

the Bulletin

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Gainey topples Peduto in primary, will be PGH's first Black mayor, barring a November challenge

By Charlie Wolfson & Juliette Rihl

PublicSource

Pittsburgh - State Rep. Ed Gainey defeated Mayor Bill Peduto in [the May 18] Democratic primary, clearing a path to become Pittsburgh's first Black mayor and signaling a shift in the city's politics.

There were no candidates for the office on the Republican ballot, though an independent could oppose Gainey in November's general election. Gainey is the first challenger to unseat an incumbent mayor since 1933.

"One person can't change a city. A city is changed with all of us," Gainey said after his victory. "A city is changed when we all come together to improve the quality of life for everybody. That's why I ran for mayor.

See **Gainey** | page 2



ABOVE: Mayoral candidate Ed Gainey leaving his polling location at the Catalyst Academy school building in Lincoln-Lemington. Read the story of the May 18 primary election, beginning at left. Photo by Nick Childers/PublicSource.



ABOVE: Pamela Schön tosses work into the air on her last day as the BGC office manager. She was recently promoted to Chief Operations Officer at the BGC. Read about Schön's journey from NYC to PGH, by way of FLA, on page 3. Photo by John Colombo.

Closing the black-white wealth gap: homeownership in East Liberty

By Elizabeth Sensky East Liberty Development, Inc.

East Liberty - The black-white wealth gap is a widely documented reality of American life.

According to a 2016 Brookings Institution report, the net worth for a typical white family is \$171,000, nearly ten times greater than that of the average black family (\$17,150). Among the many factors that contribute to this divide, one main driver is homeownership.

Today, homeownership rates among African Americans have declined to below what they were in 1970, just two years

after the landmark Fair Housing Act was passed, prohibiting housing discrimination.

In 2004, at the peak of the housing boom, nearly 50% of African Americans owned a home. But from 2000 to 2019, census data shows that that gain was more than erased as black homeownership dropped to 40.6%. At the same time, the homeownership rate among white Americans rose from 71 to 73.1%.

Looking at the Pittsburgh region, black

See **Wealth Gap** | page 4

Gainey *continued from page 1*

Because I believe that we can build a city for all. And we will work hard — not just I as mayor, but we as community and we as a city — will work to build a better city called Pittsburgh for everybody.”

Republican voters cast 2,115 write-in votes for the office, and depending on who received those, a Republican (or independent) could theoretically run against Gainey in November. However, Democrats have held the mayor’s office since 1934.

At about 10:30 p.m. Tuesday [May 18], Peduto tweeted: “I just called [Gainey] and congratulated him on earning the Democratic endorsement for Mayor of the city of Pittsburgh. Wishing him well. Thank you Pittsburgh for the honor of being your Mayor these past 8 years. I will remain forever grateful.”

Gainey had 44% of votes reported when Peduto conceded the race.

“I really wanted that chance to serve another four years with you, and maybe that was being a little bit selfish,” Peduto said to about 60 people at his election night event. “Maybe it is time to give somebody else a chance, and I can assure you that the city that I will be leaving to Rep. Gainey is a much better city than what we accepted in 2013.”

Gainey’s campaign to oust Peduto was shaped by major events that the mayor has had to deal with in recent months. He ran on police reform after Peduto faced criticism in 2020 for some of his remarks during racial justice protests.

He pledged to prioritize affordable housing while Pittsburgh reckons with its inequities and activists decry reports that 7,000 Black residents left Pittsburgh between

2014 and 2018. And he vowed to make healthcare giant UPMC pay its “fair share” in taxes, criticizing Peduto for backing out of a related lawsuit in 2014.

“We see so many other cities coming together nowadays, doing the thing that’s right and making justice the foundation of how we build a city for all,” Gainey said after he cast his vote on Lemington Avenue [the morning of May 18]. “We can do that right here in the city of Pittsburgh. It is our time. It is our time. We’ve already set the foundation.”

Peduto incorporated racial equity into his campaign in recent months and announced \$115 million in local investments by nonprofits including UPMC, but critics saw it as too little, too late. The voters may have seen it that way, too.

“The power of the people is always greater than the people in power,” Lee said. “And today, even though we were outspent, we showed up and won.”

Gainey mounted a challenge unlike what Peduto saw in his first election in 2013 or his first reelection in 2017. His campaign raised more than \$300,000 and a political action committee promoting his candidacy raised more than \$400,000. Still, Peduto’s campaign raised more than \$900,000 in 2021, and Gainey’s win was against the financial tide.

More than \$180,000 (or about 20%) of Peduto’s campaign donations came from out of state, compared to less than \$20,000 (or about 6.5%) for Gainey.

State Rep. Dan Miller, D-Mt. Lebanon, spoke highly of what he thinks Gainey will do for Pittsburgh. “It’s all about heart,” he said. “Ed will wrap this city up in his heart

and carry it for everyone.”

State Rep. Sara Innamorato, D-Lawrenceville, said she’s feeling “elated.” “We made history tonight,” she said, not just because Gainey will be the first Black mayor but because his win sets a foundation for progressive politics in the city.

City Councilwoman Deb Gross said she’s looking forward to working with Gainey to create safer and more equitable neighborhoods. “We’re all looking forward to building the Pittsburgh we all deserve,” she said.

Gainey, from Lincoln-Lemington, has represented the 24th state House district since

2013. He previously worked for Pittsburgh Mayors Luke Ravenstahl and Tom Murphy.

Peduto was attempting to become just the fourth Pittsburgh mayor to win a third term. He is the first mayor to lose reelection since Republican John S. Herron lost in 1933, a defeat that permanently turned power over to the Democrats.

