

Neighborhood Improvement Team Meeting (Spanish)
General Meeting, St. Peter Martyr Catholic Church
740 Black Diamond St, Pittsburg, CA 94565
October 30, 2016, 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

City Staff Present: Joe Sbranti, Jill Hect, Hector Rojas, Ron Nevels, Richard Abono, Rosalind Gutierrez, Toni Baldazo, Myla Rivers, Haidi Muro, Jorge Esparza, Claudia Gonzalez, Celina Palmer

Mayor: Ben Johnson

Number of Residents in Attendance: approximately 60

Meeting began at approximately 3:25 p.m.

WELCOME – Joe Sbranti, City Manager and Hector Rojas, Senior Planner
Mr. Rojas introduced himself and the City Manager and provided translation for City Manager.

- Thanked public for attending meeting
- City has provided Neighborhood Improvement Team Meetings for 10 years
- City's first "real" meeting in Spanish
- 70,000 citizens and only 265 City staff
- Need feedback from public to see what is going on in City
- Public are eyes and ears to help staff do our job, to be the best we can be
- Staff present from various departments to answer any questions

INTRODUCTION – Ben Johnson, Mayor

- Thanked public for attending
- Privilege for mayor to be at meeting
- Encouraged public if they had questions to not hesitate to ask.

STAFF

Jorge Esparza, Public Works Supervisor

- Items in street
- Anything with drains
- Worked 26 years with City
- Call for questions (925) 252-4935

Lisa Vela, Housing Specialist

- Housing Authority
- Section 8
- Worked 15 years with City
- Call for questions (925) 252-4938

Arturo Fernandez, Police Officer

- Worked 14 years with City
- School Resource Officer at Pittsburg High School
- Call for questions (925) 383-9478
- Police Department Non-Emergency (925) 646-2441

Hector Rojas, Senior Planner

- Planning Department
- Permission for Zoning
- Call for questions (925) 252-4920

Leticia Preciado-Gomez, Parent and Family Coordinator

- Resident of Pittsburg 20 years
- Glad to be present and have so many members of public at meeting, because very important to be involved

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

Q: *Directed at Officer Fernandez*

What can we do if neighbors are selling drugs and growing marijuana? I have called twice, and I need to know if I should do more than call. I am concerned that something worse will happen and I can give my name and number in private if I need to.

**After the meeting Officer Fernandez may speak with resident further. Understands that citizen has called twice, but staff needs citizens to continue calling, as there are a limited number of officers to police the whole city. Growing marijuana is not permitted. You can call the police and have it be anonymous. The police can go out and investigate, and there is a lot that the police can do, but if they visit the site and no one is outside, they cannot go in without permission. Officer Fernandez provided his number for residents to call (925)383-9478.

City Manager, Joe Sbranti, also commented, the Pittsburg City Council has decided to take the strongest action allowed by state for a ban on marijuana. Laws prevent us from making any stronger ban. The votes of November 8, 2016 will determine what will be allowed by the state. Another way to report any problems is to make a [Service Request Online](#).

Q: *Directed at Officer Fernandez*

If we report a problem or call the police, will it be anonymous?

**Yes, any report can be anonymous, you do not have to provide your name and number if you don't want to. For a non-emergency, call (925) 646-2441, there are also Spanish speakers at this number. *City employee handed out cards with hotlines for services*. City Manager requests that citizens sign in with name and email so City staff can provide the information electronically as well.

Q: *Directed at Officer Fernandez*

How do you decide where to patrol?

**It is based off of reports and phone calls. Please call for everything, if you see something in the park, or in the streets, or selling drugs, just call. Call and call and call. The police respond to calls by going out to check; Police may not go by the area if they don't receive a call for it. When possible, please provide information that can help our investigation, ie. What street? What clothes was person wearing? Were they on a bike?

The citizens are the eyes of the City, we need your calls.

Q: *Directed at Joe Sbranti, City Manager*

Will you translate to English for the Mayor?

**The Mayor will be provided a copy of the minutes after the meeting (they will be available in English and Spanish).

Q: *Directed at Jorge Esparza, Public Works*

There are trees at the intersection of Harbor Street and Bliss Avenue that block the view of automobiles.

**For trees on sidewalks, or chips and mulch on the freeway getting in the way of cars, Public works will go out and investigate. *Mr. Esparza provided his card*.

