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District 6 Quarterly Newsletter

Spring Edition 2011

ASK CITY COUNCIL TO RESTORE THE LOWER HILL

As I am sure you know by now, the Civic Arena has been nominated for historical designation. On September 16, 2010, I supported the vote from the Board of the SEA to demolish the arena, followed by the March 2, 2011 decision from the Historic Review Commission denying historic designation to the arena. The final decision now lies in the hands of City Council.

Legislation for the historical designation of the Civic Arena was introduced in Council on April 12, 2011. This legislation has been held for a public

hearing. The public hearing will be held at 5:30 pm on March 23, 2011 at the social hall of Epiphany Church at 184 Washington Place in the Hill District community. This is so those most affected by our decision will have the greatest opportunity to be heard. Should Council reject the designation, the process for demolition and the rebuilding of the Lower Hill District will be given the green light to begin.

Since I have been involved in the Arena related deliberations, I have continually

stated, my principal decision making factor is to do what has the optimal economic and social benefit for the residents of Pittsburgh, particularly those of the Hill District. I believe that by demolishing the arena, we have an opportunity to ensure that thousands of family sustaining jobs and millions in future tax revenue would be created through the redevelopment of the site. Not to mention our ability to rebuild the amputated half of our community, reconnect it to its upper half, and resuscitate the entire Hill

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NORTHSIDE COMMUNITIES BENEFIT FROM CASINO DOLLARS

When the Rivers Casino submitted its bid for Pittsburgh's slot license, it included a commitment to provide \$1 million annually for three years for housing and neighborhood business district development on the Northside. Monies for the approved projects are to be distributed through the Northside Leadership Conference (NSLC). The range of initiatives being supported includes historic

preservation, site preservation, renovation and lighting.

On March 16th, the NSLC awarded \$500,000 of the first round of casino grant monies. Funds were distributed to organizations whose proposed projects will help to bolster housing and business development initiatives in the Northside. It was noted that the main criterion in making the selec-

tions was that each project will tangibly improve the community. They should demonstrate a strategic importance to a project's targeted neighborhood and to the greater Northside.

A few of the awardees were:

- Western Renewed! Allegheny West Civic Council; \$20,000 grant

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“City Council must hear from you directly, to ensure we understand that restoring the Lower Hill District site back to its original usage would not only represent a symbolic remediation of past ills, but will also, in a more direct and measurable way, provide an economic boost to the Hill District, the City of Pittsburgh, and most importantly, to you and your families’ lives.”



ASK CITY COUNCIL TO RESTORE THE LOWER HILL

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District.

In sum, I will be voting based on the belief that the people’s lives I represent and care so much about are given the highest consideration.

Since the arena’s erection in the 1950’s, residents in the Hill District have been unduly

maligned by what was, in effect, the amputation of a vibrant community from Downtown.

It is therefore critical that residents of the Hill District express this fact to City Council by showing up to the public hearing and stating their concerns, opinions and voices. City Council must hear from you directly, to ensure we

understand that restoring the Lower Hill District site back to its original usage would not only represent a symbolic remediation of past ills, but will also, in a more direct and measurable way, provide an economic boost to the Hill District, the City of Pittsburgh, and, most importantly, to you and your families’ lives.

NORTHSIDE COMMUNITIES BENEFIT FROM CASINO DOLLARS

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- Preservation of 1108 Federal Street., Central Northside Neighborhood Council; \$20,00 equity investment
- Federal Street Commercial Façade Grants, Central Northside Neighborhood Council; \$10,000 grant
- Garden Theatre Block Public

Safety Improvements, Central Northside Neighborhood Council; \$2,500 grant

- Manchester Renaissance Housing Program, Manchester Citizens Corp; \$75,000 grant

Future application rounds will determine the distribution of the remainder of the funds available for this year.

Groups interested in submitting an application should get in contact with the NSLC at 412-330-2559 for more information.

