

the Bulletin

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*Serving Bloomfield, Friendship, Garfield,
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Area clergy to convene forum on policing, social justice

By Alan Guenther *Bulletin contributor*

Pittsburgh - Local leaders will come together on Sunday, Apr. 10, to discuss how to improve community safety, race relations, and policing.

Clergy members are holding the event, "Saving Lives, Keeping the Peace: A Forum on Policing and Social Justice," in memory of two Black Pittsburgh men who died in controversial circumstances.

Jim Rogers, a 54-year-old homeless man, was tasered by police on Harriet Street in Bloomfield on Oct. 13, after he took a bicycle for a ride and returned it. He died the next day, and the Allegheny County medical examiner has ruled the death an accident.

Two months later, on Dec. 12, Peter Spencer, a Black Pittsburgh resident, was shot

See **Policing** | page 2



ABOVE: A work crew demolishes the former St. Lawrence O'Toole Church activities building (left), as well as the worship hall at Penn & N. Atlantic Aves. in Garfield, revealing some quirky remnants of 1960s architecture to passersby. According to CEO Pam Keen, Children's Home of Pittsburgh, which purchased the site late last year, will devise a plan for its use in the coming year. See more photos on page 14.



ABOVE: Pittsburgh Mayor Ed Gainey (second from left) joins State Rep. Sara Innamorato (third from right) and Allegheny County Labor Council's Darrin Kelly (second from right) on Mar. 5 to support the unionization efforts of Bloomfield Starbucks employees. Read the workers' story of solidarity at right. Photo by Alex Criegio.

Workers organize vote, file for union papers at Bloomfield Starbucks

By Sam Spearing *Bloomfield Development Corporation*

Bloomfield - In early February, a nationwide string of unionization efforts among Starbucks employees came to Pittsburgh.

The workers at the Bloomfield Starbucks location (4765 Liberty Ave.) announced their intent to hold a union vote and join the Starbucks Workers United movement.

As the first group of Starbucks employees in Pittsburgh to file for union certification, workers from the Bloomfield store follow in the footsteps of previous unionization efforts within the coffee chain. The ball got rolling with two stores in Buffalo, NY,

who won their unionization vote last year.

In a letter to now-former Starbucks CEO Kevin Johnson [who stepped down in March], the Bloomfield employees outlined significant worries about their store's working conditions. Since many of these employees had to continue showing up for work throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, their letter expressed a shared concern for the store's health-related precautions, or lack thereof.

Apprehension about understaffing further

See **Starbucks Workers** | page 6

Policing *continued from page 1*

to death by a White man in a rural area of Venango County.

Shawn White, the Venango County district attorney, recently announced that no charges will be filed in that case. Spencer was shot nine times by a man who, White said, was acting in self-defense.

Spencer’s family has hired retired coroner Cyril Wecht and is presently challenging the ruling.

Although legal challenges are expected to continue in the weeks and months ahead, clergy members from throughout the area say these incidents have contributed to increased tensions between the police and people of color.

Rallies protesting police actions have been held in Bloomfield, Garfield, and Downton outside the City-County building on Grant Street.

Forum organizer Mary J. Parish, of the Quakers’ Working Group Against Racism, said the Apr. 10 forum will explore how communities of faith can support long-term efforts to bring about changes for the common good.

“This gathering will allow us to come together to listen, learn, ask questions, and identify how we can best do our part in this important work,” Parish said.

Questions and audience participation will be encouraged following every speech, and during a live panel discussion moderated by Brandon McGinley, associate editorial page editor of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*.

Among those who have agreed to participate are Pittsburgh Police Chief Scott Schubert and Beth Pittinger, executive director of the independent Citizens Police Review Board.

They will be joined by Brandi Fisher, president of the Alliance for Police Accountability, and Tim Stevens, chairman of the Black Political Empowerment Project (B-PEP). Various experts and academics will also be on hand to provide commentary and information. The Palm Sunday gathering, held from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m., will

be led by distinguished faith leaders including the Rev. Liddy Barlow, executive minister of Christian Associates of Southwest Pennsylvania. The meeting, which is free and open to the public, will be held at the First United Methodist Church (5401 Centre Ave.).

The church is located about a quarter mile from Harriet Street, where Rogers was Tasered by police. Of the eight Pittsburgh Police officers facing disciplinary action as a result of Rogers’ death, five have been terminated; the other three officers will remain employed.

A 367-page internal police report, which was leaked to the media in February, raised concerns about Rogers’ death and his treatment by the police. The report’s findings included the following items:

- On Oct. 13, 2021, a police officer stunned Rogers eight times with a Taser during a period lasting three minutes and 15 seconds. He died the next day.
- While in police custody for 17 minutes, Rogers banged his head off the seat of a police cruiser and said, “I need a hospital....I can’t breathe...get a medic...help me.”
- Rogers asked for help 13 times, according to the internal report. Two emergency medical technicians arrived at the scene and never treated him. Instead, the medics were asked by a police lieutenant to decontaminate officers who were splattered with Rogers’ blood as he was pushed, tased, and rolled across the street. ♦

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Support a Neighbor in Need

On behalf of local resident Regina Brown, the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation has organized a GoFundMe campaign to help Regina and her daughter recover from a devastating fire that engulfed the house where they lived.

On Monday, March 7th, Regina and her daughter lost all their household possessions with an estimated value between \$20,000 – \$25,000 in the fire on Dearborn Street in the Garfield neighborhood of Pittsburgh.

These possessions included everything Regina owns, Regina’s daughter’s belongings, and the equipment Regina used to operate her catering business. Regina’s catering business The Fine Feather contributes to the community by providing and distributing free meals during the holidays and assisting other food-based business owners in the community with food safety education.

