

**Polish Hill Civic Association
Membership Meeting, March 3, 2009**

Meeting started: 6:30 pm

Pledge of Allegiance

Crime Report

Officer Davis has another meeting for the next couple of months, so she can't make it to the PHCA meetings. She will have someone drop off the crime stats for the report each month instead. See February's report for individual stats: only 4 crimes, none are violent. Good job everyone.

Meeting Minutes

Meeting minutes from the February meeting are available at the PHCA. We can put the minutes on our website as well.

Financial Report

Pam can't be here, so Terry gave the financial report.

\$7,844 regular account

\$361.20 capitol

\$2,324.50 security

Restricted funds:

PNC Bank for the Polish Hill Voice newsletter

\$1,000 donation from Enterprise for greening on Brereton Street

Fundraisers:

Paczki: sold 84 dozen, profit \$190.56

We sold more than last year, so they must be getting popular

olleen Helwich motioned to approve the financial report. Sarah Miller seconds. All in favor. Financial report approved.

Old Business

A. Herron Avenue Housing Project, Phase III

Two homes have been signed (under contract); we hope the third will be done soon.

B. Homes for Sale

Any homes for sale or for rent, please let the PHCA know so we can help advertise for you on the website and spread the word to get good neighbors. There have been some homes that have sold very quickly, so we'd like to help you find good people to buy.

C. Jubilee Kitchen Bldg 3101-3103 Brereton

Still continuing with renovations. There is a building permit in the window. Paulette from Melwood wants to open a business there- a consignment and handmade jewelry store. She is talking to Sister Ligory and Bogden (next door) about space.

D. City Steps

Repairs are under way but the weather has slowed down repairs. There has been more concrete poured and a new center column has been added. As the weather warms, more work will be completed.

Committee Reports

A. Membership Updates

85 regular memberships are paid up to date, 25 subscription memberships are paid up to date. Remember to renew your membership for 2009! Membership reached 245 from last year, so many people have not paid their dues yet this year.

B. Monument Committee

Easter will be the next holiday to decorate the tree. Volunteers are needed - tall and short people.

C. AWYG 2009

We have had our first planning meeting to start planning the festival for this year. Leslie Clague will lead the committee for Art What You Got 2009. Looking for volunteers for the day of the event: loading, booth sitters, setting up tables and chairs, clean up, etc. The festival will be July 19, 2009.

D. Green Team

Josie and Debbie are leading our neighborhood cleanup. The next Polish Hill clean up date is April 18th starting at 10 am til 1 pm. Meet at the PHCA. Coffee and snacks provided. We will use blue bags to pick up recycling. Over 50% is able to be recycled.

E. Housing Committee

The next meeting is Thursday, March 5th and March 11th with the URA. We have had contact with Yum Bakery and referred to business owners. The housing committee will discuss with the URA about future development on Polish Hill and ways to create welcoming spaces for businesses.

F. Sprout Fund

We are going to apply again this year for a Sprout Fund mural. Our committee is looking for a site in Polish Hill. Sprout Fund wants a solid, masonry wall and it can't be a building that is under renovation or has cracks or peeling paint. March 27th is the application deadline. Please let us know if you have any suggestions.

G. Fundraising

\$196.05 from packzi sales raised

\$1000 from Enterprise for greening of 28th and Brereton.

Redstone candies (Easter chocolates) – orders due March 13th

Polish Hill maps from 1923 have been printed and are being sold for \$35 as a fundraiser for the PHCA. They are printed on high quality paper. Tai + Lee is printing the maps for us. The maps show names of families who used to live there during that time. It is a very unique item.

At the end of our next membership meeting in April, we will have Tastefully Simple come, so you can buy items after the meeting. Tastefully Simple sells dip mixes, seasoning packets and other food items. This is a fundraiser for the beautification committee so we can provide lunch for the volunteers who help beautify our lots in the neighborhood. May 30th will be the day of the planting on Brereton and 30th Street.

Leslie has helped to create Polish Hill buttons, selling for 75 cents each. They are red, round buttons that say Polish Hill on them. If you are interested, ask at the PHCA.

New Business

A. Project 53

Joe Reichenbacher made a short presentation about his properties and his nonprofit Project 53. Joe bought three properties – two on Melwood and one behind Melwood. He occupies one house with his family. He started a nonprofit Project 53 and he hopes to run a small music store. The closest music store where you can buy musical instruments is in the South Side. Project 53 will provide acoustic instruments and lessons and hold monthly workshops for kids to learn music and how to repair musical instruments.

Joe started a nonprofit called Free Ride, where they used old unloved bikes and fixed them up and gave them to kids. Now it is very successful. He would like to open the business in the property that he already owns on Melwood. The house he lives in would be next to the business. Traditionally it is easier to run and keep cleaner if he lives close by the business. His current tenants want to help with the business. It would cut down on overhead. One issue is parking. In his research so far, he found that a traditional music store needs x number of parking places per square foot. Hie space will be less than 1,000 square feet.

