

Morningside Area Community Council Monthly Meeting
November 5, 2014 - Agenda
VFW Banquet Hall, Morningside

I. Welcome & Introductions (7:08 pm)

Pledge of Allegiance recited. Group introductions.

II. Treasurer's Report & Previous Minutes (Jared Delaney)

Morningside Mile earned \$1,768 for MACC. Gold Star Mothers received \$4,300. MACC paid \$300 for the garden wall repair.

Patty motioned for approval of minutes and treasurer's report, Allison second, unanimously passed.

III. Falloween Recap (Jared Delaney)

Despite bad weather, the event had decent attendance. It was very well received, and the Bulldog was a good location. MACC will send a thank you letter to Frank for the food donation.

IV. Public Works Discussion (Mike Gable)

Grant, Jared, and Ira attended the capital budget hearing last week. They raised issues the following issues on behalf of the neighborhood:

1. El Paso/Duffield hill subsidence
2. Heth's Run restoration project - completion of the bridge and activity within city government is presenting an opportunity to move the project forward
3. Field renovations - poor conditions of the playgrounds and fields

Director Gable responded:

- The hill subsidence between Duffield and El Paso is occurring on private property. Water has already been redirected on El Paso as much as it can be. The issue needs to be resolved between the property owners. Councilwoman Gross has been involved and will continue to assist.
- The Heth's Run project is in the design/construction document phase. The city is bringing in a landscape design firm to take over from Mackin Engineering. \$400,000 has been raised to move the project forward. The next step is to set up an executive committee with members from the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, Highland Park, Morningside, the City, and the Zoo. Work should resume in 2015.

There has been continuing construction activity in the zoo parking lot area. Does Director Gable know what the work is? It is not a city crew.

- As for the field restorations, the administration recommendations in the Field Improvement Plan should be the first thing on the table. The biggest capital priority is Natoli playground, as well as a general maintenance schedule and athletic scheduling.

The bottom line is that the fields need more rest. The City has been moving away from multi-purpose fields, which is one reason why it's important for the Heth's Run project to include a new rectangular field.

One remaining point of contention is the addition of field lights. Conversations with the athletic teams regarding scheduling changes might make new lights less of a necessity; also modern lights create much less light pollution. Schenley Circle is a good example.

Many of the city's playgrounds are fatigued. The Morningside equipment will last for a few more years, but need a refreshing of paint and parts. The biggest problem in Morningside is the safety surfaces. The City is working to convert all playground surfaces to tiles.

The opportunity should be taken not just to paint and clean the equipment, but for modernization. Is there anything that can be done about the shower at Natoli Field? It's 50 years old, and wall is buckling.

What are the next steps for the Field Restoration Plan? The next step would be creating construction documents. Before that level, administration changes are the low hanging fruit.

Yvonne Chan owns the residential property across from Heth's Field that has a stormwater problem. It borders city property, but the exact property line is difficult to determine. Yvonne is making improvements to both her and city property to improve stormwater handling. She is also implementing traffic calming techniques for Hampton Street.

Who can MACC talk to to partner with the City on these improvements? Hampton is a perfect Green Street opportunity.

V. *Morningside School Presentation (A.M. Rodriguez Associates)*
Michael Wardenby, Brent Lazari, Laura Nettleton, Victor Rodriguez

A.M. Rodriguez Associates has been developing affordable senior housing for over 35 years, and completed a number of projects recently in Pittsburgh. They have been looking at the Morningside School project for over 1.5 years. Rodriguez Associates is a unique developer because they remain the owner of the property and do not just take the developer fee and leave. They are also committed to energy efficiency.

Part of plan is to remove the less attractive additions and relocate the Morningside senior center to that part of the building. It would be a more modern concept of a senior center. It's a good fit because Rodriguez Associates already provides some of the same types of facilities in their other projects, but the City could staff it better.

The commercial character of the Greenwood Street corridor needs to be reinforced between Jancey and Chislett. Rodriguez Associates plans to preserve the original school building but build an addition facing Greenwood that fits the character of the business district. Additional parking will be available next to senior center portion.

There will be 46 housing units, mostly 1 bedrooms. There will be three floors of housing, with parking underneath at street level. The building's facade will continue the rhythm and building heights of the existing residential neighborhood on Jancey.

Eligible households will be 62 and older, with an income restriction of up to 60% of the area's median. There is a possibility of market rate units, but they are less likely. A two-bedroom unit would cost approximately \$750-850 per month.

The facility will be built according to passive house standards, which means it will use minimal energy for heating and cooling. There will be solar panels on the roof, and possibly geothermal on site. PHFA is giving 10 extra points for passive house projects, so this aspect will increase the chance of receiving approval for the tax credit.

The anticipated construction budget is \$8 million.

The URA is listening to community feedback. URA is very supportive of the project.

Rodriguez Associates will wait to hear back from PHFA after the application is submitted in January. Then they have to go back in front of the URA with a financing plan, etc. Rejection of the application might changing their financing options. It would help to have community support.

Motion from Patty to draft letter of support, Ira seconded, unanimous approval. The Housing Committee will draft a letter and submit it to the URA.

MACC requests the regularly scheduled December meeting to be a working meeting to provide additional feedback to the developer.

VI. *Adjourn (9:00 pm)*

Motion to adjourn, unanimously approved.

Minutes prepared by Ira Mabel, Secretary