Peduto is the only Democratic mayor to ever lose a reelection bid, though few have attempted to win a third term.

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College & Career Readiness Program: senior spotlight on Stacia & Bina

A Message from the BGC Youth Programs Team

Garfield - Another month has come and gone, and to say that April has kept the youth development staff at the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC) busy is an understatement.

BGC staff members have been dutifully helping high school seniors participating in our College and Career Readiness Program (CCRP) to make this stressful time seem a little more manageable.

April was our “Final Decision” month. This is the time when students utilize all of the information they have gathered in order to make an educated decision on plans for their post-secondary education.

All of our 28 seniors have committed to either a 4-year college, an extension program offered by Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) in partnership with the Pittsburgh Promise, a college focused program, or a trade school. Of our 28 seniors, 17 of them have received a full ride scholarship, or at least 75% of their tuition has been paid off by way of grants and scholarships.

Following this school year, our seniors will be moving on to Carnegie Mellon University, Lincoln University, Highmark/Purdue “Straight to Business,” Penn Commercial Business/Technical School, CCAC, Morgan State University, Clark Atlanta University, The University of Pittsburgh (both the Greensburg and main campuses), LaRoche University, Slippery Rock University, Gannon University, Kent State University, Chatham University, Spellman College, Howard University, Pittsburgh Job Corps, and the United States Air Force.

BGC staffers would like to highlight the stories of two of our graduating seniors.

Stacia, who is currently a senior at Perry Traditional Academy, was able to main-



ABOVE: CCRP student Bina will study architecture at Carnegie Mellon University. Photo courtesy of Judy Lubarski.

tain a 4.0 GPA for all four years of her high school career, and managed to keep up this excellent academic record despite the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although Stacia has immense potential, she nonetheless faced the problem of financing her college education. With some uncertainty as to where her professional path will take her, she was extremely stressed with figuring out how to pay for a four-year degree.

Stacia will be participating in the “Straight to Business Program” offered as a partnership of the Highmark Foundation and Purdue University. The program offers paid employment to students with Highmark Health, combined with a debt-free college degree, effectively allowing her to experience a variety of professional areas while being paid as a full-time employee.

Once she pins down her area of interest, the program will pay for Stacia to obtain an online degree from Purdue University.

Bina, a senior at Pittsburgh Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) High School who excels at drawing, has earned scholarship money from the Manchester Craftmen’s Guild, among other organizations. She is preparing to embark on her post-secondary journey as a first-generation college student whose family hails from Eastern Asia.

Boasting a 4.0 GPA, she was accepted by several universities, but has decided to take a large financial aid package offered by Carnegie Mellon University, where she will matriculate in the fall. Making good on her plans to study architecture and engineering, Bina is already preparing for her career by interning with a local architectural firm through CCRP. ♦

the Bulletin

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Board Meetings are held by the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation at 6:30 p.m. on the second Monday of each month, and are open to the public. Meetings are currently being conducted online via Zoom; email Nina@Bloomfield-Garfield.org for more details.

The opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the publisher.

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COO Pamela Schön takes reins at BGC

A Message from the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation



Garfield - Pamela Schön has recently been promoted to Chief Operations Officer for the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC).

Schön joined the BGC as its office manager in July of 2017, and earned an MBA in Organizational Development in 2020 - all while working full-time, co-owning a business on Penn Avenue, and raising a family. She is a native of Queens, NYC, and moved to Pittsburgh in 2016 from Florida, where she had managed multiple H&R Block offices for over 10 years.

Known for her twisted sense of humor and sharp wit, Pam looks to maintain a great rapport with her fellow BGC staff members, and with the people who live or work in the Garfield, Friendship, and Bloomfield neighborhoods. She is undoubtedly the glue that bonds everything together at the BGC.

Schön is especially excited to reconnect with everybody who, for years, had to pass her desk to get to Rick Swartz’s office. Now, they are all more than welcome to pass by Rick’s desk on the way to her new office. ♦

ABOVE: Pamela Schön, the BGC’s new COO. Photo by John Colombo.

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Wealth Gap continued from page 1

homeownership rates are even lower.

According to 2018 data from the American Community Survey, only 32% of black families [in the Pittsburgh metropolitan area] own their own home. On top of that, many of these homes have a much lower sale or appraisal value when compared to Pittsburgh averages.

“One only has to look to decades of housing discrimination and discriminatory policies to understand how it got so bad,” Ted Melnyk, East Liberty Development Inc.’s (ELDI) director of operations, said.

A community development corporation based in East Liberty, ELDI is working to close Pittsburgh’s black-white wealth gap through homeownership. One example is the organization’s efforts in the community of Enright Court, a residential enclave of townhomes and two- and four-bedroom houses that sits just a few blocks east of East Liberty’s commercial core.

Since 2016, ELDI has been working to renovate approximately 16 units for homeownership -with funding from the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh, Rebuilding Together Pittsburgh, and other sources.

Through its Affordable Homeownership Opportunities (AHO) program, the organization will work with some of the community’s renting tenants to help them stay in the Court and then transition into becoming first-time homeowners.

ELDI is partnering with the nonprofit Catapult Greater Pittsburgh for this project. Catapult’s supportive programs prepare residents for their homeownership journey, helping them with everything from improving their credit score to securing a loan.

“We have a plan to make a big difference in a small part of our neighborhood, which sits in the midst of a neighborhood experiencing a really big turnaround,” Maelene Myers, ELDI’s executive director, said.

