

# OHI Journal

Newsletter for the Friends and Neighbors of Observatory Hill

August 2022

## NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS



**Ida's Sandwich Shop: 3921 Perrysville Ave**

### Five Points Project:

At long last, we celebrated the ribbon cutting ceremony of the Five Points Revitalization project. Our tenacious board of directors dealt with COVID delays, funding snafus, finding new contractors when the first company bailed out, three realty companies, three different project managers and a change of executives at the Northside Leadership Conference. We stayed focused and pressed toward the goal of completing this important project. Continuing to add neighborhood amenities is part of our mission and we are working diligently towards this goal. We are proud to have returned these once vacant and blighted buildings back into neighborhood assets. Three of the four commercial spaces have been leased out and we welcome Ida's Sandwich Shop, the Neighborhood Community Development Fund and the Northside Chronicle to our business district. We are actively marketing the former Mr. Bill's restaurant space in hopes of finding another restaurant to take that building.

### Bonvue Revitalization Project: Phase II

Construction on Phase II of the Bonvue Street Revitalization houses began at the end of 2021 and it was kicked off with a nail pounding ceremony attended by neighbors, city leaders, funders and partners. These revitalized homes are currently on the market and are slated to receive many updates including new kitchens and baths. See the larger article on page six.

### Conservatorship Project:

Progress continues with our conservatorship property - the former Lamb of God Church and adjoining apartments. We borrowed another \$110,000 to replace the leaky roof on the apartments and had a masonry company take the crumbling balconies apart and rebuild them. We thank Chris Waracks for his contractor recommendations and for lending a hand. To date, we have spent over \$200,000 on repairs, maintenance and building stabilization.

House of Life, the non-profit which was interested in this space, has decided not to pursue this location at this time. We will continue to work to find a neighborhood amenity to complement our business district.



## From the Desk of Bobby Wilson

Hello everyone,

At the end of June, I introduced three bills at Pittsburgh City Council to protect reproductive freedom and the right to choose in the City of Pittsburgh. My introduction of these bills comes in response to the decision by the Supreme Court of the United States in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* (2022) to overturn *Roe v. Wade* (1973), *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1992), and its progeny, thereby ending Americans' constitutional right to abortion. The Court's decision in *Dobbs* clears the way for states to enact their own abortion laws.



If the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania bans abortion, the [first bill](#) will instruct the City of Pittsburgh's Bureau of Police and other law enforcement agencies to de-prioritize enforcement of any abortion-related crime. The City of Pittsburgh used a similar strategy in the past to decriminalize marijuana. The language of this bill relies on the fact that law enforcement does have some discretion in how they prioritize their time and budget.

The [second bill](#) seeks to regulate deceptive advertising by limited-services pregnancy centers, also known as crisis pregnancy centers, in the City of Pittsburgh. These centers often pose as healthcare clinics but give out misleading or false information about pregnancy healthcare and often do not provide care or delay care for pregnant people. Crisis pregnancy centers outnumber verified healthcare clinics 9 to 1 in Pennsylvania and tend to target black and brown neighborhoods. The City of Pittsburgh's Home Rule Charter states that in our city, citizens should expect "aggressive action from officials toward the achievement of health and safety." City Council has established a strong precedent of passing legislation that seeks to "protect and promote the general health, safety, and welfare" of our citizens. I believe that the City of Pittsburgh can regulate this type of advertising without infringing on the First Amendment because the Supreme Court previously gave state's the ability to regulate "deceptive health advertising."

The [third bill](#) aims to shield abortion providers in the City of Pittsburgh from out-of-state investigation or prosecution for providing abortion care that is legal in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. About half of all states are expected to ban abortions. Some states have already signaled that they are interested in prosecuting health care providers offering abortions to their residents in other states. Here in southwestern Pennsylvania, we are neighbors to Ohio, where abortion is banned after six weeks, and West Virginia, where a total abortion ban is expected. The goal of passing this bill is to ensure that health care providers in Pittsburgh are not targeted for providing abortions to people who live in neighboring states where abortion access is restricted. I want doctors in Pittsburgh to focus only on taking care of patients and their families when they are making private decisions about what is best for them.

