

CASGED Community Meeting Minutes — November 15, 2016, 6:30 pm

Board members present: Paul Cerny Jr., Brenda Kay Dailey, Ruth Ann Dailey, Bob Herbert, John Klinger, Dennis Lynch, Chris Rosselot, Rafael Walton
Absent: Joe Valorie

1. RA Dailey called meeting to order at 6:36 p.m. and asked attendees to observe a moment's silence in honor of Ofcr. Scott Bashom. B. Herbert then led community in the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Guests from City Hall and Zone 1 were not able to attend [due to change from CASGED's normal 2nd-Tuesday meeting date]. In lieu of the Zone 1 report, RA Dailey invited Public Safety Committee's Denise Pierce to speak about the effort to raise money for Ofcr. Bashiom's family. D. Pierce reminded attendees of the officer's slaying over the weekend, provided info on funeral arrangements and invited attendees to make contributions to a collection box/memorial she'd set up at the front of the meeting room.

3. Real Estate Development Updates

a. East Ohio Street Hotel — Mark Fatla, executive director of the North Side Leadership Conference, presented an update on Workingman's Square, a \$17 million hotel/restaurant/apartment complex slated for East Ohio and Phineas streets. He reported that in tandem with PennDot's work on E. Ohio, the sewer/water work for the hotel site was complete. The architectural analysis is also complete. The primary challenge at present is arranging financing. No single bank wanted to take on the role of main lender at \$8.5 million, so the development team has been meeting diligently with regional banks to put together a five-bank partnership or "participation loan," in which this main lending role would be shared. Dollar Bank has ordered an appraisal of the project, to be done in 30 days; upon its successful completion, the banks' soft commitments will be made "firm."

Community members asked questions about the project's cost, timeline, grant applications and tax-increment financing (TIF), and why a "syndicated loan" was necessary. M. Fatla said current cost estimate is \$17 million. He said the TIF was deemed not necessary and the CITF application (Community Infrastructure & Tourism Fund) was not successful. An application for funding of streetscape enhancements, such as lighting and landscaping, is pending and an answer expected soon.

Re timeline, he said the restaurant will be done concurrently with the hotel, with construction to begin in the Spring of 2017 and to last 12 to 16 months; the apartment building will be done in 2019. Town homes will be the final phase.

In response to the “syndicated loan” question, he explained that during the Marcellus Shale boom, the state experienced a surge in hotel building; now, with the Marcellus downturn, the loans for many of those hotels are “under water.” Given these circumstances, any single lender is hesitant to assume large risk on a hotel alone. He believes the mid-range price point of this hotel — a Comfort Suites — will make it more attractive than the higher cost hotels on the North Shore and Downtown. He said the Grafts [of the Grand Hall/Priory Inn] will be partnering with the hotel team to develop a restaurant and banquet facility at the Workingman’s Savings Bank adjacent to the hotel.

b. Status of Penn Brewery — M. Fatla said the new retaining wall is complete. The Conference is on track to complete the sale of the complex to its Master Tenant, the Penn Brewery, by the end of the year.

c. New Housing on Spring Garden Ave./Concord St. — Bob Dini, of Berkshire Hathaway/Preferred, was introduced to the community as the representative of developer John McGrath. Mr. McGrath has been building houses on Mount Washington and the South Side for 15 years.

Their team is now putting up six town homes on the vacant land formerly owned by Jan Comport, with three units to face each street. The footers for the two separate buildings are already in place. The units will be three stories high, with integral parking; living space will range from approx. 1,540 to 1,900 sq.ft. The center unit facing each street is 27’ wide; the end units are smaller, at 23’ wide. All are 35’ deep, and each will have a small rear courtyard/green space.

In answer to community members’ question, B. Dini said the facades will be “hardy plank,” which is manufactured with solid color all the way through, making for greater longevity. He said the target price will be somewhere from \$260,000 upward. The three units facing Spring Garden will be completed first, and the timeline for the Concord units will depend on how well the first group sells.

d. East Ohio/Troy Hill Road Gateway — RA Dailey reported that the Troy Hill welcome sign had just gone up, a glass/ceramic mosaic created by artist James Simon. It took a few years, with the sign in storage, for Troy Hill to secure the location opposite Vinial Street’s southern end and to meet PennDot’s requirements. A community member asked how that location was arrived at. RA Dailey recounted that it had been a compromise worked out between CASGED and Troy Hill Citizens. THC originally wanted to put it at the eastern end of the Penn Brewery parking lot, farther up Troy Hill, but neighbors threatened legal action if their city view was obstructed. THC then asked

to put the sign opposite the Teutonia Mannerchor, but CASGED objected since this area is East Deutschtown's gateway. THC worked out the final location with PennDot.

