

Oakwatch: The Oakland Code Enforcement Project Meeting  
Minutes  
March 20, 2019

## Meeting Attendees

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**Present:** Lizabeth Gray, Elena Zaitsoff, Hannah Green, Guy Johnson, Michael Medwed, Carver Murphy, Matt Landy, Jamie Ducar, Makeda Thompson, Massie Ridz, Ricquel Williams, Martell Covington, Guy Giampolo, Leah Friedman, Alicia Carberggy, Keith Paylo, Mark Oleniacz, David Manthei, Moira Egler, Gwen Bolden, Toni Vecchio, Ethel Deluiis, Sally Stadelman, Bruce Kraus, Commander Daniel Herrmann, Officer David Shifren, John Tokarski, Ron Griffin

## Call to Order, Introductions

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EZaitsoff read the mission statement and reviewed the ground rules for the meeting. Introductions continued around the room.

LGray announces new monthly [Oakland Design Development Review](#) meeting hosted by OPDC. In response to a recent surge in project proposals, OPDC is instituting a monthly public meeting to facilitate discussion between developers and community members. Through these meetings, residents are invited to gather in a collective effort to advocate for quality projects. The first meeting took place [Wednesday, March 27](#) and featured two current projects: A proposed new office high-rise by Wexford Science + Technology (3440 Forbes Avenue) and an application for demolition of the Pittsburgh Playhouse.

## Sally Stadelman | Department of Permits, Licensing & Inspections (PLI)

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SStadelman provided updates on the following target list properties:

- 1) **226 Ophelia Street:** Currently in violation of fence exceeding permitted height. Court date is schedule for May.
- 2) **3202 Niagara Street:** Property owner appealed PLI's decision to revoke certificate of occupancy. They failed to attend hearing and filed another appeal. Court date is not yet scheduled. SStadelman thinks this is a stalling tactic. Once tenants move out, the property will no longer be over occupied and property owner can begin renovations to bring property under compliance.
- 3) **0 Boundary Street:** Stuck in court of common pleas; granted extension to mid-May.

Inspectors have begun to look at properties LGray submitted for demolition requests.

LGray: We have properties on the target list that remain on our list for years. We know the property owners are deceased. PLI continues to send out summons, but they keep coming back because there is nowhere for them to go. Is there a limitation on how many times you send a summon before taking other actions?

SStadelman: PLI only has ability to cite. There is a whole other world of development and property acquisition.

SStadelman: (In regards to over occupancy) PLI needs sufficient evidence to move forward. We can only enter a home with permission or if we see something outside that indicates over occupancy. Tough to prove.

LGray: Pitt took action to remove listings for over occupied properties from their online rental listings (Off Campus Living page).

### **Featured Speaker | City Council President Bruce Kraus**

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EZaitsoff: Update on rental registration?

BKraus: We are in the 11<sup>th</sup> hour. Council has accepted rules and regulations. Now just waiting on judge to lift order of stay.

ACarberry: Is PLI ready to enforce legislation as soon as it is approved?

LFriedman (mayor's office): Yes, PLI is ready.

EZaitsoff: Who is the new Parking Authority director?

BKraus: Gwen Bolden (in attendance). She started at the end of February.

EZaitsoff: Any progress on the road resurfacing list Oakwatch sent to Bob Charland?

BKraus: We are still focused on snow removal right now. Please keep submitting requests. It's helpful to have an organization behind requests to demonstrate research has been done on identifying problem roads. We tend to begin with the primary routes, however, I am still fighting for secondary and tertiary roads. Primary routes are usually emergency routes and experience heavy traffic.

LGray: Submitted Oakland list to Bob Charland earlier this year.

EZaitsoff: Do submissions from previous years roll over?

BKraus: Yes, we keep advocating for them. We try and drive council district in its entirety to see roads and rate conditions ourselves.

EZaitsoff: Is there anything your office can do to assist PLI with properties when homeowners cannot be located? There are some properties leaning toward conservatorship; is it possible to expedite that process if we can verify property owner is deceased?

BKraus: I see hope and promise in conservatorship. We are still exploring how to best leverage conservatorship to take delinquent properties under our wing so that we can bring them back under compliance.

ACarberry: Properties can be submitted to treasurer sale, but there is not end user in mind. Anyone can reclaim that property and citing process could start all over again. With conservatorship, an owner must be identified.

LGray: Bates Street houses have been condemned; first notice.