Regina is known for being there whenever and however for others, and the BGC would appreciate your help to assist Regina in recovering from this catastrophic event. Any monetary donations would help immensely at this time and would be greatly appreciated by Regina, the Garfield Community, and the BGC.

If you have questions or want to make any donations of clothing or other physical items, please contact Rick Swartz (ricks@bloomfield-garfield.org) or visit the BGC in-person at 113 North Pacific Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15224.

Please visit gofundme.com/f/regina-brown-devastated-by-house-fire-in-garfield to donate. Any monetary contributions will be tax-deductible to the fullest extent permitted by law.

Homebuyer Education Series

You’re invited to a free, three-part series if you’ve been wondering how to make the transition from being a tenant to becoming a homeowner. It’s growing harder for people of modest means to join the ranks of homeownership. Learn what you can do to overcome the hurdles and navigate the challenges of owning your own home.

All three sessions will be held at the BGC’s Community Activity Center, 113 N. Pacific Avenue, in Garfield. Seating is limited so don’t hesitate in reserving your seat at one or more of them.

Saturday, April 30th – Noon to 2 PM

Session title: What’s the deal with buying a home?

A local realtor will share some of the do’s and don’ts in shopping for a home to buy. The Bloomfield-Garfield Corp. and City of Bridges Community Land Trust will offer information on programs that can make it more affordable for you to own your first home.

Saturday, May 7th – Noon to 2 PM

Session title: What’s the deal with getting a mortgage loan?

A local mortgage lender will help you understand the criteria which determine a “yes” versus a “no” decision on your loan application. How much can you afford to borrow to get the house that you want? Where can you find help for the down-payment and closing costs?

Saturday, May 14th – Noon to 2 PM

Session title: What’s the deal with property taxes and other aspects of homeownership?

Once you’re in the home, how do you stay there? A county assessor will explain what you can do to ensure your property assessment is fair. And we’ll have an expert to acquaint you with the potential pitfalls all homeowners face.

Pizza lunch and soft drinks will be provided at each session. Call the BGC at 412-441-6950, ext. 4, or email Rick Swartz at RickS@bloomfield-garfield.org to reserve your space for one or more sessions.

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ENEC update: adapting to 'new normal' and welcoming back familiar face

A Message from the Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center



ABOVE: The Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center welcomes back Josephine Fails, who captains the front desk with a smile, as its new program assistant. We love Ms. Josie!

Garfield - As we round the quarter-turn of 2022, the Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center (ENEC, 113 N. Pacific Ave.) continues adapting its services to fit an ever-changing job market, and help neighbors like you navigate this new landscape.

The center still offers the job-searching, preparation, and workforce development assistance that we have become known for in Garfield. We also continue hosting hour-long, self-guided computer classes every Tuesday [at 11 a.m.] and Thursday [at 2 p.m.].

ENEC staff members the importance that life stability plays in the pursuit of employment - and vice versa - so we are partnering, learning from, and training with organizations and programs from across the city. Working together, we are better able to assist our neighbors by directing them to services and resources that can help them achieve stable employment. This month, we are excited to reintroduce the "Workshop Wednesday" series at the ENEC, where we will offer assistance with specific topics on a designated Wednesday every month.

We are also excited to reintroduce a friendly face to the ENEC community, as we recently welcomed back Josephine Fails to the employment center. Ms. Josie, as she is known by visitors and staff of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation and ENEC, was previously placed with us through the AARP Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) at our previous location [5321 Penn Ave.].

She was often the first face visitors would see at the front desk, or the voice people heard on the phone informing them of upcoming events at the ENEC. Ms. Josie is also no stranger to our current location, downstairs at 113 N. Pacific Ave., where she has helped countless neighbors feel at home through her work with AARP.

"I'm excited to be back with the ENEC" she said. "Everyone should feel welcome to come downstairs and say, 'hi' and feel free to ask me for help while you're here."

Please do not hesitate to give us a call at 412-362-8580 with any questions about ENEC programs and services. ♦

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the Bulletin

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with the mission of reporting on issues affecting underserved
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- Deadline for the May edition is Friday, April 15 -

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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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Neighborhood Learning Alliance appoints new leader: Kashif Henderson

A Message from NLA Board of Directors

Garfield - On Monday, Mar. 7, the Board of Directors of Neighborhood Learning Alliance (NLA, 5429 Penn Ave.) introduced Kashif Henderson as the new executive director of NLA.

NLA Board members said they could not be more excited to welcome Henderson as the second Executive Director in our organization's 18-year history.

They were instantly impressed with his passion and alignment to NLA's mission, and his enthusiasm about the future of the organization. Board members say they are confident that the experience he brings will greatly improve their brand and uplift the local students and families they serve.

Henderson comes to NLA from Pittsburgh Public Schools, most recently serving as the K-12 Gifted & Talented Coordinator responsible for program development, oversight of state regulations and compliance, national and regional partnerships, and budget management.

During his twelve years working in education, Henderson has been a teacher, teacher leader/mentor, and administrator, all in the public school system. Having served on regional committees, he continues to be active on national committees focused on disrupting inequities

in K-12 and higher education.

He is deeply committed to overcoming persistent equity challenges through creative and innovative methods.

A two-time alumnus of the University Pittsburgh, and a proud product of the Woodland Hills School District, Henderson looks forward to leading a fiscally responsible organization, building long-term partnerships, and expanding NLA's out-of-school programming and best practices.

