



**General Membership Meeting Minutes  
Monday, September 12, 2011  
New Hazlett Theatre, 7:00 p.m.**

There was no membership meeting in August.

**In Attendance:** Michele Adams, Steve Adams, Dennis Bell, Colleen Bender, Shelley Bias, Patricia Buck, Randy Burns,, Anthony Cabral Lauren Cabral, John Canning, Christopher D'Addario, Mark Deptola, Patrick Dexter, Bill Donovan, Nan Donovan, Elena Firsova, Chad Fisher, Shara Fisher, Adel Foughies, Joan Gielas, Jim Gilson, Pam Grove, Tom Hardy, Bruce Harshman, Arthur James, Paul Johnson, Brian Kaminski, Joan Kimmel, Sandra Kniess, Don Kosy, Susan Larkin, Tom Little, Paco Mahone, Joe Mansfield, Randi Marshak, Dennis McAndrew, David McMunn, Al Meyers, Jan Meyers, Lisa Monahan, Mark Monahan, Janet Moore, Rose Moriarty, Scott Mosser, Gregory Mucha, Mark Myers, Glenn Olcerst, Lindsay O'Leary, Julie Peterson, Debbie Proctor, Tim Proctor, Ralph (Henry) Reese, John Rhoades, Barbara Russell, Kristi Russo, Diane Samuels, David Scalzo, Belinda Shlapak, David Shlapak, David Solosko, Brad Spencer, Gregory Spicer, William Steen, Neill Stouffer, Carlton Stout, Barbara Talerico, Richard Thomas, Jana Thompson, Karina Westfall, Thomas Westfall, Randy Zotter

Meeting called to order by Chris D'Addario, President.

**1. Announcements**

**a. North Side Health Improvement Partnership**

The *North Side Health Improvement Partnership (NSHIP)* is conducting a survey to learn more about current health needs of the Northside community. NSHIP will use the survey results to improve its programming and initiatives to best reflect the needs and priorities of the residents of the Northside.

If you are interested in hearing more about the North Side Health Improvement Partnership or have any questions, please contact Keri Harmicar at 412.330.2535 or e-mail [keri@pittsburghnorthside.com](mailto:keri@pittsburghnorthside.com).

**b. Carnegie Library Pittsburgh (CLP) Wine Tasting Fundraiser**

The membership is invited to the wine tasting at the CLP Federal Street Branch on Friday, September 30<sup>th</sup> at 7 o'clock. Ticket are \$50 per person – available online or at the Library.

**2. Approval of the Meeting Minutes from the July 11, 2011**

Motion made to approve the July General Membership Meeting Minutes by Jan Meyers. Motion seconded by Tom Westfall. Motion unanimously approved.

**3. President's Report**

Chris D'Addario reported some key highlights of events over the last two months:

John Engle stepped down from the Board. John was chair of the Beautification Committee and a great liaison between the CNNC and the Mexican War Streets Society.

Safety and Development are two of the biggest focal points of the neighborhood.

In July, the Safety Committee coordinated a safety walk through the neighborhood with Councilman Lavelle. The focus of the walk was the Tot Lot/Alpine Gardens. The meeting became tense when people standing on the street started to swear and make threats toward the group with the Councilman. Unfortunately, two weeks later there was a murder at the same spot. Chris had a follow up meeting with Councilman Lavelle and Commander Brackney two weeks ago. The Safety Committee will continue to meet to address these issues.

Development – Major points include an update on the Garden Theater Block as well as \$200,000 for October Development for the Scattered Site Development. The \$200,000 will be used for site development to keep costs down and helps empty lots in the neighborhood find themselves occupied by families.

Toula's Building IRS lien on the property for \$20,000 was forgiven. Bill Barron is looking to rehab the property to use as another retail space.

A neighborhood walk-through was held on July 31 concerning the Historic District and upcoming expansion.

The Branding effort was big this summer.

Chris invited the membership to speak, and welcomed comments from the community.

