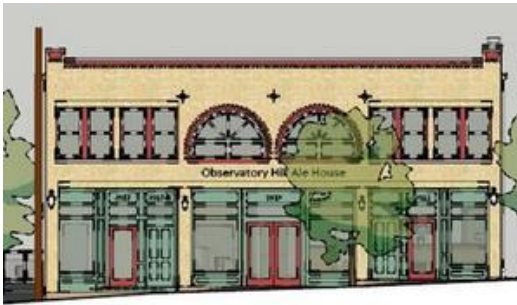


OHI Journal

Newsletter for the Friends and Neighbors of Observatory Hill

Spring 2020

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS



Observatory Hill Development Corporation is making slow but steady progress on our commercial district. After resolving contractor and funding issues, (a snafu with a state grant held up critical funding) progress is being made. We brought on a consultant, Chad Brinkley, who has a formidable background in commercial development, to add expertise to our board. To be in compliance with a grant we received, a request for bids needed to be placed in the paper. Several contractors responded. The buildings were toured, and a contractor was chosen. Meetings then continued with our new contractor, the HVAC company and our architect.

We currently have two businesses interested in the restaurant space – both have signed letters of intent. General feedback from potential lease holders was that the space was too large and most who toured were not interested in that much square footage. As a result, our architect worked with the two potential lease holders to wall off the bar section from the restaurant space. Specs then had to be redrawn since the original designs were intended for one business. Splitting the space in two then impacted the building codes, the bathroom specs, etc.

We also have two lease holders interested in our other commercial spaces located at 3925 Perrysville Avenue. Our contractor has now met with all four tenants to review their build outs and to finalize specs and budgets. Construction will be underway shortly.

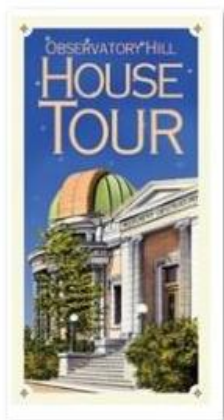
Phase II of the Bonvue Street Revitalization continues to move forward. Homeowners and board members attended a zoning hearing to request a variance to add parking pads behind the row houses we purchased. The zoning board approved our request and gave us permission to proceed with off street parking pads. We had one contractor interested in the project, but his numbers were too high and well outside of our budget. The same process was repeated of placing an ad in the paper to receive additional contractor bids. We found a reputable contractor who met our budget and are now moving forward. We will work with the URA to offer affordable housing as we did with phase one.

We have put little attention on our conservatorship project – formerly the Lamb of God Church and adjoining apartments. Primary focus remains on the Five Points Project and getting our restaurant spaces up and running. Selective demo has been completed on the apartments which sustained fire, smoke and water damage. Our business district consultant toured them and sent us cost workups to help us to evaluate our options and we are currently reviewing his data.

Due to excessive speeding, three speed bumps will be installed on Venture Street. Speeding is a top complaint throughout the neighborhood and this issue will continue to be evaluated. The Department of Mobility and Infrastructure will also be adjusting the timing of the lights at the Five Points intersection to allow more cars to pass before the light changes. They agree that the timing is still off as they monitor both the AM and PM rush hour traffic.

Save the Dates: Gala and Observatory Hill House Tour Set for July

By Jeremy Lawler



Dear Neighbors:

The Roaring Twenties were more than a decade of lasciviousness, flappers and intemperance. During those years, F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote some of the most powerful literature of the 20th Century. Pittsburgh's own KDKA hosted the very first radio broadcast. Josephine Baker changed attitudes in Harlem; Charles Lindbergh completed the first transatlantic flight, penicillin was discovered, and women won the right to vote. That decade served as a springboard to the amazing accomplishments of the twentieth century.

The years following the Twenties showed us that our success does not guarantee the wellbeing of the community, however. That work needs its own pioneers, even today. Observatory Hill, Inc. invites you to join in support of children in the Northside who are in need. We will celebrate a century of

community in our neighborhood by making sure that Northside children are able to celebrate themselves!