The NLA Board thanks readers for their continued support during this transition. ♦

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(FINE) FREE TO THE PEOPLE

Module Housing tweaks proposal for Rosetta St. development

By Joe Reuben *Bulletin contributor*

BELOW: Module's elevation drawing of affordable housing units proposed for construction on the 5100 block of Rosetta Street in Garfield. Graphic courtesy of Module Housing.



Insight/Garfield - In order to build housing that is truly affordable to people who are being priced out of the market-rate developments going up all around Pittsburgh, many challenges must be overcome.

One after another, developers are now making their intentions plain: they will not attempt to reduce building costs just so their projects can appeal to a broader range of potential tenants. Trying to put all the financing together to reduce these costs is very time-consuming work, and they contend there is no real profit to be made. On top of that, very few developers enjoy dealing with government agencies.

Into this environment wades Module Housing, LLC, as it endeavors to bring ten single-family, 3-bedroom homes to the 5100 block of Rosetta Street [in Garfield] by 2024.

On Mar. 22, Module representatives Brian Gaudio and Lu Zhu held an online meeting with local community members to discuss the latest twists and turns in their project.

The Pittsburgh Housing Development Corp. (PHDC), a nonprofit agency under the wing of the city's Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), remains a partner in the project. Module and the PHDC have set about trying to find roughly \$950,000 in grant

financing that would make four of the homes affordable to households earning less than \$60,000 annually.

Gaudio said they knocked on the doors of the R. K. Mellon Foundation, which managed to award grants of \$150 million to Carnegie Mellon University and \$100 million to the University of Pittsburgh within the past year. So far, Gaudio said, they have had no luck. They also approached the state's Department of Community & Economic Development with an application for \$500,000 in grant funding, but will have to wait a number of months before any decision is rendered.

The PHDC will help Module secure funding from the URA, but that will have to wait until the project moves further along what Gaudio described as the URA's "disposition process." This is the vernacular for trying to buy nine, city-owned land parcels - that have been vacant for several decades - from the URA. Of course, if Module were to wait for the city to sell the properties, the process could take up to five years or longer. With the URA, Module still has a shot at getting the purchase accomplished within 24 to 30 months. At the meeting, Gaudio said that he is encouraged by the progress his team is making with the URA.

To address neighbors' concerns about parking on the street, Module has added integral garages to four of the ten homes. A third story has also been added to the remaining six homes to allow for a large third bedroom on the top floor. The plan remains to take a city-owned lot at the west end of the development, near N. Evaline St., and turn it into a landscaped buffer; Gaudio will invest some time in defining what that buffer could look like.

He said Module aims to create a workforce training program, in partnership with the Trade Institute of Pittsburgh and Garfield Jubilee Association, to help local adults who would like to get into the construction trades.

Gaudio maintains that Module will ultimately not make a profit on the four affordable homes, but needs to achieve a break-even point in order to cover the cost of building these units. ♦



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Easter Sunday, April 17 @ 11:30 a.m.

Many Bulletin readers connect with the paper at dozens of bulk pickup spots located throughout the city.

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Starbucks Workers *continued from page 1*

contributed to workers feeling like they could not undertake extra COVID-related cleaning measures. They also took issue with low wages, unpredictable schedules, and the inability to collect non-cash tips.

After announcing their intent to hold a vote, workers at the Bloomfield Starbucks organized a rally on Saturday, Mar. 5. Well over 100 community members were in attendance to sing songs and show support for the workers. Among the speakers at the rally were City Councilwoman Deb Gross, State Representative Sara Innamorato, and Mayor Ed Gainey, as well as State Representative and Congressional candidate Summer Lee. Allegheny County Labor Council president Darrin Kelly also spoke in support of the vote to unionize.

Bloomfield Starbucks employees spoke of how inspiring it was to see stores in other cities unionizing, a trend that seems to have continued locally, with workers at the Amos Hall Starbucks [on the University of Pittsburgh campus] recently announcing their intent to unionize. Their union election will take place by mail; ballots were sent to employees on Mar. 24, and the final vote counting will occur on Apr. 13.

On social media, members of Pittsburgh

Starbucks Workers United have relayed how, just like at other stores across the country, they have witnessed efforts to dissuade workers from supporting a union. As a means of showing support for the workers, customers are now attaching messages of encouragement to their names when placing orders.

A tightened labor market, increased health risks, and other factors are leading many workers to ask for improved conditions in their workplaces.

Pittsburgh Restaurant Workers Aid, a local advocacy and service organization, reflected on the past two years of COVID, and its impact on the service industry, in a recent statement: "At this moment, workers have the most collective power we've seen in years. This is a historic moment where we can shift the balance of power in the restaurant labor market and demand dignity and respect."

While the Bloomfield Starbucks will be the first unionized store in Pennsylvania, this wave seems unlikely to stop in Pittsburgh. In addition to the Amos Hall location, several Starbucks stores based in Philadelphia have also filed with the National Labor Relations Board. ♦

BGC Youth Programs' Student Spotlight: Nasir Crownie

A Message from BGC Youth Programs Staff

Garfield - Nasir Crownie is a senior at Obama High School and a second-year participant in the College & Career Readiness Program. Crownie has worked diligently on his college applications, essays, and interviews for his favorite schools - and he set his college goals high, with Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) topping the list.

This star student was accepted to a staggering total of 18 schools. At CMU, he had applied for an early decision, which was risky; if not accepted early, he would not be able to reapply for a regular decision. We are now excited to announce that Crownie was accepted to the freshman class at CMU. He will study engineering and computer science, with scholarships covering ninety percent of the cost of his first-year tuition.

