

9th Ward Block Watch
06/19/2018, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
St Mary's Lyceum
Meeting Minutes

46 people in attendance.

Police Report:

Officer Antoine Davis: Uptick in crime with burglaries and theft from automobiles. 2 burglaries, 6 thefts from auto, overall a total of 9 Part 1 crimes in the Lawrenceville area. One of the incidents was the aggravated assault. The suspect has since been arrested. The victim is in a healthy condition now. One burglary at 4305 (Industry) and another at 4900 block of Butler Street which was a home invasion. A serious uptick from theft from automobiles; someone was caught last year. Throughout the last month, there's been an increase. They are working on this. Every last incident was a door unlocked and valuables in plain view. These create opportunities for criminals. Please look over the burglary safety tips. They have not received a silent complaint form in over four months. Always say something if you see something. You can turn it into a local officer on the street, turn it into Zone 2, turn it into LU. It can be anonymous. Put items in your trunk. It always increases with one crime to multiple.

Sergeant Hoysen: May be the same suspect doing both vehicles, businesses, and homes. They're looking for easy targets. Brought a suspect in last week but he says he picks targets of opportunity. Open car doors, etc. With the exception of one night, the burglar is finding open businesses. Finding unlocked windows, etc. We've seen the uptick over the last two months and the first 5 or 6 were businesses without video surveillance. Finding places that didn't have security measures and occupied houses with unlocked doors or windows. Out doing surveillance; leading up until now has been target based. Starting to develop suspects. Investigating a person of interest and it will hopefully put an end to this string of crimes. Secure windows and doors and vehicles. Urge your neighbors to be more careful.

No updates yet on the slew of business burglaries-no fingerprints recovered yet. Industry is the only business they've robbed that has cameras. An experienced burglar. Residential and business burglaries are handled by separate detectives.

Dave (LU): We have a database of privately held cameras; it helps us monitor crimes. Let us know if you have camera footage you can provide. Videos on LU's website of private captured footage. If you want to get cameras, we've reached out to a number of security companies and said can we get a discount. ADT, Advent and a local company were all willing to work with businesses and offer 20-30% off. We can take your information and follow up on that. Give us a call and give us the tips and we follow up via our public safety team.

Resident: Some of the restaurants are leaving their doors open when deliveries happen.

Proclamation Honoring Ron Deutsch - Councilwoman Gross:

Proclamation to Ron Deutsch. We presented this official proclamation at city council and it's an official part of legislative record. He was always quick to pick up the phone and call me when anyone needed anything. Sometimes he wasn't happy with me but he was always advocating for someone else and an important resource for us and we're grateful for his work in the neighborhood.

Monday, May 14 is Ron Deutsch Day in the City of Pittsburgh.

4609 Butler Street Community Meeting:

Quick background on community process. Community process since 2011. New development projects and new liquor licenses. Building relationships with business owners and neighbors. We only take projects that go through existing public process. Going through Zoning Board of Adjustments and PA Liquor Control Board. We can not intervene on private transactions. We try to take the larger projects that have community level impact. We are facilitators of this project, not recruit business owners or real estate to the neighborhood.

We flyer within 500 feet, put it in our newsletter, website, FB, Next Door Lawrenceville. Review ground rules. We act as neighbors.

Brett Minarik: Neighborhood residents. Live on Fisk. This is our shot at starting a small business and we want it to be in collaboration with the rest of the neighborhood. There are a lot of concerns that are applicable and were very early in the process and open to suggestions.

Our values are those of the community & responsible hospitality, preservation, open, inclusiveness, and keeping it local. This project is not a bar. This is not the environment or vibe we're going for. This is meant to be a food hall for families and friends with casual dining. Large brick façade, beautiful property, keeping that sense of history is very important. We looked back to what it looked like in the 1900s and tracked progression of that building and stay true to that history. Keeping everything local. We want to hire within the neighborhood, advantage program, offer a general neighborhood discount.

Basically storage on inside currently. Façade needs some work. At risk of demolition if use can't be found that works. Keep it family friendly and neighborhood friendly. Keep original brick and structure and integrity. Open up the front panel to let in natural light. Keeping the existing façade as it is. 24 ft

ceilings, original brick on wall. Built in 1900 so there's original woodwork in there. Put in some skylights, really appreciate history of structure.

Calling it Lawrence Hall. Special event space. Shared urban space. Have a bar, but not be a bar. Food hall first and foremost. We would not serve alcohol outside of dining hours. Lunch, brunch and dinner. Whole space to be a place for special events. Host up to 7 other small businesses, one with a walk up window on Butler, specialty prepared foods from local chefs and restaurants, something for everyone in a family or group. We don't know vendors yet, but open to suggestions for what the neighborhood would want. Come, have a communal table, etc.