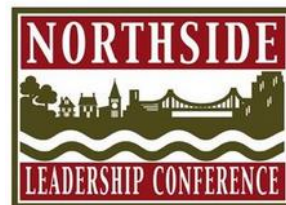
To that end, Observatory Hill, Inc. is pleased to partner with **Beverly's Birthdays**, a Pittsburgh-based organization that works to ensure that all children can enjoy birthday cheer. Beverly's Birthdays brings each child a joyful celebration through birthday baskets, classroom celebrations with their friends, or even "shopping" for free clothing in the Birthday Boutique, a mobile fashion closet where children can select free new clothes.

Observatory Hill, Inc. will be hosting a gala fundraiser, "The **Bees Knees Bash**" on the evening of Friday, July 17, 2020. **Funds raised will benefit Beverly's Birthdays, families in the Northside and Observatory Hill, Inc.** The Bees Knees Bash will include bands, dancing, cocktails and heavy hors d'oeuvres, and outstanding sponsorship opportunities to showcase your company or organization. The annual House Tour will follow on the afternoon of Sunday, July 19, 2020. The "**Puttin' on the Richey**" tour of homes focuses on Richey Avenue, a revitalized turn-of-the-century streetcar neighborhood that, in many ways, is just as charming and neighborly as it was a century ago.

Observatory Hill, Inc. wants to be sure that people from across Southwestern Pennsylvania can benefit from the support the Observatory Hill, Inc. offers them and the ways in which Beverly's Birthdays brings joy to many deserving children on their birthdays. Please join us!

Neighbor of the Year – Submit Your Nomination

We are now accepting nominations for the annual Neighbor of the Year awardee. Each year, the Northside Leadership Conference honors area neighbors who have stepped up to make our community a better place to live. Do you have an unsung hero on your street? Then let us know by April 11th. Send an email to ohipgh@gmail.com and tell us the name of that special volunteer and the reasons why this person is being nominated. The winner will be honored at this year's Annual Scholarship & Awards Dinner held on Thursday evening, June 18 and their story will be shared in our community newsletter.





FROM THE DESK OF BOBBY WILSON

Hello everyone,

It has been an exciting and busy two months since I took office. So far, I have met with the directors of many of the City of Pittsburgh's departments and learned how I can make sure that these departments are working for you.

I have also had productive conversations with the directors of the Housing Authority, Pittsburgh Water & Sewer Authority (PWSA) and the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA). I was especially surprised to learn how many homeowners have not responded to PWSA's effort to replace lead lines in their neighborhoods. PWSA makes multiple attempts to contact homeowners, and my office shall be working with neighborhood groups like yours to make final contact attempts with homeowners to ensure that they have every chance to get their lead lines replaced. Lead line replacements are necessary and will dramatically decrease the possibility of high amounts of lead in your drinking water. A great aspect of these replacements is that 98% of the homes will not have their yard torn up because PWSA simply attaches a new line to the old one and pulls in a new copper one. Please visit lead.pgh2o.com to find out where the latest lead line replacements are being done and resources to find lead line replacement resources.

It was nice to see many of you at the January and February community group meetings. I appreciated the opportunity to introduce myself in January and to hear your immediate concerns for Observatory Hill and the improvements you would like to see. From that meeting, I became aware that speeding cars and dangerous intersections were of great concern. I'm committed to working with the City and you to make improvements to your streets so that they are safe and accessible to everyone. If you would like to get started on these traffic calming improvements, please visit <https://pittsburghpa.gov/domi/traffic-calming> to request measures to make your street safer and slow down those speeding cars.

If there is something you'd like us to discuss in the next issue of Observatory Hill's newsletter, please let us know at (412) 255-2135 or email me at bobby.wilson@pittsburghpa.gov. We look forward to meeting and hearing from all of you. Let's get to work!

BOBBY WILSON
COUNCILMAN, DISTRICT 1

Annual Easter Sunrise Service at Riverview Park



The 86th annual Easter Sunrise Service will be held on Sunday, April 12th at Riverview Park outside the Observatory beginning at 6:30am to see the sun rise. This is a community based, inter-denominational service and all are welcome to attend. Bring a chair and wear warm clothes. In case of inclement weather, the service will be moved inside Riverview United Presbyterian Church. Visit their website for more details and for the list of participants. www.northsideeastersunrise.com



A WORD FROM THE MAYOR'S OFFICE

Spring has arrived in Pittsburgh, and we look forward to sunny days spent outdoors. I am excited to share news with Observatory Hill residents and visitors regarding a few of the initiatives on which my office has been working.