Joe will accept old lesson books, sheet music, instruments, etc. There would be workshops for different ages. There will be a repair facility. The goal is for it to be accessible to the public. You can get it for any price you want, but you get what you pay for. One of our goals is to get people to help themselves.

Right now the building is zoned residential, so he needs a zoning variance. A zoning exception is easier to get than a variance. Looked in county records to prove past use of property. Project 53 is part of the Thomas Merton Center.

They are recognized by the state, but use the Merton Center's 501c3 designation; they are working on getting their own nonprofit designation. Mapping Pittsburgh recently rezoned the city. Joe from Sen. Ferlo's office gave some advice. Shelly from City Planning gave some advice. Example: Morningside made zoning changes that changes it "forever." Joe is going to change a zoning variance, which ends when he sells the property, so it would go back to residential zoning.

Joe has been instrumental in helping to improve things at Alfred's Deli. Thanks for all your help with that effort. There are new items available there. Alfred's is offering evening hours on Fridays (open until 7:00 pm) and delivery by request to John Paul Plaza.

B. Stair Steward program

Patrick Dowd's office has proposed an idea to help salt the city steps. This would be a pilot program to choose a stair steward for each set of city steps. There would be salt boxes for the steps and the boxes would have locks on them. The Stair Steward would be responsible for salting the steps. You can contact the PHCA or Patrick's office directly if interested. This program would not take effect until next year.

C. Community Bread Oven

Leah is taking the lead on using the green space on Harmar Street to use for a community bread oven. We're just starting to look at all the issues involved in it. We are in the initial stages, but if anyone has any suggestions or ideas, please contact us. It could be an interesting option. There would be a schedule and certain volunteers would help with building the cooking fires, etc.

D. Council to Go

Council to Go will meet at the PHCA on odd months at 6:30 pm on the third Wednesday. Next meeting March 18th at 6:30 pm. They have been very well attended. Cookie shared some success stories from past meetings: the City sent a summons to clean up a neighbor's property, they put new railings up in the tunnel under Bigelow.

E. Polish Hill qualifies for Elm Street Funding

Polish Hill now qualifies for Elm Street funding. We are trying to find out what is available to put in an application for next year. Part of the funding is to provide funding to plan development and neighborhood improvements. Elm Street is the sister program to the Main Street program. Elm Street piggy backs off Main Street to improve residential areas. A planner or consultant would help. The funding also helps home owners to get grants to improve their homes, etc. For example, maybe half of the cost of a renovation would be subsidized.

F. Corner Lot - Dobson and Herron

Penn State has partnered with the city to help green up lots in community. We heard from mayor's office that Brereton/Dobson is going to qualify for business district improvements. Polish Hill will receive 8 trash cans. We will work with public works to pick locations. We are looking at benches too. We will also get 1 or 2 recycling containers. They will come out later in the spring. Street paving money would be a different funding source. The city has prioritized street paving and some of the stimulus money will probably be used to help repave. Brereton and Herron top - bad sink hole in the road. Make sure to be vocal about these kinds of problems if you want them fixed.

G. West Penn Park

The city only has funding to put in new lighting for West Penn Park. The goal is to complete lighting in 2009, but there will be no other improvements. It has been requested to designate an area for dogs and to provide bags. Some residents asked whether the City will they maintain the field even if they're not planning to do renovations for another year. The field is not very useable right now. Rod Perkins does permitting for the fields. Talk to him about giving out permits again this summer in the meantime. Tennis courts - could they be restored into a basketball court so the skate park can be expanded into the basketball area? Or could the tennis courts be used as a dog park?

H. Strategic Planning

Strategic Planning is happening with the board. Pam Buchner is working to lead the board to finish the strategic planning. As we move forward, we need a long term plan to keep PH a place we all want to live in. The plan will also be something we can present for Elm Street funding.

I. PHCA Apt 2

This apartment is ready to rent. Working on renovations in others. New kitchen cabinets in two apartments. Two furnaces added. Added new sinks, new toilets. Used water conservation and used fluorescent bulbs. Bathroom is finished. Russell Manski helped us finish that. Three rental apartments to help fund the PHCA is our goal. Apt 2 is being advertised on Craig's List right now: \$600 rent. Catherine will show the apartment. If you want to see the apartments or know someone who wants to move here, let us know. Thank you to Senator Ferlo for his assistance to get funding for this project.

J. IHM sweet bread

\$7/loaf for bread – it is a fundraiser for the church

K. PHCA – 40th anniversary

The PHCA is one of the oldest community groups in the city. September celebrates the anniversary. How do we celebrate 40 years? Please give us some suggestions.

L. March 28th Earth Hour

Global effort – March 28th 8:30 pm – 9:30 pm turn off your lights for an hour. This started in Australia as an environmental initiative to create awareness about energy usage.

The PHCA is being as green as possible in our renovations. We used Construction Junction for parts, including a sink, and we used recycled paint. We will recycle cardboard from renovation projects.

50/50 raffle winner announced.

Adjournment

Janice motions to adjourn. Sarah Miller seconds the motion. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:43 pm.

Meeting minutes submitted by Alexis Miller, Secretary