



### Projects Move Forward Thanks to Community Involvement

This summer you've noticed a lot of activity in the Observatory Hill neighborhood. The retaining wall to shore up Portman St. is well underway. Although summer rains caused slight delays in the work being done at the Riverview Park soccer field, progress is continuing at a good pace. The turf has been ordered and will be in place this fall, and soon the infrastructure for the field lights will be installed. Field lights have come a long way in recent years. The lights for this field will be targeted and focused on the field, and there will be little, if any, "spillover" light.

Observatory Hill's business district will soon be sporting new lights also! We are looking forward to installation being completed by early fall.

Community improvements don't just happen by themselves, they are group efforts. One of the most rewarding aspects of my job is working with involved, dedicated residents to enhance District 1 neighborhoods. I encourage you to join with OHI's endeavors. A good first step is attending their membership meetings.



*Duane Ashley, City Director of Operations, Darlene Harris, City Council President, Walt Nalducci, Vice-President, OHI at the dedication of Moses Carper Memorial Bench Riverview Heritage Day, June 8, near Park Visitor's Center*

During Harvest season, Observatory Hill is fortunate to have two nearby sources for farm fresh foods. The Brightwood Farm Stand happens every Wednesday, from 2 to 6 p.m., through November 20. Citiparks' North Side Farmers Market will be open until November 27. It offers a wonderful way to enjoy a bountiful, healthy time of year. North Side Farmers Market is held every Friday, from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m., in Allegheny Commons Park at East Ohio St. and Cedar Avenue. Please note that the Farmers' Market accepts credit/debit cards and EBT.

As always please call my office if I can be of assistance. I can be reached at 412-255-2135.

Darlene M. Harris  
City Council President

## Neighbors Demonstrate Pride through Community Beautification

City Leaders have awarded Observatory Hill a Love Your Block Grant for beautification of the Commercial District at the corner of East and Perrysville Avenues, north up the hill on Perrysville Avenue. This latest grant follows projects to clear debris and plant flowering shrubs near the intersection of Baytree and Evergreen Road this past spring. Before that, local neighbors pitched in to clean up East Street, and to plant and maintain the Venture Street planting strip at the bend in the street near the high retaining wall there.

During May before Heritage Day that served to kick off the opening of the summer season with the Jazz All Stars presentation and Saturday night movies. Neighbors from Brighton Heights, Summer Hill, Perry Hilltop and Observatory Hill helped plant flowers at several garden plots throughout the park. This project organized with the help of District One Supervisor Bob Lacki and his crew, was planned with supervision and landscape design advice from the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy Staff. Each spring, the beds and borders are planted, then maintained through the summer and reclaimed for winter and later spring planting. So this is a long-term effort with volunteers needed in spring, summer and fall.

Each location welcomes volunteers to weed, water and maintain the planting areas. More volunteers are needed to help with the landscape preparation and planting planned for the business district in September. This workday is slated for September 28. If you can offer your assistance for any garden project please contact a neighbor listed here.

Please check our website for added information.

Riverview Park – Janet Pazzynski at [jpaz@verizon.net](mailto:jpaz@verizon.net)

Commercial District – Roxanne Tuinstra at [ohipgh@gmail.com](mailto:ohipgh@gmail.com)

Venture Street – Jan Moreland at [mrsjan1103@verizon.net](mailto:mrsjan1103@verizon.net)



*Riverview Park Entrance with garden maintained by volunteers.*



*Venture Street landscaping funded in collaboration with Council President Harris' office, maintained by community volunteers.*

## My Children Are Getting a Fine Education in the City Schools

by Tim Tuinstra, Pittsburgh Allegheny K-5 parent

As a parent of three students in the Pittsburgh Public Schools, I assure readers that our kids receive an outstanding education.

Their teachers inspire creativity, generate students' excitement for learning and go the extra mile to demonstrate commitment to the children.

