

Allegheny West Civic Council, Inc.
Membership Meeting Minutes
March 12, 2024

7:33 PM Call to Order by Tim Zinn, President. A quorum was present.

I. Reports of Elected Officials, City Departments, and Other Organizations

- A. City of Pittsburgh Zone 1 Police
 - Ofc. Defeo reported there a simple assault at a North Shore bar.
 - The new police reporting system only generates reports for incident that have a crime code. So, minor things, such as missing wallets, which were formerly reported will no longer appear.
- B. City of Pittsburgh Mayor's Office (Lindsey Robles)

No one from the mayor's office attended the meeting.
- C. Pittsburgh City Council District 1 – Cllr. Bobby Wilson (Jordyn Gilliard)

Cllr. Wilson appeared for the meeting and opened the floor for questions.

 - The first topic was proposed legislation aimed at erecting tiny houses and tents in certain areas, including the riverside on the Northside. Cllr. Wilson made it clear that he did not support that legislation and that the bill was written without speaking with experts. He also stated that the Allegheny County Department of Health & Human Services is no longer giving out tents. The Pittsburgh Planning Commission is starting a working group to work on “fair housing” which may involve repurposing existing structures. Zoning code changes may be required. The Department of Health & Human Services is not opposed to “tiny houses” but not in the proposed locations. Some members stated their opposition to the bill, while others supported it.
 - The second topic was a zoning bill which did pass. The new zoning allows more attached structures in residential areas, for lots that are 39 feet wide or less. Some members voiced their opposition to a zoning change that affects the entire city, rather than the areas where the issue recently arose in a court case. Other members voiced support for the zoning change. It was noted that this change was unlikely to affect Allegheny West, and that Allegheny West already has many row houses.
 - The third topic was the real estate tax reassessments that are happening downtown due to remote work and empty offices. The reduction in assessed values is eroding the real estate tax base. Cllr. Wilson was asked how this will affect the city budget. He responded that he introduced a bill today that gives certain tax breaks to developers who convert empty office space to residential units. It is intended to increase housing in the city and keep properties on the tax rolls.
 - The last topic was the number of sunken boats in the river. Cllr. Wilson promised to investigate the issue.
- D. Pennsylvania State Representative – Rep. Aerion Abney

No one appeared on behalf of Rep. Abney.
- E. Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy – Erin Tobin

- Ms. Tobin stated that the North Promenade project in the Allegheny Commons is now complete. She thanks Cllr. Wilson for his hard work in getting an allocation of the new city Parks Tax funds for the project. She also thanked the Allegheny West Civic Council for its letters of support for project funding. She also thanked the Duquesne Light Company for its generous donations. There will be a ribbon-cutting ceremony on April 30 to commemorate the completion of the project.
- Lake Elizabeth will be drained and cleaned soon. The PPC is hoping that AWCC will once again be a fiscal sponsor of this event. The cleanup now produces less plastic because Allegheny Cleanways provides a dumpster so that volunteers don't have to use plastic bags.
- In Riverview Park, the PPC will be repairing the Valley Refuge Shelter using Parks Tax funds. The design work will happen this year, with construction slated for next year.
- There will be an Arboretum Day celebration in Riverview Park, as well as a Family Day.
- Members told Ms. Tobin that the city's Department of Public Works is once again driving vehicles onto the Allegheny Commons unnecessarily. She will convey this to the proper authorities.
- Allison Keating then appeared and spoke to the membership about the deer hunting pilot project. Deer populations have hit very high levels, so the city allowed limited bow hunting in Riverview Park. The meat was donated to local shelters, and that food was worth more than the city spent on the deer hunt. She requested that AWCC furnish a letter of support to the park rangers who will appear before city council in support of the project.

II. Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting were approved. (S. Graubarth / J. Beatty)

III. Reports of Officers, Standing Committee Chairs, and Others

- A. Treasurer's Report – Cathy Serventi
 - The treasurer reported that both the Allegheny West Civic Council and the Allegheny West Development Corp. were in sound financial condition.
 - AWCC received approximately \$36,000 from the March sale of 827 Western Avenue.
 - The membership approved a motion to submit the treasurer's report for the annual audit. (F. Barbush / D. Adam)
- B. Friends of Allegheny West – Deb Lantz
 - Ms. Lantz could not attend.
 - President Tim Zinn reported that there are twelve flower baskets left for sale.
- C. Communications Committee – Trish Burton
 - Ms. Burton could not attend the meeting. Elizabeth Barbush, editor of the Allegheny West Gazette, urged members to submit articles and information to the Gazette.
- D. Housing & Planning Committee – Jim Wallace

- Mr. Wallace could not attend the meeting.
 - AWCC has heard nothing from the prospective buyer of the former A&P lot at the corner of Brighton Road and W. North Avenue.
 - 827 Western Avenue was sold, as reported by the treasurer. The new owners are excited to build their new residence after consolidating the two lots.
 - AWCC has heard nothing concerning 939 W. North Avenue, which has a “for lease” sign in front.
- E. Membership Committee – Aaron Bryan
- Allegheny West bowling is under way at the Elks Lodge on Cedar Avenue. Members were encouraged to attend and socialize. Bowling is not required.
- F. Property Committee – Michael Shealey
- 806 Western Avenue
 - The plumbing leak has been repaired. It was caused by a cracked drainpipe. The floor and a wall will need to be repaired.
 - A neighbor submitted a professional kitchen design for the apartment, free of charge. She works for a kitchen remodeling firm, though, and would appreciate the business.
 - The property committee is still getting bids for new windows.
 - The ongoing issue of people illegally parking in the driveway continues. Someone ruined the cone sign by wrecking the cone and throwing the sign many feet away. Mr. Shealey has contracted with a towing company, which will put up signs and tow offender’s vehicles.
 - Someone posted an unsigned note that rats have been spotted behind McIntosh Row. Apparently, some McIntosh Row occupants have placed garbage cans behind 806 and their garbage is not being taken to the curb as often as it should.
- G. Ways & Means Committee – Carol Gomrick
- Ms. Gomrick could not attend the meeting. Others reported the following.
- The summer Wine & Garden tour sold out within a week.
 - Ms. Gomrick wonders if we should add an additional tour on Sunday. There was some opposition to this by the members, who felt that three days of tours was too much to ask of the owners of the tour houses. One member suggested simply raising prices again, while another thought it might be possible to add an additional house. It was pointed out that the tour guests might become intoxicated if additional houses were added.
- H. Nominating Committee – Adrian Skinner
- There was nothing new to report.
- I. Executive Committee Actions – Tim Zinn, president, and Bob Griewahn, secretary
- The secretary reported that there were no actions taken by the executive committee.
- J. Northside Leadership Conference Report – Ann Gilligan
- Ms. Gilligan could not attend the meeting.
- R. Griewahn reported that the conference continues to debate the future structure of the Neighborhood Community Development. It appears that the NSLC will be able to appoint half, not less than half, of the board members of the NCDF.

IV. Unfinished Business

A. Registered Community Organization status

Cathy Serventi is updating the organization's website, and uploading its minutes, to comport with the city's RCO rules.

B. Western Avenue Neighborhood Improvement District

President Tim Zinn stated that there was no news to report.

C. AWCC Budget – The 2024 budget as presented by the treasurer was approved (D.

Adam / T. Barbush, C. Serventi abstaining).

V. New Business

A. Memorial Trees – The membership voted to allocate \$2,000.00 for the planting of memorial trees for the following Allegheny West residents who died within the past year:

- Mary Callison
- Dennis Bergevin
- Dan Pultz
- Paula Cellini

(F. Barbush / M. Shealey, with amendment by C. Malakoff / S. Graubarth)

B. Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy "What the Muck" Cleanup – The membership voted to spend make a \$1,000.00 sponsorship donation.

C. Letter of Support request for deer hunting project – The membership voted to issue the letter of support to the city park rangers. (R. Zoufalik / T. Barbush)

The meeting adjourned at 9:06 PM (D. Adam / T. Barbush).

— Bob Griewahn, secretary.