will only have approximately 400 spaces because it will not be driven to often. BART extension will be to Antioch where there will be mass parking at Hillcrest Station which will open up more parking in Bay Point.
- Grew up on Bay Point – what's being planned for walking/biking for students to get to school from the new developments on W. Leland so we can be less car dependant?

** (Joe Sbranti) Delta Deanza trail runs East to West, it's a safe and secluded trail up to Railroad Avenue. There you'll have to sort out through the traffic. We are trying to plan a trail to connect each of the sub-

divisions for kids to get to school that way. Engineering has to sort out the slopes and grades which create a safety issue and still have to be in compliance for the handicap. We have about \$100,000 with developers help but the project will cost 3 times that. There is someone on the Planning Commission who is an avid bike rider and is championing that cause, who also lives in Oak Hills.

- Can the City put trash cans along the pathway to Safeway, on W. Leland from San Marco?

** (Keith Halvorson) The owner is not the same on the big lot, it's conditioned for a big pathway. We can ask Public Works to trim the weeds and try to clean it and make it walkable. We have 2 paths planned in San Marco area – one by Babbling Brook which is partial and one starting at Santa Theresa to come down to a walking area to the east. Part of the Bailey upgrade was safety on trails.

- There is a community garden at Los Medanos, is there any other ones throughout the city to help out the community?

** (Joe Sbranti) That's not a bad idea to create a new one, we would just need to have someone provide the land, but the city would support it if land came about. Someone would have to find a location and volunteers, but it's not impossible to use city land, it just has to work for the community.

** (Don Buchanan) The Environmental Center has linear beds as does the Senior Center. The Lions Club is looking to develop gardens.

- What about the land across from the library?

** That would not be an ideal location.

- What's going on with the property across from Safeway?

** This is Bay Point and belongs to the County. It is zoned for new homes but there was a shortage in funding. It will be predominately residential.

- Are the trails safe to ride/walk?

** (Officer Spires) The trails belong to the East Bay Regional Parks District, but the police department is always the first to respond. Our motor units patrol them. Citizens still need to be safe on them and remember there are no street light on the trails so they get dark. The day is ok to use them but there is no visibility at night. EBRP patrols at times but if you see a group of kids hanging out, call the P.D. The trails are not a higher crime rate area.

- There is no sidewalk on Willow Pass Road at Range Road making it difficult for student to walk to Willow Cove Elementary.
- The Welcome letter in the student handbook is written by the District Attorney and is very off-putting for new parents/students coming into the district.

- There are a lot of thefts of small things in the Mariner Park development like a garden hose or bike right out the garage or right off of the porch.
- Are there volunteer opportunities in the community?

** Can volunteer at the Senior Center or STS Academy – contact Don Buchanan. Can also Adopt-A-Spot.

- Custodian for school district asking if we can build a footbridge over the freeway for students to get to Willow Cove Elementary

** (Joe Sbranti) A connection was looked at 9 years ago but it was not cost effective, but maybe if it is pedestrian only but we'd have to work with the police department in regards to safety.

- Is Canal Road part of County?

** Yes.

- Who is in charge of Kirker Pass?

** The County is after Kirker Creek Apartments.

- Citizen would like more outreach for community meetings past Bailey Road.

** We've tried contacting Mt. Diablo School District to use one of their facilities in the San Marco area, but they don't return calls, they don't open their doors to us. PUSD is very accommodating.

**We have an agreement with developers for the 2900 homes in the San Marco area which was signed in 1991, some of the projects are working off of monies from that agreement. New developers have increase fees for traffic, park services, P.D. services, security camera installation. We're trying to get more from the original developers. Phase 3 on pays a Police Facilities fee of \$500 year.