Q: *Directed at Joe Sbranti, City Manager and Lisa Vela, Housing*

It is hard for young people to find places to live and rent in Pittsburg because it is too expensive. Section 8 has been closed for years and there was a lottery for that, but what about the people here? I want to see houses where people can live better. Right now it takes 3 families to afford a home.

**We have 900 new affordable homes that are rent restricted for 55 years, 240 new apartments under construction, and a 30 unit veteran's housing project in downtown in the planning stages- all will be

affordable. I will now turn over to Lisa to address Section 8.

We have had the list for Section 8 Closed for 10 years, but now in February it will reopen for everyone and you can contact staff about that (925) 252-4938.

Q: Directed at Joe Sbranti, City Manager

We are a very small city, but we have a lot of houses here. On Railroad Avenue there are so many cars, it takes so long to get around. If there are more houses, how much worse will traffic be?

******City engineering staff is working on the traffic on Railroad Avenue by synchronization of the lights for smoothing of traffic to get from one place to another as efficiently as possible. I heard the question on how new housing may increase traffic; the new housing projects are required to pay traffic mitigation fees (which have been used to widen Highway 4 from 4 lanes to 10, the extension of BART, and to improve local roads). New construction has fees of \$24,000 per home on top of regular taxes.

Q: Directed at Joe Sbranti, City Manager

On Range Road, where Rancho Medanos is, there are a lot of children trying to get to school. Is there any way to create an overpass for the children to get to school, to make it more easy and safe?

******Our Mayor, Ben Johnson, when he was a Council Member pushed hard for this project approximately 12 years ago. Looking into these improvements, we have found the cost would be \$35,000,000 to extend the road over the top, as well as a variety of other challenges. The City asked the state for funding for this project and was rejected, so we just do not have the money for those improvements.

I just want to let the citizens know that we have been having these Neighborhood Improvement team meetings for years, and traffic concerns are brought in every meeting. City Staff appreciate your comments, are aware of the issues and are working to make it the best it can be. I am happy to follow up more after the meeting.

Q: Directed at Joe Sbranti, City Manager and Officer Fernandez

Thank you for this opportunity. Can you put a traffic light or stop sign along Baily Road? What can we do? BART riders are also parking in the neighborhood and are blocking driveways.

****** Requests for traffic lights go through the City's Engineering Department. After this meeting, I can give you information on how to apply for a traffic light, and what the requirements are. There are a lot of factors being looked at to see if it is the best choice. We'll look to see if that would make the area more or less safe, evaluate the results, and see if it is feasible. We will look at other traffic calming measures as well, and we can also ask police to keep an eye on that area, and I will let Officer Fernandez speak more.

Officer Fernandez stated that police can give tickets, and code enforcement can go out and monitor if cars are being parked blocking driveways or along red curbs, or violating parking signs.

Q: Directed at Joe Sbranti, City Manager

There is a lot of trash on the entrance to the freeway, and we see people there with drugs, along Frontage Road and Chelsea Way. Can we put up cameras?

******We appreciate the question, we have dumping in a lot of areas and like I said before we have just 83 police officers and 12 public works employees to address concerns. We may be able to put up some cameras temporarily. But please keep calling when you see anything so together we can find a way to solve the issues. Please leave your name and number so we can return your call. We will look at that area more carefully and follow up.

Q: Directed at Joe Sbranti, City Manager

There is a lot of traffic in the area of the church and school and we need a parking lot.

******The church has been here a long time. Unfortunately, there is no parking lot for the church. It has been

around for years, and we didn't have the same parking requirements at that time. The City has added parking along 8th Street, but I understand that has not solved the problem. We are looking to make more parking downtown; but, for now, you will have to continue to find legal parking.

Q: Directed at Joe Sbranti, City Manager and Officer Fernandez

I have called the police for different occasions and have come to my house wanting to take a report, but I can't call because I don't want them to come to my house because with all of the things going on, I don't want people to see that I'm the one complaining.

*** I understand you are worried about contacting the City and maintaining anonymity. You can contact me directly, email or call, and I can get a translator to assure you that you will be anonymous.*

Joe Sbranti, City Manager
(925)252-4923
jsbranti@ci.pittsburg.ca.us

Officer Fernandez also stated that when you call dispatch and they ask for your name and number, you can just state that you don't want to provide that information.

Q: Directed at Joe Sbranti, City Manager

There are a lot of cars without registration, or parked illegally, along W. Leland and Crestview.