Now that he has submitted more than 35 scholarship applications, we are confident that Crownie will not have to pay anything for college. Great job, Nasir! ♦

AT RIGHT: *Nasir Crownie participated in the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation's College & Career Readiness Program for two consecutive years, and is now poised for success. His hard work paid off in the form of 18 college acceptance letters. Crownie ultimately chose to attend Carnegie Mellon University (CMU), where he will study engineering and computer science, as a freshman this fall.*



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In conversation with performance artist Princess Jafar

Interview By DS Kinsel BOOM Concepts

Pittsburgh - DS Kinsel recently caught up with local performance artist Josie, a.k.a. Princess Jafar, for a conversation about “villians4good,” “The Princess is Right,” and what comes next for this local producer extraordinaire.

DS: Let’s start off talking about Princess Jafar (PJ) as a character. What’s the biggest difference between Princess Jafar and Josie the producer?

PJ: “I like to try to use Princess Jafar’s villainous nature to actually do good in the communities that have helped me become the artist and producer I am today. Hence, my tag line: ‘villain4good.’ So, for example, the show might seemingly be all about me, but I’m employing a cast of 20 Queer artists and creatives of color and raising funds or awareness for local organizations or issues. As Josie, I was always told I was too much, but the whole idea behind Princess Jafar is it’s never enough.”

DS: How have the people in your world, on- and offstage, helped you develop PJ both as a character and as a brand?

PJ: “It’s a rolling cast and crew. I love working with creatives and spotlighting their talent and work. I love working with larger-than-life personalities and people who have a world of their own behind their characters.”

DS: What was the most rewarding part of performing your latest show [“The Princess is Right!”] at the New Hazlett Theater?

PJ: “I’m was excited to bring surrealist queer theater to the historic New Hazlett Theater and introduce their more traditional theater audiences to my world, and to my merry band of friends. Working with Madeleine Steinek as a lighting designer, Tucker Topel as a stage designer, Kristin Helfrich & Rene Conrad as producers and everything else - and Janus Young as a last-minute stage manager who really whipped the show into shape - has been the biggest gift from this CSA series at The New Hazlett.”

DS: What’s next for Princess Jafar?

PJ: “Coming up, I’m doing a few pop-ups, bingos, and a drag brunch. But mostly, I’m excited to jump back into the studio to record “daddy 2” which is coming out Fathers days 2022. Though it seems like work, it’s a break in the sense that I’m not currently planning a huge show. Even though there’s a break, I need to capitalize on the momentum of the moment and get “The Princess is Right!” booked at another venue.” ♦

BELOW: *Princess Jafar toys with the villainous nature of her character while also giving back to the Pittsburgh’s performing arts community. Photo courtesy of Thomas Agnew.*



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NeighborhoodFOCUS

Sts. Peter & Paul Church: hope on East Liberty horizon

By Elizabeth Sensky *East Liberty Development, Inc.*

East Liberty - The pointy spires of Sts. Peter & Paul Church (130 Larimer Ave.), which gained newfound recognition following their prominent role in Kevin Smith’s 1999 film *Dogma*, have been a fixture of the neighborhood skyline for well over a century.

The original church building was constructed in 1859, but the cornerstone of the Sts. Peter & Paul that we know today - a local landmark - was laid on August 10, 1890, as designed by the famed architect Adolphus Druiding. Opening for worship services the following year, the church became home to a growing congregation of mostly German and Lithuanian, and ultimately Italian, immigrants who worked in Pittsburgh’s mills, construction trades, and food industry. After a fire destroyed much of the building in 1909, the church was partially rebuilt by architect John Theodore Comes.

Following World War II, church attendance mirrored the city’s slow and steady population decline. The flight of families to the suburbs, combined with the collapse of Pittsburgh’s steel industry in the 1970s, left only a remnant of elderly parishioners who could no longer support the massive structure. In 1992, the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh announced the closing of Sts. Peter & Paul Church. In 1997, the Diocese sold the property to Everlasting Covenant Church, which

aimed to restore the structure as a new home for its congregation, and also start a charter school in the former school building. In the meantime, the Everlasting charter school operated at a different site.

When the charter for the school was not renewed in 2002, the church building was again left to sit fallow. In the years after, the building deteriorated steadily as it became a site for squatters, vandals, and curious neighbors.


After more than a decade of starts and stops, local nonprofit East Liberty Development, Inc. (ELDI), worked to acquire the sanctuary from Everlasting Covenant in 2014. Though a deal could not be reached, ELDI was eventually granted the deed to the property in 2018 -through Pennsylvania’s Abandoned and Blighted Property Conservatorship Act.

Thanks to loans from the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh and Wes-Banco Bank, ELDI has since invested \$400,000 into the site; the church and school were abated for asbestos, the church’s roof and steeples were stabilized, and the collapsing rectory was demolished in 2017.

In an effort to gather community feedback in 2019, ELDI sought the expertise of two nonprofit organizations, ULEAD and Partners for Sacred Places. The resulting “Space Walk and Talk Tours” engaged over 200 people, including many who lived and/or worked in close proximity to the church building. Tour surveys indicated that the majority of respondents envisioned a multi-use option for the space.

- continued on next page -

NOW OPEN TO GARFIELD HOME OWNERS!



Residential Façade Improvement Program:

Helping increase the curb appeal of Pittsburgh’s neighborhoods, block by block.

Grant Amount

Homeowners can receive up to \$8,000 in matching grant funds, based on household income. (See chart on back. Home must be owner-occupied.)