Primary Issues: Parking: seeking parking lease agreement, exploring free shuttle to parking in the strip, primary customer base of locals, not visitors. Bike PGH business program, Healthy Ride, Port Authority. Uber and Lyft share ride discounts. Gears for beers discounts for cyclists. Draw local folks in. Suggestions welcome. Leaving contact details here, too.

Food centric, not standalone bar. Own/operate the only liquor license on premises. Selling alcohol during food vendor/dining hours only. They will not be permitted to sell their own liquor as a vendor.

Noise: Willing to close any open windows, panels after dark. Ventilation: we don't anticipate heavy exhaust but exploring venting near the front of Butler instead of back near residential. Trash: dumpsters and recycling would be kept inside in basement, off the alley.

We welcome questions. Early in process.

Q: Joanne Sculous, 45th: Did you purchase? Do you have an architect?

- Brett: We have an agreement of sale, 120 days of due diligence to make sure inspections are OK. Hopefully we'll close this fall. We hired Moss Architects, also Lawrenceville resident. We live off of Fisk. Right behind Crazy Mocha.

Q: Hours of operation?

- A: Front vendor that has a window; that person will sell coffee so 7, 7:30 in the morning and not opening past 11:30, 12.

Q: Phoebe Stern: Backgrounds, why you want to do this as your business. Professional background, etc?

- A: Brett: from Cleveland originally, wife Phoebe's mom is from here which is why we're here. Brett works for financial advisory company and Phoebe is in marketing. We're foodies, we enjoy the concept and we've been to these places all over the country and we don't have experience operating a food or alcohol business and we recognize that's important so once we

close on property, we're looking to bring on general manager who has that industry experience. Obviously we would still control the process but this person would bring that restaurant experience.

Q: Christine Miller: How many vendors? Wouldn't they manage their own little niche? If a couple drop out would there be rotating?

- Brett: 7 vendors. They would manage their own businesses, but we're coordinating for the hall as a whole. They fit with the environment and the neighborhood and managing common spaces, chairs and tables, etc. Individual vendors are only responsible for the space behind their counter. We hope that there's aggregate demand so we want to get 15-20 applications and selectively choose. 1, 3 or 5 year leases. As positions open up, we would have 3-6 months to inquire about openings. Hopefully we keep full occupancy but some time for turnover.

Q: Randall Sulkin: Is there loading in the back? Many deliveries on the premises. Parking: you're going to need 29 spaces, several businesses have tried leasing from all those places you mentioned with no success, so what's your ultimate answer alternative to that?

- Brett: Given our square footage and use and bicycle parking, our requirement is 15 which is still 15 more than what we have, but if the leases fall through we're at the mercy of the zoning board, with or without the parking, so we really want to encourage other methods of transportation. We don't have a good answer for that yet, we can try and make something else work. We have space right in front of driveway, so we have loading and that space will be on street parking for bicycles.
- Brett: For loading, there is an alley in the back so we'd use that. Try to do something similar as Industry, overnight for larger deliveries as to not block Butler.

Q: Nancy: We had a lot of wonderful restaurants and a lot are expensive. Average price point?

- A: We want this to be approachable. We've been and price point is between 7 and 12 for a meal. That's what we're going to shoot for. The idea is that for any amount you can find something and good, no one to be turned away.

Q: These exist already: Smallman and Federal Galley.

- Brett: Smallman and Federal Galley, yes, but most cities of our size are supporting between 4 and 6 so many other places have multiple stops. Smallman is two miles away so we don't anticipate too much siphoning off between business. Some spillover will occur. There's also Oxford Market downtown which is more like a food court.

Brian Taylor: Neighborhood discount and seniors will be conditional for vendors?

- Brett: Because I don't know who these folks are, if they're amenable to it, so we can't force them to, but getting on board with sustainability and neighborhood accessibility are low bars for most folks. The space itself, it will definitely apply.

Cory Ricci: How many seats?

- Brett: 150-165 seats depending on the mezzanine where there will be additional seating. If don't do the mezzanine would be 150.

Joe: Can you describe one of these places? I've never been.

- Phoebe Minarik: Denver Central Market. Sometimes you can buy prepared foods, sometimes produce. Yu can go in and go with three or four other people and we can all pick whatever it is we want. More of a communal space and great way to meet and talk to people too so you can find a more inclusive environment.
- Welcoming, community open space. Quick bite or you can stay for a while, hoping to also have community events there or a game.