#### **4. Development Update**

##### **Scattered Site Development**

There are six new construction units on the 100 block of Jacksonia, near the Firehouse, also one rehab unit at 105 Jacksonia. Monies to help the effort were awarded from the Allegheny County Economic Development Fund in the amount of \$200,000. New homes will be 3BR with about 2,000 SQFT and will have off-street parking. Pricing will be similar to Federal Hill, so low \$200's. Working to get assistance with second mortgages. There are expected to be about 60-90 days of architectural and site work, so likely will start Spring 2012, after the winter.

Tom Hardy addressed a question from the membership regarding timelines for the Scattered Site project. S&A Homes and October Development were awarded different phases of the project and will alternate phases, with October Development taking the first phase. The total proposal that went to market included 50 units, with a goal to complete 6 to 7 units at a time. Therefore, it will take 4 to 5 years to complete the entire Scattered Site Development project, with phases likely to be 12-18 months each. A resident from the Alpine area requested that properties in that area be addressed sooner in the process as one effort to assist with safety issues in that corridor.

##### **Historic District Expansion**

Two separate processes happening right now.

###### *National Register Historic District*

Referenced in today's Post-Gazette article and includes the Garden Theater Block. This National designation is important in making those buildings eligible for Historic Tax Credits. That expansion is going to be reviewed by the Pennsylvania Historic Review Commission on October 6 – then the PA HRC makes a recommendation to the National Park Service, which has final sign off.

###### *City Historic District Expansion*

The CNNC is working with the Mexican War Streets Society on this joint effort. Representatives from the City requested a walk-through of the neighborhood. There have been many questions from the community about the process and opportunity for comment. Essentially, this process has several steps and will take some time. Entities that will be involved include not only the Mexican War Streets Society, but also the City Historic Review Commission, the City Planning Commission, and, finally, City Council. The CNNC is working to have a representative from the City present at a membership meeting before year's end.

##### **Garden Theater Block**

Craig Totino, on behalf of the Zukin development team, provided an update on the Garden Theater Block. Craig welcomed questions from the membership.

If the Federal Historic District is approved for the Garden Block, it could add \$1.5M coming into project via Federal Historic Tax Credits. Though Zukin submitted the application for historic designation, there are only four state historic review commission meetings/year, so the development team was excited to make the October agenda. Process thereafter is 90 days before can get an approval, but very comfortable based upon Zukin's Historic Consultant and the City's Historic Consultant that those credits will be eligible to come into the Federal North development.

Craig referenced the two potential tenants mentioned in that day's P-G article. The East End Food Co-Op (EEFC) was a process that started over a year ago before Zukin even chosen as the developer. A market study was conducted, but it didn't provide the numbers to support the co-op in the neighborhood. The Zukin development team has since partnered with a Philadelphia Co-Op Consultant. Craig noted that the EEFC has a timeframe of 2013 to open, but not sure the EEFC's timeframes are in line with the Garden Theater Block development. There are alternative interests in the space from an art institution as well as other restaurants. That day's Post-Gazette article also mentioned Nakama Japanese Steakhouse, and Craig confirmed that the Zukin team is in discussions with Nakama's owners.

There has been a sense of urgency with regard to 1113-1115 Federal Street, which are the two buildings at Eloise. As the team was measuring the buildings, they noticed major structural deficiencies. In order to mitigate those issues, they plan to move forward working to stabilize those buildings, which should be seen in the next couple of months. Goal is to have 1113-1115 be the first building developed as part of the project. Zukin requested drawings for stabilizing the structure, and

construction drawings are almost complete. This week those specs and drawings will be sent to the URA. The URA has assured the team that turnaround time on drawings will be 1.5-2 weeks maximum. From there, it will take another 2 weeks to bid the work. If everything goes well, work should commence in 6 weeks.

Craig knows that it has been awhile since anything has happened on the block, but noted that if Zukin doesn't get signed leases, the development group won't get a loan for the project. Craig knows this project has taken longer than planned, but asked the membership for continued support.

A member asked if the disappearance of the fresh food grants from the State is going to affect EEFC from moving into theater? Craig noted yes, that will likely play into the project. There are some fresh food low interest loans available, but those are not the same as a grant.

