

Community Meeting on Aftershock Theater (10<sup>th</sup> Ward Block Watch)  
8/8/2017  
Meeting Minutes

**Zone Two Police Report:**

3 theft from auto—right here on Carnegie Street. No signs of forced entry. Valuables back in the open. Lock your vehicle and take your valuables.

3 overdoses. Trending down over the summer across the zone. Important to note once crimes involve an overdose the crime goes to narcotics rather than Zone Two police.

There will be a Pittsburgh Recovery Walk on September 16; if you want to participate, you can read more in the LU newsletter and register as a group so Lawrenceville residents can all be together.

In October, there will be a community meeting on how to access resources and treatment centers for people needed recovery help. Date and location TBD.

**Presentation from Aftershock Theatre:**

Dave explains process and ground rules.

They picked up the space about a year ago. Used to be Slovenski Auditorium. A building with great potential. Andy came to PGH 9 years ago at CMU. He's looked at arts organization and how they could run better; he's also looked at arts audiences. They were working on a project and working for one in town that was struggling to reach new audiences. Aftershock's goal is to include more diverse people and audience. It was vacant for 6 years before he got it. They applied for hearing back in May and it was rezoned from non-conforming to performance facility. One thing they've had to do is offsite parking. The liquor license will also require more of that. They want to be able to create art, musicals and plays, as well as live music, and a place where people feel welcome. They want to create experiences around theatre. Theater chases movies, but they want to create a fuller experience. They want to engage more audiences. They want theater to continue the conversation around societal issues. The last known use of the basement was an auto detailing shop. They had to deal with a lot of disrepair for the building. At one point the building was a vibrant social hall. They did a mold and asbestos report and they found a lot of asbestos and the tile had to go. There was beautiful brick underneath and parts of the old building still there. They improved the auditorium to make it a more welcoming space. They can have weddings there again, and produce art. They want to bring life back into the space. One of the big issues is parking. Right next to the building will be ADA parking for 4. They're going to clear out the grass and have parking available. There are two garage doors that will make for a good ADA

entrance and put in an elevator. Across the street there is an abandoned lot and they're going to try to turn that into a parking lot with the city so as not to disrupt neighbors. They've been talking with Persad to lock in 15 spaces. Once they have events, it will be leased. They're considering valet parking in a park nearby. They want to keep the parking and traffic on 57<sup>th</sup> street to be respectful for neighbors. The space is 3 floors. They want to put a café with baked goods and beverages. There would be a small bar with a performing arts facility license and great for nonprofits. 2 hours before performances, 1 hour after, and during the performance. They want to have themed cocktails for every show. Only draft beers and cocktails. Cocktails that are relevant to theatre and enhance the experience. Pair them along with shows. It's not just getting a drink for the sake of a drink. The back will become offices. The seating won't be as rigid. It will be a welcoming, warm, relaxed environment. The idea is come as you are, experience good art. They'll have two restrooms on top floor. ADA bathrooms on first floor. Single wing of gender neutral bathrooms. There will be a scene shop. There will be gallery or blackbox space. They also want to do a small cabaret stage in the bar area. You could also see local artists in the gallery space. They want the space to be flexible. They previously had an open house with alcohol served that matched the show. They're on Facebook, there's more pictures there. Working right now to turn the space around. The liquor license is around the show and building up the experience.

### **Q&A:**

Erica: When will you be open?

A: Open by the end of fall. Have the art control the building. Getting occupancy permits for parts of the building as do performances and build out that way. They could open and start using the space before everything is finished.

Jesse: Parking solutions. Have you considered reaching out to UPMC? They have lots that are vacant.

A: Good idea. My understanding is that the people next door asked and they came up with a valet parking plan. I don't love the idea of valet parking though. It feels like another barrier to people coming. If they would let people park on their own, sure, but if not, it would be harder.

Jesse: I know there's concerns about larger events.

A: The capacity is about 200.

Butch: I don't see how parking is going to be feasible at all. No parking for people that live there on 57<sup>th</sup> Street already.

Andrew: That's why I'm hoping to clear out 110.

Butch: That's only 4 or 5 spots.

Andrew: It will be a big issue. 15 or more spots at Persad. Encourage carpooling. Reach out to Uber. Maybe start a shuttle instead of coming to park and get a discount. A ride with one of the members of the artistic staff to talk about the experience of the show. We'll put in bike racks also. I know it's tight so I'm looking for offsite parking. Just the ADA parking and 110 isn't going to be enough.

Butch: Will there be a curfew? Alcohol outside?

Andrew: No alcohol allowed outside. There are double paned and sound resistant windows. Keeping the sound down and figuring out sound dampening methods. We won't have groups of loud people. No one leaving past midnight. Dark on Monday and Tuesday. Wed Matinee. T-Sun Matinees. Shows during the week would start earlier. On the weekends, nothing would likely go past midnight. Maximum time selling liquor is 6 hours. If it happens to become an issue, we will handle it. We've been offering free tickets to shows or movies away from the street and other ways to not disrupt the neighborhood.

Dave: Managing customers through house manager? Someone who knows how to manage a bar?

Andrew: I am RAMP certified. My head bartender is RAMP certified. Anyone who we let work with alcohol is RAMP certified. I have good connections with CMU police or security to make sure it stays in control. Conscious about overserving.

Dave: Designated smoking area?

Andrew: Hadn't considered. Make the building non-smoking. We could offer a designated smoking area that keeps them off of the sidewalk.

Don K: Is this for profit?

Andrew: No, nonprofit. If you run it correctly it shouldn't make a loss. You can pay people. Right now we pay property tax, but we won't if it's a nonprofit. You don't have to pay property or sales tax if it's a nonprofit. They will be salaried employees, and they will be taxed.

