



Serving Beechview, Brookline, Bon Air, Carrick, Mt. Washington and Overbrook

This is a monthly newsletter sent by Councilwoman Natalia Rudiak to constituents and others who are interested in District 4 Neighborhoods. Together, we can make our neighborhoods better places to live, work, and play. Staying informed is part of that process! Please forward this newsletter to your friends and neighbors, and encourage them to subscribe. Have questions that you'd like to see addressed in an upcoming newsletter? Contact our Constituent Services Manager, Ashleigh Deemer: ashleigh.deemer@city.pittsburgh.pa.us or 412-255-2131.

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District 4 News

Butta Bing Strip Club Applies to Re-Open in Overbrook

Those of you who frequently travel Rt. 51 are likely familiar with the burnt out, vacant structure at 1885 Saw Mill Run Blvd. in Overbrook—the former Butta Bing strip club. Since 2005, when a fire destroyed much of the structure, community groups and neighbors have been vocal about the need to tear down the building and repurpose the property. When Councilwoman Rudiak took office, she became an advocate for these groups, talking with City Planning, studying zoning code, and even allocating funding from the city budget to demolish the building. Unfortunately, it's not as simple as razing the building and starting over.

Now, six years after the fire, the owner of the property, Mr. Daniel Smithbower is making moves to re-build and open another strip club on that site. Residents are up in arms, and rightfully so. Studies have shown that adult entertainment establishments foster criminal activities, such as racketeering, arson, and prostitution, that extend beyond the walls of the club, into the surrounding neighborhoods. Considering that 1885 Saw Mill Run Blvd. directly borders a single-family zoned residential neighborhood, “adult entertainment” is an undesirable, inappropriate use. Moreover, Mr. Smithbower has a long history of code enforcement violations on the properties that he owns.

We've received dozens of letters and nearly 70 signatures from residents of Overbrook, voicing their opposition to the re-opening of the club, citing many of the reasons listed above. However, the fight we now face is a legal zoning issue, and the secondary effects of the club will not be considered. What is up for debate is the zoning designation for the property.

As it stands, the site is currently zoned “Highway Commercial,” under which “Adult Entertainment” is a “non-conforming use.” The best chance that we have to prevent this club from opening is to prove that the owner abandoned the “Adult Entertainment” use when the club closed due to the fire in 2005. To this end, the Overbrook Community Council has secured an attorney, and is organizing a community meeting prior to the next Zoning Board of Adjustment hearing on July 21st (10:20 AM, 200 Ross Street, 1st Floor Hearing Room). The tentative date is July 13th. Please mark your calendars, and more details will be available in the coming days and weeks.

Here are a few ways for you to stay informed:

Overbrook Listserv—Subscribe Here: <http://groups.google.com/group/occ-pittsburgh-pa>

Carrick Listserv—Subscribe Here: <http://www.carrickpa.com/Home/google-group>

If you are unable to attend any of the meetings or the Zoning Board of Adjustment Hearing on July 21st, you may submit your concerns or testimony by sending our office a letter by mail or e-mail. Please make sure we receive your comments by COB on July 20th, 2011, so that we can present them as evidence at the Hearing. If you have any questions, or are interested in volunteering to work on this issue, please feel free to call our office and speak with Ashleigh, our Constituent Services Manager. 412-255-2131

Councilwoman Rudiak Invited to Speak with President Obama

Wow! Our District 4 Councilwoman traveled to Washington, D.C. on Friday to meet with members of the Obama administration and attend an intimate reception with the President to discuss important issues facing states and cities across the country. "The President has been a steadfast ally of cities in America, but our main streets need help and Republicans in Congress have done nothing but force cut after cut to cities like Pittsburgh," Natalia said. "We've seen cuts to programs that help Pittsburgh with our police protection, street paving, building demolition, youth job programs, economic development, and much more."

Unfortunately, the federal COPS program, a grant Pittsburgh receives that is designed to keep police on the streets, lost \$296 million this year when Republicans in Congress threatened to shut down the federal government unless a slew of cuts were made. In addition, the Community Development Block Grant program, was cut by more than \$600 million this year, and is proposed to be cut by \$300 million next year. Because of these dire cuts by Congress, Pittsburgh has been forced to cut back street paving, building demolition, summer youth jobs, and economic development initiatives. Councilwoman Rudiak has promised to fight for restoration of this funding.

Councilwoman Rudiak was part of great discussions with Administration Officials including Austan Goolsbee, Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors, Heather Zichal, Office of Energy and Climate Change, and Aneesh Chopra, Chief Technology Officer (of the Federal Government.)

Many lessons from the federal government could be applied to the City of Pittsburgh. Making information available to the public is a focus for the Obama administration. Sites like <http://www.data.gov> make data accessible to the average citizen like nursing home ratings to how well our local hospitals treat kids with asthma. Also <http://www.healthcare.gov> has anyone who is looking for health care product tailored to themselves and their families. The Affordable Care Act passed by Congress in 2010 will end lifetime limits on care, allow young adults 26 years or under to stay on their parents insurance, and will make insurance available to those who have previously been denied because of a pre-existing condition.

