

Morningside Area Community Council Monthly Meeting
February 4, 2015 - Agenda
VFW Banquet Hall, Morningside

I. Welcome & Introductions (7:08 pm)

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

There was no financial activity this month. Membership was the largest positive line item last year; the largest expense was the "capital improvement" to repair the garden wall. Overall, MACC earned \$1,500 more than expected in 2014.

The minutes were posted online. Question from previous minutes: does the plan for the school involve the building being torn down? No, it will be reused modified. If the developer's application is approved, MACC post everything on the website.

Ali motioned to approve the treasurer's report and minutes, Lisa seconded, unanimously approved.

III. Public Safety (Stacey DiRenzo)

Zone 5 meeting is Feb 10th 7pm at Union Project. Narcotic detectives will be presenting.

IV. PittMesh (Meta Mesh)

The idea behind mesh networking is that everyone has wireless devices in their homes, but they're all in a silo. But what if they could talk to each other? What if you could use your neighbor's connection when yours was down? What if a neighborhood could create a pool of bandwidth.

PittMesh is in operation in the city already. It's attractive to business districts because it provides "free" wi-fi. It's also an opportunity to create a mini Pittsburgh internet. What if Morningside were on the same network as the zoo or Highland Park?

Meta Mesh received a grant from URA to build a wireless mesh network in Allentown. Antennas in three businesses are providing service to about 1/4 mile of Warrington Avenue. There's also a network in the South Side, Hill District, Oakland, and Mt. Oliver. When you connect you are directed to a splash page like any other public wi-fi, except this splash page can be highly configured to local needs. This is similar to an internal company network that doesn't live on the internet. The community can host its own services.

PittMesh is not a substitute for your internet connection. It's a benefit for the public. It's also a learning opportunity for school kids. Another big benefit is the public safety aspect of providing back-up communication.

Routers are \$50-\$350. It looks like any wireless network to the end user. Many of the routers have battery backup. A solar powered version is in the works. There are also a lot of public/semi-public buildings in Morningside that could host routers.

One of the advantages is that the network is not centrally managed. There is also little maintenance cost. You donate your excess bandwidth provided from your ISP, the mesh net doesn't use up your bandwidth.

Mesh networking has been successfully implemented in Red Hook, NY. The neighborhood was damaged during Hurricane Sandy and cell coverage still hasn't recovered. Now about 1/3 of the neighborhood has wi-fi coverage via mesh networking.

What about security? One measure in Allentown was to limit access from the outside to just the internet gateway. There is also the ability to encrypt traffic between nodes.

Most people won't participate in the hardware side, they'll only log in and use the network. Meta Mesh's hardware is set up as a kit. You control your router, set up your own password.

What type of geographic coverage is needed to be viable? From experience, about one sizeable antenna per block, depending on line of sight, etc.

Are splash pages moderated? No, they're controlled individually.

The next step is planning. Meta Mesh wants to work with MACC to propose a useful implementation.

Chris has volunteered to lead MACC's effort.

V. *Working Group Reports*

Membership Committee

Membership levels are the same this year, but a discount at Eddie's Pizza Haus replaced the Bulldog discount. There is also a new t-shirt design. Premiere members get free admission for Easter Egg Hunt and Falloween and \$5 off yard sale registration. You can pay your membership by check or paypal.

Members last year will be receiving a thank you calendar magnet. Allison also handed out membership letters to give to your neighbors. People see the membership

announcement in the newsletter, but many don't join, so please make the effort to reach out to neighbors you know aren't members.

We're trying to get more people to volunteer this year. There is a form to fill out for interested volunteers on the back of the membership applications.

Welcoming Committee

We are finally putting together a welcome packet with neighborhood information, restaurant menus, a reusable shopping bag, etc. We need \$200 to purchase materials for the packet.

Allison motioned to grant the Welcoming Committee \$200, Sally seconded, unanimous approval.

Beautification

Lisa is looking for help for the spring neighborhood clean up. Lisa attended a pruning event in Lawrenceville and is looking to host one in Morningside. However, you need to be a tree tender, so if anyone is interested in becoming a tree tender, that would help. We also got approved for our tree application, we should know how many trees within the month.

Other

Have event coordinators come up with job descriptions? Not yet. It's the next step, especially for the March events.

Jenni is looking into organizing a MACC trip to the Pirates on May 9th. Grandstand seats are \$22. Is there enough interest? Organization tickets book quickly.

Can there be a contest for the next t-shirt design? Yes. Put it in the newsletter.

March and September meetings will be potluck.

VI. Old Business

None

VII. New Business

There's construction equipment on Chislett St. They were supposed to start work on Jan 5, but no one has showed up and no work is being done. Chislett St is basically being used as a parking lot. It might be a gas company subcontractor.

VIII. Adjourn (8:19 pm)

Motion to adjourn, unanimously approved.

Minutes prepared by Ira Mabel, Secretary