

**Allegheny West Civic Council, Inc.**  
**Membership Meeting Minutes**  
**October 8, 2024**

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7:34 PM Call to Order by Tim Zinn, President. A quorum was achieved at the outset.

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

**A. City of Pittsburgh Zone 1 Police (Ofr. Defeo)**

- The North Shore reports are filtered out of the Allegheny West statistics we get.
- Some tires were slashed in the 600 block of Galveston Avenue.
- There was a robbery on September 21 in the parking lot next to Graybar Electric, perpetrated by an armed man.
- A neighbor asked about an arrest observed in the 800 block of Maolis Way. Ofr. Defeo will check into that.
- The “stolen car” reported in last month’s meeting was not stolen. The owner’s spouse had moved the vehicle.
- A neighbor asked about which items should be reported using 911, as opposed to the 311 service, and described a recent altercation he’d had. Ofr. Defeo responded that the neighbor’s description of what happened warranted a 911 call. He stressed that the 911 call center prioritizes the incidents, so folks should not worry that they are calling about something that is not significant enough to report.
- A neighbor said that her office heard that there were two sexual assaults near the Community College of Allegheny County campus. Ofr. Defeo responded that his reports for September do not indicate any such assaults.
- Another neighbor asked about the relatively new police report tracking system. Specifically, it does not seem to include the mapping capability that the prior system had. Ofr. Defeo said that the city is working on it and should have mapping on the website sometime soon.
- Ofr. Defeo’s telephone work number is (412) 551-4976.

**B. City of Pittsburgh Mayor’s Office (Lindsey Robles)**

- The Snow Angels volunteer sidewalk shoveling program is starting up in early November. Volunteers can sign up to shovel the walks of the elderly and others unable to shovel their own walks. Those who qualify and want this service should sign up for that.
- A neighbor asked about the homeless on the bicycle trails along the river. Ms. Robles said that encampments that have been there a certain amount of time cannot be moved. She does not know whether this is a law or a city policy but will find out. She mentioned that the boulders put in place at some locations were put there by property owners, not the city. The city’s Roots Team oversees helping the unhoused.
- A neighbor expressed their opposition to the city’s proposed zoning changes, stating that City Planning needs to stop making changes that adversely affect existing residents.
- Another neighbor commented on city workers parking illegally on the Allegheny Commons grass. The vehicles are not emergency vehicles and do not appear to be necessary to what the workers are doing.

**C. City Planning Department (Nazia Tarranum)**

- Ms. Tarranum could not attend.

**D. Pittsburgh City Council District 1 – Cllr. Bobby Wilson (Jordyn Gilliard)**

- The city's Department of Mobility and Infrastructure ("DOMI") will send someone out about the overhead electrical line at the corner of Beech and Galveston Avenues.
- The trees on the 900 block of W. North Avenue and the 1000 block of Galveston will also be checked upon. The trees are being severely pruned to keep the branches clear of utility lines. One neighbor suggested that one answer could be to move the lines from W. North Avenue to Jabok Way, since those lines are just "through" lines that do not connect to the houses on that block.
- There is no update on Duquesne Light's intentions for the property it purchased on Ridge Avenue.
- Neighbors reported that street sweepers came through on the correct day. Some cars were ticketed; others were not.
- The new Parking Authority website is not working very well. They are aware of the issues and are working to correct them.

**E. Pennsylvania State Representative – Rep. Aerion Abney**

- No one appeared on behalf of Rep. Abney.

**II. Minutes**

- The minutes of the September meeting were approved. (F. Barbush / N. Knaus)

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

**A. Treasurer's Report – Cathy Serventi**

- The treasurer was unable to attend, so there was no report.

**B. Communications – Trish Burton**

- Ms. Burton was unable to attend.
- The neighbors thanked her, in her absence, for the Christmas tour labeling "party" she organized at Calvary U.M. Church.

**C. Friends of Allegheny West – Deb Lantz**

- Ms. Lantz was unable to attend, and there was no report.