BKraus: Just because they are condemned, doesn't that mean they'll be demolished. City has been under mandate for asbestos abatements, which has been the main focus. However, price for demolition has dropped significantly, so we expect to see more action taken.

EZaitsoff: How can the city regulate Airbnbs?

BKraus: Many cities struggle with this. Many are pushing back because of the negative impact they have on local hotels and similar tourist revenue.

ACarberry: I believe the county collects hospitality tax. The county would be the best channel to go through for regulating Airbnbs.

LGray: There is a trend in landlords turning over occupied properties into Airbnbs. It's even more difficult to enforce over occupancy for Airbnbs.

BKraus: If this is really something you'd like to work on, we can try and get a hand on it. The biggest impact I see is how they affect quality of life – more cars taking up parking spots, noise, etc.

ACarberry: It's important city and county ensure Airbnb properties are respecting over occupancy rule.

EZaitsoff: Can you tell us more about the new [garbage legislation](#) (legislation begins on page 5)?

BKraus recited a few main points from new garbage legislation.

MEgler (Councilperson Strassburger's office): Every in city is required to recycle. Large apartment buildings need to provide independent recycling service. We removed specific materials that can be recycled for code itself to leave room for environmental services to make updates as needed. The legislation makes not of waste regulations, which can be changed at any time (will eventually be available online). Environmental services will be sending out information on accepted materials in next weeks. Legislation should be separate from this information, because council should not need to review legislation every time accepted recycling materials change.

LGray: Does this legislation apply to restaurants? Many don't recycle.

ACarberry: Yes, restaurants are considered a commercial business. Requirement to recycle is now clearly stated in legislation. Part of the outreach plan is to send a postcard mailer to over 15,000 businesses stating recycling rules and increased enforcement.

BKraus announced he has been working with a preservation planner at City Planning and the President of Preservation Pittsburgh to nominate the Shrine of the Blessed Mother for historic designation. Statue meets criteria. BKraus would like to host a community meeting to share with residents what this would mean and get feedback. If community supports nomination, process can begin.

## **Commander Herrmann, Sgt. Griffen, and Officer Shifren | Pittsburgh Police Zone 4**

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Officer Shifren gave crime stats for January, February, and March:

Robberies: January 0 – February 1 – March 2

Robbery attempts: 0 – 0 – 0

Carjacking: 0 – 0 – 0

Burglaries: 4 – 6 – 5

Stolen vehicle: 1 – 1 – 0

Stolen vehicle attempt: 1 – 0 – 0

Theft from auto: 8 – 2 – 2

Theft from auto attempt: 1 – 1 – 0

Theft from business: 5 – 2 – 2

Theft from person: 3 – 13 – 7

Theft from residence: 2 – 0 – 2

Theft by Deception: 3 – 2 – 3

Total: 29 – 28 – 25

Officer Shifren shared that he wrote an article featured in Squirrel Hill magazine about safety and reporting crime. Read it [here](#) (page 22).

Commander Herrmann reported that Zone 4 was busy over St. Patrick's Day weekend. Oakland did not have very many problems. Most resources are currently focused on Rosefield trial. Crime in Oakland is down. Camera project is ongoing; footage is kept for 10 days to help with investigations when a crime occurs. There is some discussion about extending that time to 90 days to be consistent with body and car cameras.

BKraus: Camera privacy policy should be updated as technology continues to change. I will make an effort to work on this. In regards to St. Patrick's Day – thank you to all public safety officers.

MOleniacz: Can 90-day limit for keeping video footage also apply to scans of permit parking areas?

GBolden: I'm not sure Parking Authority keeps that information. Anything that comes from cameras is turned into data, which is turned into citations when applicable.

## **John Tokarski | Pittsburgh Public Safety Outreach & Education**

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Student and Citizens Police Academy sessions have begun. Great, diverse group. Many of the youth participants are interested in pursuing careers in law enforcement.

[City-wide public safety meeting](#) on April 17<sup>th</sup>. Topic will focus on recognizing and reporting hate groups and extremism.

## **Sgt. Mark Villasenor and Officer Guy Johnson | University of Pittsburgh Police**

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Officer Johnson gave crime stats for January and February:

Total 53 reported incidents in January

2 defiant trespass

2 marijuana citations

1 DUI arrest

2 public drunkenness citations

1 stolen property arrest

4 underage drinking citations

1 warrant arrest

15 student conduct referrals

4 party shutdowns

53 reported incidents in February

9 harassment

1 disorderly conduct

1 defiant trespass

1 indirect criminal contempt

1 public drunkenness citation

3 underage drinking

3 warrant arrests

21 conduct referrals

5 party shut downs

BKraus: Pitt has demonstrated a strong partnership with city public safety officers. Thank you to the work officers put forward.

