
ALLEGHENY WEST GAZETTE

February 2009

Message from the President

By John McDanel, AWCC President

"I've been driving from one meeting about sprawl to another for fifteen years, and the only thing that's changed is that now it takes a lot longer to get there." – Rob Melnick

While the Western Ave project has been stopped by winter, the North Shore Connector boring machine completed the tunnel mining portion of the project. Most of Western Avenue and a good portion of Allegheny West will be within a half mile walk of the new LRT transit stop at Allegheny Ave. While not a panacea, it should be good news for our neighborhood and the Northside. According to Reconnecting America, 30 percent of the demand for housing is for denser, walkable, mixed-use communities, and less than 2 percent of new housing starts are in this category. Obviously, something went wrong in real estate - one could wonder if there was more to it than sub-prime lending. The Urban Land Institute argues that "the trick for real estate developers has always been identifying the hot transit system. Today, highways are out; urban transit systems are in."

At the national level, mass transit has gained traction with voters. In November, the Wall Street Journal reported that mass-transit projects fared well at the polls, with over 70 percent of mass transit projects getting approval from voters – about double the usual approval rate. Last summer, other changes were noted in the media, such as Christopher Leinberger of the Brookings Institution saying the American dream is changing. We will finally witness the beginning of the end of sprawl, he predicts.

The North Shore Connector project should be completed in 2011 at a total cost of \$552 million, and is 80% federally funded. The Port Authority expects 4.2 million annual riders to use the North Shore Connector, and further expansion into the North Hills and other areas in Allegheny County. The Connector had its fair share of opposition from a group of politicians and various citizens. Recently Simon Property Group dropped plans for a sprawling mall complex in Cranberry because \$63 million in state and federal funds from road and highway improvements to the mall disappeared. Dale Pinkerton, chairman of the Butler County commissioners, said the project would have benefited Allegheny County. An attempt at humor? Many of the retailers we hoped would locate downtown, Nordstrom's for example, have leased space at Ross Park, another Simon property.

Be glad we got transportation dollars and Cranberry didn't. In his book Twentieth-Century Sprawl, Owen Gutfreund examined highway federalism and how it reshaped the American landscape. Gutfreund concluded:

The anti-urban slant of state and federal policies, the collapse of mass transit, and civic initiatives meant to accommodate cars undermined the sustainability of the city itself, fundamentally altering settlement patterns. Culture and technology were channeled and focused by the cumulative effect of subsidies that skewed personal and corporate decision making, underwriting sprawl while undermining urban density. The manner in which Americans adapted the national infrastructure to accommodate the automobile encouraged the dispersal of jobs and people across the continent and fueled a nationwide need for capital expenditures unmitigated by consideration of equity, efficiency or affordability. The drive to accommodate automobility, as the United States built far more pavement per capita than any other nation on earth, transformed all American communities, big and small, east and west, north and south.

FEBRUARY/MARCH CALENDAR OF EVENTS

AWCC GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MTG

CALVARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10 @ 7:30PM

TUESDAY, MARCH 10 @ 7:30PM

HOUSING & PLANNING MTG

844 BEECH AVE

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17 @ 7:30 PM

TUESDAY, MARCH 17 @ 7:30 PM

AWCC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MTG

858 BEECH AVE.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24 @ 7:30

TUESDAY, MARCH 31 @ 7:30 PM

NORTH AVE SUB-COMMITTEE MTG

1009 GALVESTON AVE.

TUESDAY, MARCH 3 @ 7:30PM

Allegheny West Civic Council
812 Western Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15233
(412) 323-8884

Re-adoption of the Allegheny West 8 Year Plan

Motion:

AWCC hereby readopts the findings and recommendations of the Allegheny West Plan 2000 – 2008, including the Mary Means Report, while noting that at least some of the recommendations in the Plan have been implemented.

In particular, as recommended by the Housing and Planning Committee, AWCC should continue to work toward:

- development of residential uses in the 800 and 900 blocks of West North (as proposed, in part, in the plans for The Lofts project); such uses may be combined with some retail/office, as appropriate; the former A&P site and the Brighton – Western site should also be developed as residential;
- development of new commercial uses on undeveloped sites at the corners of Western and Galveston, Western and Allegheny and North Lincoln and Allegheny;
- development of a new parking structure on the north curb of Ridge in the 900 block between Allegheny and Galveston;
- development of residential uses in the 900 block of North Lincoln;
- development of residential uses on Ridge between Brighton Road and the railroad tracks; and
- development of links to the new LRT transit line.

AWCC should also work toward:

- growing businesses on Western;
- extension of HRC construction guidelines to all new construction areas, regardless of whether or not they are in the historic-designated district;
- more aggressive enforcement of prohibitions on surface parking lots in parking overlay district and monitoring of zoning to preclude additional surface parking;
- City enforcement of all code/parking regulations during events on North Shore, at City's, not Allegheny West's, expense;
- establishment of a comprehensive tree maintenance and replanting program;
- ensuring that timely and appropriate improvements take place in West Commons, working with the Commons Initiative;
- monitoring and elimination of “blight”, inappropriate signage, and poor street cleaning, including storm sewer; and
- control of truck traffic through the neighborhood.