Fees


There is a \$150 application fee due upon submittal

Uses

Funds can be used for front and side façades (Min. of 50% of funds must be used on front)

Types of Modifications

- Siding replacement
- Brick repointing
- Painting
- Porch repair
- Window repair
- Door repair
- Soffit/fascia repair
- Gutter repair
- Other modifications



PROCESS

- Homeowner solicits bids for façade work from qualified contractors
- Homeowner submits full application packet including all required documents
- URA Quality Control Manager reviews and approves the scope of work
- Homeowner notifies contractor to begin work
- Upon completion, Homeowner pays their portion of cost then PHDC/URA distributes their agreed upon match

APPLY

- Follow instructions on the Program Procedures document
- Fill out a paper or digital copy of the Program Application
- Submit all Documents in the Required Document Checklist (on Program Application)

Grant Eligibility Based on Income


Area Median Income (AMI):	Below 80% AMI	80% to 100% AMI	100% to 120% AMI
Homeowners Contribute a minimum of:	20% of total project cost	35% of total project cost	50% of total project cost
PHDC contributes a maximum amount of:	80% of total project cost up to \$8,000	65% of total project cost up to \$6,500	50% of total project cost up to \$5,000

2020 Area Median Income (AMI) Limits


Household Size	80%	100%	120%
1	\$46,500	\$58,100	\$69,750
2	\$53,150	\$66,400	\$79,700
3	\$59,800	\$74,700	\$89,650
4	\$66,400	\$83,000	\$99,600
5	\$71,750	\$89,650	\$107,600
6	\$77,050	\$96,300	\$115,550
7	\$82,350	\$102,950	\$123,550
8	\$87,650	\$109,600	\$131,500

More information:

Jarmele Fairclough, Program Assistant | 412.255.6573 | jfairclough@ura.org
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BELOW: A hallmark of East Liberty, the Saints Peter & Paul Church (130 Larimer Ave.) will soon be renovated as a multi-purpose event venue. Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Sensky.



- continued from previous page -

A music and performance theater, event center, banquet hall, and community recreational center were among the preferred options. To ensure that preservation concerns were properly addressed, ELDI consulted with the Young Preservationists Association (YPA) and the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation.

“We have to look at all the factors when preserving a historic building, especially long-term viability,” explained Matthew Craig, executive director of the YPA. “There is no need to pour a lot of money into a one-time fix and then let the property start to rot again. A long-term steward who understands the full value of the historic property is what we would most want to see.”

In July 2021, ELDI hired Tom Rooney [of the Rooney Sports & Entertainment Group], in partnership with David Stone of Stone Planning, LLC, to provide analysis on the concept of the church building serving as an event venue.

Over the last three decades, Tom Rooney has developed large-scale sports and entertainment venues all around the country. But, as a Pittsburgh native and resident who remains active in his Catholic parish, this project is close to his heart in more ways than one.

“To me, it’s a labor of love. I ran into so many people who said, ‘My brother went to school there,’ or ‘My mother was married there.’ I always say that churches never really close - they exist somewhere else,” Rooney said. “When I walk in there, I’m overcome emotionally. It’s surreal to stand up at the altar and look at the sun shining through the stained-glass windows.”

Upon further analysis, Rooney and his team recommended that the church be renovated for use as a multi-purpose events venue. Their report shows a strong market for concerts, weddings, and business meetings & conferences, among others.

“The size of this venue, the location, and the timing are all very good,” Rooney said. “I always say that you don’t make your niche, you find it. And it’s not always

‘I love to see old structures like these reused, not as some brewpub, but as some worthy-to-the-community public space.’

- Tom Rooney, Rooney Sports & Entertainment Group

what the community wants, but it’s almost exactly what the studies show that they should do.”

According to Rooney’s impact study, renovations would cost approximately \$15 million - with the venue potentially supporting 200 annual events, reaching 58,250 attendees, and adding over \$1 million to the region’s local economy every year.

Rooney and Stone recommended adding a new two-story addition to the side of the church structure in order to accommodate the bathrooms, kitchen space, breakout meeting rooms, and parking space. ELDI, with Stone and Rooney, is currently in the process of applying for a Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program grant from the PA Office of the Budget.

To Rooney, saving the church is something of a personal mission: “I love to see old structures like these reused, not as some brewpub, but as some worthy-to-the-community public space. The East Liberty that I remember, as a kid, was a thriving community of businesses, churches, parks, and family dwellings. Today, East Liberty is thriving again, but there is very little to recall the past. Saving the twin-spired church will help remind people of the old, vibrant place that was the original East Liberty - or as we called it, ‘Sliberty.’” ♦



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'POGOH' relaunches bike share program, greenlights new stations in Garfield

By Ricardo Solis *POGOH*

BELOW: New e-assist bikes can bridge neighborhoods, and climb hills, throughout the new POGOH system. Photo courtesy of Ricardo Solis.



Insight/Garfield - We are currently making a lot of changes at Healthy Ride, and even changing our name.

On Mar. 16, we announced the upcoming retirement of Healthy Ride bikes and stations, and the forthcoming launch of a new system with a new name: POGOH.

Pittsburgh's new bike share program, POGOH will launch in the coming weeks with 38 stations and brand new bikes, including both e-assist bikes and traditional pedal bikes.

Bike Share Pittsburgh, a local nonprofit that managed the Healthy Ride system, will now operate POGOH.

The program's launch will take us one step closer to our goal of better serving the Pittsburgh community with a more accessible, inclusive system.

Major changes, like incorporating electric bicycles and public charging stations, will provide an opportunity to rethink station locations all over the city.

With the incoming equipment, several of Garfield's stations will not physically fit in their current locations. To address this, we are meeting with key stakeholders in the neighborhood to find new "homes" for these stations.