**Moira Egler | Office of Councilperson Strassburger, District 8**

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Office has been working on updating the intersection at Center and N Dithridge to improve pedestrian safety. Design for improved cross walk will be ready in April.

**Leah Friedman | Office of the Mayor**

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Haze Woods Task Force Meeting: April 3 at Holy Angels Parish (403 Baldwin Road) at 6:30 to discuss plans for large piece of undeveloped land. About a year ago, the Mayor appointment a task force to think about potential plans for the land. Current hopes are for the land to be a city park. Community is invited to join the discussion.

Annual summer Learn and Earn applications are now open. Young people between the ages of 14-21 are invited to apply for this program to develop career skills, network etc. Apply at [jobs4summer.org](http://jobs4summer.org).

Inclusive Innovation Summit: Four days of 40 free event throughout the city. Will take place from March 28-30. A celebration of the innovation that happens in the city year round. See details at [weinnovatepgh.net](http://weinnovatepgh.net)

**Pittsburgh Parking Authority Report**

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2019 February – Daytime Enforcement

Area	B	D	E	M	Total
Plates	4,723	8,371	4,403	6,942	24,439
Tickets	135	182	159	171	647
ROIP	2.86%	2.17%	3.61%	2.46%	2.65%

2019 February – Nighttime Enforcement

Area	E
Plates	213
Tickets	9
ROIP	4.23%

Total Enforcement	
Plates	24,652
Tickets	656
ROIP	2.66%

## **Jamie Ducar | University of Pittsburgh, Community and Government Relations**

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New crosswalk and traffic lights on Forbes expected to get service in near future. The signals will flash yellow for three days before being timed with the rest of Forbes Ave. The crosswalk and traffic stop bar will be installed during the time the lights are flashing yellow or as the lights transition to being timed. There are not exact dates; they are relying on a PennDOT contractor. DOMI is questioning if a pedestrian railing needs to be installed to stop jaywalking. They have asked Pitt to proceed without the railing, however, materials are available if temporary barriers need to be installed. The Registered Community Organization (RCO) for Oakland, OPDC, did not have an opportunity to review the design before it was reviewed at Art Commission.

## **Matt Landy | University of Pittsburgh, Student Conduct**

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Student conduct numbers have been low. Nothing noteworthy to report.

## **Keith Paylo | Point Park University**

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Student conduct numbers are also low. Patrols were increased for St. Patrick's Day weekend. Only on-campus issues were four lockouts and a roommate conflict. KPaylo credits Point Park's educational programming on being responsible and staying safe.

University working with LGray to organize neighborhood beautification event in Oakcliffe (where majority of Point Park students live.)

## **Meeting Adjourned**

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EZaitsoff reviewed community events (below) and adjourned meeting. **Next meeting: Wednesday, April 17, 2019 at St. George Orthodox Cathedral (3400 Dawson Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15213) at 12:00 p.m.**

**- NEW - Oakland Design Development Review, Wednesday March 27, 6 – 7:30 PM**

Oakland Career Center, 294 Semple St.

**- Zone 4 Public Safety Council Meeting, Thursday, March 21, 6 – 7 PM**

Jewish Community Center, 5738 Forbes Ave.

**- Adopt-a-block, Saturday March 23 & April 13, 9 – 12:30 AM**

OPDC offices, 235 Atwood St.

**- South Oakland Neighborhood Group, Tuesday, April 2, 6 - 7 PM**

Frazier Field House, 3617 Frazier St.

**- West Oakland Neighborhood Council Meeting, Tuesday, April 9, 2019, 6:30 - 7:30 PM**

The Corner, 200 Robinson St.

**- Bellefield Area Citizens Association Meeting, Tuesday, April 9, 2019, 7 - 8 PM**

First Church-Christ Scientist, 201 North Dithridge St.

**- Oakcliffe Community Meeting, Wednesday, April 10, 2019, 7 – 8:30 PM**

Community Human Services Food Pantry, 370 Lawn St.

**- Baum Centre Initiative Meeting, Tuesday, April 16, 2019, 6 - 7 PM**

First United Methodist Church, 5401 Centre Ave.