All of these advantages contradict the negative stereotypes that several well-meaning people "warned" my wife and me about as our children approached school age. Placing our first-born in

Pittsburgh Public Schools flew in the face of assumptions that we would move to the suburbs for educational reasons.

Five years in since first sending our oldest to the public schools, we strongly recommend that anyone considering whether to live in the city with young children explore the Pittsburgh Public Schools. You will be surprised to learn the breadth and depth of outstanding educational opportunities and choices available.

\* Originally submitted to the Pittsburgh Post Gazette and published July 29, 2013

## FAMILIAR FACES IN MUSIC VIDEO SHOT IN OBSERVATORY HILL

There is a YouTube music video released on June 30 that is about Pittsburgh and speaking Pittsburghese. The song is called, "Pittsburgh PA," written and performed by Ron Romanovsky, a Pittsburgh native who has moved to Sante Fe, New Mexico but has a soft spot in his heart for his home town of Pittsburgh.

He and Co-Producer Janet Pazzynski (Pittsburgh Native that still lives in the city) filmed the entire video in Pittsburgh using locals and great scenes of the city to introduce the world to our wonderful dialect. The video features Observatory Hill, some of its merchants and the North Shore. The video shows Pittsburghers as warm and welcoming. The lighthearted feel to the video makes it easy to love. The song will stick in your head and heart. Here is the link for the video:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=sUHNRCuwiqo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sUHNRCuwiqo)

Please share this video with your family and friends. It is a real treasure.



## The OHI Board

### Glenn Miller President

412-322-5724  
glenn.miller@stantec.com

### Walt Nalducci Vice President

412-322-6478  
wnalducci@msn.com

### Jason Wrona Treasurer

724.322.0198  
jason.wrona@bipc.com

### Roxanne Tuinstra Secretary

412.415.0962  
roxyinpa@yahoo.com

Rev. Dennis Austin  
Outreach & Schools  
Committees

412-931-1678  
Dennis.leann@gmail.com

Stephen Connell  
Business Development  
Committee  
412-481-8204  
sccconnell@aol.com

Paul Homick  
Organizational Development  
Committee  
412-586-7176  
pshomick@andrew.cmu.edu  
homickp@aol.com

Peter Humphrey  
Neighborhood Beautification  
Committee  
412-925-1770  
Humphrey.peter@gmail.com

Peg Perlik  
Membership Committee  
412-231-6710

Jane Sestric  
Newsletter Committee  
412.231.8134  
sestricsanny@gmail.com

Dorrie Smith  
Housing & Business  
Development Committee  
412-877-4828  
openthedoor@hotmail.com

Jasun Stanton  
Public Safety Committee  
412-323-2531  
jasunstanton@hotmail.com

Jeff Wagner  
House Tour, Business  
Development Committees  
jeffreywagner2@gmail.com

## Annual Registration Form for Membership to Observatory Hill Inc.

Mail to: Observatory Hill Incorporated.  
P.O. Box 100247, Pittsburgh, PA 15233  
412-736-2489

Member's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Date Paid \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Contribution: (check one)

☐ \$5 ☐ \$10 ☐ \$15 ☐ Other ☐ \$50 (Business Member)

☐ Please include me on the email list that provides information on local activities and important community notices.

☐ Do not include me on any email notifications

Make Checks Payable to: Observatory Hill Inc.

### Observatory Hill Journal Credits

Editor: Pipitone Group, Jane Sestric  
Design and Layout: Scott Pipitone, courtesy Pipitone Group – 412-321-0879  
Printing: Dave Gilbreath, courtesy Mercury Printing – 412-241-1189

September 2013

OHIO Journal

P.O. Box 100247  
Pittsburgh, PA 15233

Non-Profit  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 3666  
Pittsburgh, PA

# OH Journal

Observatory Hill, Incorporated



The Newsletter for the Friends & Neighbors of Observatory Hill

September 2013

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE ADVOCATES FOR NORTHSIDE OPPORTUNITIES

The Northside Leadership Conference Education Committee is organized to seek improvements in public education for families in the Northside. The Committee continues to engage the school board and administrators, both in central administration and at the schools themselves, to equip Northside schools with enriching options, to keep expectations high and bolster achievement through added reinforcement as needed.

