



Public Comment
December 10, 2020 Regular Board Meeting

A public comment was received from Daniel Perla regarding Homeowner Assistance Program-funded work that was performed on Mr. Perla's home. The matters raised in the comment have been addressed, and the comment is withdrawn.

Name: Myrna Newman

Comment: It was recently brought to my attention by a Hazelwood resident that the URA is considering selling lots along Chance Way to Oak Moss Associates, LLC. While I am grateful for their efforts to renovate the historical Woods House into a pub and support the idea of development in Hazelwood, I am concerned about the location of this particular development project due to its location in a proposed Greenway.

Between 2010-2015, our organization spent quite a bit of time in this area of Hazelwood, removing a total of 15.6 tons of trash and 300 tires from the green space between Sylvan Avenue and Monongahela St./Chance Way and another 7.7 tons of trash and 269 tires from the wooded green space between Gladstone and Sylvan Ave. We were actually under the (apparently mistaken) impression that the wooded area between Chance and Sylvan had already been designated as part of the Greenway. Regardless of the official designation, it was clear that the community valued and wanted help in cleaning and preserving this green space.

It seems that the interest in preserving green space in Hazelwood has only increased in recent years. In the 2019 Neighborhood Plan, strengthening the quality of greater Hazelwood's green spaces was a primary infrastructure goal. Developing this wooded green space that is adjacent to an existing Greenway and was identified by the city as proposed Greenway is counter to the community's plan.

Developing this green space is counter to city-wide and regional plans, as well. The city's Climate Action Plan calls for increasing tree canopy by 60% and halting tree canopy loss due to development. The city, greater Pittsburgh area, state of Pennsylvania, and the US all have goals to increase tree canopy, understanding that forested green space is vital to the health and well-being of communities. Cutting down existing hardwood trees for this development would be inconsistent with these goals.

Hazelwood has no shortage of vacant/abandoned lots (we cleaned many of those in 2015, also!). Wouldn't it be better to build on existing vacant lots that aren't forested? Not only would that fit with community and regional goals for tree canopy and green space, but it would also help fill in the "missing teeth" of the neighborhood, aiding in general revitalization.

Our organization spends much of our time, energy, and other resources on removing trash from the wooded hillsides of Pittsburgh because they are iconic to Pittsburgh, provide opportunities for recreation and enjoyment, serve as critical wildlife corridors, and are vital to the health and well-being of our residents. Please help preserve these woodland spaces by agreeing to halt the sale of lots along Chance Way for development by Oak Moss Associates, LLC.

Sincerely,

Myrna Newman
Executive Director
Allegheny CleanWays
412-381-1301
www.alleghenycleanways.org

Name: Megan Confer-Hammond

Board Item: Overall comment and 6E

Comment: My name is Megan Confer-Hammond, I am the interim executive director of the Fair Housing Partnership of Greater Pittsburgh. For the last URA Board meeting of 2020, my comment is generally applied to the URA as a whole. Pittsburgh is at a crossroads. As we await the federal transition and the new HUD leadership, including locally, fair housing groups nationwide convened in the past month discussing Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing and anticipated HUD policy changes. As always, I ask the URA to understand how its development decisions impacts our City's inequity. Over 50 years ago, our country was at a civil rights crossroads. Our Congress wrote the AFFH provisions to compel meaningful change within our decision-making. We're still awaiting our regional governments and other decision-makers to make good on that commitment. For example, in 6E. the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Applications, a new construction project is proposed for those who are 62 years of age and older that is entirely 1-bedrooms. Within Housing for Older Persons, housing for those who are 62 and older is much more restrictive than housing for those who are 55 and older. Additionally, the project's siting is in the neighborhood with the lowest, by far, Black alone population, as per the Census, of the 4 proposals. Again, such a development strategy is historically known to maintain or deepen pre-existing racial segregation.

Additionally, the purse strings are needed to impact affordable housing management that is in place after construction. The privatization of the region's affordable housing is resulting in private companies cherry-picking the impoverished population that they serve. For 2021, I ask for equity in our affordable housing development.

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LOWER HILL EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MEMO

Date: December 10th, 2020

To: URA Board of Directors

From: Lower Hill Executive Management Committee (EMC)

Subject: November Progress Report

During these challenging times of COVID, the EMC board is working diligently with all Lower Hill stakeholders and the community to achieve the goals of the CCIP. At this time, best efforts have not been demonstrated. Here are some of the EMC challenges.

Community Reinvestment Plan

Since May, the EMC has been waiting to receive FNB and PAR's counteroffer to the Community Reinvestment Plan for Block. Still pending, no update.

Stop Gap Protection

On August 21st, the EMC requested from PAR a Stop Gap Protection that would require PAR before any takedown proceedings to give the EMC eight weeks to consider community benefits, specifically the Community Reinvestment Plan. EMC is waiting on PAR's response. Still pending, no update.

Lower Hill Development Team

On November 19th, 2020, Mayor Peduto, Councilman Lavelle, and BPG issued a press release announcement on the Lower Hill Development team expansion. The press release was the first time the EMC was made aware of new editions to the development team and attempts to meet the CCIP. The EMC board meets on a bi-weekly basis and ask for updates related to the CCIP from the SEA, URA, Mayor's Office, Councilman Lavelle's Office, and PAR. The request for updates is a standard procedure documented in our meeting minutes since September 4th, 2020. SEA, URA, Mayor's Office, Councilman Lavelle, and PAR did not disclose these critical Lower Hill Development team negotiations to the EMC.

Requested Extension

PAR informed the EMC that the purpose of their request to extend resolution no.179 (2020) before the URA board was to align dates within the URA and SEA terms. Discussions occurred on the matter; however, there was no consensus among the EMC that the extension should be granted. A standard of full confidence regarding transparency on the request could not be achieved at the committee meeting.

The EMC is committed to assuring the implementation of the CCIP and full disclosure to the Urban Redevelopment Authority staff and board of directors such that thoughtful and informed decisions that support our end goal can be made.

Please direct all inquiries to Lance Harrell, CCIP Project Administrator, for the Lower Hill EMC at lharrell@hilldistrict.org or by phone at 412-589-5154