*** Concerning code enforcement, two people are taking notes on the issues brought up today and will be out giving tickets next week. This is why we're here, to hear your concerns and take action. So to let you know, if you are illegally parked, you will be ticketed. We will not just look at one car being called about; we will look at the entire street.*

Q: Directed at Joe Sbranti, City Manager

I'm worried about the play structure at John Henry Johnson Park. The structure is bad, the wood is deteriorating, and can hurt the kids. Can you repair it quickly?

*** The play structures at John Henry Johnson Park are to be replaced in the next six months. It is a priority for us, and thank you for bringing it to our attention.*

Residents responded with applause.

Q: Directed at Joe Sbranti, City Manager

There's no crosswalk or safe passage across Crestview by the apartments.

*** For a crosswalk along the street I will have to work with the Engineering Division. I would like to know where exactly you would like to see a crosswalk.*

Q: Directed at Joe Sbranti, City Manager

At Crestview and Frontage, there is a lot of trash- across from Mi Pueblo, I have photos you can see.

At Leland Road, a lot of vehicles park on the sidewalk.

On Leland there are 3 accidents that I know of, off of Golf Rd. Can we put street lights, so people can see the curve? Need lights all along the street of Leland and more police presence.

*** We are continuing to try to improve Leland Road. Most of the time accidents are caused by extreme speeding. We now have 164 lights along the road and are continuing to put more warning signs up to make people aware of the curve and make it a safer stretch of road.*

*** Regarding parking on Leland, I know exactly what you are talking about. People park on the sidewalk. We have a project coming up to underground all of the utilities and put up streetlights. The parking situation is difficult, because we are trying to figure out how to add parking without taking away people's front yards. Hopefully when the project is complete it will be a little better. Please stay tuned. We will look into whether or not we can ticket those people.*

Q: Directed at Officer Fernandez

Along Davi, between Civic and Power there is a lot of speeding.

****** Staff has received calls for speeding. Please continue to call.

Q: Directed at Joe Sbranti, City Manager

What is happening with the project on 10th Street, WesPac?

****** WesPac has withdrawn their project and are not moving forward, we can withdraw from website.

Q: Directed at Joe Sbranti, City Manager

Asthma and cancer rates are higher in Pittsburg than the rest of county, what is city going to do about health?

****** As requested, we are adding air monitoring station by the Los Medanos Hospital Community District. We are working as fast as we can with Bay Area Air Quality Management to get the information.

There is a new program for idle free zones at schools. As kids are being dropped off for school, parents must turn off cars so as not to produce so many fumes in a sensitive area. If stopped for more than 30 seconds, must turn car off.

The City is putting more solar projects (library, on 10th street), new program through planning- homes designed to be able to charge electric vehicles.

Q: Directed at Joe Sbranti, City Manager

We want a parking garage, for cars to park and go to businesses. The BART is coming. Where is the parking for BART? How many spaces?

****** We have had specific meetings about parking with the High School Village area. We will continue to have more meetings about parking and traffic in that area before BART opens.

We opened the Pittsburg/Bay Point BART station on Bailey in 1996. It was the first one in town, and we had no idea what parking would be like and had to react quickly. We have since learned from that and know what to avoid for this new station.

Senior Civil Engineer, Richard Abono, stated that we are being proactive, by reaching out to all residents. We want to make sure whatever action is taken that resident's quality of life stays good. We are staying ahead of the curve to make sure parking doesn't become a problem. Regarding parking for eBART, BART is reconfiguring their Park and Ride lot for 268 spaces. Only 144 spaces are expected to be used for BART. Parking spaces available are expected to meet the demand for this particular station.

Q: Directed at Joe Sbranti, City Manager

Regarding eBART, how many cars are they expecting?

****** The number of spaces need initially is low and may grow each year. There will be a parking study done every year, by both BART and the City.

Q: Directed at Joe Sbranti, City Manager

The corner of Railroad Avenue and School Street has several accidents because you can't see people. Can we put a traffic light?

****** The intersection there is awkward. There are several different directions you can go, so putting a traffic light is too complicated; however, visibility is something we will have to address, including possibly banning political signs at the intersection.

Q: Directed at Joe Sbranti, City Manager

Regarding eBART, you've said the station is primarily for walkers; however, most people don't walk to the current station. What about parking?

