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**General Membership Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday, September 11, 2023**  
**Zoom, 7:00 pm**

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**In Attendance (17):**

Beth Boroumand, Brittany Conkle, Maggie Connor, Joan Gielas, Jordyn Gilliard, Matthew Hartford, Julianne Hluska, Arthur James, Deirdre Menchaca, Tom Mulholland, Glenn Olcerst, Sherah Rothman, Ian Alden Russell, Tom S., James Wick, Councilman Bobby Wilson, Laura Winter

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**Introduction:**

The regular monthly meeting for the membership of Allegheny City Central Association was held on **Monday, September 11, 2023** via Zoom. The meeting was presided over by **Matthew Hartford** and minutes were recorded by **Brittany Conkle**.

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**Approval of Meeting Minutes**

- July 2023 minutes were voted on and approved unanimously.
- All Meeting Minutes can be found on ACCA's website:  
<https://www.alleghenycitycentral.org/acca/meeting-minutes/>

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**New Business:**

**Special Election for Board**

- Laura Winters and James Wick – voted and approved unanimously.

**Glenn Olcerst: Update on Norfolk Southern**

- Glenn Olcerst: Gave an update on litigation with Norfolk Southern. Glenn reported that the agreement reached requires that the pedestrian bridge be open before any part of North Ave is closed. Glenn reported that the city never allocated any money for repairs so now the bridge is closed. The agreement is that the pedestrian bridge is done first and simultaneously work on North Ave Bridge. Glenn stated that their main concern was that if they focused solely on North Ave Bridge and that was finished first, they would never put in the pedestrian bridge. Norfolk Southern is paying for all of that because of the settlement agreement. Once schedule is in place for pedestrian bridge, bids can go out for W. North Ave bridge. Glenn stated that if the city had done the repairs that it was supposed to do, then there wouldn't be a closure.

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## Announcements:

### District 1 Councilman Bobby Wilson

- Introduction of Jordyn Gilliard from Councilman's office.
- 60% of design is done on North Avenue streetscape, so timeline is still on target to wrap up by 2025. Construction to start in 2024. There is an EngagePGH page for this: <https://engage.pittsburghpa.gov/north-avenue-signals-and-safety-project>
- East Ohio Streetscape: Public engagement meeting on Sept 19 at Alliance.
- Bridge closure at North and Brighton: This has brought up discussions about the pedestrian bridge. With the current agreement, the pedestrian bridge is to be done before the construction of the North Ave bridge. There was a meeting to discuss the design plan and it is being finalized. Norfolk Southern could do both at the same time, in the Councilman's opinion. DOMI had to make an emergency closure after an inspection of the bridge. The city received results 10 days ago and showed that it had to be closed. Detour created. There is a press release (<https://pittsburghpa.gov/press-releases/press-releases/6194>). The order is currently: pedestrian bridge, North Ave, then Pennsylvania Bridge. The agreement would have to be amended to change the order.
- Julianne Hluska: The lights are back on in the park. Councilman reported that Allegheny City Electric is the contractor. Duquesne Light provided a whole new power source at no cost.
- Beth Boroumand: It is important that we support our neighbors in East Deutschtown at their upcoming meeting re: East Ohio streetscape on September 19. This would improve their main corridor. More information at: <https://engage.pittsburghpa.gov/east-ohio-st-streetscape-improvements>

### Tom Mulholland, Allegheny Land Trust

- At the meeting because of people reaching out about protecting green spaces in the neighborhood.
- The goal of Land Trust is to help local people protect local land. They try to protect land with high conservation value, so it isn't lost. The Land Trust has been around for 30 years. Only recently started working in urban context and this is where Tom is largely concentrated.
- Benefits: noise reduction, storm water sequestration, rates of crime and stress and other health outcomes.
- Working in our neighborhood with the Olde Allegheny community gardens. Partner with Grow Pittsburgh (provides support to community gardens and urban agriculture) to protect land for community gardens. Olde Allegheny applied a few years ago (between Arch and Sherman, off of Veto). 40 plots for 40 years. Have seen a lot of investment from community members over the years. The goal is to protect that asset permanently so that it will always be a community garden.
- Laura Winter: There is a lot that is adjacent to Alpine parklet. Trying to make that a permanent part of the parklet.



- Pittsburgh Land Bank accepting applications through their process. Olde Allegheny Community Gardens have been identified as top 50 to transfer from City to the land bank. Mid-Summer of 2024. There will be a point where we will need it to go through a Pittsburgh land bank approval process and city council approval process. Our advocacy at that time will go a long way to making that happen.
- Councilman: Glad that Tom came to put detail to this. Will be supportive.

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### **New Business:**

- Ian Russell is looking for support to facilitate the purchase of a lot from the URA. Lives on Buena Vista. The lot is in various stages of overgrowth, has knotweed, etc. This is what has caused him to reach out to URA to acquire side-lot. He enjoys gardening and planting. It's a 20-year side lot greenspace commitment from the URA. URA wants the community to be aware.
  - Went through Side Lot Acquisition Project through URA. It is a transfer. They would be selling; he would be purchasing. Because it is a URA lot, there are steps (community support). Clause in the sale such that it can't be developed as anything else without URA approval. Only gardening and maintenance.
  - Beth Boroumand motioned, Brittany Conkle seconded. Approved unanimously.
  - No timeline on the letter.
- Northside Leadership Conference Update from Beth
  - Northside Leadership Conference (NSLC) is a Northside-wide Board where the Board is made up of reps from each neighborhood group. Meetings once per month. Beth reported that lots of money and energy have gone to the flats (where we live) over the years. Now, NSLC has decided to focus more energy on underserved communities. Rewriting bylaws, new Executive Director. Lot of positive changes.
- Ian Russell: Last Tuesday night, a transformer on Buena Vista exploded. The neighbors are working with Red Cross, Duquesne Light, etc. There are a lot of these transformers in the neighborhood. There seems to be a pattern of older transformers having similar problems. Threat to valuable buildings in the neighborhood.
  - Maggie Connor: Similar thing happened a few years ago. If you notice spurts where your clock is flashing when you come back home, it is worth reporting. These are early signs. Scorch marks on one of the poles on Arch. If you hear an electric buzzing, that is also a sign that the transformers are starting to wear. If you hear it, report it. If you are in question, report it.

**The Meeting was Adjourned.**