A longstanding concern of the committee has been the poor quality of communication from the district in almost every circumstance. Some school web sites are not updated to include changes in new principals, or messages for standing principals. Online school calendars do not include sports schedules with game locations. Over the past few months the committee has posed questions about the success of King Elementary's Teacher Academy, strengthening Perry High School, expanding Morrow in line with the K-8 model, transporting Pre K students

from Northview Heights and keeping Machester Elementary open as a key neighborhood asset. The PPS Superintendent and Board of Education has not responded to these concerns.

The NSLC Education Committee supports ALL education options on Northside, including charter and parochial schools. However, the committee sees a need for the Pittsburgh Public School system to offer options here in Northside that will draw those who have left back to take advantage of Promise Scholarships of \$10,000/year for graduates of PPS high schools. The NSLC Education Committee meets the second Tuesday of every month at 6 p.m. in the Mezzanine Conference Room of 4 Allegheny Center. Please join us to voice concerns and offer suggestions. Good schools are the building blocks of stable communities!

Related story from one parent who has had a positive experience during the past 5 years, on page 2.

## PLANNING BEGINS FOR OBSERVATORY HILL HOUSE TOUR 2014

by JoAnn Pomietto

House tour 2013 is now history. It was a great success. The trolley ride through Riverview Park and seeing inside of the Visitor Center and Chapel Shelter made this year's tour exciting! Planning for next year's house tour on June 1 has already begun. The committee is looking for homes near Perry High School and to the north, such as Baytree, Franklin, Bascom, Perryview to name a few streets. If you are interested in sharing your Observatory Hill home – let us know! If you are one of those who promised us for next year, thank you. We will be in touch.

Some neighbors may wonder what's the point of the House Tour. What's the big deal? It is a day that we, as neighbors, get to share our neighborhood! We let visitors and prospective buyers into our homes, not just on the main roads but also on the side streets. They experience a warm welcome to Observatory Hill. I have helped with the house tour in the past but the past few years I have been involved with the planning. I have made new friends and found streets that I never knew existed. Please think about being part of the house tour committee, either as a volunteer or home owner host. You can contact me, JoAnn Pomietto at 412-931-7729 or via email at [jopomietto@comcast.net](mailto:jopomietto@comcast.net) and please put in the subject line "house tour interest." I'll be waiting to hear from you!

## FALL SPAGHETTI DINNER AND FAMILY NIGHT; RIVERVIEW ACTIVITIES BUILDING ON OCTOBER 25

Our fall spaghetti dinner and family fun night is scheduled for Friday, October 25 from 5 to 8:30 p.m. at the Activities Building in Riverview Park. This is a great time to meet your friends for some conversation, games and activities for children and adults. There will be entertainment and interactive crafts. So mark your calendars for a great time at the Park!

Cost: \$7.00 for adults/ \$4.00 children

Activities: Fall themed games, contests, and dancing

Entertainment during the program – music and dancing for all

Menu: Spaghetti, rolls, salad, drinks and dessert

Contact person: Dorrie Smith at 412-877-4828

Volunteers are needed for serving food and helping with children's activities. Please phone Dorrie if you can help.