Upon returning home, Councilwoman Rudiak will explore ways to make City of Pittsburgh information, from street paving to crime statistics, more accessible by residents online.

Good News You Won't See On the News!

Safe Cosmetics Week Proclamation □

On Tuesday, June 7th, Councilwoman Rudiak sponsored a Proclamation to declare Safe Cosmetics Week to raise awareness of the good work done locally by Women for a Healthy Environment. Cosmetics and other personal care products are not required to be inspected by the Federal Drug Administration, and they can contain harmful chemicals, such as leads, metals and potential neurotoxins that have been linked to cancer and other medical conditions. Women for a Healthy Environment is a local group, that helps women understand environmental risks so they can make healthy choices for themselves and their families. To learn more about what may be in your cosmetics and how it may be affecting you and your family, check out <http://www.safecosmetics.com>.

Concord Elementary First In Math Champions!

Congratulations to Ms. Cara Christian's Concord Elementary Third Grade Class for their excellent performance in the First in Math competition. First in Math is an online program that

helps students develop their math skills, ranging from single-step addition to complex algebra. Students are rewarded virtual “stickers” for every three math problems that are solved correctly. Over 12,000 Pittsburgh Public School students, grades 1-8 participate in First in Math. Concord Elementary placed first in the school district, and Ms. Christian’s class placed ninth overall in the United States! One student in the class, Joseph Johns, was the top player in the school, with 11,150 stickers. That means he answered 33,450 math questions this year! Thank you for representing South Pittsburgh so well!

Our Library Our Future Voter Initiative

□□The Our Library, Our Future voter initiative will ask voters to put a referendum question on the November 2011 ballot for zero point two-five (0.25) mill special tax on all taxable real estate in the City of Pittsburgh to be allocated and used only for the operation and maintenance of Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. This is the equivalent of \$25 per year or \$2.09 per month on \$100,000 of assessed value. □□You can learn more, get involved and stay informed by visiting ourlibraryourfuture.com.

Shop Local! 3/50 Project Encourages Shopping in Brookline & Beechview

Shopping locally at independently-owned businesses is one of the best ways to see your money reinvested in your community—for every \$100 spent locally, \$68 returns to the community through taxes, payroll and other expenditures. If you spend \$100 in a national chain store, such as Wal-Mart or Target, only \$43 stays in the community. Worse, if you spend your money online, none of it comes back to your community!

The 3/50 project challenges you to ask yourself, “what three independently owned businesses would you miss if they disappeared?” Further, what are you doing to keep them open? Stop in, say hi, and make their shops part of your shopping routine, spending \$50 locally per month. If half the employed population spent \$50 per month at locally owned independent businesses, it would generate \$42.6 billion in revenues nationally! Keeping our business districts strong helps to maintain the charm and utility of our South Pittsburgh neighborhoods, and also has a positive impact on residential property values! While this campaign is focused on Brookline and Beechview, be sure that you can apply these same principles to our other District 4 communities.

This initiative is supported in the community by the Beechview Merchants Association, Brookline Area Concerned Citizens, Brookline Chamber of Commerce, Community Leaders United for Beechview and the South Pittsburgh Development Corporation.

For more information, you can contact Stephanie Miller at the South Pittsburgh Development Corporation: stephmiller.spdc@gmail.com

“Hard to Recycle” Drop-Off Day at Brashear High School

On Saturday, July 16th, 10AM-2PM at Pittsburgh Brashear High School (590 Crane Avenue), the Pennsylvania Resources Council is sponsoring a collection of “hard to recycle” materials. Most items will be collected and recycled for free—including televisions, computers, compact fluorescent light bulbs, cell phones, and ink/toner cartridges. Fees will be charged for more difficult items, like tires, batteries, and miscellaneous e-waste (printers, scanners, small appliances, etc). For a list of fees, check out the flyer on the Pennsylvania Resources Council Zero Waste Pittsburgh website: www.zerowastepgh.org.

These events also offer an opportunity to donate the following items for reuse by local non-profit organizations: medical equipment and supplies (such as crutches, nebulizers, wheelchairs, etc) for distribution through Global Links; usable building materials (like like fixtures, doors and windows) for resale by Construction Junction; and gently used furniture for distribution to those in need by Off the Floor Pittsburgh.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Sarah Alessio Shea of PRC at 412-488-7490 x 236 or saraha@ccicenter.org

All e-waste will be recycled by eLoop, LLC— www.eloopllc.com

It's Your Government

The More You Know: Strip Club Legislation Introduced

Councilwoman Rudiak is co-sponsoring legislation with Councilwoman Theresa Kail-Smith that would reform how the city regulates Sexually Oriented Businesses and Adult Oriented Entertainment (like Butta Bing). The legislative package will balance the rights of business owners and their employees with those of city neighborhoods and struggling business districts.