I believe that everyone has a constitutional right to reproductive freedom in this country. Exercising this right entails the right to choose what happens to your body. In *Dobbs*, the Supreme Court of the United States took away our constitutional right to choose what happens to their body. I cannot accept that. That is why I introduced these three bills and that is why I will fight to make them law.

If you have any thoughts about these bills, or ideas about other ways we can protect reproductive freedom and the right to choose here in the City of Pittsburgh, please feel free to call us at (412) 255-2135, email us at [district1@pittsburghpa.gov](mailto:district1@pittsburghpa.gov), or find us on Facebook and Twitter. We look forward to hearing from you.

**BOBBY WILSON**  
**COUNCILMAN, DISTRICT 1**

## Save the Dates!

**Saturday, Sept 17: Garbage Olympics:** We will be participating in the annual Garbage Olympics. This citywide trash clean up event works to rid neighborhoods of garbage. Volunteers are needed to lend a hand. If interested, please meet us in the five points parking lot across the street from the firehouse from 9am to 11am. Gloves, vests, bags, and pickers will be provided.

**Saturday, Sept 24: Observatory Hill Culture and Arts Festival:** The Diversity Committee of Observatory Hill Inc. welcomes our neighbors to join us in celebration of community with the Observatory Hill Culture and Arts Festival. Local craft vendors, food trucks, live music and artists will display the rich flavors of our community. Please join us from 4pm to 8pm in the Perrysville Avenue business district to celebrate Observatory Hill. Vendors and food trucks will be set up on the sidewalks and in the parking lot. We are accepting applications for vendors who sell crafts, jewelry and artwork. Other vendors are welcome. Bring your own table. Entry fee is \$25.00. Contact Erica at ohipgh@gmail.com or call 412.736.2489.

**Sunday, October 2: RP Day:** from 11am – 5pm the Friends of Riverview Park in partnership with the Northside Leadership Conference and the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy will be hosting this day of fun to showcase the beautiful Riverview Park. The day will be filled with festivities, live music, hikes through the park, family friendly activities, food, games and more. You are invited to be part of the fun!

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## Allen Place Shines at Awards Dinner

Congratulations to Allen Place Community Services for winning the Northside Service Provider Award at the Northside Leadership Conference awards dinner. Since 1985, Allen Place has been active in church health programs and now it is their hope to bring community members together at their Bonvue Street location to help all people improve their health. It has established programs that influence all age groups focusing on prevention and health promotion for the entire community.

Allen Place is deeply committed to the mission of providing health and wellness programs to Pittsburgh's northside senior residents and to the social, emotional, and educational needs

of children and youth by encouraging the healthy development of family relationships and enhancing the cultural awareness in the broader community.

Activities include healthy aging, low impact exercise, support groups for caregivers, art and music inspiration, basic computer skill classes, first aid and basic cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) classes as well as health screenings and volunteer opportunities. Additionally, Allen Place provides workshops, screenings, and opportunities for participants to identify and have better access to community resources and health services.

We thank Milton and Jerry Ann Allen for all they do to make our neighborhood a better place.





## National Night Out in Observatory Hill

Thank you to everyone who helped to support the OHI National Night Out event. Special thanks to Denise Colbert, Mary Anne Klein, Mary Beth Favorite, Ann Murray and Lorenda Wleklinski for putting in some extra time helping to prep for the event. Thank you to the Father & Son Family Bakery for their donation of sweet treats. We thank all of our first responders for stopping by to visit and we extend our appreciation to each one of them for their dedication and for their service to our neighborhood.



## Denise Colbert Wins Neighbor of the Year Award

We congratulate Denise Colbert who won the neighborhood of the year award for Observatory Hill. She was honored at the June award's dinner sponsored by the Northside Leadership Conference.

She and her family, husband Bernard, daughters Jessica and Erin and son Justin, moved to Observatory Hill over 30 years ago. They feel it is a great place to live with the added bonus of Riverview Park.