### What's Inside:



City Council News–2

City Schools–2

Community Beautification–2

Fall Family Fun Ideas–3

Old Allegheny Soccer–3

Molly's Trolleys–3

Riverview Soccer Field–4

Riverview Dog Park–4

Allegheny Observatory–4

Scott Pipitone– 5

Commercial Development–5

Music Video–6

## Fall Family Fun Ideas, Close to Home

by Barbara Stanton

One of the great benefits to living on Observatory Hill is the number of families that live in this neighborhood. There are always people playing at the park, out walking, biking and pushing strollers. Events like Halloween and OHI-sponsored family festivals have taken on a new life thanks to the many families that fill our neighborhood. We are fortunate to have the park and pool so close; they are like a continuation of your own back yards! But what is a young family to do when the weather turns a bit more brisk and the pool is closed? Fortunately, there is no shortage of ideas.

A favorite pastime of our family is hiking in the woods in Riverview Park. There are great trails that range in skill level and terrain type to accommodate all hiking levels. The trails are also relatively easy to follow and are not very long, so you can start out simple and then increase your length and difficulty. Some trails are great for a stroller if you have little ones. If you can fit a football in your backpack, you can even hike to one of the fields to toss around the ball. Be sure to visit [www.pittsburghparks.org/riverview-directions](http://www.pittsburghparks.org/riverview-directions) for a printable trail map.

West Park, in Allegheny Commons, isn't exactly in our backyard, but that park is great for a bike ride around the lake for the preschool/elementary school crowd. It's also a nice park to pack a picnic lunch with lots of open space to spread out a blanket and have lunch. Of course a trip to West Park would not be the same without Gus and YaiYai for iceballs!

While you are down in West Park, be sure to visit the National Aviary. This is a great place for families with children of all ages. Atria's Kookaburra Kitchen is located in the atrium of the Aviary. This is a new addition to the Aviary to offer some unique lunch options. Some of the more popular attractions include the penguin exhibit and the daily bird shows. Visit the Aviary's website ([www.aviary.org/](http://www.aviary.org/)) for more information.

The Pittsburgh Children's Museum is another great resource for families with preschool and elementary school age children. The museum recently announced plans to expand into the old library and opened a newly designed Waterplay room. Visit their website ([pittsburghkids.org/](http://pittsburghkids.org/)) for more information.

The Carnegie Science Center is a great adventure geared a little more for the elementary and middle school crowd. The Center combines learning and education into lots of fun and adventure. The Highmark SportsWorks is a great place to relieve any pent up energy. ([www.carnegiesciencecenter.org/](http://www.carnegiesciencecenter.org/))

The Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh Woods Run branch is located just on the other side of Riverview Park. They offer lots of programming aimed at children and families. There are storytimes for toddlers and preschoolers, after school activities for school age children and entertaining events and activities for teens. Be sure to check the schedule of events and activities at [www.clpgh.org/locations/woodsrun/](http://www.clpgh.org/locations/woodsrun/).

Another great resource for keeping your kids busy during the fall and winter months is the Sarah Heinz House. The Heinz House offers different types of programming for all ages of children. There are opportunities at the Heinz House to fit the needs all children. Be sure to visit their website ([www.sarahheinzhouse.org/index.html](http://www.sarahheinzhouse.org/index.html)) to learn more about what they can offer.

This list of fun family could go on forever. We are fortunate to live in a neighborhood with so many great amenities. If you have a fun idea or activity that your family enjoys, be sure to spread the word on the OHI Facebook page.

## Old Allegheny Soccer Season Begins

Old Allegheny Soccer offers instructional, in-house recreational, and travel team soccer programs for children ages 5 to 19. Our players come from the Northside and North Hills neighborhoods of Pittsburgh, although anyone can play, regardless of where they live. Many of our players have gone on to play for their High School teams and College teams.

Ron Zaffuto started Old Allegheny Soccer in 1981. The league currently uses fields at Brighton Heights, Allegheny, Rooney and Perry. Players come from all of the North Side and some northern suburbs. Our travel teams compete with other teams in Western PA. Old Allegheny Soccer is a member of USA Youth Soccer Association and PA West Soccer. This year, we plan to have City League teams for ages 9 to 18, and our in house league for ages 5 to 13.

