

9th Ward Blockwatch Meeting Notes

October 18, 2016 6:30pm

Presenters: Officer Antoine Davis, Bike Pittsburgh, Arun Gupta Properties

Approximately 29 people attended

Officer Davis: Last time we met up, we talked about cyclists and motorists and as we continued the conversation, it took a turn. I de-escalated the situation but not because I didn't care – I directed away from the situation to diffuse it. No side was weighed more heavily than another. A special guest, Sergeant David McNilliard, who has been an officer and a cyclist, attended the meeting to talk about bicycle laws.

Q&A

Q: if a cyclist is up on the sidewalk, what can be done by the public?

A: If in a business area, the cyclist is not allowed on the sidewalk but in residential areas they are allowed. Bicycles are considered vehicles. Some bicyclists obey the rules.

Q: What is the preferred way of handling a cyclist on the sidewalk? If you get a video, does that count?

A: We have to know who the cyclist is to cite them. ID is the issue. Just as graffiti reports can be monitored and cited as a violation, so can cyclist infractions as long as the cyclist has an ID with them.

Q: Will cyclists ever have to abide by the same laws as drivers? Will they have to register themselves? Will they have to get insurance?

A: Four foot is the latest law, it is hard to go around a bicycle, violations need to be seen to be cited. On the books this is in section 21.10. It is hard to cite a cyclist, same rules apply as with vehicles. A driver of a bicycle or a car must be identified. If you follow a person, you can't do a citizens' arrest, if you try to stop somebody it can really escalate. Increase signage outside businesses so as not to not interfere with folks walking.

Q: Are there plans for cycling paths?

A: Plans with bike lanes to keep increasing them to connect the north side to downtown.

Most people at the meeting were unaware that it is legal to ride on sidewalks in residential neighborhoods.

Q: The four foot law is relatively new, what do drivers know about this? Is it applied? Is Pittsburgh trying to amp up the awareness?

A: Title 75, section 3501-3514

ATVs – sometimes you have to get a registration plate for them.

Eric Boerer, Bike Pittsburgh Advocacy Director

Bike Pittsburgh works with the City on bike planning and bike safety. There is a signage plan, directional, for the whole City. There could be signs to get people off of Butler street sidewalks. When there's no safe place on the street, cyclists ride on the sidewalk. Bike Pittsburgh has classes for responsible cycling and is educating several hundred people a year. Wheelmill is an indoor bike park for courses are given. Key messages are stay safe on the roads and understand the rules of the road.

There are protested lanes within in the Lawrenceville area, different ownership along the way. The state requires the City to have a bike plan. They are now updating the 1999 plan to 2016 which will be extended to Ft Pitt. East Liberty bike lanes are right up against the curb which is confusing to people who can't get in to the lane.

Many drivers aren't cyclists and are afraid to cut off a cyclist. Tips for people who want to be more cognizant of cyclists when it's tight to pass and it's dangerous. Cyclists asserting their space because the space is too narrow to pass in. Safety as a priority, important that we respect each other.

Q: Having some form of ID on bicycles? Like a license plate? For example: cyclist pulled in front of a car and the van hit both cars because of it. If the cyclist has a license plate, it could have been reported to the police.

Oppose or support this suggestion: 1) It doesn't pay for itself 2) Cost prohibitive for people who have many bicycles 3) Biking should be accessible to everybody

Lots of cyclists come to Pittsburgh from all over the world. A license plate would have to be enforced at the state level. Could be a bureaucratic nightmare.

Q: How can cyclists be identified if an incident occurs, when a car is keyed by a cyclist for example?

A: Personal Identification, good id to carry one with you. Someone on a bicycle needs to be identifiable, 85% of Bike Pittsburgh members own cars. To cite you the police need your name and date of birth. No record found means cyclist gave false information.

Screening question: has crime been committed or about to be committed? That's what the police officer is enforcing. Lots of pro-active things about being a member of Bike Pittsburgh. Register bicycle at the bottom of the crank, registration number is for theft. Many bicycles are stolen.

Pittsburgh Bureau of Police Safety Report

- Uptick on drug overdoses and burglaries
- Summarizations included in safety report print out
- Drug overdoses could be because of a hot shot of heroine, nothing has been confirmed but there have been six overdoses, three of them fatal
- If you see something, say something

Thanksgiving – announcement is for meal delivery for people homebound on Thanksgiving.