Elaine Fleming, a longtime East Liberty

and Enright Court resident, worked with ELDI to become an Enright Court homeowner in 2019.

After learning about the organization’s work in the community, she communicated her desire of moving into a four-bedroom home in Enright Court. As a single mother of three kids, the house would give her the extra space that her family needed. This is where Mary Hester, a real estate agent and affordable homeownership specialist working with ELDI and Catapult, stepped in to help.

“She took down all of my info and encouraged me to get involved with Circles [Catapult’s former name],” Fleming explained.

Things started moving quickly for Fleming, and she was able to close on the purchase of her home in Enright Court in May 2020; the whole process took less than a year. ELDI and Catapult helped Fleming fix her credit, offered her free homeownership courses, and guided her through the home loan and rehab process.

“Mary was always there to coach me through it,” she said. “I really had to put my faith in strangers, but they all led me the right way, and I really appreciate that.”

Another tenant, Gerald McClendon, started working with the AHO program in November 2018 to fix his credit, and got a prequalification for his mortgage with Citizens Bank in January 2019.

“Once I got serious,” he said, “things really took off and started happening fast.”

While ELDI staffers would be the first to admit that building black household wealth and equity in Pittsburgh is a task that requires more than the initiative of one nonprofit, they are committed to doing what they can to close the disparities in their corner of the city, and share knowledge with other neighborhoods.

“We are hopeful,” Skip Schwab, ELDI’s deputy director, said, “to continue growing affordable housing in the East End and beyond.” ♦

BELOW: An impromptu audience is spellbound by “Beep Bop Boop,” a fully interactive theatre show pulled off by Big Storm Performance Collaborative in just 15 minutes, on Friday, May 7. The Opportunity Fund (5126 Penn Ave.) joined many other Garfield businesses in hosting performance artists from the Fringe Festival, which coincided with the first in-person Unblurred festivities in more than a year. Unblurred is back; on the first Friday of every month, Penn Avenue will host a gallery crawl unlike any other. Photo by Suzanne Werder.



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FREE TO THE PEOPLE

Garfield food pantries providing more than just meals during pandemic

By Paris Wright Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

Perspective/Garfield - In case you forgot, diamonds are formed under conditions of intense heat and extreme pressure that cause carbon atoms to crystallize.

It amazes me how such difficult circumstances can reveal the beauty of useful things that we might not have considered "beautiful" in the traditional sense.

The COVID-19 pandemic has tested our communities, both locally and worldwide, but it's so cool to see a new kind of beauty emerging through the pressure and heat that the pandemic has created. So many hardworking people and useful places are finally being recognized for their never-ending beauty, and I'd like to draw attention to one particular example.

Garfield is home to two Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank distribution sites. The team at Valley View Church's "Isaiah's Kitchen" Food Bank have adapted in order to meet challenges posed by the pandemic. They moved from once-monthly distributions [taking place in the church], to weekly home delivery and drive-thru distributions.

As a result of the pandemic's improving conditions, they have comfortably settled into a twice-monthly distribution model: one day (usually the third Thursday of each month) is dedicated to monthly deliveries; and one day (usually the 1st Friday of each month) set up for outdoor drive-thru distribution at the church (613 N. Aiken Ave.) from 11:30 - 2:00 p.m.

For more details about Valley View Church's food distribution, call Pastor Chad Collins at 412-708-6158.

Morningside Church of God in Christ (5173 Dearborn St.) hosts the neighborhood's other Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank distribution site. I have received food there as a Garfield resident,



ABOVE: Volunteers at the Morningside Church of God in Christ food distribution site in Garfield. Photo by Paris Wright.

and also volunteered there for the past 15 years.

The church has likewise made adjustments to the site's traditional distribution procedures. In response to the pandemic, we have changed our distribution to an outdoor, drive-thru formatting. I believe, wholeheartedly, that these changes have made it easier to serve and interact with our neighbors in more intentional ways.

Morningside COGIC's drive-thru distribution occurs on the third Saturday of every month from 9 a.m. to Noon on the Dearborn Street side of the church.

For more details about our Food Bank at Morningside, you can reach me [Paris] at the BGC during the week - by phone (412-362-8580, ext. 114) or by email (paris@bloomfield-garfield.org).

We look forward to seeing everyone as they pull up, and exchanging pleasantries while loading up their vehicles. We're very thankful for the connections and friendships that we've formed during these moments - and we love seeing our neighbors carpooling to the distribution sites in order to lend a hand together.

Most importantly, we thank you for helping us help the Garfield community. ♦

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Women & Non-Binary Summit breaks down barriers to bicycling

By Alexandria Shewczyk *BikePGH*



ABOVE: A panoramic group photo from the 2019 Women & Non-Binary Bike Summit. Photo by Monica Godfrey Photography.

Pittsburgh – On Saturday, Jun. 26, the eighth annual Women and Non-Binary Bike Summit (presented by Dollar Bank) will convene from 9 a.m. to Noon.

A fun, one-day, virtual event hosted by BikePGH, the Summit will feature live Zoom sessions on the following topics: breaking down gendered barriers to bicycling, bike advocacy, size inclusivity in the cycling community, and skill-building activities to boost bicyclists' confidence.

The Virtual Women & Non-Binary Bike

Summit will kick off with a keynote speech by Ann Nguyen.

An urban designer and member of Bicycle Colorado's RIDE Advisory Board, Nguyen will speak about using the power of bicycling to drive change in social justice, environmental justice, and transportation infrastructure.