Denise got involved with Observatory Hill Inc. years ago and served for several years on the Housing Initiatives Committee which rehabbed five properties on Perrysville Avenue and two properties on Marshall Avenue. In addition, she has served on the Observatory Hill House Tour Committee which works to showcase the beautiful homes in the neighborhood.



She is very honored to be nominated for this award and is accepting it on behalf of all the hard workers and fine people that she has worked with through the years. She offers her sincere thanks for this award and hopes that we will all continue to work together for the good of the neighborhood.

When the Friends of Riverview Park was formed, she began lending a hand and currently organizes the monthly litter pick-ups at the park where she is also joined by other neighborhood volunteers who want to see improvements and who are willing to work towards that end.

Observatory Hill is proud to have selected Denise Colbert as its Neighbor of the Year.

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### Woods Run Watershed Taskforce

The Woods Run Watershed Taskforce invites you to support a Green Corridor between Riverview Park and the Ohio River front. The taskforce, formed by those who live in the Woods Run Watershed (Brightwood, Marshall-Shadeland, etc...) wants to see more climate resilient urban spaces in this corridor to improve access to clean and safe outdoor spaces. The group meets monthly - every third Tuesday of the month from 6-7:30pm. Locations vary each month. If you would like to be added to our email list or learn more about the Woods Run Watershed Taskforce, please contact Erin Tobin at [etobin@pittsburghparks.org](mailto:etobin@pittsburghparks.org).

### Friends of Riverview Park

The Friends of Riverview Park (FORP) is a volunteer group that works to advocate on behalf of the park. FORP is a project of the Northside Leadership Conference in partnership with the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy. Events include:

#### Monthly Friends of Riverview Park Meetings

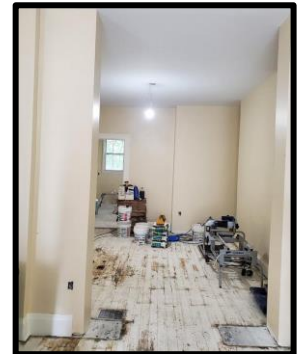
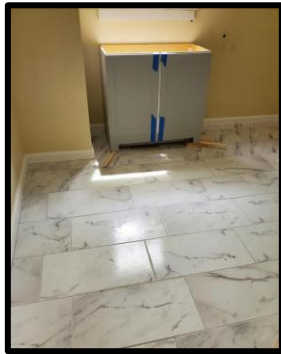
Every fourth Monday of the month from 6-7:30pm on Zoom. If you are interested in attending these meetings, please contact Erin Tobin at [etobin@pittsburghparks.org](mailto:etobin@pittsburghparks.org) for the zoom link.

Monthly Trail Clean-up Days: Last Saturday of the month from 9am to 12pm. Meet at the Riverview Park Visitor's Center. Tools and gloves provided.



## Bonvue Street Revitalization Phase Two Update

As phase two of the Bonvue Street Revitalization winds down, we are thankful to everyone who has stepped in to support this important project. The vision of removing blighted houses and making an investment in this critical street so close to our business district began in 2014. Fast forward, eight years and \$2.5 million dollars later, this street has seen a remarkable difference. Years of disinvestment, the infiltration of absentee landlords and numerous blighted and abandoned properties took a toll on both its residents and the residents of neighboring streets. House values declined, crime increased, and homeowners were moving away taking deep losses. Ten homes were purchased to fully rehab to boost house values and to stabilize the street. All five homes for phase two are currently available for sale. Two homes are market rate: 4 Bonvue is for sale at \$320,000 and 121 Bonvue is for sale at \$250,000. Three homes are being sold under the affordable housing guidelines with income restrictions attached. We have partnered with the City of Bridges to market and to sell these beautiful homes. Projects like this one are so important to our neighborhood, and we are the only community development group in the city to have an all-volunteer board with three revitalization projects going on simultaneously. In addition, we are the first board of directors in OHI history to own property and to be landlords. Please support us. Please support the important work we are doing. We have gone several years without our house tour fundraisers due to COVID, but we are still here and still working to make improvements to this great neighborhood.