The OA Soccer philosophy assures families that house leagues provide a positive learning experience for all participants. Everyone plays at least one-half of every game. We select new teams every year, attempting to balance them to provide a better experience for all. Players are grouped on their ability and we try to put siblings on the same team. In House teams use Brighton Heights fields. Every In House player receives a trophy and keeps their Team shirt. Registration for the 2013 season is now closed, but you can read more about the practice schedule and find contact information for the team at Old Allegheny Soccer: [www.leaguelineup.com/welcome.asp?url=oldallegheny&sid=134436903](http://www.leaguelineup.com/welcome.asp?url=oldallegheny&sid=134436903)

## Thumbs Up for Molly's Trolleys on the 2013 OHI House Tour!

by volunteer conductor Joe Skoski

I thoroughly enjoyed my trolley experience as a guide on the 2013 OHI House Tour! The trolley driver was professional, friendly, and enthusiastic. As a guide, I informed our house tour guests about the diverse historical architecture in our neighborhood from the 1890s to the 1940s. I remember one man who went to the school on Bonvue as a child. He enjoyed visiting the school building again. Most people had questions about buildings on the tour, the park, and how frequently the trolleys were running. I really wanted people to get excited about our streets, homes and Riverview Park.

It was interesting to hear stories from people who grew up in Observatory Hill, attended school here, or frequented Riverview Park. One lady passenger shared her family story which all enjoyed. She was a member of the Watson family that once owned the land where Riverview U.P. Church and Riverview Park stand today. Because she spoke about the early history of the farm that became the park and the restoration plans for the Cabin, several people talked with her at length and she added narration to the photos at the chapel. It was rewarding to connect with visitors, and I hope that Molly's Trolleys will be a permanent part of our annual house tour!



Trolley photo courtesy of Kelsey Shea at Northside Chronicle

## Riverview Soccer Field Progress Continues

Over the summer crews have been completing the compacting and leveling of the Riverview Soccer Field. Despite the rainy weather, contractors have continued the fine grading. Now city leaders and engineering representatives believe that the "...soil has compacted to our satisfaction and substantial settlement has occurred."

The next step is to lay the Field Turf later in September, with a little cooperation from the weatherman. The turf has been ordered and shipment is due during September. Director of Operations, Duane Ashley, believes that with the grading nearly done, crews can make real progress during late August and early September. Once the grading is completed and turf is installed, he expects to address the lighting of the field and is confident that lighting can be accomplished with little impact on nearby neighbors. Now precise technology can provide appropriate lighting with very little spillage; lighting that is directed at the turf itself.

More details will be provided as each phase of construction approaches. While the current budget does not include funding for the Recreation Center, this phase of the project is in the conceptual development stage. As it stands now, additional funding needs to be identified to move forward with the construction of the Center at the site.

### **Memorial Completed at Riverview Dog Park** by Katie Wagner



This memorial plate on the bench in the Dog Park sits near the tree and planting to honors Joann Hollinger.

I am proud to announce that the memorial for Joanne Hollinger has now been installed in the Riverview Dog Park! I would like to say thank you to everyone

who made this possible. Your donations and words of encouragement blew my mind to say the least. Community support is real, and it's times like these that I am reminded of how much love people can have in their hearts. I would like to say a very special thank you to the folks at Observatory Hill Inc. who gave us their support throughout this process. I couldn't have asked for a better group of folks to get behind us and rally on our behalf.

Anyone that ever met Joanne will never forget her, that's for sure. But now her memory will live on at the dog park, and in the hearts of strangers as well as acquaintances for years to come. No one deserves it more than her. I hope that people tell awesome stories about her when those who didn't get the chance to meet Joanne see the bench and ask about it. And I also hope that they will tell them in that over-the-top fashion that was so Joanne!

Ms. Hollinger was vital part of this community, and thanks to the generosity of its inhabitants she will not be forgotten. Thank you all so much, and I would encourage you to come by the dog park and see us! Wherever Joanne is now, she's smiling, and laughing that unmistakable laugh that anyone who knew her could recognize from a mile away!