Q: What deterred you from doing something closer to Reading Terminal?

- A: space limitations smaller and more intimate, the idea of having raw goods market was less attractive since there's already farmers markets, etc. we wanted specialty and prepared and this concept fit the space the best. We didn't go into this with this idea, it was the building itself that spoke to us. We thought what could fit here and this did.

Q: Phoebe Stern: will one of you going to be full time on site?

- Brett: it depends on how we net out with the actual General Manager but we'll be there more than anyone. Intend to be there full time.

Q: Dave Breingan: sidewalks can be a huge barrier and accessibility. I know there's some issues with the sidewalk out front due to the tree there. What are the plans to address that?

- Brett: We need to expand water access, etc, we're going to do some work in the front anyway so we're going to smooth out that walkway and make it a lot more friendly.

Q: Mike Linn: how many jobs are you going to create? Living wage jobs?

- A: that's our ultimate goal, we're going to be a bit more traditional first and have people rely on gratuity, our goal is within three years to move toward to living wage environment and have people stop tipping. And offer benefits, etc. if there is budget for it, we intend to do it. Current estimation is about 15 new jobs. Each of the individual vendors would need between 3 and 6 people. So decent contribution to the community. We can put it up to Lawrenceville first, etc.

Q: Will you offer takeout and delivery?

- Brett: similar to neighborhood discount, will strongly encourage delivery and takeout.

Brett: Zoning hearing is July 19, seeking a variance for parking requirement, variance for off-street loading zone, and special exception for restaurant (general).

Councilwoman Gross: West Penn Surface Lot: they expressed a willingness to explore leasing for businesses there. Had a meeting with their president for leasing. Where is your liquor license coming from?

- Brett: TBD, we have an attorney but we're still so far away, will revisit in Q2 of next year.
- Councilwoman Gross: Also make sure you have current pricing on water and sewer tap-ins, they've gone up a lot.
- Brett: Our civil engineer is going onsite next week.

Closed Door portion after Brett/Phoebe excused

Dave (LU): Positions we take are - support, support with conditions, oppose, and occasionally neither support nor oppose. If have any additional questions, write them down and we can get them answered. Meeting notes will be online, reach out to us for any additional input. The Zoning Board hearing is July 19th at 9 a.m., downtown at 200 Ross Street.

Amber: at what point are we gonna acknowledge that parking is just an issue and move on? This is a city. We should stop talking about parking, spend more time on other issues.

Joanne: my concern is parking. It's a very big issue. Concern about zoning letting them do what they want to do. When you come home at 6 or 7 and you have to park two blocks away it's an issue if you have children or elderly. Abundance of additional seats, the barbeque place. Where are people going to park? We live in the city but it is an issue. The zoning board just allows developers to do what they want.

Councilwoman Gross: Lawrenceville Stakeholders have been challenging some cases, which I've supported. I'd be interested to see if we could count up the ZBA cases and see how they trend. When we had more staff we actually did that analysis, but it might've changed -- the ZBA members change and their opinions and attitudes change, but how many times are you going to let people off? They may not even be registering themselves where these variances are. Better job of trying to show back to them about where these are and the numbers they're permitting.

Joanne: as neighbors make plea, they still do what they want to do and allow developers to come in. The plan sounds wonderful but if he would resolve the parking issue.

Resident: Very cool space and someone is eventually gonna buy it and use it for something. It's big. They're interesting people; it's better than the developers because it's at least local. I trust them more than normal developers.

Brian Taylor: I would like to see some more solid commitment to the neighborhood discount and senior discount; they could agree to make that the commitment. Sounds like a thing that might go out the door if they can't get tenants to do it.

Matt (LC): Might make sense to bring that up again when they go for the liquor license, hold that as an issue.

Dave (LU): Zoning Board hearing is next month which is why we felt it important to get in front of everyone today, but they're quite a ways off from the liquor license so we can hopefully bring him back out for that process.

Brian Mendolssohn: Dealing with trash and grease will be a concern since there's so many restaurants in one place. Hard to manage 7 different restaurants with a crowded alley. A well thought through plan for that and make sure we look through it and make sure it's reasonable.

Resident: They seem to put a lot more thought to that than parking. West Penn? Sears Outlet?

Phoebe: Echo what Brian said, maybe there could be a condition through the GM that they are the only ones contracting with trash, deliveries, so that it's all coordinated by a single person, not 7 different trucks coming through the day.

Matt (LC): That might be impossible just given the different restaurants and their different needs and sources.

Phoebe: There may still be opportunities for central services for more general things like maintenance of equipment, waste services, loading and unloading.

