

Morningside Area Community Council Monthly Meeting
August 5, 2020 Meeting Minutes
Conducted via zoom Video due to COVID-19

I. Called to order 7:04. Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Public Safety. Sgt Maddox joined over the phone. He reported three significant recent incidents: a burglary at the gas station on Butler, theft of rent money, and an “electric company” tele-scam which defrauded a Morningside resident. Ryan asked about the parking/pedestrian concerns that will be addressed later in the call. The sergeant recommended 311 as a point of contact, reporting that many of the community-relations officers are detailed to special assignments for the pandemic response.

III. Elected and Other Officials

A. Magda from Councilwoman Gross’s office was in attendance. Tomorrow the Stanton Hts neighborhood association is holding another food and mask distribution tomorrow:

Tomorrow’s food and mask distribution: Stanton Heights Neighborhood Association is partnering with Renaissance Church Pittsburgh to distribute prepared meals and masks to community members Thursday, August 6th from 4:30 to 6:00 PM at Pittsburgh Sunnyside Pre K-8 at (4801 Stanton Ave).

CARES Act rent and mortgage assistance is available to households who have lost 30% of their monthly income and income qualify:

Rent and Mortgage Assistance:

Mortgage and rental assistance is now available to homeowners and renters who, as a result of COVID-19, became unemployed after 3/1/2020 OR had their annual household income reduced by 30% due to reduced work hours and wages.

Your household’s current yearly income must be less than the Area Median Income for Allegheny County. For example, the yearly Area Median Income for a two person household in Allegheny County is \$66,400, \$74,700 for a 3-person household, and \$83,000 for a four-person household.

The CARES Rent Relief Program (RRP) application: <https://phfa.org/pacares/rent.aspx>

The CARES Pandemic Mortgage Assistance Program (PMAP) application:

<https://www.phfa.org/pacares/mortgage.aspx>

B. Leah Friedman from the Mayor’s Office introduced herself and announced the governor has extended the eviction moratorium until at least August 31. She echoed Magda’s announcement on the CARES Act housing assistance as well as small business resources offered by the URA. She reminded all to refer to the city’s COVID website. The Census was referred to, including the Federal Government’s rollback of the deadline extension and the strain that that places on the Census.

C. Sara Innamorato joined the call. She also referenced the rental and mortgage assistance. There is additional assistance available from PHFA:

<https://covidrentrelief.alleghenycounty.us/> <https://www.phfa.org/> Sara also mentioned that her office can act as an advocate for them if they are having difficulties with the state unemployment compensation system. She referenced that the \$600 additional unemployment benefit has ended due to federal inaction, her office can assist if people need to access programs like SNAP or CHIP due to reduced income. Mail-in balloting and the Census were discussed. Details of the county’s voting arrangements were discussed.

IV. Secretary’s Report. June 3 draft minutes were shared in the meeting and uploaded to the website. Dana moved to accept them and Jared seconded. Passed unanimously.

V. Treasurer's Report. Jared provided his report.

VI. Membership Report. Allison reported that new memberships are winding down which is normal for this point in the year. Overall new membership was down somewhat as could be expected.

VI. New Business

- A. The yard sale was discussed and the consensus was that an event, even with masking and distancing observed would not be a responsible event to hold as it would draw outsiders to the neighborhood in groups. It was agreed that the event would be suspended for 2020.
- B. The zoning variance requested for new site development on Duffield was discussed.
- C. The greenway was discussed in the context of recent outreach from a representative of Tree Pittsburgh relative to funding available for improvements to designated greenways. The past plan for the former Baker Street rowhouse lots and the idea of a river overlook at the end of Morningside Avenue was reviewed in the context of the creation of the greenway.
- D. The former Senior Center was discussed. The former plan for a walkthrough with Citiparks has been tabled by the city and their inclination to move the items out of the building that they have stored there. Magda recommends that we try to craft a plan for the building for Deb to champion to try to overcome this inertia.
- E. Ideas were solicited for the forthcoming newsletter eBlast, a new florist in the district and the possibility of profiling the Spigno club were raised as possibilities.
- F. The past DOMI traffic calming initiatives were discussed and the mixed response which it received. The goal is to reengage with DOMI on specific issues and intersections of concern. Some specific areas of concern were discussed.

VIII. Meeting adjourned at 9:04.

Zoom Chat Transcript

19:02:54 From Morningside Area Community Council :
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1KXxEDTMEV0tCSSMqKNPK5sEq421BarDsv1Mza6ue8gl/edit#>

19:03:03 From Morningside Area Community Council : Tonight's agenda

19:03:44 From Jared (Treasurer) : Thank you.

19:14:36 From Magda Gangwar - District 7 : Rent and Mortgage Assistance:

Mortgage and rental assistance is now available to homeowners and renters who, as a result of COVID-19, became unemployed after 3/1/2020 OR had their annual household income reduced by 30% due to reduced work hours and wages.

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19:23:26 From Rep. Sara Innamorato : <https://covidrentrelief.alleghenycounty.us/>
19:24:34 From Rep. Sara Innamorato : <https://www.phfa.org/>
19:26:41 From Rep. Sara Innamorato : <https://www.votespa.com/Pages/default.aspx>
19:28:12 From Steve Rine : Sara, if someone calls your office for help with unemployment, is there anyone in particular in your office they should talk to? Does it matter what, more specifically, they're calling about, e.g. regular UC / PUA / other?
19:31:01 From Jared (Treasurer) : For mail-in ballots, do we know of possible dropbox locations since they must be "received" by election day?
19:37:55 From Leah Friedman, City of Pittsburgh : Those seeking assistance may find more information on:

County programs: <https://covidrentrelief.alleghenycounty.us/>

URA programs: <https://www.ura.org/pages/housing-opportunity-fund-programs>

The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency: <https://www.phfa.org/pacares/>
19:38:23 From Leah Friedman, City of Pittsburgh : You can fill out of the census online, by phone, and by mail
To fill it out online: <https://my2020census.gov/>
You can complete the census online or by phone in 13 different languages
To learn how to fill it out by phone or by mail <https://2020census.gov/en/ways-to-respond.html>
19:38:44 From Leah Friedman, City of Pittsburgh : Feel free to reach out to me any time with City related concerns at leah.friedman@pittsburghpa.gov
19:44:13 From Rep. Sara Innamorato : I also want to note that rental relief can be initiated by the landlord. It requires both parties to agree to the program.
19:46:16 From Morningside Area Community Council : Awesome! Thank you for the info Sara, Leah, and Magda!
19:56:33 From Leah Friedman, City of Pittsburgh : I can talk to zoning about improving their pre-meeting materials
20:00:53 From Rep. Sara Innamorato : Goodnight all! Email me if you need anything sinnamorato@pahouse.net
20:16:18 From Jared (Treasurer) : The LLC that owns the properties is Lepalais LLC.
20:16:38 From Jared (Treasurer) : 121-F-84, 121-F-86, 121-F-91
20:19:21 From Steve Rine : Glad I got to hear the greenway discussion. Gotta go as I have another Zoom @ 8:30.
20:23:54 From Jared (Treasurer) : Thanks Steve.
20:27:41 From Jared (Treasurer) : Pens 0 Canadians 1
20:29:35 From Leah Friedman, City of Pittsburgh : Change Agency got access to Warrington Rec Center (which was closed) in Betzhoover for a pilot period to test out usage
20:30:24 From yasmeeen : Gotto go. Thanks.
20:40:44 From kirkrys : Thank you, everyone. I found this to be very informative. Thanks particularly to the government reps - I appreciate the insight and commitment.