"The Summit aims to celebrate, empower, and connect women and non-binary people and those who might feel excluded from the male-dominant cycling culture,"

Sarah Quinn, BikePGH Membership & Outreach Manager, noted. "Together, we can build a more inclusive and equitable community for people who want to ride bikes."

This year's installment will include an ice cream group ride, in-person packet pickup, and pay-what-you-can registration.

All Summit participants will receive bike lights, tire levers, a patch kit, and a Bike Girl Magic e-book - and be entered to win prizes from Machines for Freedom,

Superfit Hero, Po Campo, and Terry Bicycles. Those who attend packet pickup will receive a swag bag featuring: a WMN-BikePGH water bottle, the 8th Edition Pittsburgh Bike Map, Biking 101 Guide, ride-friendly snacks, and more.

After the Summit, all are welcome to join on a celebratory ice cream bike ride to Millie's in the Strip District, starting in Highland Park.

To register, visit bikepgh.org/summit or call 412-325-4334. ♦

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Reminiscences of the late Fred Seifried

By Nina Gibbs Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

Tribute/Pittsburgh - Fred Seifried of Pittsburgh passed away at his home on April 23, 2021. To those that knew him, Fred was one-of-a-kind.

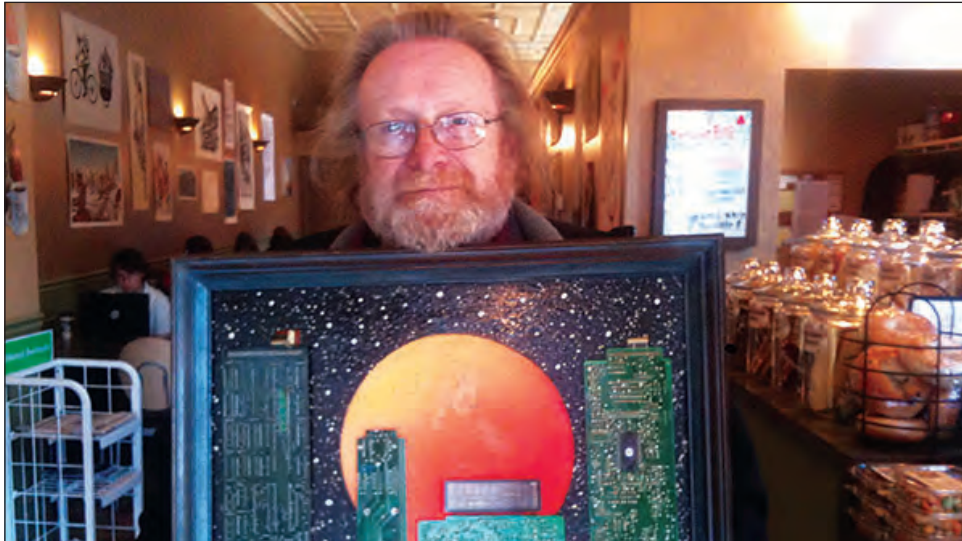
As Will Seifried wrote in his father's obituary, Fred was "a blue-collar renaissance man of sorts; auto mechanic, father, poet, handyman, chef, storyteller, brother, photographer, master of sarcastic wit, uncle, advisor, historian, naturalist, philosopher, artist, friend, and grandfather to name a few."

The Bulletin invites you to learn about Fred's life through from some of his many friends and fans. Read their tributes below, and find the full obituary at thomasmsmithfuneral-home.com/obituaries/Frederick-Seifried/#!/Obituary.

I [Nina Gibbs] first met Fred 15 years ago during Unblurred: First Friday, when I was running Most Wanted Fine Art. Fred was our most regular and most treasured visitor - never missing an event, and often just stopping by when the doors were open on a sunny day. His stories were filled with famous characters including Jackie O, Dr. King, Dolly Parton, and Joan Baez.

A prolific street photographer, Fred not only documented every single art event he could attend, but also his daily adventures - capturing what he always reminded us were

BELOW: The late Fred Seifried shows off one of his artworks at the former Crazy Mocha coffee shop in Bloomfield. Fred will be missed by the many people whose lives he touched along the way. Photo courtesy of Nina Gibbs.



"the future famous artists." He saw the same passion in the coffee barista as he saw in counterculture activists of his youth.

"You are the future, I'm the past. Don't worry about me!" he would often tell me. He carried around a pouch with prints of his photos - using them as story aides to tell anyone who would listen about the current artists he felt were changing the game.

Fred often told me that he was a refrigerator photographer. He mused that he probably had more of his photographs hanging in homes than any other Pittsburgh photographer. A glance at my fridge confirms that he is correct; seven of Fred's photographs, featuring my friends and family at art events, cover the surface.

Melissa Ciccocioppo: "Fred always encouraged me to submit my own artwork to galleries whenever he would visit the coffee shop I used to work at. He also carried around stacks of photographs featuring pics of quite literally anyone and everything in Pittsburgh, even if it was just a pile of rocks. He had a knack for finding art and beauty in the most mundane things, and inspired me to look at the world in a totally different way. He will be missed by so many, especially in the art community."

Richard Clarava: "Fred was a very friendly guy who loved to take pictures of everyone he met, especially when they were associated with art. He was a fixture at openings around town and attended all the Spinning Plate Gallery events."

Gab Bonesso: "He truly was dedicated. He only started to miss shows at Brillobox when he was too sick to attend. He always made me feel seen and understood, and appreciated as an artist. Fred and I both looked at art similarly. We had to do it, be around it, and absorb it constantly. It's almost like a religion that he practiced very faithfully."

