



**General Membership Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 12, 2015
1400 Buena Vista, 7:00 p.m.**

In Attendance (65)

Michele Adams, Steve Adams, Gregory Bednarek, Heather Bednarek, Cindy Berkowitz, Jeff Berkowitz, Tim Bezek, Jeff Brizek, Patricia Buck, Nicholas Cafardi, Jorgen Christensen, Zolina Cook, Christopher D'Addario, Dave Demko, Mark Deptola, Patrick Dexter, Bill Donovan, Nan Donovan, Phil Flaherty, Chris Gates, Joan Gielas, Donna Green, Jerrold Green, Cody Harding, Tom Hardy, Darlene Harris, Bruce Harshman, Sharnay Hearn, Arthur James, Paul Johnson, Stephanie Johnston, Brian Kaminski, Kate Kay, Heather Kniess, Todd Meyer, Charles Moore, Lindsey Morrow, Gregory Mucha, Jason Owens, James Pastorius, Mace Porac, Erin Powers, Frank Quinn, Henry Reese, Andrew Reichert, Shannon Reichert, Craig Reinhard, Patricia Rogers, Vincent Salvino, Julianna Schilling, Bob Sechler, Sheila Sechler, Bob Sendall, Brooke Smith, Kyle Smith, Neill Stouffer, Patrick Sweeney, Brian Toevs, Ruth Tomlin, Leslie Ward, Karina Westfall, Thomas Westfall, Matt Williamson, Bernelle Wood, Al Zanon

Introduction

The regular monthly meeting for the membership of the Allegheny City Central Association was held on Monday, January 12, 2015, at 7:00 p.m. at 1400 Buena Vista Street. President Andrew Wickesberg chaired. Secretary Arthur James recorded the minutes.

Minutes from the 11/10/14 meeting were approved.

Councilwoman Darlene Harris

Councilwoman Darlene Harris addressed the assembly and answered questions.

Q: Can people who don't own property in the city bid on properties for sale by the city?

A: Yes. Anyone can bid on properties.

Q: Can the plan for lighting upgrades in Allegheny Commons be expedited?

A: Have tried to make it a priority since it's a safety issue, but haven't been able to expedite it because of the way the bidding process is.

Q: Suggest a four-way walk light at the corner of Federal and North.

A: Agreed, that intersection is an issue for pedestrian traffic.

Q: Will the bridge on Ridge Avenue be closing soon?

A: Recently learned that they plan to raise it 5 feet instead of 3 feet as they had been saying before. They are now also wanting to a gas line to the new bridge site. Will be arguing for lowering the tracks, or at least not going higher than 3 feet.

Bernelle Wood

Bernelle Wood from Councilman Danielle Lavelle's office addressed the assembly. There were no questions.

Allegheny City Central Association / Mexican War Streets Society Cooperation

Andrew Wickesberg (ACCA President) and Kate Kay (MWSS President) reported:

- The ACCA's and the MWSS's Executive Committees have been meeting to talk about how the two organizations can collaborate and increase efficiency.
- Have identified some small projects that we can work together on.
- We will be sending out more joint messages.
- We hold our meetings back-to-back in the same location. Starting in February, the MWSS meeting will be at 6:30 followed by the ACCA meeting. MWSS meetings will be held every other month.
- If there is interest from both organizations, we can explore the possibility of merging in the future.

URA and the Garden Theater Block Timeline

Tom Hardy introduced Rebecca Davidson-Wagner and Kyra Straussman from the URA. They gave a presentation that laid out the history of acquiring the Garden Theater, the other buildings in the block and the development milestones. The presentation also covered the latest developer selected from the project, TREK. They then answered questions.

Q: Is Zukin still a developer on the project?

A: Yes, he owns the Garden Theater outright. He will continue to develop it.

Q: Can you do something about the fence blocking the sidewalk in front of the Garden Theater? It has resulted in a lot of food traffic in the middle of the street as people walk to the bus stop there.

