

## Minutes for CASGED Community Meeting of Tuesday, September 11, 2018

Board members in attendance: Paul Cerny Jr., RA Dailey, BK Dailey, Bob Herbert.

1. **Meeting called to order** at 6:35 p.m. B Herbert led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. **Public Officials**

Zone 1 officers update: Shot Spotter will up and running by month's end. Coverage has been a challenge — more than any other city to date — due to Pittsburgh's hills and valleys; but it will cover the entire neighborhood.

Crime report — number of incidents is down. Burglary remains the most frequent crime, though a majority of recent incidents were inter-family thefts or thefts from unlocked cars. Officers warned residents not to leave any valuables in their cars.

Councilwoman Darlene Harris: Dept of Public Works continues to resist restoring a water fountain at Catalano Park, despite already receiving photos of the former fountain in use. A newly found photo will also be sent. There has been confusion as to whether the fountain was to play in or drink from; a neighbor said the first one was for children to play in but after a remodel, it was a drinking fountain. Now that's gone. Someone asked that the park's surface be changed to something other than black, as there is no shade — and no water — to relieve the heat.

A resident asked for a Catalano-style surface at the Kaboom playground. Discussion about whether the Kaboom site meets city safety standards and whether this hinders upgrades.

A Spring Garden resident of 30-some years asked why it is so difficult for him to purchase property from the city. His multiple efforts have been denied or keep getting shuffled around. Mrs. Harris said she runs all purchase requests through CASGED. RA Dailey affirmed this, saying the board checks to see if the request and its purpose align with the community's comprehensive plan. She said the neighbor's request had been approved by the board months ago and asked for follow-up to ensure its completion.

A resident asked for an update on the dangerous condition of the Concord-Vista City Steps. A flimsy barrier had been moved; residents and schoolchildren continue to use them, despite partial collapse. Mrs. Harris said she was not aware of the problem. Residents said they have sent photos, complained to city, would send more pics.

Molly Onufer, Mayor's Office: Citizen Police Academy still has openings, even though it's underway.

She will connect with the city's Dept of Mobility and Infrastructure (DOMI) about the city steps just discussed.

The city of Pgh is doing a new Comprehensive Plan and is forming a steering committee to explore how to engage all neighborhoods for thorough input.

Phillip Battista, Rep. Wheatley's office: Their office can look into whether there is any help they can provide to spur repair of city steps. Mr. Battista said Rep. Wheatley is working on two pieces of legislation, one to legalize recreational use of marijuana, the other to set up an amnesty program for suspended driver's licenses. The latter would let people get back their driving privileges more quickly while still paying off fines; the current process is a hardship for the working poor.

RA Dailey asked for help with the lien on the Madison Avenue Meeting House, which the community had to pay but which Rep. Wheatley persuaded the state to forgive. The state returned its share of the lien but the city won't without more paperwork from the state. Mr. Battista said to get in touch with him with details.

### **3. Mini-storage update**

Bailey Gaffney of Johnson Development thanked those in community who had supported their requested variances and announced that the Zoning Board's decision to grant the variances had been appealed by CASGED and some local residents.

RA Dailey affirmed that CASGED's appeal on behalf of its membership had been filed that day. A resident asked about legal expenses and whether a cap has been set; she replied that about \$5,000 in services has been supplied to date, that \$1,500 paid on that amount, that the attorney has offered to do much of the work pro bono and that the board has not yet discussed whether a cap on expenses would be needed. She said the next step is a conference between Johnson and CASGED attorneys by early November; it's possible that some negotiation might be possible.

D Pierce asked if negotiation could have taken place before the ZBA hearing and proposed that her husband Tom Pierce's plan for a 4-story facility should have been embraced by the community as a compromise. RA Dailey replied that the board and Development Committee were unaware of T Pierce's proposal, as he hadn't presented it to them, and the board couldn't negotiate for the community without first finding out what the community wanted. Voting on the variances concluded at the April 10 meeting with substantial opposition to Johnson's plan, but the ZBA hearing was two days later. Johnson did not change any aspect of its plan, although strong opposition was known to them from Feb. and March meetings.

### **4. Updates — ACCBO, T-Sale requests, Bags & Blocks sign-up**

The Advisory Committee on Community Based Organizations channels money from the Dept of Housing and Urban Development to community groups to fund their operating expenses; its shuttering was announced, but then it was restarted. Consultant Nancy Noszka prepared CASGED's application; a decision is expected in September.

The CASGED board would like residents to nominate vacant properties that could be brought through the Treasurer's Sale and cleared for redevelopment. The next opportunity to nominate properties will occur in early November for the first 2019 T-Sale.

The board has received word that a few T-sale properties will soon be ready for CASGED to purchase and to place with developers; so the board and Development Committee will be finalizing a "Request for Proposals" (RFP) to send out to any developer interested in building or renovating in our two neighborhoods.

The board has approved \$200 for the Bags & Blocks program, recommended by Isaac Falvey. Mr. Falvey explained the program, which provides bags, extension trash pickers and gloves for people who volunteer to patrol litter on their blocks. Please contact him to sign up.

### **5. Committee Reports**

Public Safety Chair Raphael Walton said Nat'l Night Out was a great success — many in attendance. CASGED board had given \$740 to the event for supplies, artist's caricatures, etc. A safety issue became apparent during the event — the difficulty in identifying a safe place for the "bicycle rodeo." There is much speeding and running stop-signs on Spring Garden Ave.

There will be a citywide public safety event on Human Trafficking — 10-17-18 at the Pittsburgh Project.

### **6. New Business**

Madi Nestor announced a benefit concert for Food City at Wigle Whiskey on October 13th. She said volunteers from Highmark will work on the Food City garden at 1 p.m. on Sept 12 — please join them as you are able.

**Meeting adjourned 8:10 p.m.**