127 Bonvue Street – construction nearly complete. Pictured above are bathroom and kitchen flooring being installed, Final picture is the dining room – walls and trim have been painted – next step: flooring!

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## Volunteer Spotlight

We thank Autumn Williams who has been planting and maintaining a large garden bed on a busy stretch of Perrysville Avenue near the edge of Riverview Park. She reached out to us several years ago when it became clear it was being overlooked. She stepped up to create a lovely perennial garden for everyone to enjoy. We have supported her efforts to get garden grants and have made donations to support the cause. We appreciate volunteers like Autumn who offer to be a part of the solution. We thank you, Autumn! You make our neighborhood a better place!



## Observatory Hill Development Celebrates with Ribbon Cutting

We thank everyone who attended the open house and ribbon cutting event celebrating the completion of the Five Points revitalization. This project finished at nearly \$1.8 million dollars and includes four commercial spaces and six affordable apartments. We are thankful to all the funders and partners who attended and who helped us along the way: The Urban Redevelopment Authority, our local First National Bank, the Neighborhood Community Development Fund, SSB Bank, the Pittsburgh Parking Authority, the Northside Leadership Conference, the office of Councilman Bobby Wilson and Sally Stadelman, Ida's Sandwich Shop and the board of directors of Observatory Hill. We thank Mayor Ed Gainey for attending and for spending time with us.



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**August 22: Friends of Riverview Park:** 6pm-7:30pm held via Zoom. If you enjoy Riverview Park and all its offerings, this group is for you. Contact Erin Tobin for a zoom link to be able to participate:  
[etobin@pittsburghparks.org](mailto:etobin@pittsburghparks.org)

**August 27: Riverview Park Trail Clean Up:** 9am - 12pm - meet at the Riverview Park Visitor Center to lend a hand cleaning up various trails at the park. Tools and gloves will be provided.

**September 17: Annual Garbage Olympics:** 9am - 11am to be held in the Five Points parking lot across the street from the engine 34 firehouse. We will work to clean up trash throughout our neighborhood.

**September 21: OHI monthly board meeting:** 7pm held via Zoom. Visit the OHI website community calendar page for the meeting link:  
[www.observatoryhill.net](http://www.observatoryhill.net).

**September 24: Riverview Park Trail Clean Up:** 9am - 12pm - meet at the Riverview Park Visitor Center to lend a hand cleaning up various trails at the park. Tools and gloves will be provided.

**September 24: Culture & Arts Festival:** 4pm - 8pm: Join us in the Observatory Hill business district for live music, food trucks, crafters, artwork and more as we celebrate the many offerings of our neighborhood.

**September 26: Friends of Riverview Park:** 6pm-7:30pm held via Zoom. If you enjoy Riverview Park and all its offerings, this group is for you. Contact Erin Tobin for a zoom link to be able to participate:  
[etobin@pittsburghparks.org](mailto:etobin@pittsburghparks.org)

**October 2: RP Day:** 11am - 5pm: This day of fun will showcase the beautiful Riverview Park. The day will be filled with festivities, live music, hikes through the park, family friendly activities, food, games and more.

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OBSERVATORY HILL INC  
PO BOX 100247  
PITTSBURGH PA 15233**

**NONPROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PITTSBURGH PA  
PERMIT NO. 3666**

Phone: 412.736.2489  
Email: [ohipgh@gmail.com](mailto:ohipgh@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.observatoryhill.net](http://www.observatoryhill.net)  
Facebook: Observatory Hill Inc  
Twitter: @ohipgh

## **DONATION FORM**

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PO Box 100247  
Pittsburgh PA 15233

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

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Contribution: (check one)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$5.00 \_\_\_\_\_ \$10.00 \_\_\_\_\_ \$20.00 \_\_\_\_\_ Other

\_\_\_\_\_ Please include me on the list to receive monthly emails and OHI updates