This February, in partnership with UPMC, we launched Minutes Matter, an initiative to boost education and awareness surrounding emergencies that happen every day in Pittsburgh. The campaign, which kicked off with a

television advertisement during the Super Bowl, will provide residents with access to information they need to help respond in an emergency situation to save lives, to stop the bleeding, to deploy an Automated External Defibrillator (AED), to intervene during an overdose, and more. Pittsburgh has been a worldwide leader in public health innovation, and this partnership helps to boost our world-class Bureau of Emergency Medical Services' efforts to increase the likelihood of survival by empowering residents to take action while awaiting paramedic response. To join the movement, visit www.minutesmatterpgh.com.

We are proud of the work of the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority (PWSA) to ensure that residents have access to safe and clean water, replace public and private lead service lines, invest in green stormwater infrastructure projects to reduce the combined sewer overflow into our rivers, and improve customer service. This year, PWSA will continue a major project in Riverview Park that will help to capture stormwater, improve the aesthetic of this important regional asset, and complement another major investment in the Mairdale Avenue entrance of the park, thanks to grant funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development and matching dollars from the City's Capital Budget.

Additionally, with continued support from PENNVEST, the PWSA Community Lead Response Program has replaced 6,000 lead service lines citywide with plans to replace 3,000 more in 2020. To learn more about PWSA's ongoing transformation, visit www.pgh20.com.

I am also excited to report ongoing success with our Imagination Library Program. Launched through a partnership with the Dolly Parton Foundation, the free program provides a book each month to children ages 0-5 until they reach their fifth birthday. So far, the program has sent over 17,000 books to children in Pittsburgh. To sign-up a child in your life, visit www.pittsburghpa.gov/mayor/imaginationlibrary or call my office at 412-255-2626.

Byzantine Roman Catholic Seminary Celebrates 70 Years



Congratulations to the Byzantine Roman Catholic Seminary for celebrating its 70th year. Founded in 1950, the seminary recently received a 10-year accreditation from the Association of Theological Schools after a three-day comprehensive evaluation, which "ensures that institutions of higher education function according to standards of institutional and educational quality."

The seminary currently has 21 seminarians enrolled in their degree programs with most of those students taking their courses online.

Riverview Park Update from Friends of Riverview Park (FOR Park)

By Mark P. Masterson, Chair



Mairdale Street entrance

There has been a lot of progress on some big projects in Riverview Park during the past six months. But first, we want to announce a community 'visioning' meeting to plan the future of Kilbuck Valley / Grand Avenue Entrance to Riverview Park

Public Works Depot Relocation

FOR Park has been advocating for the removal of the Public Works depot from Riverview Park. The depot has had a detrimental impact on Riverview Park, as picnic groves and other areas have been taken over for storage of materials not related to the Park. There is also a waste transfer and recycling transfer function that has had severe negative impacts on the Grand Avenue/Kilbuck portion of the Park.

- 1) CEC, Inc. and IKM Architects have volunteered their services to lead a 'visioning' process for the community to gather ideas about what should be done in that portion of the Park. The process kicked off on Monday March 2nd with a community meeting at Providence Connections. The next meeting is slated for Saturday 4/18/2020 at 9:30 am at the Valley Refuge Shelter in Riverview Park. It will feature a site walk thru to familiarize everyone with existing conditions. Two other meetings will be held in June and September. Please check our Friends of Riverview Park Facebook page for more information.
- 2) The City has committed to reducing its 'footprint' in the park by slowly removing materials stored in various locations in the Park.
- 3) The City has agreed to relocate the public works function to a site that it owns on the Northside. There was \$500,000 in the 2020 Capital Budget for the design of the facility. It is hoped that the public works facility can be constructed and occupied within the next two or three years.