Judging by the feedback, there is a need for more stations that can accommodate residents of Garfield's hilltop area. Once POGOH's e-assist bikes are introduced later this year, going up the hill from Penn Avenue will definitely be a lot easier - and stations located along the neighborhood's hillside will see increased use.

Phase 1 will bring an electrified station to the intersection of S. Pacific & Penn Aves. It will be located near former station locations, close to the "Coral-Comrie Neighborway," which will provide great visibility and connectivity with other neighborhoods.

Phase 2 will add stations (pending approval) at three more locations: Hillcrest Street & N. Atlantic Avenue; S. Mathilda

Street & Penn Avenue; and Penn Avenue & Roup Avenue.

The N. Atlantic Ave. location was specifically requested by local community members. E-assist bikes would open up the possibility for commuters to go up the hill with less effort. The future Garfield greenway could also provide more biking and walking options.

If you live, work or travel through Garfield, your feedback is very valuable to us. Please help us find new homes for these relocated stations. You can access the survey at surveymonkey.com/r/GarReloc.

These proposed stations are just the beginning because we are committed to expanding and growing our station network in the coming years. Our goal is for POGOH to provide city residents with enhanced access to their local bike system.

We want to thank you for contributing to the Healthy Ride community for all these years, and we appreciate your patience as we begin the challenging work of replacing an entire bike share network. ♦

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Pittsburgh's zoning law: layered process, history

By John Axtell *Friendship Community Group*

Perspective/Pittsburgh - The first article in this series [featured last month, and to be continued in next month's *Bulletin*] looked at the effects of Pittsburgh's zoning law in recent decades as Bloomfield, Garfield, Friendship, and Lawrenceville have gone from economic uncertainty to unprecedented housing and commercial redevelopment.

This installment will dive deeper into the legal basis for zoning laws, the history of zoning, how the zoning process works, and how ordinary citizens can best make their voices heard in Pittsburgh's zoning and planning process.

Why does the city have a zoning code? Whom is it intended to protect, or tend to favor?

In the simplest terms, zoning is the public regulation of private land and buildings. Pittsburgh's zoning code, like similar laws across the US, divides the city into a series of zones for residential, commercial, industrial, and other uses, and specifies limits for height and setbacks from property lines to create open space.

The zoning code also regulates things like the number of parking spaces required for a residential or commercial project, as well as performance issues, such as the maximum permitted sound levels for ventilation equipment, and the hours that trash removal or construction activity must begin and end. Like many regulatory tools, zoning is often a blunt, rather than precise, instrument. Much like other regulations, its use often creates

unintended consequences, despite the best of intentions.

Since the US Constitution contains strong protections for private property rights, zoning is basically the only tool with any legal teeth that cities have to achieve their planning goals. In practical terms, the only purpose for which a government agency is permitted to regulate private property is to protect public health & safety.

Early zoning laws, like the ones adopted by Pittsburgh in 1923, focused on regulating new construction in order to ensure adequate light and air in both residential and business districts. A typical argument made by advocates for the first zoning law was that requiring adequate yard space for each house would keep kids from playing in streets and alleys.

The growth of heavy manufacturing, beginning in the late 1800s, and the introduction of automobiles in the early 1900s caused many to look to zoning as a remedy to prohibit obnoxious uses (polluting, noisy factories, gas stations, etc.) near houses and stores.

Revised in 1998, the city's current zoning code similarly states that it has been adopted "for the purpose of preserving and improving the public health, safety and general welfare of the citizens of Pittsburgh." But, beyond health and safety, both the 1923 and the current 1998 zoning laws make clear that their additional purpose is to protect "neighborhood character" - which can be reasonably taken to mean property values - presumably in the interest of residents' general welfare.

From the outset, critics of zoning law have argued that such regulations are either legally redundant or overly burdensome of property rights. The common law doctrine of nuisance permits neighbors to sue neighbors who pollute their air or water. So, in the 1920s, some argued that filing a nuisance suit in court was a sufficient, and perhaps better, remedy for a homeowner bothered by a gas station or factory next door than enforcing a still new zoning code.

To this day, some opponents of government regulation point to the example of Houston, Texas, which has no zoning laws, but instead relies on deed covenants in each subdivision to privately enforce height, setback, and use limitations. (Although racially discriminatory deed covenants have been ruled unconstitutional, land use covenants such as those in Houston remain valid in the eyes of the law.)

The zoning code was last updated in 1998. What significant changes were made back then?

Prior to the 1998 revision, Pittsburgh's zoning code had last been revised in 1958. The 1958 law was in many ways a reflection of the urban renewal planning policies of that era. For much of Bloomfield, Garfield, and Lawrenceville, the 1958 law permitted and promoted the construction of garden apartments, with little attention paid to the existing pattern of row house and detached-house development. Commercial zones encouraged automobile-serving designs, with little thought given to creating lively, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use business districts.

By contrast, the 1998 revisions sought to preserve the context and character of the existing pattern of city neighborhoods by permitting the elimination of setbacks in attached dwelling (row house) districts, and requiring that buildings in most commercial districts be built to the sidewalk, with first-floor display windows provided.

New houses could now use contextual setbacks to reduce the required front yard to match those of the buildings on either side of the property in question. Similarly, building heights could be increased if the adjoining buildings exceeded the height limits for that district. The 1998 law also created incentives, like added height or floor space, for projects that use sustainable design or are located close to public transit stations.

[Want to learn more about our zoning laws? Look to the May Bulletin for the next installment in this series.] ♦

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State legislation aims to curb hate crimes

By State Senator Jay Costa Allegheny County, 43rd District

Op-Ed/Pennsylvania - According to an annual report by the Anti-Defamation League, Pennsylvania led the nation in 2021 for acts of extremism and anti-Semitic incidents. Last year, 488 incidents were reported in the Commonwealth.