Rick Cancellera: "Fred was so kind. Always. He held the door for me and always had a picture to share. I can't count how many photos he shared with me over the years. He photographed my house-warming and my farewell parties, and always stopped by to say hello. Such a gentle soul."

R.I.P. Fred Seifried. ♦

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Neighborhood FOCUS

Planning for new Enright Parklet kicks off in East Liberty

By Joe Reuben *Bulletin contributor*

East Liberty - After several years of virtually no movement, the city is picking up the pace on the planning for a new parklet next to the large commercial development now under construction in the 5600 block of Penn Avenue.

Much of what was once the original Enright Parklet has now been absorbed into that project, which will include a new Whole Foods store, a 600+ car parking garage, and a nine-story office tower.

The original parklet had a somewhat irregular shape; the new parklet will be much more linear, extending from S. Negley Avenue on the west to what is now known as S. Euclid Ave. (formerly Penn Circle West) on the east.

Andrea Ketzel, a senior landscape planner with the city's Department of Public Works, led an online meeting April 26 with a small group of community representatives, as well as Sarah Thompson, a landscape architect from the consulting firm of Pashek MTR.

Ketzel said the city is hoping to see construction on the new parklet start no later than May of next year. The developers of the commercial project next to it have pledged \$1 million in real estate taxes towards the parklet's reconstruction, funding that will be held at the city's Urban Redevelopment Authority rather than going

BELOW: A layout depicting plans for the reconstructed Enright Parklet. Graphic courtesy of the Dept. of City Planning.



directly into the city's coffers. Another \$300,000 has been allocated for the project by the city in its 2020 capital budget. Whether these funds will be sufficient to build the parklet, illustrated in the site plan [above], remains a major question.

Ketzel acknowledged that there could be a few more holes in the timetable for a May 2022 ground-breaking on the park. One of these might be determining how a private roadway - that the commercial developers, L G Realty Partners, will be building later this year - will affect access to the parklet.

In a controversial decision, Common Pleas Court Judge Lawrence O'Toole ruled in October of 2019 that the roadway, which will run the length of the parklet, could be built as a private street, to be owned by L G Realty, upholding an agreement authored by the Peduto Administration and later approved by City Council. Three community groups, the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation, the Friendship Community Group, and the Enright Park Neighbors' Association, petitioned the court to void the agreement, contending that the new roadway would be replacing a public street that is being folded into the reconfigured parklet. O'Toole rejected the petitioners' request at the urging of the city law department and L G Realty Partners.

There is also a problem with the slope of the reconfigured parklet, as it will initially come off of S. Negley Avenue. There would be a rather steep drop-off from the street, Thompson observed, and unless some type of remediation is done as part of the construction project, this could make it difficult for anyone to walk into the park from S. Negley.

Jason Roth, a member of the Enright Park neighbors' group, told Ketzel that a court-supervised agreement hammered out in October of 2017 among the city, L G Realty Partners, and the community groups called for the new parklet to be level throughout. "If it isn't," Roth said, "then I think we'd have a default by the city under the terms of that agreement."

Steve Quick, another member of the Enright Park Neighbors Association, ex-

- continued on next page -



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"If [Enright Parklet is not level throughout], then I think we'd have a default by the city under the terms of that [Oct. 2017] agreement."

- Jason Roth, Enright Park neighbors' group

- continued from previous page -

pressed concerns about the absence of off-street parking for visitors to the new parklet. Quick said the new parklet could be so inviting that people might want to spend an entire afternoon picnicking and playing basketball.

"How will that be possible", Quick asked, "if there is no place for vehicles to park and unload their stuff? What if someone wanted to have a farmer's market?" He said that, given the current site plan, pedestrian access to the new parklet from Topaz Street to the south could also be problematic.

Jennifer Haven, a member of the Friendship Community Group, questioned why no street light poles were shown alongside the new roadway. "Are those to go on the Gumberg property on the north side of the street?" Haven wondered. In response to another question, Ketzel said there are no plans to build any restroom facilities for park users. "The city no longer is able to maintain restroom buildings with the staffing that we have," she told the group.

Ketzel promised that the city and Pashek MTR will attempt to make refinements to the plan for the new parklet, taking into account the comments that were shared at the meeting. Ketzel also committed to using the engagepgh.org website to allow for broader public comment and input on the park designs. Another meeting with the community representatives will probably be scheduled in either June or July, she promised. ♦

Meet the BGC: Deacon John Wright



ABOVE: Deacon John Wright, in his own words: "I have been an active member of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation's (BGC) Board of Directors for the past four years, serving the wonderful community of Garfield and the surrounding neighborhoods. I'm a 50 year resident of the East End, and I've spent the last 17 years in Garfield with my wife Laurie and son Paris (who is currently employed by the BGC). I applaud the community-oriented work that the BGC does in the areas of education, employment, and affordable housing. As a Deacon and past Executive Board Member of the Morningside Church of God in Christ (located across the street from the BGC's offices at Dearborn St. and N. Pacific Ave.), I have always supported the BGC's community events and activities over the years."

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Sidewall: BOOM Concepts presents artwork by atiya jones

A Message from BOOM Concepts

Garfield - BOOM Concepts (5139 Penn Ave.), a creative hub dedicated to the advancement of POC and LGBTQIA creative entrepreneurs, serves as a space for field-building, knowledge sharing, peer-to-peer mentorship, and storytelling.