In terms of bike safety, know the rules of the road and fines.

Cycling gets painted as a divisive issue, when cars hit bikers there's usually a loss of life there

Culture shift that we have to make

Addendum to safety report:

Ashlee told me about a problem the Lawrenceville neighborhood is facing with residents. She informed me residents are putting chairs and cones in the street to preserve their parking spots. We are all aware that it is very hard to find a parking space in Lawrenceville, however, it is a clear violation of the law to put obstacles in the street to preserve a parking space. If anyone does this please **call 911** and we will remove the obstacles. *Please inform the residents that we do not recommend removing the items themselves, because most of the time these situations become violent, it is best to let us do it.*

Please include this information in your news letter so people can be informed on how to handle this situation.

In conclusion, we are in need of volunteers for the **STUFF WITH LOVE** program. It is a wonderful community event that really display our love for the people we serve. Please let everyone know if they are in need of a dinner or know someone in need of a dinner, to contact us. There is really no good reason why anyone should go hungry in our country especially during the holidays.

Hatfield Homes presentation: Arun Gupta, see attached slide presentation

Clarification of LU's responsibilities: LU explains community process to developer and engages them in Blockwatch meetings. The community process allows residents a voice as development continues in the neighborhood. LU does what it can to work with developers, responding to resident feedback. Review of ground rules, be respectful and please limit questions to the end of the presentation.

Hatfield Homes had their first community meeting in June 2016. LU did not take a position on the project. The ZBA denied the variances requested. There are presenting new variances and the plans for the development have changed. Developers are at the meeting out of their own good will. Many 9th ward Blockwatch meeting attendees were at the June meeting.

Matt Dierson – architect, site engineer and banker representative in attendance

History of the site: Controlled by a family named Lanihan, the shells of the homes on Blackberry are still the original. Parcel can fit six units end to end.

Original plan was five units, conjoining construction, current plans are for four 3BR, 3 1/2 bath with cornices that celebrate the past

The four unit plan means the units will be higher in price. Councilwoman Gross is very concerned about this. Affordability is a key issue in the neighborhood.

Timeline: hearing in December, break ground in 2017, sell one unit at a time through 2018

Developers are envisioning posting about construction milestones throughout the project so residents can be advised of noise and dirt and can plan accordingly

Q&A

Q: Rowhome owners often drive up to garage door and park part way in the street. What is the offset from the sidewalk?

A: This will not be an issue at Hatfield Row

Average prices in the upper 400,000s plus upgrades. Mortgage programs let buyers in for 3% down, the townhomes will be a decent option for professionals and first time home buyers.

Q: Have you given any thought to using 49th street for construction?

A: No have not thought about construction logistics

Customization in townhomes. Buyer can select from an entire list of finishes such as urban theme – soho, shabby chic – magnolia, etc.

Discussion of variances and setbacks requested

Q: When will drawings be complete?

Q: Are privacy screenings for the second floor balconies part of the plan?

A: Drawings will not be completed until after the ZBA hearing. Since the first zoning hearing, not a lot of additional design work has been done so decks aren't looking directly into backyard.

Q: What does the ZBA require?

A: They make no requirement, you must apply within one year of the development proposal. The next step will be what they are permitted to build – with larger number of units.

Parking situation has not appreciably changed

Announcements:

Lawrenceville Food Pantry Location Change, location is undetermined, check website

LOCG Volunteer Days – Wednesdays 6-7 PM at McCandless & Natrona

Tree Park Workday – 2nd Mondays @ 5:30 PM at Stanton & Keystone

Duncan Workday – 4th Mondays @ 5:30 PM at 54th and Duncan

Doughboy Project Community Meeting #3 – 10/27, 6 PM, Clemente Museum

Kids Halloween Party – Saturday 10/29, 1-4 PM at Arsenal Park

LU Membership Meeting – 11/1, 6:30-8 PM @ Full Pint

Next 9th Ward Block Watch meeting – Tuesday 11/15 at 6:30 PM

Concern about if you don't have a computer – how will you know about the meetings? Please call LU or go to the library for information