A member asked why the project can't begin with residential development vs. the commercial side, especially in a neighborhood with high demand for apartments. Craig Totino noted that the project has enough equity behind it without the leases, but preferable not to take on that much risk. Craig added that it would be easy to start the Bradbury, but puts in jeopardy the New Market Tax Credits for the project. However, they could move forward if working on only one building, and not the whole block at once.

One of the ancillary development pieces that needs to be addressed are the crumbling and dangerous conditions of North Avenue. Craig noted that part of the project will include adding ADA-compliant curbs and upgraded ramps.

Craig offered to take questions from people individually after the meeting.

## 5. **Monterey Street**

CD'Addario noted the City of Asylum Monterey Street project has been on the CNNC's agenda since 2008.

**Henry Reese and Diane Samuels of City of Asylum and Craig Dunham of Dunham reGroup, LLC presented.**

Slides of the presentation may be found online at <http://www.cnnc-pgh.org/archives/820>

Henry and Diane are co-founders of City of Asylum (COA), have lived on the North Side since 1978 and on Sampsonia Way since 1980.

City of Asylum/Pittsburgh provides sanctuary to writers exiled under threat of death, imprisonment, or persecution in their native countries. City of Asylum has gutted and rehabbed four houses on Sampsonia Way, which house writers in exile.

Diane Samuels noted that City of Asylum is presenting tonight to ask the CNNC Membership for support to take to Zoning for Alphabet City.

The CNNC in the past has provided letters of support for the project.

The 'Facility' for City of Asylum thus far has mainly been the neighborhood itself. Events are often held on the street, in homes, and under tents. Believing there is more of a need to have a formal facility, the organization is looking to expand. The goal is to, in 2012, have the Monterey Street Literary Center / Alphabet City. Four key principles they want the Center to encompass: Welcoming, Inviting, Inspiring, and Hospitality.

The Literary Center / Alphabet City program activities will include readings, performances, workshops (everything from literary writing to how to fill out a government form), small café bar/restaurant, literary resources, cultural exchange, and a bookstore specializing in translations.

Benefits of the Center include: Construction Jobs, Employment, Training and Education, and Community Investment.

Craig Dunham reviewed the three properties 1406, 1408, and 1410, one of which was a well-known nuisance bar. 1408 is a vacant lot, 1406 was originally to be residential construction.

The Center's prior concept included demo and reconstruction of 1410; substantial reconstruction of 1406, and a new courtyard on 1408 with a partial new/existing cellar between the existing buildings.

There was a private decision by the City of Asylum organization to change architects and revisit the project. The group is now applying for Zoning application. The July 2009 original Zoning approval expired, but had included three Special

*City of Asylum / Pittsburgh, Monterey Street Literary Center / Alphabet City, con't.*

Exceptions: 1. Cultural Services and Community Center (limited to under 5,000 square feet), 2. Exception for Off-Street Parking, and 3. Residential Compatibility Standards. The three separate parcels were consolidated in May 2011.

Found out that 1406 doesn't have a party wall, it is leaning on and part of 1404. With new foundations and new loads it didn't make sense to continue to rely on an adjacent property (1404) for support. That decision set off other issues related to the rehabilitation of the property. Basically, the decision has been made to do demo sooner rather than later, before the winter.

Copies of the Zoning Application were provided and anyone was welcome to take one home with them.

Now limiting the definition of the project to Cultural Services Limited, with a Café as an accessory use to the Cultural Services, two Apartments (though 1,000 SQFT smaller than originally planned), and Cellar (which would take up entire footprint of building) for a building of 10,860 SQFT. Café Seating is set at 43, and the number of books increased from 4,340 to 13,370 with the new design.

Craig Dunham walked through the floor plans. Noted a goal of the literary center is to leave much of the literary center open, up to the 5,000 square foot limit. First floor includes a bar/café/literary center, a seminar room for smaller gatherings and workshops, a bar, and a bookstore.

Design inspirations were reviewed, and among the characteristics important to the built facility include keeping an open design. It was noted that this type of Center doesn't have a prototype: Library + Bookstore + Café = Community Center = Literary Center. Want the feeling of performance, a place where can go for glass of wine or coffee and read a book. Also wanted to be surrounded and enveloped by books like a library. The group is not moving forward with finalizing architectural process until they go through zoning approval. One concept, though haven't gone into architecture of what building is really like, is to include large openings into the Literary Center that would allow for private events to be closed down, if needed.