Beyond its Garfield headquarters, BOOM is working with local and international artists on projects like "Sidewall." Sidewall is a public mural exhibition space hosted on the side-wall of a private residence in Bloomfield [608 S. Millvale Ave.].

The space is dedicated to displaying different murals throughout the calendar year. BOOM aims to increase the number of opportunities for artists to publicly exhibit work with sidewall, as well as inspiring new visual dialogue with passersby.

The latest sidewall installation is from artist atiya jones, a Brooklyn native who is now navigating life in Pittsburgh. Her work occupies the realm of mixed media, incorporating ink-drawings, photography, collage, graphic design, and fiber.

A self-described "autodidact creator of abstract organic accumulations," jones focuses on human migration, and more specifically, the modern diaspora known as gentrification.

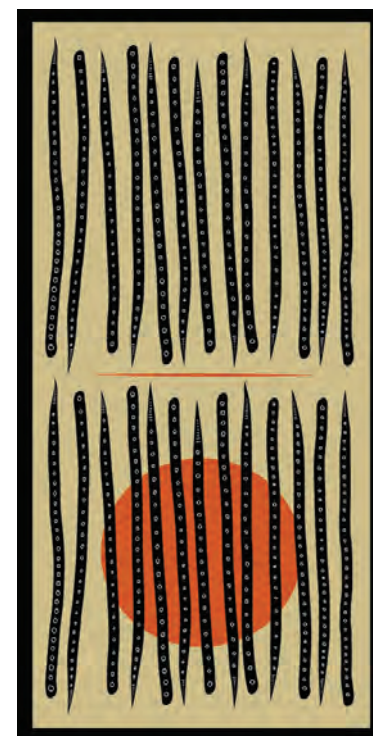
Her sidewall piece "Snake Prayer (Domino)" further explores an isolated line aesthetic that she has shifted towards during the COVID-19 pandemic. "Following its completion, the image read to me as a tarot card might," jones said, "and I invite viewers to adopt a similar viewing ap-

proach, if accessible. Personally, I found myself wrapped in thoughts connected to mysticism, prayers for social transformation, and prison abolition."

"When considering the Afro-American experience within our country," she explained, "one must see that communities of color have most often been moved by force, for capital gain."

Having personally witnessed the socio-economic/demographic shift of neighborhoods in Brooklyn, Los Angeles, and now Pittsburgh, the artist questions how populations reflect, reconnect, and rebuild within their communities.

By creating art, jones creates value. As a woman of color, this is an act of defiance,



ABOVE: "Snake Prayer (Domino)" is now on display outdoors in Bloomfield, at 608 S. Millvale Ave. Graphic courtesy of BOOM.

BELOW: Artist atiya jones, who specializes in mixed media. Photo courtesy of BOOM.



empowerment, and visibility. Her work is about human connection. It is a visual depiction of healing, finding one's tribe and building a life as a unit. It is about the magic permeating beneath the surface of self. It is soft, but tense - mobile, yet still.

Art appreciators are encouraged to safely visit the exhibition during a social distance walk, run, or bike ride in the Pittsburgh neighborhood of Bloomfield. The art is available for public viewing at the corner of 608 S. Millvale & Lima Way.

During this guest curatorship of sidewall, BOOM Concepts has highlighted the work of Sakony Shakur, Jameelah Platt, Takara Canty, Miles E. Saal, James "YaYa" Hough, Christina Acuna Castillo, and Danielle Robinson. ♦




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Saturday June 12 at 2pm- In Person

Tuesday June 29 at 6pm State of the Neighborhood - Virtual

Thursday July 8 at 6:30pm -Virtual

Email Nina@bloomfield-garfield.org for more details

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BDC seeking new board members

By Christina Howell Bloomfield Development Corporation

Bloomfield - Bloomfield Development Corporation (BDC), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is now accepting applications to serve on its board of directors. Composed of residents, business owners, community stakeholders, and at-large members, BDC's board members are responsible for governing the organization and maintaining a commitment to transparency and diversity.

All community members are welcome and encouraged to apply. BDC is particularly interested in residents who are Pittsburgh Public Schools parents; individuals of diverse age, race, and gender identities; and those with experience in financial or marketing fields. A Registered Community Organization with the City of Pittsburgh, BDC works for a Bloomfield where everyone can build a home, a business, and a future. We accomplish our mission through resident support and community engagement, small business promotion, housing advocacy, community process for new development, and the Bloomfield Saturday Market. For more info, visit bloomfieldpgh.org.

A meet-and-greet with current board members will be held outside at the Bloomfield Saturday Market on Saturday, Jun. 12, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The BDC tent will be located in the middle of the market; the folks at the info booth will be happy to point it out. To apply, send a statement of interest and experience (may submit a resume) to Lauren Nichols, BDC Board Chair, at board@bloomfieldpgh.org; send any inquiries to this email address or call 412-681-8800. ♦

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Level Up Studios aims for new 'Apex'

A Message from Level Up Studios

Garfield - Level Up Studios is excited to announce our new expansion project: the Level Up Apex.

The Apex is a soon-to-be-realized, state-of-the-art training facility located at 5152 Penn Ave. in Garfield. The 6,000 sq. ft. space will house two dance studios, along with a complete boxing and Mixed Martial Arts gym.

Level Up will run a fundraising campaign known as "#ApexPGH," which will consist of weekly car washes, an open mic event series, and dance workshops.

We are committed to offering nothing but the highest quality arts programming and services to our community, but we need your help to make it happen.

