

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: 3081 Sarah Street	Groups Represented (e.g., specific organizations, residents, employees, etc. where this is evident): SSCC Residents
Parcel Number(s):	
Building & Development Application (BDA) Number:	
Meeting Location: via Zoom	
Date: February 19, 2026	
Meeting Start Time: 6:00pm	
Applicant: South Side Community Council	Approx. Number of Attendees: 10
Boards and/or Commissions Request(s): ZBA for a Variance for overall sign area being larger than 40 square feet, and Planning Commission as a Project Development Plan.	

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.

The artist is a sculptor and presented the final South Side sign proposal and explained that she designed the sign. She is partnering with an architectural products company in Wilkinsburg, who will oversee most of the fabrication and installation. She will create a cast sculptural component for the sign and assist with aspects of the fabrication process. The project is sponsored by the South Side Community Council as a gateway sign for the neighborhood. The applicant shared the original drawing, noting that the design is based on the neighborhood's logo and includes its tagline. The sign also incorporates several historical references and visual elements that connect to the identity and heritage of the neighborhood.

Images were shown to demonstrate the lighting concept. The sign is not electronic and therefore does not require a variance for digital signage; it will be an illuminated sign with a neon-style lighting effect. Updated renderings reflect community feedback, including a wider overall design and an enlarged skyline element. Notably, the skyline highlights the former Equitable Gas building, now the Iron City Beer complex, along with other recognizable neighborhood features. The lettering has also been widened and spaced farther apart to improve readability.

Details were provided regarding installation. The sign will be mounted on two poles with decorative supports. Plans submitted to the City of Pittsburgh indicate that the total sign area will not exceed 200 square feet. The bottom of the sign will be positioned nine feet above ground level, with an overall height of 25 feet. In response to feedback, the proportions were adjusted so the sign is wider rather than taller.

A site plan and map were presented to show the proposed location and orientation, including views for motorists traveling westbound on Carson Street. The scale of the sign was carefully considered in relation to traffic volume and visibility for visitors entering the neighborhood. Additional images showed longer-range views to demonstrate how the sign would read from a distance.

The applicant referenced additional historical and stylistic considerations but emphasized that the primary request involves a variance related to sign face square footage. While the typical allowable size is 40 square feet, this gateway sign is significantly larger due to its sculptural and artistic nature. She noted that public artwork of this scale is intended to withstand and visually compete with the surrounding environment.

Discussion

Topic / Issue	Recap
Signage Size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Concern raised:</i> Clarification of the variance request and how large the proposed sign is compared to the 40-square-foot code limit. • <i>Who raised it:</i> Multiple residents. • <i>Applicant response:</i> The zoning code permits 40 square feet of sign face area (roughly the size of a sheet of plywood). The proposed sign will be significantly larger but will not exceed 200 square feet. The upper portion includes open-work elements, a skyline extending several feet above the main body, a foundry worker figure rising approximately six feet higher, and a smokestack extending above that. The next step is to prepare an engineering/CAD drawing to accurately calculate the sign area, which will be required prior to the Zoning Board of Adjustment hearing. • <i>Outcome/follow-up needed:</i> Provide exact square footage calculations through formal drawings before the ZBA hearing.
Signage Location & Hardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Comment:</i> The need to demonstrate “hardship” to justify granting a variance under the sign regulations. • <i>Who raised it:</i> Resident. • <i>Applicant response:</i> Acknowledged that hardship will likely be the primary issue. Discussion focused on roadway conditions (four-lane roadway), traffic speed (approximately 35 mph), viewing distance, and readability standards in the sign code (e.g., letter height relative to distance). • <i>Outcome/follow-up needed:</i> Applicant will work with the SSCC to discuss further.
Community Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Comments:</i> Whether background information about community support and state grant funding should be presented at the zoning hearing. • <i>Who raised it:</i> Multiple residents. • <i>Applicant response:</i> Acknowledged that it may be helpful to note that the sign has long been a community goal, is sponsored by the South Side Community Council, and was funded through a state grant secured by local legislators. • <i>Outcome/follow-up needed:</i> Applicant will work with the SSCC to discuss further.

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

Planner completing report: SJE