**D. Housing & Planning**

- 1103 Western Avenue in Manchester – There is a plan to convert this property to residential. The developers would like a letter of support from the Allegheny West Civic Council, but the Manchester Citizens Corp. has not yet reported whether they support the project. We will wait until they do to decide whether to issue the letter.
- 1112 Galveston Avenue (formerly the Value-added Foods Building) – The executive committee is working with Allegheny West Civic Council's law firm to determine what our options are.
- 939 W. North Avenue (formerly Process Reproductions) – There is a question of whether the former owner's use is still grandfathered for zoning purposes. The new owner consulted her attorney, who said that it is. One resident said that it clearly is not grandfathered, although the Zoning Board of Adjustment could allow it with certain conditions. Another neighbor, who attended the presentation at the Housing & Planning Committee meeting, thinks the new owner was just telling the committee what they

wanted to hear. A third resident said that the new owner is a member of the Berger family, and that they are reputable owners. A fourth resident suggested that Allegheny West Civic Council attempt to get the owner to enter into a “Good Faith” agreement concerning the use of the property. These agreements were highly effective in the neighborhood in which he used to live.

- Registered Community Organization – Pres. Zinn stated that the executive committee is working on this.
- Truck traffic – This has been tabled due the closure of W. North Avenue at Brighton Road, which has reduced traffic considerably.
- Former A&P lot on Brighton Road – The developer has modified the original plan. He now intends to build a series of duplex condominium townhouses. The designs, though, are very modern and not in keeping with Allegheny West’s guidelines for development outside the historic district. He and his architect were told about Sarah Mistick’s new house, and they said they will revise their plans somewhat after viewing it. The ultimate plans will depend upon Norfolk Southern Railroad’s decisions on the bridge at the intersection of Brighton Road and W. North Avenue. One neighbor stated that, after viewing the plans, they are inadequate.
- Duquesne Light Company’s Ridge Avenue property - Nothing to report at this time.
- Airbnb / Short-Term Rentals – Jim Wallace, the Housing & Planning committee chair, suggested that we should be looking for guidance at the laws enacted in Austin, Texas and New Orleans, Louisiana.
- 928 Western Avenue – There is an open 311 ticket on this property because of overflowing trash and garbage. Neighbors were encouraged to file 311 complaints if they observe an infraction.
- 900 Western Avenue (Lefty’s bar) – The lease on this space ends in December, but they expect to renew. The owner may come to the next Housing & Planning committee meeting.
- 920 N. Lincoln Avenue – The 10-year variance approved by the Zoning Board of Adjustment has now expired. We need to decide what, if anything, should be done if there is a use outside the current zoning.
- Zoning Changes – One neighbor stated that he has great issues with the city’s new zoning policies. The city’s ENGAGE website has the information.

**E. Membership - Aaron Bryan**

- This year’s Christmas tree is in the works.
- Aaron also is getting a large new holiday greetings sign to replace the one we have used for decades during the house tour. The new sign will be weather-proof, unlike the old sign.

**F. Ways & Means Committee – Carol Gomrick**

- We are still looking for houses for the Victorian Christmas House Tour.
- Approximately 900 tickets have already been sold.

**G. Nominating Committee – Adrian Skinner**

- The nominated slate for the 2025 Allegheny West Civic Council executive committee is:
  - President – Elizabeth Barbush
  - Vice President – still open
  - Treasurer – Cathy Serventi
  - Secretary – Bob Griewahn

- Sergeant-at-Arms – Deb Kelly
- Housing & Planning – still open
- Ways & Means – Carol Gomrick
- Membership – Yulia Bhonsle
- Friends of Allegheny West – Trish Burton
- Property – Aaron Bryan
- Communications – Sarah Cook
- Immediate Past President – Tim Zinn
- Mr. Skinner reported that there are likely candidates for the two remaining positions.

**H. Property - Michael Shealey**

- Nothing to report

**I. Executive Committee**

- The executive committee approved a motion to have GRB Law appear at the sheriff's sale of 946 Western Avenue and bid up to \$200,000.00 on behalf of the Allegheny West Development Corp., which also approved.
- Airbnbs – The executive committee approved a motion to have GRB Law write letters to the owners of problem properties on Western Avenue and W. North Avenue.

**J. Northside Leadership Conference - Ann Gilligan**

- Ms. Gilligan could not attend. Bob Griewahn reported that the NSLC is working to fill its remaining committee slots and will be having an annual review of its new executive director.

**K. New Business**

- A neighbor asked about the WANID project, and the membership were given an update. This included an estimate for running electrical lines underground up Western Avenue for the McIntosh Row properties, which came in at over \$200,000.00.
- Linda Ehrlich sent a message that Thomas Funk, former pastor of Calvary U.M. Church, recently died.
- Memorial trees will be planted in the Allegheny Commons on November 10: Dennis Bergevin, Paula Cellini, John DeSantis, and Dan Pultz. This also will be reported in the Allegheny West Gazette.

The meeting adjourned at 9:36 PM (F. Barbush / N. Knaus).

— Bob Griewahn, secretary.