Our goal is to raise \$50,000 by the end of June. You can support us directly by donating at [Paypal.me/leveluppg](https://www.paypal.com/leveluppg), or by purchasing some of our Level Up swag at [LevelUpPgh.com/store](https://www.leveluppg.com/store).

You can also support by donating to our online campaign ([gofund.me/98738026](https://www.gofund.me/98738026)),



or by simply by sharing the news with your friends and family. It is time that Level Up reaches the next level. With your help, we can bring the Apex to life.

Disclaimer: All donations made directly to Level Up Studios are not tax-deductible. To make a tax-deductible donation, write a check to the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation / Attn: Level Up Studios / 113 North Pacific Ave. / Pittsburgh, PA / 15224.

To learn more about the Level Up Apex campaign, and how you can help, please visit [LevelUpPgh.com/press](https://www.LevelUpPgh.com/press). ♦



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Community responds to Amazon's intentions for Lawrenceville warehouse space

By Emily Persico *Lawrenceville Corporation*

Lawrenceville - As part of its plan to open a distribution center at the former Sears Warehouse on 51st Street, Amazon was scheduled to participate in a neighborhood meeting on Tuesday, Jun. 1, to share more of the details surrounding the project and respond to questions and concerns from residents.

Lawrenceville Corporation (LC) and Lawrenceville United (LU) will host the virtual meeting, which begins at 6:30 p.m. To join the conversation, register at bit.ly/Amazon51st.

After two years of negotiating community benefits with Spear Street Capital (SSC), the community got wind of a major change in plans: instead of developing office and retail space in the former Sears Outlet on 51st Street, SSC would now be

leasing the site to Amazon.

This meant that the warehouse would remain a distribution center, and all the agreed-upon community benefits associated with the requisite zoning approvals would have to be scrapped in the process.

Since learning of the new plans in December, LC and LU have twice met with Amazon representatives.

The groups note that Amazon anticipates using between 75 and 150 cargo vans per day, each delivering within a 40-minute drive from the center between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m., in addition to accepting as many as 20 long haul trucks every night.

Amazon plans to hire between 100 and 300 full-time employees, and between 200 and 450 seasonal, contracted delivery

drivers, for the distribution center.

In an effort to identify the community's shared concerns and help shape conversations with the global corporation, LC and LU created a survey detailing Amazon's plans to date and asking residents to share their thoughts.

The response has been staggering. In just a couple of months, the survey has garnered nearly 300 replies.

The majority of respondents said they do not support Amazon moving into the former Sears warehouse - a sentiment consistent with an emerging consensus among Lawrenceville residents about the re-use of industrial sites, and their compatibility with the neighborhood's social and environmental goals.

Residents expressed concerns related to traffic and mobility impairments, air pollution, and potentially harsh working conditions, to name a few. Submit your response at bit.ly/Amazon15201 ahead of the community meeting.

If all goes as planned for Amazon, the distribution center will be operating by the end of the year. Empowered by survey respondents, and attendees at the Jun. 1 meeting, the two community groups will do their best to ensure that future development at this site is in line with commu-

nity priorities.

If you have any questions, email info@LUnited.org or call (412) 802-7220. The first segment of the meeting was live-streamed, and archived, at facebook.com/lawrenceville.pittsburgh. ♦

GARFIELD


State of the Neighborhood Meeting

Tuesday JUNE 29, 2021
6pm-7:30pm
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via Zoom

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Agenda includes
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Time for Q&A from the community
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To apply, contact Mike Demes at Supportive Housing Management Services, 412-829-3910, or find the application online at actionhousing.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Sixth-Ward-Flats-Application.pdf.

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Garfield Jubilee: YouthBuild offers driver's ed

A Message from Garfield Jubilee Association, Inc.

Garfield - Garfield Jubilee Association, Inc. (GJA) now provides driver's license training to YouthBuild students.

With a small grant from 84 Lumber, the Garfield Jubilee YouthBuild program was able to provide drivers' education to five students. After receiving four lessons from Kennedy Driving School, the students will be prepared for the driver's test.

To date, two students have passed the driver's test and the remaining three are obtaining their permits. The driver's ed element of the YouthBuild program helps eliminate obstacles students face when entering the construction trades.

Spearhead by Roxanne Thomas from Mistick Construction, the driver's ed program was created by the Garfield Jubilee

Workforce Development Advisory Committee, which documents the need for workforce development education and programming.

Thomas played a pivotal role in encouraging partners to bring resources to the table and help the YouthBuild students develop marketable job skills. If you are an employer and want to help young people acquire the needed skills to become valued in the workplace, call 412-665-5200.

GJA is now recruiting youths, 16 to 24 years of age, for the YouthBuild program; participants must reside in the City of Pittsburgh or Allegheny County.

Please contact Dion Jones at 412-665-5206 or email him at dionjones@garfield-jubilee.org for more info. ♦



Father's day is a special day of the year to remember our fathers and father figures.

Yet, as we know, it can also be a very difficult time for those who grew-up without or who have lost a father.

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ALL CLEAN UPS WILL BEGIN AT 9AM UNTIL NOON. PARTICIPANTS WILL MEET AT BGC OFFICE AT 113 N. PACIFIC AVENUE TO PICK UP CLEAN UP SUPPLIES AND BE ASSIGNED PRIORITY AREAS IF APPLICABLE. ALL CLEAN UPS ARE WEATHER-PERMITTING, IF NOT FAVORABLE A RAIN DATE WILL BE SCHEDULED. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT PORCHEA ANDREWS AT PORCHEA@BLOOMFIELD-GARFIELD.ORG.