Woods Run Stormwater Management Project

- 1) Phase I of the PWSA's Woods Run Project is 75% complete. The section along Riverview Avenue centered on Horseshoe Bend and involved installing a tiered system of rain gardens along the side of the road. Clean up work will be done in the spring to address a small landslide and to plant vegetation. There will be a ribbon cutting sometime in May. You can read more at <https://www.pgh2o.com/projects-maintenance/search-all-projects/woods-run-stormwater-project-phase-one>

Continued on Page 6

- 2) Phase II of the project involves work on the stream that will be daylighted under the entranceway at Mairdale Street, deer fencing in portions in some uphill sections above the stream, and rain gardens along Mairdale to better capture storm flow. An application for the work to be done on the stream was submitted this month. We are hoping that work can begin this year, but that is dependent on the application being approved sometime this spring or early summer. You can read more at <https://www.pgh2o.com/projects-maintenance/search-all-projects/woods-run-stormwater-project-phase-one>
- 3) Enhancements to the project include walkways, interpretive signage, stone facing on the culvert under Mairdale/Riverview Avenue, benches, improved trails, and improved parking to make the connection between the park and the neighborhood much better. The City, with the help of State Senator Wayne Fontana and State Representative Adam Ravenstahl, received a state grant of \$200,000 to help fund those enhancements.

Davis Avenue Bridge

The FOR Park has been advocating for a new bike and pedestrian bridge to reconnect the Northside's largest neighborhood, Brighton Heights, with its largest Park. In February 2019, the City determined that the cost of doing a bike/pedestrian bridge now made this a feasible project. It also alleviated some of the concerns that residents along Davis Avenue had about increased motor vehicle traffic. The City received funding from the state Dept. of Community and Economic Development, with the support of Senator Fontana and Representative Ravenstahl, to help pay for design work on the bridge. We expect that the City will begin a public input process by mid-summer.

FOR Park is a committee of the Northside Leadership Conference. We work in partnership with the City of Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy. We meet at 6 pm on the 4th Monday of each month. In warmer months, we meet at the chapel shelter. When the shelter is closed during winter, we meet at the Brighton Heights Citizens Federation Office. You can get more info by following us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfRiverviewPark/>

OHI Welcomes New Board Member

Please join us in welcoming Jeremy Lawler to our board. He moved to Observatory Hill in 2015, to Waldorf Street. Upon restoring his 1870's home on Waldorf, he relocated to Richey Avenue in May 2019 to be closer to Riverview Park and friends. His 3-story 1910 brick home on Richey is being artfully cared for to bring back the original glory of the historic home. Mr. Lawler is a graduate of Westminster College with a Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations and works in client services as a project manager for the IT insurance industry. He has been an active volunteer on the house tour committee and will join the Communications and Marketing Committee.



Riverview Park Full Moon Hikes & Star Parties

Get out, get some fresh air and enjoy the sights and sounds of Riverview Park at night. Join our park ranger for a 90-minute hike under the light of a full moon. Star Parties last longer and are based upon interest. To participate, send an email to receive all the details and then meet at the Visitor's Center. All ages welcome but please leave your dog at home. The hike will take place if it snows or if there is light rain. RSVP to: riverviewpark.pgh@gmail.com

Full Moon Hikes:

Tuesday, April 7
Thursday, May 7
Monday, August 3
Thursday, October 1
Monday, Nov 30
Tuesday, Dec 29



Star Parties:

Friday, June 5
Wednesday, Sept 9

New Murals Coming to Observatory Hill this Spring

By Ben Tolman



I would like to introduce our project to our neighbors in Observatory Hill. For the past year we have been redeveloping the former Nativity School at 4072 Franklin Rd. into an art center. It will be called The Fiasco Museum & Cultural Center. This will be a long process, of which we are only now at the beginning, but our goal is to have a community space with an art library and cafe, a gallery of temporary exhibits as well as a permanent art collection, an event space and performance space. We are working towards having community events and facilities and workshops for art making. We want to help increase the cultural activity and sense of community in Observatory Hill!

One of our first projects will be cleaning and painting a mural on the large neglected building at Garvin Field on May 23 & 24. Thanks to support from New Sun Rising, we received a \$1,000 grant. Along with that, we will be bringing local, national, and international artists to paint murals on the former Nativity School. It will be a weekend of art, music, food and friendship. Come help us clean the park, enjoy the party, be mesmerized by the art and support a local endeavor! For more information you can contact us at fiasco.pittsburgh@gmail.com, or co-founder Ben Tolman at 412-759-6561

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Member's Name: _____

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Email Address: _____

Membership Contribution: (check one)

_____ \$5.00 _____ \$10.00 _____ \$20.00 _____ Other

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