Where they are right now – need to define the 'building envelope' that they can use to then start to finalize design options. This current state is really just showing a profile, as it relates to differing setback options. As the group works through additional design options they plan on sharing them with the neighborhood.

#### *Q&A Between Alphabet City Representative and the General Membership*

Randy Zotter asked about the hours of operation of the café. Henry Reese indicated that current plan – and is a plan only – roughly M-TR morning (open for breakfast) through 11-11:30 pm. On weekends, open until 12-12:30 a.m.

Joan Kimmel asked what criteria was used for the parking study, and strongly questioned the statement that 463 spaces were available. Dunham noted it was same firm and same study used in 2009 and offered to communicate the criteria in another forum.

John Rhoades asked about Zoning. There was a Zoning variance issued in 2009 for about 2 years, which expired in July 2011. Why did the variance expire? And what is difference between zoning variance made then and now? Dunham clarified

that variance is for a specific request, and in 2009 the variance was for a use for a cultural use. Since then went from single parcel to three. Because they consolidated the sites in zoning, have to request variances for two apartments. Only reason it expired, was due to unforeseen circumstances, and construction was not begun prior to end of two-year period.

Joan Kimmel asked if the two apartment/residences are part of Alphabet City's programming? Henry Reese indicated that, yes, part of programming would be for those such as transient readers. Joan Kimmel asked about café bar and whether it would extend to the reading garden, the street, and to the bookstore? Joan noted that idea of welcoming puts people on a residential street. Joan has concern that commodious sidewalk lends itself to people coming back out onto sidewalk. It was noted that the programming of the spaces hasn't changed from the original design to the new design, and that the setback is only 5'. Added that a sidewalk café permit is a completely separate approval process, that the Department of Public Works is involved, and that is not part of the Zoning approval. That is a decision that could be discussed further or pursued through another public process.

Glenn Olcerst offered some observations: First, the Master Plan process resulted in the recommendation to use the arts, culture, and educational institutions by providing unique neighborhood based collaborations. Second, because healthy communities contain diverse commercial services, the Master Plan recommended the CNNC attract new commercial development. Getting those recommendations was an incredible process completed by a voluntary board via 20+ meetings.

*City of Asylum / Pittsburgh, Monterey Street Literary Center / Alphabet City, con't.*

Glenn Olcerst submits that City of Asylum meets and exceeds these criteria. Speaking for himself, likes very much what Henry and Diane do for the writers and the neighborhood. Notwithstanding certain inconveniences, you have to balance what's best overall for the entire neighborhood. Need to find a way to feed and support the writers and their collective voices. In terms of diversity, cannot get any more diverse than writers who barely speak English.

Motion made by Glenn Olcerst that the CNNC Membership allow the CNNC Board to support the Alphabet City project at Zoning. Motion seconded by Dennis McAndrew.

Discussion ensued among the Membership. Chris D'Addario read a letter from the Mexican War Streets Society (MWSS). The letter was a letter of support from the MWSS, but also requested that any structures built for Alphabet City be conforming to the structures in the neighborhood.

Brad Spencer agreed with the mission of City of Asylum, but doesn't agree with demolition of the building. If possible, would like to negotiate that demolition. John Rhoades indicated that a member can offer a friendly amendment to the motion and the person who made the motion can decide whether or not to accept the friendly amendment.

Brad Spencer suggested amending the motion per submitting some type of design for review. Glenn Olcerst noted that the property is in the national district but not the Mexican War Streets. Glenn countered that the existing building is over the property line and that it is not feasible or practical and could cause the development to fail. Amendment not accepted.

Chris D'Addario called for a vote only of those not in favor of the motion presented by Glenn Olcerst and seconded by Dennis McAndrew. 5 nays counted by raised hands. Chair observed that the majority in the room did not vote against the motion put forth, thereby the majority is in favor of the motion. Motion passed.