A: Work should resume there next week. Will send someone from construction engineering.

Q: Will any buildings be demolished?

A: Preservation has been a high priority for this project and was a prerequisite for the RFP. TREK will be looking into the engineering of it.

Q: Are the historic tax credits still secured?

A: There are historic tax credits that can be used for the Bradberry. Historic tax credits are being used for the Masonic. They can't be used for 8 West North because the wall was rebuilt.

Communications Consultant

Andrew Wickesberg introduced Joanna Huss who has been retained to help with PR. Joanna addressed the assembly.

- Worked for Ravenstahl's office 5 years ago when the CNNC hosted an event about the Garden Theater Block in the Masonic building.
- Now works freelance as Huss Communications.
- Loves the neighborhood and all of the excitement around it.
- There's been a lot of buzz in the city about other neighborhoods such as the East End. Will work to draw more of that focus here by placing stories in local, and even national media.
- The neighborhood has a lot of great stories to tell.



ALL TOGETHER. DIFFERENT.

Children's Table

Lisa Ferguson of Fabled Table spoke about the Children's Table program.

- Lisa started Children's Table as a non-profit 10 years ago.
- It received a grant two months ago from Aetna.
- The grant is very specific in that it must be used in support of children of the Northside.
- Children's Table educates children about making good food decisions.
- The grant also requires community involvement.
- Children's Table happens regularly at the Fable Table facility at 1400 Buena Vista.
- For the grant, it will begin its Community Partner program in the spring.
- In the process of soliciting potential Community Partners now including YMCA, The Northside Coalition for Fair Housing, etc. Welcome suggestions for other groups that work with children in the Northside.
- Looking for volunteers to help with the Community Partner program in the spring.

Treasurer's Report

Tom Hardy presented the treasurer's report.

- The annual Auditor's Report is nearly complete and will be presented in February

Highmark / Allegheny General Hospital Sign and Lighting

Andrew Wickesberg reported about the sign and lighting that Highmark is proposing to place on Allegheny General Hospital.

- Highmark came to the North Side Leadership Conference for input on the sign and lighting they're proposing.
- They would like to light the top similar to the Koppers Tower downtown.
- The sign would be on three sides. The side facing Fineview would not have a sign.
- The sign would incorporate the Allegheny Health brand.
- ACCA doesn't have images that can be shared, but is soliciting opinions through the website and email.
- Deutschtown has voiced support for it. Fineview has voiced opposition to it.

Dave Demko, a neighborhood resident and Assistant Director of Scenic Pittsburgh reported:

- Their proposal includes two components, lighting and signs.
- There are not a lot of regulations on lighting, but there are very clear rules on signs.
- Their signs fall in the category of a Business ID sign.
- Per zoning, Business ID signs can't be located higher than 40 feet above ground.
- They will need a zoning variance to place their sign 140 feet above ground.
- The next step for them is a Planning Commission meeting.
- After that, they could probably go ahead with the lighting, but the sign will require a zoning variance.

River of Words

Andrew Wickesberg reported:



- The Historic Review Commission would like for words attached to the exterior of buildings in the historic district to be removed.
- Glenn Olcerst agreed to be a test case for challenging this.
- If successful, he will file a class action suit for everyone else wishing to keep their words. He will do this at no cost to anyone else.
- The ACCA Board has sent a letter of support for Glenn to the HRC.

Safety

Thomas Westfall reported on safety.

- The next Neighborhood Public Safety meeting will be the fourth Tuesday of this month (1/27) at 6pm at the Carnegie Library on Federal Street.
- Hope to have the new Zone 1 Commander there.

Board Elections

Andrew Wickesberg reported:

- Board elections will be held at the May general membership meeting.
- There will be 7 or 8 seats up for election.
- Nominations will open in February.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:50.

Meeting minutes prepared by Arthur James, secretary.
Minutes approved on 02/09/2015.