These include white supremacist gatherings, white supremacist propaganda being disseminated, and anti-Semitic incidents – whether involving violence or property damage. This is appalling, and something must be done.

For several years now, I have introduced a package of legislation that would provide law enforcement more tools to monitor, prevent, and punish hate crimes. There are many shortcomings in our state law as it relates to hate crimes and ethnic intimidation – and my bills would seek to protect folks that may become the victim of a crime simply because of their race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, sexual identity, age, or disability.

This legislation calls for further officer training, creating a private right of action for civil rights violations, increasing reporting requirements for hate crimes on college campuses, and instituting a database to track hate groups' activity across the country.

I truly believe these bills can prevent the next mass casualty event, and I am hopeful that – given the increase in hate crimes – they will be moved in committee this session. I will continue to keep you posted at senatorcosta.com. ♦

West Penn celebrates 'Donate Life Month'

By Jacqueline Drahos, MSN, RN West Penn Hospital

Perspective/Bloomfield - April is "Donate Life Month" and Allegheny Health Network's (AHN) West Penn Hospital is once again involved in the Hospital & Health System (HAP) Donate Life Pennsylvania Hospital Challenge. Last year, AHN was awarded first place for Top Health System performer, and West Penn Hospital was awarded second place among Top Hospital performers.

The goal is to increase organ donation awareness and designations within hospitals and communities. According to the Center for Organ Donation (CORE), one individual can help up to eight people, while tissue donors can improve the lives of up to 75 people. Directed, or designated, donation for a friend or loved one is an option. Living donation is also a possibility. There are only a few medical rule-outs for organ donation.

If you are interested in becoming a donor, you can register via the state's department of motor vehicles by showing your decision on your driver's license or state ID card, which is considered legal authorization for organ and tissue donation.

West Penn Hospital will conduct several activities during the month of April to re-

ceive points for the challenge.

To recognize those who have donated organs, as well as those awaiting transplantation, a flag-raising ceremony will take place at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, Apr. 7 near the emergency room entrance; a Rose Bush ceremony will be held across from the emergency room at 1 p.m. on Monday, Apr. 18.

Please consider becoming an organ donor. You can register in-person at your local DMV, or at registerme.org. ♦

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LOCAL REAL ESTATE BLOTTER

- Bloomfield, Friendship, Garfield, East Liberty, Lawrenceville, & Stanton Heights -

Real Estate Sales for the month of January 2022

Compiled by Lillian Denhardt, Residential Realtor

Bloomfield

Fred D Radfar to Romi Analytics, LLC at 4418 Penn Ave for \$252,100.

Marcia A Deaktor to 4765 Liberty Avenue, LLC at 4765 Liberty Ave for \$675,000.

Patrick J & Paula B Caffrey to William John Petry at 4541 Carroll St. for \$253,000.

Robert G Hamilton to Gabriel Andrew & Kate Ryan Rossi at 319 S. Atlantic Ave for \$350,000.

Ryric, LLC to Kyle Bridenstine at 4621 Carroll St. for \$412,000.

Stephen Choder to Daniel T Alsonsetti at 420 Fisk St. for \$265,000.

Thomas J & Gloria A McCarten to Chenen Niu at 421 S. Evaline St. for \$279,500.

Tiffani L Parks to Andy Yang at 5535 Centre Ave Unit 8 for \$200,000.

Elizabeth Evans to David Philip Kushner at 173 43rd St. for \$715,000.

Erin L Henninger to J2 Home Improvements, LLC at 5231 Holmes St. for \$167,000.

Geb Investment Partners, LLC to Brian F & Brenda L Broad at 5313 Carnegie St. for \$735,000.

Gosta Frantz to Aux Funding, LLC at 5239 1/2 Keystone St. for \$157,500.

Gosta L Frantz to Aux Funding, LLC at 5241 Keystone St. for \$157,500.

Green Ventures, LLC to Christina Tirpak at 321 37th St. for \$445,000.

James Jacob Strang to Cheyenne M Buntain at 148 Almond Way for \$312,500.

Janice J Pressman to 4402 Butler, LLC at 4402 Butler St. for \$360,000.

Jessica A Conrad to Alan R Catanzariti, Jr. at 274 46th St. for \$480,250.

Joan C Kristufek to Goran & Jelena Lukic at 259 38th St. for \$245,000.

Joseph & Donna L Bzdziaik to Swz Properties, LLC at 3512 Leech St. for \$145,000.

Jsj Sustainable Investments, LLC to Yusuf Kaan Islak at 3928 Mintwood St. for \$345,000.

Lawal Investments, LLC to Sfr3-000, LLC at 5609 Celadine St. for \$95,000.

Martin Neale to Andrew & Erica Godish at 308 44th St. for \$325,000.

Matthew L & Kathleen Gilson to Travis N Rohrbaugh and Heather Conroy at 4229 Sherrod St. for \$343,000.

Michael & Hedwig Bacasa to Casey Patrick

Mullen at 4215 Geneva St. for \$120,000.

Redoak Group, Inc. to Alexander Rigby at 5133 Carnegie St. for \$245,000.

Reed E McManigle to Scott A Harris at 4307 Stanton Ave for \$230,000.

RHMS Group, Inc. to Lawal Investments, LLC at 5609 Celadine St. for \$60,000.

Robert A Casey to Michael R Droll at 109 42nd St. for \$332,500.

Stephen L Lippello, Sr. to Daniel E Harris at 327 37th St. for \$397,500.

