

Oakwatch: The Oakland Code Enforcement Project Meeting
Minutes
January 16, 2019

Meeting Attendees

Present: Lizabeth Gray, Elena Zaitsoff, Hannah Green, John Wilds, Jamie Ducar, Officer Shifren, Sgt. Griffen, Commander Herrmann, Matt Landy, Emily Embrey, Sally Stadelman, Bob Harper, Mark Olenniacz, Officer Johnson, Bob Charland, Hersch Merenstein, Guy Giampolo,

Call to Order, Introductions

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

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

Sally Stadelman introduced herself as the new Government and Community Affairs Liaison at PLI. She gave a [presentation](#) on online tools available to the public:

- 1) [BuildingEye](#): Look up citations, building permit applications, business licenses, and zoning applications. You can see the entire history of what has happened on a property.
- 2) [Certificate of Occupancy Search](#): Search for any certificate of occupancy. Note: Search engine is particular, so you need to put asterisk around address when searching. A certificate is required for any building (except single family homes), signs on buildings, fences over a certain height, sheds over a certain size, retaining walls, parking lots, parking pads, etc. We try to make sure everyone is compliant.
- 3) [Zoning Map](#): You can check zoning of a property. Notice there are overlay districts (for example, Southside has its own set of rules of what kind of signs you can have on buildings).
- 4) [Burgh's Eye View](#): Unlike the [Allegheny County Real Estate Portal](#), this tool will list liens associated with a property. This helps PLI determine if someone has walked away from a property and is negligent.
- 5) **311**: Great place to get something started. This system is automatic. If you are not sure which category an issue should be filed as, PLI recommends putting it under "Building Maintenance". This way, the issue automatically gets queued for an inspector to check out. Please make sure your email notifications are turned on. If you would like an inspector to follow up, put your contact info in the comment box.
- 6) [OneStopPGH](#): PLI is working on improving this system to better communicate with 311 software. This tool can be used to renew licenses, access building permits, review zoning requirements etc.

Q: Will the online resources show the property owner's name or the company name?

SStadelman: It depends on what the property is registered under. That's a big challenge. If someone registered a property under an LLC, all we have on file is the company name. We are more limited on how we can prosecute a company, compared to an individual.

Q: Is it PLI's responsibility to find the individual property owner?

SStadelman: Yes, PLI does everything we can to find the owner.

Q: How is PLI addressing the glitch in 311's system? Sometimes it seems that reports are not going through and, therefore, are not addressed, especially graffiti.

SStadelman: Graffiti reports are sent first to police to be documented, then sent to the Department of Public Works for cleanup. If a property owner refuses access to property for cleanup, the process stops there. DPW has not been sending those instances along to PLI. We are working on that now. Chief Gilman's office is working on identifying a solution, such as giving police authority to directly cite a negligent property owner.

Q: Sometimes when an entry is made into the system, the automatic response says the submission was rejected but does not say why. Can we improve language to be clearer?

SStadelman: Yes, unfortunately, if you classify a report incorrectly or do not have the correct parcel number for a property, the submission fails to go through. We can work on drafting better language to explain what the error refers to.

Note - *the system does not request the parcel ID at any point in the process.*

Q: How does PLI handle rodent problems on vacant properties?

SStadelman: There is not a good process in place right now. The problem is that a property owner needs to request the exterminator directly and leave their contact information. We cannot authorize access to private property.

HMerenstein: I've had success contacting the County Executive's Office directly.

SStadelman: Animal Control makes you pay for traps, because they usually do not get returned by users. The first step PLI can take is getting a vacant property boarded up. Request this through 311 under "Building Maintenance". We have to go through the citation process first.

Q: Is there any sort of emergency authorization in place to allow PLI to take action if a property owner is MIA? Exemptions for dangerous situations like rabid animals.

SStadelman: PLI is currently designing a new online system that will collect data. Once we can analyze that data, we can identify how to better allocate resources. Both PLI and the magistrate's office work to find missing property owners, but sometimes we both run into brick walls. It's often a case by case basis, but sometimes we get held up by lack of resources.

BCharland: This year, we increased budget for demolitions, however, most of that fund was used for slope repair (more urgent). Demolitions are surprisingly costly, largely because of asbestos. We are looking at ways to be more cost effective.

Q: What constitutes a parking lot?

SStadelman: If 80% of the spots are being used to collect revenue, property owner needs a license. Exemptions for hotels, employee parking, etc.

See [presentation](#) for information on permit process and zoning vs. PLI.

Lizabeth Gray | Oakland Planning and Development Corporation

[Property progress report](#)

LGray: For the sake of time, the progress report was abbreviated. Jersey barriers installed at 5th Avenue Portal location. New lot opened across street with appropriate permitting.

Commander Herrmann, Sgt. Ron Griffen, and Officer David Shifren | Pittsburgh Police Zone 4

Crime report comparison for Nov 22 – Dec 19 vs. Dec. 20 – Dec 31:

Burglaries down 8 to 2

Theft from auto down 21 to 0

Theft from auto attempts up 0 to 1

Theft from business down 10 to 3

Theft from resident down 5 to 2

Theft by deception down 5 to 0

Total down 62 to 14

Major arrest made concerning theft from auto. Suspect was found to have committed 19 prior theft from vehicle and had six outstanding warrants for probation violation. Will be serving two years jail time. Another arrest was made near 35 Lawn Street on someone breaking into cars. Both arrests along with student break resulted in lower figures for the end of the year.