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Asphalt mural in the works at Friendship's Baum Grove

By Sara DeLucia *Friendship Community Group*

Friendship - The Friendship Community Group (FCG) and the Baum Grove Asphalt Art Committee recently selected an artist team to install a large mural at the intersection of Harriet Street and S. Fairmount & Roup Aves., adjacent to the FCG's Baum Grove parklet.

Artists Randi Stewart and Tim Englehart will work with the community to create and install over 5,800 sq feet of asphalt art, across four sections of pavement in Friendship, as part of the inaugural class of Bloomberg Philanthropies Asphalt Art Initiative.

The FCG, with the City of Pittsburgh Department of Mobility and Infrastructure (DOMI), is one of 14 awardees in the initiative's inaugural class. The full list of Bloomberg awardees and more about the Asphalt Art program can be found online (asphaltart.bloomberg.org).

Several outstanding artists – hailing from Pittsburgh and across the state – submitted proposals.

The selection committee – composed of FCG board members, residents living near the Asphalt Art site, and representatives of the art, design, and public realm

communities – rated each application for its contribution to the following categories: Quality of Artistic Work, Community Engagement, Project Management, and Demonstration of Understanding [project goals].

At least once a month until they begin the installation process, Stewart and Englehart will take part in monthly community meetings where local residents can provide feedback about the designs.

While the neighborhood groups intend to hold live, collaborative meetings in Baum Grove, they might also make arrangements for a virtual viewing – depending on COVID safety considerations; details will be posted on the FCG website (friendship-pgh.org/asphalt-art).

The mural, which is expected to be painted over the course of a “Paint Weekend” in July, will be a representation of Friendship residents working together to celebrate

shared neighborhood values.

In preparation for the asphalt art mural, safety changes at the intersection will be installed this summer. DOMI has been working with local community members and ADA advocates to finalize a design that improves navigation of this intersection for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists.

The design includes new crosswalks, improved stop sign placement, and painted curb extensions. Nearby residents will be notified a month prior to the upcoming changes.

Registration for Paint Weekend will open this summer on FCG's website, and will include many opportunities for community members to participate, like painting alongside the artists or coordinating a children's project. Plenty of opportunities will be also posted for the less artistically inclined volunteers, including food prep and other event logistics, like helping to set up the live music.

Be sure to subscribe to the FCG newsletter [visit friendship-pgh.org] and follow along on social media for the most up-to-date information about Paint Weekend. ♦

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Roll out: mobility principles to protect Bloomfield’s transportation system

By Sam Spearing *Bloomfield Development Corporation*

Insight/Bloomfield - Known to locals and visitors alike as a very “walkable” neighborhood, Bloomfield also enjoys great access to alternative transportation options like cycling and public transit.

The Liberty Avenue business district, a veritable nerve center for the Bloomfield community, was the first City-designated “Complete Street” in Pittsburgh. Thanks to the neighborhood’s dense housing and relatively flat topography, many residents can get everything they need within walking distance of their homes.

However, now that the area is dealing with increased development pressures, new transportation technologies, and aging infrastructure, Bloomfield Development Corporation (BDC) is working to protect the neighborhood’s transportation system.

We [BDC] want to better understand how Bloomfield neighbors travel in and through the neighborhood, so we launched the Bloomfield Mobility Principles project in early 2020, right as everything was shutting down in response to COVID-19. In partnership with Studio for Spatial Practice, we developed creative strategies for gaining public input at outdoor and socially distanced, pop-up workshops - and worked to publish our Bloomfield Mobility Principles.

The most important aspects of our transportation system are making sure that it is safe and equitable. The safety of pedestrians, our most vulnerable street users, remains a priority for BDC as intersection upgrades are introduced throughout the neighborhood. Design elements like shorter crosswalks help to ensure that all pedestrians, regardless of age or ability, can safely navigate our streets.

Ensuring that street users of all types have input is essential to creating a design that serves the needs of all. Important city goals such as Vision Zero, Complete Streets, and the Bike Plus Plan will help Bloomfield maintain lots of safe transportation alternatives to the car.

We also recognize how creating interconnected transportation options can help serve all our neighbors. Bloomfield’s shared transportation options, like public transit and HealthyRide, not only help neighbors get around, but also improve the local air quality and mitigate negative impacts on the environment. Connecting our transportation options to nearby business districts and employment opportunities is vital for the roughly 50% of Bloomfield residents who regularly commute by means other than a car.

BELOW: Bike-supported signage at the Bloomfield Saturday Market explains the importance of neighborhood mobility principles. Photo courtesy of Sam Spearing.



Ensuring that Bloomfield streets are places where people want to spend their time requires the creation of beautiful social environments. Over the past year, businesses have begun using parking spaces for outdoor seating, creating more intentionally designed spaces along our business district.

By adding benches and planters to the streetscape, they are providing spaces for the public to relax and spend more time along Liberty Avenue. In our more residential areas, adding street trees has helped beautify streets while also calming traffic and combating urban heat islands. In order to encourage neighbors to take advantage of Bloomfield’s existing public green spaces, we at BDC will advocate for improved pedestrian and cyclist connections to our neighborhood park spaces.

Armed with these new mobility principles, we are able to better advocate for a safe and equitable transportation system in Bloomfield. As we see potential new technologies like delivery robots and e-scooters coming to Pittsburgh in the next few years, these principles will help lay the groundwork for people-first design that prioritizes our most vulnerable street users.

To view the Bloomfield Mobility Principles final report, visit bloomfieldpgh.org/bloomfield-mobility-principles. ♦

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