## Allegheny Observatory Open House Scheduled for October 11

Families and stargazers of all ages flock to the Allegheny Observatory Open House each year. During the Open House visitors follow a designated tour path around the building. Both of the main telescopes are outfitted for visual use and the members of the Amateur Astronomers Association of Pittsburgh set up additional telescopes on the front lawn. You must get tickets to this event and they are free of charge. So call the number of the Observatory from 1 to 5 p.m. at **412-321-2400**, as soon as possible. Open House is a family night therefore the maximum group size is approximately six. This year Open House takes place on Friday, October 11.

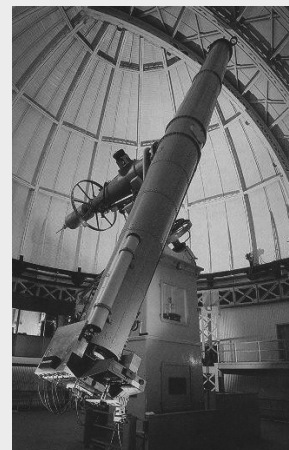
Under the largest dome is the Thaw Memorial Refractor. The Thaw telescope was designed and built by the Brashear Optical company in 1912. The photographic program started in 1914 and to this day has collected some 110,000 exposures on glass plates. It is one of the oldest and largest collections of photographic plates in the world. In 1985 the

original lens was replaced with one that is corrected to bring the red light to a focus. The photo-multiplier tubes of the Multi-channel Astrometric Photometer (MAP) are more sensitive to red light. Fortunately the Pittsburgh skies are still fairly dark in this region of the visual spectrum. The Thaw is currently doing stellar parallax work as well as looking for planets around other stars.

Under the smallest dome is the 13-inch Fitz-Clark refractor. Constructed in 1861 by Mr. Henry Fitz of New York, it was the primary telescope of the original Allegheny Observatory. The Fitz-Clark is a visual refractor, this means the lens was designed to bring yellow light to a focus it is where the human eye most sensitive. When built, it was the third largest telescope in the world. In 1906 it was moved to the new Allegheny Observatory where "it was made to be forever free to the people." This telescope has been

primarily used for the tour program and on occasion used to test instruments for the bigger telescopes.

If you are unable to get a reservation for Open House this year, you may be able to make a reservation for a Friday night tour, held each week through November 1. To make a reservation, call **412-321-2400** between the hours of 1:00 and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. To read more about the tour program or Public Lectures held the third Friday of each month, see the Observatory site: [www.pitt.edu/~aobsvtry/](http://www.pitt.edu/~aobsvtry/)



*At Open House visitors can peer through the Thaw Refractor housed in the largest dome of the Observatory.*

## Scott Pipitone Wins Pittsburgh Small Business Community Heroes Award

In July, Direct Energy and Pittsburgh Magazine awarded Scott Pipitone, local communications and marketing entrepreneur “Small Business Community Hero Award.” As principal and CEO of Pipitone Group, which celebrated 20 years in business in 2012, Scott has provided pro-bono marketing services to the tune of more than \$230,000 of in-kind contributions for organizations such as Strength & Courage: Exercises for Breast Cancer Survivors; the Northside/Northshore Chamber of Commerce; Ingomar Living Waters; and many others.

This Observatory Hill Journal is one more example of the pro-bono work the firm provides. An active longtime resident of Observatory Hill, Scott has earned a reputation for fostering a spirit of giving back to the community in his employees, who in turn, take that spirit into their own communities.

In addition to the in-kind donations mentioned, Pipitone invests his own time and funds as well as his staff’s time. Each year for the last two years, he has closed down the office for an annual Pipitone Group community service/volunteer day where employees contribute their time, talents and sweat with renovation projects in the East Ohio Street area. This year the group reclaimed a lot while beautifying and tidying up two other locations on East Ohio Street.