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

40 reported – 7 arrests – 20 citations

2 aggravated assaults

2 defiant trespass citations

1 disorderly conduct citation

1 panhandling warning

4 public drunkenness citations

1 simple assault arrest

4 underage drinking citations

1 warrant arrest

8 conduct referrals (5 marijuana, 3 underage drinking)

1 party warning

Emily Embrey | Nighttime Economy Manager

EEmbrey will be attending a crime prevention conference in LA. She will receive training to work with businesses and neighborhood groups to help diminish crime through streetscaping.

A conference will be held in Philadelphia at the end of February for other night time economy professionals to discuss creative legislation and solutions. Pittsburgh always has a large turnout out this conference. Discounts are available if you are interested in attending.

Planning has begun for St. Patrick's Day. EEmbrey is looking for more input regarding what her department can do for Oakland. They are working on responsibility campaigns and looking to partner with universities. Also, working with Lyft and Uber to get discount codes.

If you suspect a bar is operating without a license, contact Liquor Control Board.

Q: Regarding new bars in Oakland (Mario's and Bar 3 Oakland): Are they operating under the same license? Are they allowed to?

A: The new owners have acquired a licenses for four consecutive addresses, which is allowed. But the question remains as to whether they can operate two separate bars under the one license. I'll look into this and get back to Liz with further information.

Bob Charland | Office of Council President Bruce Kraus

[New recycling rules](#)

Some of the new rules eliminate various plastics from recycling; for example, clamshells used for prepared food. Additionally, recycling no longer accepts plastic shopping bags; must recycle at store locations such as Giant Eagle. New pamphlets sent out over the last couple of weeks.

The city will no longer accept shredded paper. Three new drop-off centers in Knoxville, Construction Junction, and the Strip District.

Drop off center at 3001 Railroad Street will accept TVs, computers, electronics and other hazardous materials. Curbside pick-up is an option but both require advance scheduling and a disposal fee.

LGray: I'll pick up some of the new schedules for our next meeting.

Hersch Merenstein | Office of Councilwoman Erika Strassburger, District 8

Recently completed a safety sweep of North Dithridge with police and PLI inspectors to talk with students about being responsible neighbors and cite property violations. 19 violations found; 17 have now been evaded. Another sweep is scheduled for Beeler Street.

Pittsburgh Parking Authority | Quarterly Report

2018 OCTOBER - DECEMBER / Daytime Enforcement

Area	B	D	E	M	FF	Total
Plates	8473	40260	10966	14509	1528	75736
Tickets	594	1002	704	775	186	3261

ROIP 7.01% 2.49% 6.42% 5.34% 12.17% 4.31%

2018 OCTOBER - DECEMBER / Nighttime Enforcement

<u>Area</u>	<u>E</u>
Plates	645
Tickets	77
ROIP	11.94%

<u>Total Enforcement</u>	
Plates	76381
Tickets	3338
ROIP	4.37%

John Wilds, Assist. Vice Chancellor for Community Relations, and Jamie Ducar, Director of Community Relations | University of Pittsburgh

Pitt is hosting a public meeting to discuss their Institutional Master Plan (IMP) and proposed renovations to Scaife Hall on [Wednesday, January 30, 2019 from 5:30-7:30 PM in the University Club – Conference Room A](#).

New award available for community partners: Partnerships for Distinction Award. The University will award \$2,000 to support good examples of community engagement and partnerships. If you work with Pitt in any capacity, you can nominate your group. Up to five awards will be granted each year and this year, fifteen of the applicants will be featured in Pitt’s application for the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement. See [Competition Space](#) for full award details, including important definitions, eligibility criteria, and requisite information for nominations. Nominations are **due February 4, 2019**. Questions can be addressed to Lina Dostilio, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Community Engagement at LDD20@pitt.edu or **412-624-7719**.

Announcements

- **Public Meeting: Proposed development at 3342 Fifth Ave. Wednesday, Jan. 23, 6 PM**
Oakland Career Center, 294 Semple Street
- **Oakland’s Empty Tree Wells: The next step, Thursday, Jan. 24, 2019, 6-7:30 PM**
Oakland Career Center, 294 Semple Street
- **South Oakland Neighborhood Group, Tuesday, Feb. 12, 2019, 6 - 7 PM**
Frazier Field House, 3617 Frazier Street
- **West Oakland Neighborhood Council Meeting, Tuesday, Feb. 5, 2019, 6:30 - 7:30 PM**
The Corner, 200 Robinson St.
- **Bellefield Area Citizens Association Meeting, Tuesday, Feb. 12, 2019, 7 - 8 PM**
First Church-Christ Scientist, 201 North Dithridge St.
- **Oakcliffe Community Meeting, Wednesday, Feb. 13, 2019, 7 – 8:30 PM**
Community Human Services Food Pantry, 370 Lawn St.

- Baum Centre Initiative Meeting, Tuesday, Feb. 19, 2019, 6 - 7 PM
First United Methodist Church, 5401 Centre Ave.

Adjournment

Next meeting is on Wednesday, February 20th at noon at St. George Orthodox Cathedral, 3400 Dawson Street.