REACHING A COMMON GROUND FOR THE COMMONS

City Council hosted a public hearing on January 31, 2011, in response to a petition initiated and signed by residents bordering Allegheny Commons Park/West Park. Concerns had been raised over events hosted in the Commons, with the complaints of excessive noise, improper garbage disposal and improper enforcement of rules cited as issues requiring attention from City officials. Perhaps reflective of the

diverse and ever changing population demographic of the Northside, the hearing highlighted the fractious nature of the debate, with those in favor and those opposing further restrictions on park usage; unfortunately appearing to be split along mostly racial lines.

In an attempt to bridge the gap and relieve the growing tension in the community, my office, in

conjunction with Council President Darlene Harris’ office, hosted a meeting on February 22, 2011, attended by representatives of Northside community groups, organizations and institutions. It was successful in initiating a respectful conversation between all parties involved and on all sides of the issue, to highlight not only the differences, but more importantly,

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ENVISIONING A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR THE HILL

A vision for the future of the Hill District was the goal of a process that has involved input from residents and community stakeholders in the Hill. Taking guidance from the urban design team of Sasaki Associates and Stull & Lee, appropriating elements from existing plans, and gathering input from community meetings and neighborhood tours, it is with great excitement that I present you the Hill District Master Plan. This document outlines a set of guidelines for developers and

investors to follow. It is reflective of the needs and desires of a community seeking a healthy environment and improved quality of life.

The framework for development as defined within the Master Plan covers all of the Hill District, Uptown, and smaller parts of West Oakland. In creating a set of principles and revitalization and regeneration of our community. The interest of a whole is taken into account first and foremost, as opposed to a provincial, segmented and fragmented outlook

that squanders overall potential for narrow efforts that fail to benefit the greater community.

There has been increased interest in the potential of the Hill District as of late, and with it comes a unique opportunity to direct this energy towards positive initiatives that promote growth in the community. The Hill District Master Plan is the compass that will help guide developers towards this desired objective. We have successfully completed

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PITTSBURGH DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP HAS A NEW CEO

The Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership (PDP) is an organization that was established in 1994 to market Downtown Pittsburgh as a premier location to live, shop, and work. It was formed by businesses, foundations, and professionals to create a clean, safe, and accessible Downtown through various strategies and advocacy initiatives.

Recently, the PDP hired a new CEO named Jeremy Waldrup from New York City. Jeremy completed his undergraduate studies at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and received a Master's Degree in Public Administration and a certificate in Non-profit Management from the University of Colorado School of Public Affairs. From 2004-2006,

Jeremy worked as Executive Director for NYC Business Solutions Initiative and he has spent the past seven years working for New York City's Department of Small Business Services, where he held the position of Assistant Commissioner of District Development.

We welcome Jeremy to the City of Pittsburgh and wish him all the best in his new position as CEO.



REACHING A COMMON GROUND FOR THE COMMONS

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the commonalities shared by those invested in the park.

What became evident from the discussion was that a lack of communication exists amongst the various community groups of the Northside. Equally apparent was that many of the perceived problems over use of the Commons centered on issues and questions of control of the park. Regarding

the former, my Council office will continue to closely monitor the issue and serve as a liaison to foster further interconnectivity of Northside community groups. As to the latter, it was and it should be emphasized that the City ultimately holds control of public parks. They are open to every citizen of Pittsburgh; ownership is collective and never befalls one group of people.

Moving forward, our office has partnered with the Allegheny Commons Initiative to work towards solutions in the near term and in the long term. These include a more effective notice/posting of events coming to the Commons to residents surrounding the park, connecting community groups for help in staffing events at the park, and reviewing the current noise ordinance as it applies to permitted events.





“The Manchester Public Safety Ambassadors meet on the 2nd Wednesday of every month at the Manchester Citizens Corp.”



PUBLIC SAFETY IN DISTRICT 6

The Zone 2 Public Safety Council has been meeting regularly to discuss various issues around public neighborhood safety, crime reduction, and various city initiatives that increase quality of living in our city.