RA Dailey further reported that CASGED had submitted to the PA Dept. of Community and Economic Development a grant request for the gateway area but was deemed not eligible for the funding cycle just concluded because last year's registration with the Bureau of Charitable Organizations had not been done. Now that the 2015 IRS 990 is complete and filed, the next step is getting CASGED's BCO status updated for 2015 and 2016 to be eligible for the spring 2017 grant cycle.

e. Chestnut Street Corridor/Town Square — RA Dailey said the Pashek Associates report on the October meeting's design workshop had been received and would be made available on the CASGED web site. The next step is for the Gateway Steering Committee to work through the feedback, identify which of the community's highest priorities can be achieved and make recommendations on fundraising and expenditures.

4. Food Bank Update — Bob Herbert reported that food bank volunteers had just distributed groceries to 72 local families over the previous weekend. The bags included a Thanksgiving turkey and a certificate from KDKA for another turkey.

The food bank also distributed health care surveys to its families, as part of a community health initiative with Allegheny General Hospital and the Leadership Conference. 62 families filled it out.

B Herbert reported that the newest figures from the Greater Community Food Bank show the St. Michael's Food Bank distributes 64,000 pounds of food per year.

RA Dailey presented the Herberts with a check for the Food Bank of \$2,000 from the CASGED board. The Herberts also thanked Secretary BK Dailey and former treasurer Neil Poillon for their generous donations.

5. President's Report — RA Dailey said IOBY, the Brooklyn-based online crowd-resourcing web site used for Buhl/Sprout Fund grants, had just that morning announced their opening of a Pittsburgh office, and they held their press event at the mosaic mural at the Deutschtown - Spring Hill City Steps. KDKA and NextPittsburgh were among the news outlets covering the event. Any coverage would be linked to CASGED's web site.

She also gave an update on the development of a real estate sales policy. The Development Committee had sought examples from sister organizations and found the model from Allegheny City Central Assoc. particularly helpful. The board agreed and

will be working to develop a similar approach that will involve posting all properties online as they become available, as well as sending Requests for Proposals to recommended developers and seeking names of additional reputable and experienced developers. The board and committee had noted that this approach allows developers of all sizes to bid for any mix or scope of project(s).

6. Treasurer’s Report — Due to the early, emergency-related departure of treasurer Paul Cerny Jr., RA Dailey had to present a brief summary of his report: The 2015 IRS 990 was finished a week ahead of schedule, thanks to Paul’s work with CPA Glenn MacElroy and newly re-hired consultant Nancy Noszka. This year’s and last year’s BCO registrations are in progress.

A community resident suggested that future openings for work for CASGED be posted online and preference be given to community residents.

Since the Profit & Loss Report provided at the October meeting, only a handful of checks have been written — for rent, phone, insurance, web site costs and postage. A community resident suggested that the financial statements be made available online; RA Dailey agreed that might be a good step and promised to look at sister organizations to gather info on their policies and procedures. She said the treasurer will present a P&L at the December meeting and a full 2016 report at the January 2017 meeting.

7. Committee Reports —

a. Public Safety — D. Pierce requested contributions to the memorial fund for Ofcr. Bashioum and mentioned that his partner had been brought to AGH for emergency treatment after the shooting. She said Councilman Daniel LaVelle had attended the most recent Public Safety meeting, due to the retirement of long-time city staffer and Block Watch leader Liz Style. She also spoke of the “intense policing” on East Ohio St. which is bringing great results in terms of information gathering and arrests.

A community resident noted problems with apparent drug dealing/use at an apartment building near the Town Square. Another resident noted similar problems with a boarded up house in the 1200 block of Spring Garden, where the general disrepair has created an issue due to a shared sewer line. J. Klinger volunteered to look into the sewer issue. There was a good discussion of redoubling efforts on 311 complaints regarding these nuisance properties, citing the eventual, great success with a Constance St. house.

c. 3G Committee — J Valorie’s absence, RA Dailey thanked him for heading up Pitt Serves Day and working with Eric Mount to feed the volunteers and local firefighters.