*Note to Minutes Dated October 1, 2011: Although a tally of nay votes was taken on September 12, 2011, a tally of yea votes was not formally recorded. Following the membership meeting, the CNNC Board directed the CNNC President to take an electronic vote of eligible members in attendance at the September 12, 2011 Membership Meeting. Voting eligible members who had not already recorded a nay vote were asked to vote by September 30, 2011. Non-Responses were considered abstentions. The final recorded tally of votes: 37 yea, 5 nay, 1 abstention, 10 non-responses (abstentions). Motion passed.*

## **6. Safety Update**

Paco Mahone and Karina Westfall, co-chairs of the Safety Committee, provided an update. Karina reported that the Safety Committee has been working diligently over the last few months to help find a solution to recent activities – shootings, drugs. A flier was distributed, which urged community members to call, anonymously, to report illegal activities.

Paco Mahone noted that the most important thing for this neighborhood is to unite. The number one priority for this neighborhood is Safety. An unsafe neighborhood will halt the progress that we are all trying and hoping for. More than anything that has happened in last few months is both new for Board, is we want the community to join us to help us find the right solution. Safety is the first issue, we all deserve to live in a safe neighborhood and we all deserve to be safe.

The Safety Committee called for volunteers - those who live in both the upper and the lower streets - to join in this effort. Jan Meyers noted that it's great to talk about this, but the membership needs to participate and to be involved, not just the Board. It was widely agreed that the approach to Safety must include both upper and lower war streets residents in order to be effective. Ideas were welcomed from everyone.

Feedback was requested as to the stats around the number of people who make calls to 911/311 or other contacts. Chris D'Addario noted that this initiative started several years ago, but it didn't go far enough. There used to be a dialog, but somewhere that communication broke down. Chris D'Addario noted that we had worked on something where there was a central telephone number, and to call that number in addition to/after calling 311/911 so that we could track on our own all calls made to various agencies.

Several members requested that both Councilman Lavelle and Commander Brackney join the membership at a future meeting. Discussion around the importance of involving the Development Committee and other committees with the Safety Initiatives will be important to a multi-faceted approach to safety.

In recent weeks, the CNNC has ramped up efforts and reached out to other neighborhoods and resources. Julie Peterson noted that on Saturday she and Paco Mahone attended a PCRG meeting, which featured a speaker from the Narcotics and Vice Department of the City Police force. CNNC representatives have also reached out to Lawrenceville United and Mount Washington.

Julie introduced Rob Conroy, who is with CeaseFirePA. Rob will be attending the next Safety meeting. CeaseFirePA is a coalition of survivors and advocates taking a stand against gun violence and criminals who use and traffic guns illegally.

Discussion and comments from the membership summarized that the safety issues in the neighborhood have a number of factors contributing to the problem – from political representation, to an overconcentration of poverty and its correlation with crime within certain blocks, to Section 8 property owners / managers, and finally to police politics and civil rights violations. Suggestions for addressing these various factors included: a) a petition campaign requesting the URA address the Section 8 concentration issue in the upper streets, b) adding pressure to our political leaders, c) requesting more direct involvement from Zone 1 and Police Headquarters, d) involving the upper and lower streets as a united front, and e) reaching out to and working with other neighborhoods that are experiencing the same issues with crime and safety.

## **7. Bylaws**

The bylaws discussion was introduced and it was noted that the membership is not voting tonight with regard to Bylaws. Voting by the membership will be taken at future meetings.

The Bylaws Committee reviewed the proposed changes, and added that the slides reviewed will be available online. Arthur James welcomed questions and provided an email address where members may email their questions to be addressed by the Bylaws Committee.

It was clarified that there would be three reads of the proposed changes, a vote one month, followed by a second vote the month following.

Link to bylaws slides online: <http://www.cnn-c-pgh.org/about-2/bylaws>

Questions about the proposed changes may be emailed to [bylaws@cnn-c-pgh.org](mailto:bylaws@cnn-c-pgh.org)

## **8. Old Business**

None

## **9. New Business.**

None

Anthony Cabral moved to adjourn. Jan Meyers seconded. Meeting adjourned by Chris D'Addario, President at 9:53 pm

The next CNNC General Membership Meeting will be Monday, October 10, 2011, 7:00 pm.