If you are not aware, the City of Pittsburgh's Zone 2 covers all of the Central Business District, Hill District, Uptown and Polish Hill. If you are a resident of any of

these distinct neighborhoods, please feel free to contact Sharon Wolkiewicz of the Zone 2 Public Safety Council at 412-682-492 for more information. The Zone 2 Public Safety Council meets the 4th Thursday of every month at various locations within Zone 2 city limits.

The Manchester Public Safety Ambassadors Program is a safety initiative led by Carlton Watson

of Manchester Citizens Corporation, which is chaired by Linda Nelson. This safety initiative is open to all individuals that reside in the Manchester neighborhood and seek to increase public safety in their neighborhood. The Manchester Public Safety Ambassadors meet on the 2nd Wednesday of every month at the

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THE FISCAL STATE OF PITTSBURGH

For decades, the City of Pittsburgh has been debilitated by a bleeding pension fund which was approximately 30% fully funded at the end of last year. Running against the year-end clock in December of 2010, Council approved a series of ordinances intended to raise the funding level to 50% in order to avoid State takeover of the pension. This was a response to a provision in State Act 44 of 2009, which required the city to reach the 50%

funding mark before January 1 of 2011 or face the prospect of the state controlling and dictating decisions related to the pension. Loosely translated, this could have meant a spike in tax rates, service cuts, and cuts to the municipal work force.

The approved Council plan irrevocably dedicates an annual revenue allotment from the parking tax into the pension fund from 2011 to 2041. The promised infusion of tax monies would

total approximately \$735 million, which would effectively meet and exceed the 50% funding quota as defined in State Act 44. To offset the loss of revenue from the parking tax, Council expects the Parking Authority will raise parking rates at its facilities. There is currently an impasse at the time of this writing as rates have not changed. It is a conversation that City Council and the Mayor's administration will have in the

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DINWIDDIE STREET HOUSING, PHASE II

At the March board meeting of the URA, authorization was granted for the sale of land along Dinwiddie Street to Dinwiddie Housing Limited Partnership II for \$34,500 for the redevelopment of the 200 and 300 blocks of Dinwiddie Street in the lower Hill District neighborhood of the City of Pittsburgh.

Dinwiddie Street Housing Phase

II includes a 23 unit rental housing development consisting of townhomes and apartment units. The new five building development will meet Energy Star Standards. One of the new buildings located at Dinwiddie and Reed Streets will contain a management office and a community room for residents. All units will be made available to households at or below 60 percent of the area median

income.

Additionally, owner-occupants living in the 200 block of Dinwiddie Street will be eligible to receive up to \$7,500 for façade improvements. The façade improvement program will be managed by the developer and utilize the same contractor and architect.

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PUBLIC SAFETY IN DISTRICT 6

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Manchester Citizens Corporation. A very good neighborhood initiative being worked on by the Manchester Public Safety Ambassadors is the “Northside Neighborhood Media Map”, currently in its planning stages. The map will locate every neighborhood when reported by media. The goal of this initiative is to reduce the negative perception that many City of

Pittsburgh residents have about the Manchester community. If you would like to get involved with the Manchester Public Safety Ambassadors, contact Carlton Watson at 412-323-1743. The Northside

Public Safety Council represents the City of Pittsburgh’s Northside regarding all public safety concerns and questions in relation

with the Zone 1 Police Department. The Northside Public Safety Council meets at 5:30 pm on the first Thursday of every month on the Mezzanine level at 4 Allegheny Center, Pittsburgh, PA, 15212.

Contact Donna Kramer at 412-608-2761 for more information or to get involved.



THE FISCAL STATE OF PITTSBURGH

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upcoming months to ensure that the City meets its obligations as set forth in the pension funding plan.