Matt G: we can treat this along with construction management plans and ask them to articulate those elements

Justin Ritter: supportive of project, but ask where their funding is coming from.

Brian: to be clear, it's a food court? Do we know how successful these are? The galley's are run differently than what they're talking about. This is not less a stepping stone or incubator and more permanent.

Update on Holy Family: Matt (LC): 2012 we were in this room a lot; LC and LU supported project, 59 units of housing on site but re-using buildings, 88 parking spots. Ray led an appeal of the zoning decision but it's been in legal issues for a while.

The owner of the properties (E Properties and Synergy Capital) put the property on the market for two years, looking to sell, got it under agreement with a developer and the owner sought to demolish the entire site. Throughout the last 6 years, we were very clear that we heard that because of the history of the site and because of the iconic nature of that big building, the church itself should remain. 80 year old building that needs to be preserved. We made it clear we would oppose demolition. We thought we were being very reasonable by saying we were willing to talk about the school and rectory demolition but church is not to be destroyed.

In May, the owner applied for demolition. We reached out with him and the buying developer, CRAFT out of Canada, expressed disappointment and were clear with property owners that we were unhappy because not aligned with our values and it went against community agreements and did it without telling us. We talked with developer, asked that they revoke the demolition application, they did not and then we engaged with Historic Society, Preservation Pittsburgh, Councilwoman Gross's office and the Mayor's Office and we determined we should submit nomination through the Historic Review Commission. We submitted application, then the property owner did take back their application to demolish, but that nomination is in place right now for it to be a city landmark for the church. Just the church. That news is not public yet, will probably be there tomorrow, but wanted to share with the 9th Ward Block Watch first. We want to see it preserved but want to see it developed. Since it closed in '08 it has been sad to see it not being secure and the level of care and maintenance. LU has led clean-ups of that site. Insist on maintenance of that site. Engaging with the developer as early as tomorrow but felt it was important that we answer any questions you may have and to share that story. Many of you are parishoners, and we wanted to reflect those values.

Q: Michelle, 42nd: what took so long to try and designate it? Will there be affordable housing?

- Matt: hopefully affordable housing, but we're honestly in tactic mode right now. We push for affordability in every development. LC is helping create 35 affordable units in Lower Lawrenceville, 7 in Upper Lawrenceville. To your first question, we were operating in good faith with property owner, there are both opportunities and constraints relating to the nomination process and we recognized that the demolition of non-essential buildings like the school may need to go which is fine, but to not make that process too hard, we elected to not nominate it at the time.

- Dave (LU): Frankly, this was not on our agenda for 2018. We only nominated it in response to the demolition application to save the building.

Brian Taylor: Moving forward, do you see yourselves using this tactic in a proactive way? What were they going to do with it post demolition? At this point, not a whole ton of buildings left. Would you use this kind of thing to get in the way for bigger developers?

- Matt (LC): that's not a strategy we've historically employed, the Stakeholders have in the past done a lot of historic nominations and the Historic Society has been involved with, we're not involved with that per say. At present, we are not spot designating.
- Dave (LU): Typically we defer to the preservation groups in the community. This was different for us because there was a community process that we felt this violated.
- Matt (LC): In terms of what the plans were for post-demolition, they were planning on doing around 32 market-rate townhouses that were garage fronted on 43 & 44th. Really preliminary and in all fairness, they probably needed some more time to figure it out. Wouldn't have needed a lot of zoning relief.

Michael Linn: What's going on with LC's project around the Doughboy? Haven't seen any work start.

- Matt (LC): Yes, we own the former Wilson's Barbeque and we control parking lot across from Clemente Museum. Two sites and we went through deliberate community process to create both commercial and residential. We were one of 4 projects that were awarded tax credits on April 19th, created timeline from there, and be under construction by spring of next year. Our partner ACTION Housing gets tax credit and break ground in spring. We're pretty excited about that.

Q: Carlton Street. Dump truck taking up parking from Wylie Holdings. We follow up and nothing happens.

- Dave (LU): I heard from a resident last week about this. We 311'ed it and we can follow up with Wylie, but if there weren't any violations given from the inspectors, then they probably have a permit to be there and I'm not sure what else we can do other than ask Wylie to move it.

Brian Mendolssohn: Here on behalf of Historic Society, big part of research of this site, if you're in favor of saving the structure, we need help from people in community. A lot of people really frustrated by the condition of the building, but we want to preserve the history of it. The architect is relatively well known. Historically well known importance to the Polish community. Looking for people who have connection to church or feel connected to it some way. Hearing is coming up soon. We're going to need people to come to the hearing, speak on your beliefs about that designation. Reach out with other comment or questions.