

Development Activities Meeting Report (Version: 02/20/2026)

This report created by the Neighborhood Planner and included with staff reports to City Boards and/or Commissions.

Logistics	Stakeholders
Project Name/Address: 624 E Ohio Street	Groups Represented (e.g., specific organizations, residents, employees, etc. where this is evident): East Allegheny Community Council [EACC] East Allegheny residents Applicants [URA] DCP Public Safety officials Elected officials
Parcel Number(s): 24-N-118	
ZDR Application Number: DCP-HN-2026-00212	
Meeting Location: Café in the Union Place Building, Allegheny Center Alliance Church, 801 Union Place, Pittsburgh, PA 15212	
Date: September 8, 2026	
Meeting Start Time: 7:00 pm	
Applicant: URA	Approx. Number of Attendees: 38
Boards and/or Commissions Request(s): HRC [Historic Review Commission] and PC [Planning Commission] To be reviewed for historic nomination removal.	

How did the meeting inform the community about the development project?

Ex: Community engagement to-date, location and history of the site, demolition needs, building footprint and overall square footage, uses and activities (particularly on the ground floor), transportation needs and parking proposed, building materials, design, and other aesthetic elements of the project, community uses, amenities and programs.

During the Development Activities Meeting, representatives of the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA) presented a proposal to remove the historic designation from 624 East Ohio Street (the "Hefty House"), a wood-frame rowhouse built c. 1825-1840, publicly owned since the mid-1990s (URA since 2005) and vacant for over 20 years. It was nominated for designation in 2018 for its architecture, development history, and appearance.

URA presented an independent structural review finding major failure across the second floor, rear corner, and roof, plus severe water damage and no rear/basement access, concluding restoration would exceed \$500,000 in stabilization alone and require essentially rebuilding rather than preserving original fabric. PLI has repeatedly cited the property (most recently ~August 2025) as unsafe and unfit for occupancy.

URA explained that the property sits at the center of a larger redevelopment opportunity: the One Northside initiative's proposed Community Engagement Center, combining this parcel with two adjacent URA-owned properties. Despite roughly 10 years of marketing and two failed RFPs, the site's small footprint and lack of access have deterred developers. A predevelopment hold with the current development team expires around September 24, 2026, and URA stated the project cannot advance with the designation in place.

This DAM is the first step in a 4–6-month designation-removal process; next steps are HRC and Planning Commission, both issuing recommendations to City Council, which holds final authority and will hold its own hearing. Any redevelopment timeline afterward is separate. EACC then opened up the floor for questions and comments from the residents.

Discussion

Topic / Issue	Recap
- Process - Role of EACC / Letters of Support	Concern: Is EACC board approval a required first step for this project to move forward? Who asked: Resident DCP response: A letter of support is not required; a DAM is triggered because the project requires a public hearing (in this case, before HRC and Planning Commission). If the community is generally supportive, the applicant may seek a letter of support from the EACC board, but boards and commissions weigh such letters as one factor among several, not as a sole deciding factor.
Timeline & Next Steps	Concern: What is the timeline for the designation removal, and separately, for any future redevelopment? Who asked: Resident DCP & URA response: Designation removal is estimated at a 4–6-month public process from this meeting. Given HRC's first-Wednesday monthly schedule, the item is anticipated for the November 2026 HRC and Planning Commission agendas, followed by a City Council public hearing and vote, meaning three additional public hearings remain. Redevelopment timing afterward is separate and depends on the developer securing financing; URA stated it is prepared to move quickly to sell the property once the designation is removed.
- Process - Council Discretion / Precedent	Comment: A resident recalled a prior historic-nomination case in the neighborhood (~2018) where HRC did not recommend designation, but the outcome ultimately deferred to the district's City Council member, raising concern that Council's decision may not follow commission recommendations. Who asked: Resident Discussion: Meeting participants acknowledged this dynamic and encouraged residents to submit testimony directly to City Council in addition to HRC and Planning Commission, since Council holds final legal authority over designation decisions.
Structural Condition Basis for Removal	Concern/Comment: What specific evidence supports the conclusion that the building cannot be preserved? Who asked: Resident Applicant response: URA's engineer cited independent findings [Brace Engineering] of ~80% second-floor structural failure, a 12-foot collapse at the rear corner, ~25% first-floor framing/roof failure, and extensive water damage, mold, and rot. The building has no rear or basement access, requiring all work to be staged from the street, and stabilization alone was estimated to exceed \$500,000, more than a full rebuild. Multiple PLI citations (most recently ~August 2025) have found the property an unsafe and unfit occupancy.

Topic / Issue	Recap
• Structural Condition • Alternative Estimate	Comment: A resident who originally submitted the building's 2018 historic nomination presented a competing rehabilitation estimate from a local contractor experienced in neighborhood renovations, reportedly around \$164,000 to install a new roof, replace structurally deficient timbers, restore the façade, and remove rear additions. Who: Resident Discussion: The resident also stated that the property's marketability has been affected by area conditions (citing homelessness and public-safety concerns near the site) as much as by the building's condition, and referenced an out-of-town preservation-minded developer reportedly interested in purchasing and restoring 624, 628, and a third nearby property if those conditions were addressed. This estimate and framing were not independently verified by URA at the meeting.
• Community Concerns • Preservation Value / Board History	Comment: Several residents, including a neighboring architect and former EACC board members, stated that a prior walk-through of the building (as a board/neighborhood group) did not identify remaining features of significant historic value, and noted the original 2018 nomination had not been supported by the neighborhood or EACC board at that time. Who: Residents / former board members Discussion: Most residents expressed strong support for removing the designation to allow the larger Community Engagement Center project to proceed, while acknowledging respect for preservation efforts generally.
• Community Engagement • Submitting Comments	Discussion: DCP staff and EACC board members encouraged residents to submit written comments, whether in support of or in opposition to the designation removal, via the neighborhood planner or EACC board, and to participate directly in the upcoming HRC, Planning Commission, and City Council public hearings, noting that written comments can also be read into testimony at those hearings for residents unable to attend in person.

Link to Video Recording (if available): N/A

Planner completing report: [NT]