What’s more, municipal fiscal woes have been heightened both by the Federal government and the introduction of Governor Corbett’s state budget. Proposed cuts by both levels of government to services and programs will inevitably have an impact on the City of Pittsburgh. It is difficult

to predict precisely how the City will be affected, but one area that will be hit hard is the distribution of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). These monies are intended for organizations and programs aimed at assisting low-moderate income communities and/or individuals. An estimated 16% reduction in the annual allocation of these federal funds will limit the amount of funds distributed to community organizations in the City of

Pittsburgh. In addition, it will hamper our ability to pave streets, demolish dilapidated structures and limit our capacity for economic development via the Urban Redevelopment Authority. However, as City Council did with the pension fund, we will certainly continue to work to find creative ways to address any and all fiscal shortcomings while continuing to provide all the functions afforded to all citizens from city government.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE - PITTSBURGH CITY COUNCIL

Below is legislation passed by Pittsburgh City Council in the last month sponsored by Councilman R. Daniel Lavelle:

- 2011-1477: Resolution extending the agreement between the City of Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership (PDP) for the construction and operation of a Wi-Fi network in the Golden Triangle.

[Passed in Council on 4.5.11]

- 2011-1565: Resolution which restricts trash hauling activities between 10pm-6am within 1000 ft of a residential zone or within 300 ft of a residential structure. A residential structure is defined as a building in which at least 50% of the floor space is used for residential purposes.

[Passed in Council on 4.12.11]

- 2011-1577: Resolution providing for the continued designation of a Downtown Pittsburgh Business Improvement District for the area known as the Golden Triangle at the behest of the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership. [Currently on hold for a Public Hearing]





“I urge all who have been involved in the process up to this point to continue to do so, and encourage community members who come across the plan for the first time to become actively engaged in its implementation.”



ENVISIONING A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR THE HILL

Continued from pg 3 a first step in envisioning a brighter future for the Hill District. But a first step is not an end, and now begins the work to implement the plan, to realize it in the real world, to give it shape. What began as a community effort must continue to be so.

I urge all who have been involved in the process up to this point to continue to do so, and encourage community members who come across the plan for the first time to

become actively engaged in its implementation. Together, we will plan for a vibrant future for the Hill District.

The Greater Hill District Master Plan can be viewed at: <http://greaterhilldistrictmasterplan.org/worktodate.html> or by contacting our office at 412-255-2134.



DINWIDDIE STREET HOUSING, PHASE II

Continued from pg 3 Dinwiddie Housing Limited Partnership II, TREK Development Group, the general partner, was awarded Low Income Housing Tax Credits through the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency to help complete the project. Total cost for Phase II is \$7.6M.

Phase I of the project is nearly complete and leasing has begun. A portion of the units will provide new housing for tenants relocating from the Reed Roberts site,

an adjacent apartment building that is in the process of being demolished.



UJAMAA COLLECTIVE IN THE HILL DISTRICT

The UJAMAA Collective is a non-profit organization founded in 2008 as a means of promoting small business ownership, particularly among African-American women. They stress the importance of self-sufficiency, entrepreneurship, and healthy living. Our office congratulates this very strong partnership of women as they opened their marketplace for the summer on Friday, April 22, 2011.

The UJAMAA Collective marketplace will be open from 11 am–5 pm on a bi-weekly weekend basis.

Please contact Celeta Hickman of the UJAMAA Collective at 412-969-3260 for more information on this phenomenal organization. The UJAMAA Collective marketplace is located at 2030 Centre Avenue in the Hill District.



DISTRICT 6 MAP



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HILL GROCERY STORE BREAKS GROUND



Since assuming office, the question of a grocery store in the Hill District coming to fruition has been a continual question posed by constituents and stakeholders alike. I am pleased to tell you that as a result of prodigious community effort, planning and work by all those involved we are excited to report positive progress on development of the project.

The Hill House Economic

Development Corporation has a financing commitment from Dollar Bank for a construction loan, and we approved transference of land to the Hill House Economic Development Corporation at the Urban Redevelopment Authority's March Board Meeting.

For the construction of the store, a joint venture team consisting of L.S. Brinker and CM Solutions

has been selected to build the 36,400 square foot retail plaza along Centre Avenue in the Hill District, making this project exceed 50% Minority and Women Business participation. The plaza will feature a full service Shop N' Save grocery store operated by Jeff Ross, as well as 6,900 square feet of commercial retail space.

An official groundbreaking was held on Wednesday, April 27, 2011.