Don T: Only a little parking near your space? Maybe 12-15 cars? That would be staff parking. Hunter Saw is looking for a 194 occupancy permit and then 220 people in your theatre. Right now there's no parking at all. No exaggeration. Work a deal out with someone who owns a lot, but I can not personally go along with this. I believe in the arts. I worked with a theatre before who got similar parking complaints. This just won't work. UPMC parking lot is hard too; they have things with insurance that make it difficult. I'm not trying to be negative, but this seems impossible. The hearing sign was also too high. When will the hearing be?

Andrew: The permit has been sent to Harrisburg.

Kim: No way to prevent people to park in certain spots? There are a lot of crews working also and there's only a quick window to find a parking.

Andrew: I'd love to discourage people from driving. I'd love to set up the shuttle. And use Uber.

Kim: Events all year?

Andrew: That's the goal.

Jim: The townhouses got 2 spots for each house. But that's not even enough for those. They asked to turn Harrison Street into parking, but the city owns it. How can

our community influence the city to remove landscaping and make that into parking?

Dave: We can talk about other projects and district-wide parking solutions afterwards, but let's finish this part with questions for Andy.

Don: Are you already a nonprofit?

Andrew: Yes, we are a 501c3. I am also pro busing people in instead of parking.

Kim: Price point for tickets?

Andrew: No more than \$25 ever. I want to make theatre more accessible that way. Productions will be minimal. Maybe a range. More for better seats, etc. But keep it below \$25.

Kim: Is there any reason for public to go outside of showtimes?

Andrew: I would like to make it accessible to the public and host meetings etc. I want it to be part of the community.

Dave: Available for private events?

Andrew: Yes, weddings since they used to host them there. Producing and presenting. Some people coming in to put on the show. We would rent it out to companies.

Amber: Are you going to partner with local schools? Arsenal and Woolslair?

Andrew: I'd love to.

Amber: You're not going to profit for artists to put in art?

Andrew: It's not my intention to charge artists to use the space. Theatre companies yes, but not artists. In terms of gallery, no charging artists for the privilege of using our space.

Sarah: What other partnerships do you have in the process?

Andrew: Partnerships depend on shows, but I'd love to work with Nights of the Arcade and Arcade Comedy. I'd love to work with CMU and Uber for shows relating to robots or tech.

Sarah: I meant like in the building, etc.

Andrew: Hopefully Uber for parking. Hopefully restaurants in the area. Berotta would let them use their space for fundraising. I have ideas depending on shows, but a lot of our funding comes from foundations. We're looking into partnerships with some liquor companies, too, to fund the bar. If you have any suggestions for partners, I'd be willing to listen.

Don: Is there anybody else besides you?

Andrew: I'm building a board now. 7-10 people. I want community members to be board members.

Don: How did you get started without a Board of Directors already in place?

Andrew: It relates a lot to the nonprofit process. There are two other people who work closely with me, an artistic director and operations. I have a bar manager. It includes collaborating artists. The board is in process because I'm trying to select people very carefully and find people who actually will be part of the community. I want to make sure they're not paying their way on and can give meaningful advice about the space and community.

Eddie: Along with ticket prices, you want to support the shuttle? Are you willing to financially support that? Like 30 if you come with your car? 25 if you come on shuttle?

Andrew: Yeah that's a great idea.

Jesse: Beer and cocktails? Would you be considering sourcing from local?

Andrew: That's our hope. Depends on funding. I have a good contact with PGH Brewing Company. Cocktails related to or inspired by show. Some contacts at Wigle and Maggie's Farm.

Jesse: The price points? 4-18? Is it your hope to have prices be accessible?

Andrew: Yes.

Dave: Clarify on parking? Getting spots with church on 57<sup>th</sup> st?

Andrew: They wanted to hold it for their internal people, so they said no.

Question: 21 and over theatre?

Andrew: No, but we want to reach college age and up. Everybody gets carded. Child friendly but not child focused. I want to reach the demographics that theatre companies don't usually reach. Some shows will be kid friendly but some won't.

### **Closed Door Portion**

Parking is the major concern. They're required to lease 6 offsite as part of the special exception they got. They will have to prove that when they get an occupancy permit.

Hunter Saw got a valet contract with UPMC at the end of 57<sup>th</sup> street. The residents seemed to support that.

Could be a concern with valet going up and down neighborhood streets.

They got their special exception from zoning, and they will still need occupancy and building permits. This meeting is because they applied for their liquor license, so parking arguments might not carry as much weight.

Doing a bus over would be good, like Scarehouse.

I think he's going to be forced to do that UPMC. It's true that there's a big bike or walk crowd but how much percent is that? It's never going to cover it all.

Valet also makes people uncomfortable, but it might be the best option.

Accommodating a two or five dollar valet might be better. Or incorporate valet into the price of the ticket.

The parking authority has income; do you have a connection with city council to try and work something out with them where the school buses are? I don't want to put anyone out of business, but the parking is a problem.

- LU has been pushing for strategic parking solutions and also a Parking Enhancement District, which would meter Butler Street in the 10<sup>th</sup> Ward and create residential permit parking in the areas adjacent to it. For people in the 10<sup>th</sup> ward that don't have RPP, residents could get help there. Extending the enforcement hours through midnight. You do a dynamic pricing which raises the price of parking during peak hours and it becomes a revenue generator for parking solutions in the neighborhood. We will likely be hosting some stand-alone community meetings related to this idea in the coming months. We continue to push, but there's not a lot of support for building parking structures. There's a general sense of relaxing parking requirements. The city wants to want to move Pittsburgh in a less car focused direction.

Parking, designating smoking, managing customers, etc. are the main concerns. Maintenance of the outside too – cleaning up after customers, not leaving trash that will impact adjacent residents.