At present, the City's Zoning Code fails to allow for Adult Entertainment uses within the City unless an applicant makes appeals before the City Planning Commission and City Council—a regulatory scheme which federal courts have viewed as too vague and arbitrary to pass Constitutional muster. To put it plainly, rejecting an adult entertainment application opens the City up to a lawsuit, since there is no other legal place in the city for the business to open. This occurrence is commonly known as “zoning out.” This very deficiency in our code has compelled the City to grant Adult Entertainment permits to the Hustler Club on the North Shore and another proposed club on the West End.

The proposed bill would eliminate the City's vulnerability, by allowing Adult Entertainment as an over-the-counter Permitted Use By Right in the General Industrial and Urban Industrial districts, thereby eliminating the “zoning out” argument, and keeping strip clubs and sexually oriented businesses out of our main streets and neighborhoods.

For additional insight, check out these two articles about the legislation.

Post-Gazette: <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/11159/1152134-53.stm?cmpid=localstate.xml>

Tribune Review: http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/news/breaking/s_740855.html

As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to e-mail or call our office: 412-255-2131 or ashleigh.deemer@city.pittsburgh.pa.us

Neighborhood Resources / Coming Up!

Improving our neighborhoods and keeping them great is a process that requires involvement from people like you. Be active, and join us at any of the following events or meetings. We can't do it without you!

If you have questions about any of these events, feel free to give our office a call: 412-255-2131

Community Day in Grandview Park

Saturday, June 25th, Noon-4PM

The Friends of Grandview Park are having a Community Day in Grandview park on Saturday, June 25th, noon – 4PM. There will be Arts & Crafts, Food, Local Businesses, Games for Children, and a Custom Car Show. Come out for the afternoon and meet some of your hilltop neighbors! □□Grandview Park- Mt. Washington/Allentown—499 Bailey Avenue, 15211

Pittsburgh Public Schools Budget: A Community Discussion on Setting Priorities

Monday, June 27th, 5:30-8PM @ the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers (S. 19th Street, 15203)

Be Informed! Pittsburgh Public Schools is losing millions of dollars due to funding cuts. What are your budget priorities? Join us to find out what's at stake for PPS and weigh in on proposed cuts. Your opinion matters!□□Call or Register Online to Attend: 412-697-1298 x105 or info@aplusschools.org□www.aplusschools.org

Carrie Furnace Hard Hat Tour- Free to Active Duty Military and Veterans!

August 20, September 17 and October 15, 2011

Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area, in partnership with Blue Star Museums, National Endowment for the Arts and more than 1,300 museums across America, is offering free admission to current and former members of the Armed Forces for the Carrie Furnace Hard Hat tour on the public tour dates listed above. Tickets for the tour, which are normally \$25, will be free to all active duty and former military personnel and \$12.50 each for up to five members of their immediate family, i.e. spouses, children, and parents.

Veterans and Active Duty Military Personnel with ID will also get free admission to The Bost Building Museum, which is normally \$3 for adults and \$1 for children under 14. Up to five immediate family members can get in for half price.

For more information, call or e-mail: 412-464-4020 x 46; sdrane@riversofsteel.com

Brookline Area Community Council □

Monday, June 27th , 7:30-9:40 @ St. Marks Evangelical Lutheran Church (933 Brookline Blvd.)

<http://www.brooklineconnection.com/history/Orgs/CCouncil.html> □

Overbrook Community Council

Tuesday, June 28th, 7:00-9:00 @ the Accamando Center (Overbrook Firehouse on Rt. 51)
<http://groups.google.com/group/occ-pittsburgh-pa>, occ-pittsburgh-pa@googlegroups.com

Beechview Area Concerned Citizens + Beechview Blockwatch □

Thursday, July 7th, 7:00 PM @ the Beechview United Presbyterian Church hall (1621 Broadway Avenue)

<http://www.neighborhoodlink.com/Beechview/home> □ <http://communitysafety.pittsburghpa.gov/WatchGroupDetail.aspx?groupID=420>

NEW! Community Leaders United for Beechview has a NEW website:

<http://www.beechview.org>□

Brookline Block Watch

Tuesday, July 12th, 7:00-9:00 PM @ Judge Jim Motznik's office (736 Brookline Blvd)

□<http://communitysafety.pittsburghpa.gov/WatchGroupDetail.aspx?groupID=423>

***NEW* Carrick Block Watch Kick-Off**

□July 18th at 6:30 PM @ the Stewart Avenue Lutheran Church

Mark your calendars!! On Monday July 18th, there will be a kickoff meeting for the new Carrick Blockwatch. Please come and find out how you can help take back the streets of this wonderful neighborhood block by block.

For more information, contact Chuck Fallert: chucklespgh@yahoo.com or 412-956-4386