** The current station at Bay Point is the end of line. That is the closest one to Pittsburg. Right now, people from Pittsburg, Antioch, Oakley and other surrounding cities would have to go there for the closest BART station. When these two new stations are done, Hillcrest will be the closest to the surrounding cities and they will have 1,100 spaces and increase to 2,000 spaces; this will relieve the demand for the Pittsburg Center Station.

Q: Directed at Joe Sbranti, City Manager

On Leland Road and Burton Avenue, can we get a traffic light so it's easier to make turns?

** We will look at that site very closely, to see if that is the best solution. Thank you for bringing it up.

Q: Directed at Joe Sbranti, City Manager

You said that along Railroad Avenue we will have the eBART and the station doesn't have much parking. Antioch and Bay Point will have more parking, Concord has a garage, Walnut Creek has a garage. We've had this plan for more than 20 years. With more houses being built here, there are more cars to transport.

** The City is having more meetings and are following up on concerns with that particular neighborhood (High School Village). There are 45 stations in BART, 13 of them do not have parking. The Pittsburg Center Station is an infill station, designed for people to walk to and from. It is close to the school, city hall, and the courthouse, and more housing is being built with the intent for people to walk from their homes to BART to get to work. You can walk or bike. One challenge we considered was that building a parking lot would draw more traffic. Having a parking lot would encourage the use of cars, and that could increase traffic on railroad. The BART parking at the Park and Ride should be appropriate for the coming years, and we will continue to monitor it.

Q: Directed at Joe Sbranti, City Manager

How do you come up with the numbers for parking?

** BART has been around nearly 60 years, they do projection on ridership. For this station, they are projecting initially 3-400 riders in the morning and 3-400 in the evening. The demand on parking for that is lower because not everyone will come to the station by car. We will try to attach the information to minutes of this meeting.

Q: Directed at Officer Fernandez

Thank you for coming, and for providing us the opportunity to ask questions. What can/does the City of Pittsburg Police Department do to open communication with us Latinos, especially the youth?

** I have a club at Pittsburg High School for running, and I work with kids and parents. I am director of school program "Explore" in Pittsburg. There are programs in each school, I work at the High School. We are implementing more things to keep kids off the streets. There are 4 [School Resource Officers](#): me at Pittsburg High School, one at Black Diamond High School, one at Marina Vista Elementary School, and one who splits their time between Hillview and Rancho Medanos.

Q: Directed at Leticia Preciado-Gomez, Parent and Family Coordinator

Is there a program for adults?

**The program for parents is in week 3. We provide information about student's grades, drugs, alcohol, or just talk about whatever you need. You can call or email. I'm there in the mornings and evenings.

Leticia Preciado-Gomez
(925)206-1651

Joe Sbranti, City Manager

This is a first real Spanish speaking meeting in my 20 years w City of Pittsburg. With every question, I learn a little bit of Spanish. Here today to build relationships and to get to know our community. 40% of population is Spanish speaking; however, when we have meetings we've only seen a very small population in attendance. There is a large percentage of different groups here, and we have a variety of

city organized activities and events to encourage participation (Multicultural Festival, Cesar Chavez March, Dia de Los Muertos). Your question is exactly correct, “how do we build that relationship?”, we hope to build it off of these meetings and city events.

As mentioned earlier, staff will be present after the meeting for questions. This Neighborhood Improvement Team Meeting has had the highest attendance. Your questions were great, thank you very much for coming. In about 3 months from now we will contact about another.

Meeting ended at 4:57 p.m.

There were additional questions and concerns that were heard by staff on a one on one basis after the meeting. Here are some of our resident's concerns that require follow-up by the appropriate division supervisor.

- Concern regarding all the trees in Maple Street, says that tree branches are almost hitting the roofs and the power lines.
- Concern regarding the dumping of wood chips on Frontage Rd from Dover way to Chelsea Way, he says that termites are migrating from there to their houses.
- Concern about illegal dumping of this in the area.
- Concern regarding all the trees in Burton Ave he says the all the trees need to be trimmed and that it has been six years since the City trimmed the trees.
- Wants information about planting trees, if the City provides a tree, and what type of tree he should plant.
- Questions about trees along Waverly Way – whether City trees or private trees.
- Complaints regarding pot holes or unpaved patches from W Leland and Crestview Drive all the way to Serrana Court
- Concerns from residents regarding the playground at John Henry Johnson Park and bushes blocking the view of traffic.