Allegheny West Book Club

When: Thursday February 17 @ 7:30PM

Where: 844 Beech Ave.

What: Animal, Vegetable, Miracle by
Barbara Kinsolver

Contact Trish Burton at 412.321.4725
for more information.

Western Avenue Fire Relief Fund

The New Year's Eve fire on Western Avenue caused serious damage for several residents and businesses. Insurance will not cover the full loss.

The Western Avenue Fire Relief Fund has been established to enable neighbors to help neighbors. Your tax deductible contribution can be made to:

Western Avenue Fire Relief Fund
c/o Northside Leadership Conference
4 Allegheny Center, Suite 601
Pittsburgh PA 15212.

If donors have a preference, they may specify the particular business or individual they wish to help in the Notes line on the check.

Your kindness towards your neighbors is deeply appreciated.

Please call 412.330.2559 with any questions.

Trees! Trees! Trees!

By Larry Ehrlich

When Lin and I moved to Allegheny West thirty-four years ago, there were only six trees on Beech Avenue and none on North or Galveston. Though at times we complain about the leaves or the sap or the roots, few of us would want to return to our treeless past. Unfortunately, many of our trees are not very healthy; this year alone we have lost six trees. We must be more proactive. We need to replace the downed trees and learn how to preserve the rest. It is also critical that we plan for future development – especially on Brighton Road and West North Avenue.

If you share my concern and would like to help keep Allegheny West green consider joining the Tree Committee. The meetings will be short and few.

If you have interest and time call 412.321.2503 or 412.607.2677 or email me at bikinglarry@aol.com



Don't Trash That TV! Event

Brought to you by the Pennsylvania Resources Council with support from Waste Management and the City of Pittsburgh

When: Saturday, February 21, 2009, from 10AM - 2PM

Where: City of Pittsburgh Environmental Services Facility

3001 Railroad Street, Pittsburgh, Pa 15201
Construction Junction

214 North Lexington Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15208

What: Drop-off your television at one of these locations on
February 21st for recycling and keep it out of the landfill!

Participant Fees:

TVs 19" & smaller: \$10 each
TVs 20" - 29": \$20 each
TVs 30" - 39": \$25 each
TVs 40" & larger: \$35 each

For more information or to volunteer at this event, visit www.prc.org or call 412.488.7490 ext 236

AWCC MEMBERSHIP MEETING AGENDA

February 10, 2009 7:30pm

- I. Reading of January Minutes
- II. Treasurer's Report
- III. Property Report
- IV. Committee Reports
 - 1. Ways and Means
 - 2. Housing & Planning
 - 1. Western Avenue Update
 - 2. North Ave update
- V. Old Business
- VI. New Business

AWCC Membership

To become an AWCC member, send your Name, Address, Phone Number and email address to:

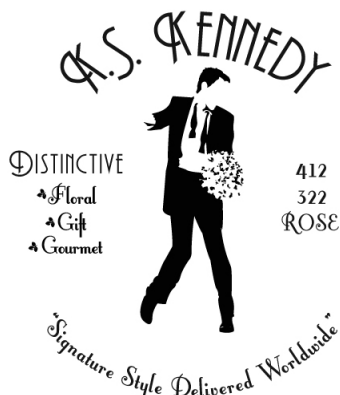
Allegheny West Civic Council - Membership Chair
812 Western Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15233

2009 Annual Dues are \$3 and Lifetime Dues are \$45. Checks should be made payable to AWCC.

Pay for your membership online with your credit card! Go to www.alleghenywest.net/shop – and pick “memberships” from the menu on the left.

If you are unsure of your membership status, please send an email to info@alleghenywest.net and we will look in the membership file!

Your paid membership enables you to vote at monthly membership meetings.



Kerry S. Kennedy

www.kskennedy.bravehost.com

848 Western Ave. Pittsburgh, PA 15233

A Note from your Communications Secretary

By Gene Wilson

As communication secretary I'm in charge of the Allegheny West Website and am interested in getting ideas about how to improve and add to it. This applies to both the content and the style of the site. I can handle the technical aspects but I'm no one's graphic designer so any good tips that you how to make it more interesting or more attractive would be appreciated. As for content, I see the site as serving information both for those of us who live here and people who are visiting us here. Information for residents might include things like historical review information, links to city services, meeting calendar, parking information, etc. Information for visitors could include information on upcoming tours, links to businesses and services available in AW, a photo album, information about moving here, etc.

Please contact me with any ideas at webmaster@alleghenywest.info

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TO LOSE SLEEP,
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THE GAZETTE

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
ALLEGHENY WEST CIVIC COUNCIL

Editor: Gene Wilson

Letters, Submissions, Advertising, For Sale and other notices: gazette@alleghenywest.net or call 412.310.3728.

Submission does not guarantee publication.

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