By winning the Pittsburgh Small Business Community Heroes award, Direct Energy will donate \$1,000 each in Scott’s name to the Presbyterian SeniorCare Foundation and the Good Grief Center for Bereavement Support, a division of Ursuline Senior Services. Additionally, Pipitone was recognized in the July issue of Pittsburgh Magazine and Direct Energy awarded him a \$500 cash prize that he donated to the charities.

Scott Pipitone’s reputation for giving may be one reason for the growth at the firm. Surely his ability to find dynamic ways of collaboration to enrich his marketing strategies have transformed Pipitone’s design group from a one-person graphic design shop to a fully integrated marketing and communications firm. As of August 1st, Vance Wright Adams is merging into Pipitone Group, and its staff will relocate from



*Betsy Benson, Pittsburgh Magazine, Todd Sandford, Direct Energy Business and Scott Pipitone (far right) present a check to Diana Hardy of the Good Grief Center and Anthony Turo from Ursuline Senior Services for \$1,000. Scott was honored with Direct Energy Business’s first Small Business Community Hero Award.*

the North Shore to Pipitone’s Observatory Hill offices. Combining the region’s 11th (Pipitone) and 17th (VWA) largest advertising agencies should create a shop that breaks into the top five advertising agencies in the Pittsburgh region. Once an agency reaches a certain size, it is considered for larger accounts.

“We’re on a growth track,” Pipitone said. He’s planning to expand his headquarters, currently 15,000 square feet, by another 2,100 square feet.

Pipitone will remain president and CEO. Adams and Moehler, principals of VWA in Pipitone Group, will focus on finding new business opportunities and continuing to build relationships with existing clients. At least two—the University of Pittsburgh and PPG Industries Inc. (NYSE: PPG)—are shared; there are no conflicts.

The new Pipitone Group will be an agency with “40-plus employees,” Pipitone said. Working towards our mission of “Always evolving, ever learning, constantly growing, while doing great work with great people.”

~In preparing this article the editor consulted the Direct Energy Blog and an article by Patty Tascarella of the Pittsburgh Business Times.

## Seeking Partners for Commercial Development

Have you or someone you know wanted to start a business or expand to another location? We have a few thousand neighbors in the Northside who are interested in shopping and dining here in the community where they live. With upgrades in the commercial district planned for the fall, this would be the perfect time to locate to Observatory Hill. Although there are vacant store fronts here, we are working with City leaders to improve the business district by improving the street scape and enhancing visibility with improved street lighting and community beautification projects.

Over the past several months changes have taken place in the business district with some offices closing and others expanding. Working with the Northside Leadership Conference, OHI addressed the failed parking lot at the former First Niagara. Now that building has a fresh parking pad, a new wooden fence and is being actively marketed.

Thanks to the cooperation of Council President Darlene Harris and the city’s Public Works Department, new Street Lighting is being installed this fall from the Maridale Avenue Parking Lot to the former bank building across from Waldorf.

OHI recently learned that the Mayor Ravensthal’s office has awarded the community a Love Your Block Grant to upgrade the commercial strip. Volunteers from the neighborhood are planning a business district landscaping project for September and October. This includes plantings and landscaping near the former Commodore Café and on Perrysville Avenue.

Now is a great time for new businesses and local developers welcome any inquiries from prospective entrepreneurs interested in start up businesses at the Bank site and other available spaces. Facebook friends have asked “When are we going to get a Coffee Shop in our neighborhood?” Neighbors see a great need for a café or restaurant. With the improved lighting and landscaping, opening of the soccer field in 2014 the business district holds promise of future growth and development.

If you are interested in learning more about the Northside Leadership Conference and services for business development or the Northside Community Development Fund, please contact Emily Leone Business Development Director, NSLC at 412-330-2559 or Diane Mercer at the North Side Community Fund at 412-322-0290.