Thomas Kravic, Sr. Revocable Trust to Aux Funding, LLC at 5320 Natrona Way for \$71,300.

Stanton Heights

Linda M Wambaugh to Zacharey P Murray at 1114 Stanton Ter for \$165,000.

Robert B & Loretta McFadden to Veronica M & Patrick G McFadden at 141 Stanton Ct W for \$150,000.

This column, which uses data from Allegheny County's online portal, contains occasional errors. If something looks off, please let us know. Feel free to call with questions, or just to chat, about real estate in your neighborhood. Contact Lillian at lillian@agent-lillian.com or 412-335-6068. ♦

Friendship

No sales to report.

Garfield

Darrell A Myrick to Melissa Kuzmyak at 5341 Broad St. for \$232,500.

Evans D & Lillian I Moore to Future 2020 Management, LLC at 106 N. Fairmount St. for \$220,000.

Joseph Ditommaso to Syed Naqvi at 300 N. Aiken Ave for \$366,000.

Kevin S Barnett to John Wright at 5201 Dearborn St. for \$156,500.

East Liberty

East Liberty Development, Inc. to Future 2020 Management, LLC at 512 N. Euclid Ave for \$150,000.

Kimberly Dierdorf to Christopher J McCluney at 6035 Saint Marie St. for \$600,000.

PGH Theological Seminary of United Presbyterian Church in USA to William Paivine at 6050 Stanton Ave for \$84,500.

Lawrenceville

Anthony V & Helen A Smulski to William B & Eleanor J Gialanella at 4235 Dunkeld Way for \$175,000.

Benjamin Karl & Andrealeigh Schilling to Whitney & Joshua J Gamble-Smith at 3451 Denny St. for \$360,000.

Crews Development, LLC to Anna J Lee at 5336 Dresden Way for \$255,000.

Crystal Hoffman to 419 Wicklow, LLC at 0 Wicklow St. for \$115,000.

David Amatangelo to Jaclyn B Kurin at 265 Main St. Unit 1 for \$318,000.

Douglass Zhong to Ying Lin at 137 44th St. for \$595,000.

Edward Clyde & Kathleen Ann Danver to Alaina P Ferry at 5505 Camelia St. for \$202,500.



Topics Include:

- Resume Construction & Updating
2nd Wednesday of Every Month (Starting April 2022)
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FCG springs forward in 2022

A Message from the Friendship Community Group

Friendship - Stay up to date on everything the Friendship Community Group (FCG) is doing this year at friendship-phg.org.

Recent election of new Board

During an Oct. 2021 community meeting, the FCG elected new directors to its Board: Sara DeLucia (President), Logan Burdwood (Vice President), Nancy Cohen (Secretary), Tom Youngs (Treasurer), and Directors Emily George, RJ Huebert, Carla Lukehart, Joe Mattis, Colleen Potanko, Elizabeth Schwall, Diana Toole, and Brad Wyland.

FCG members thank outgoing Directors Jayne Bower, Tom Hritz, Danielle Novack, and Dinora Putman for their tireless service and love for their community.

Glass Center expansion supported

The Zoning Development Committee worked with neighbors regarding the Pittsburgh Glass Center's (PGC) expansion. FCG and PGC signed a Memorandum of Agreement regarding the expansion and the neighbors' concerns.

The FCG was supportive of the PGC at the Zoning board of adjustment meeting. Please email concerns and suggestions on how to support Friendship to president@friendship-phg.org.

Friendship Good Neighbor Project

At this moment, as our hearts go out to the world community, we can let our neighbors know we are here for one another. Welcome to the Friendship Good Neighbor Project.

This project was created by neighbors who were alarmed by tragic deaths in the neighborhood over the past winter. It is sustained through heightened awareness of people struggling everyday, and builds upon a longstanding Friendship tradition of neighbors building a sense of community with each other. Will you join us? To get involved, please email goodneighbor@friendship-phg.org. ♦

BELOW: In late March, a demolition crew begins taking apart the former St. Lawrence O'Toole Church activities building. Parishioners financed the construction of this Garfield landmark with vigorous fundraising efforts in the late 1950s. The Children's Home of Pittsburgh is currently making new plans for the site. Photo by Andrew McKeon.



ABOVE: Days later, piles of rubble and steel are all that remains of the former St. Lawrence O'Toole Church activities building, which was built in 1960. Photo by Andrew McKeon.

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Allegheny Cemetery to restore Penn Ave. Tower, remove portion

By Claire Picone Allegheny & Homewood Cemeteries

Garfield - On Mar. 2, Allegheny Cemetery President & Chief Executive Officer David Michener announced that the Penn Avenue Tower, located at the entrance to Allegheny Cemetery on Penn Avenue, will undergo a restoration project over the next year.

The upper roof, turrets, and arched columns will be removed; the lower roof will also undergo restoration, which will better protect the remaining structure from erosion and weathering in the years ahead. The granite features slated for removal will be photographed, catalogued, and stored - in the event that the Allegheny Cemetery Historical Association decides to return the tower to its original form.

The Penn Avenue Tower, designed by Philadelphia architects Dull & Macomb, was constructed between 1887 and 1889. Research shows that numerous restoration efforts, including stone-pointing, were completed at different intervals throughout the 1900s.

The most recent pointing and mortar repair was completed in the late 1980s, when it was noted that significant masonry repair on the interior of the structure would be needed in the future.

Due to the unique method of the tower's construction, the aging of original building materials, and the number of subsequent repair methods over the past century, it was determined that extensive reconstruction work is needed at the top of the structure - including replacement of the roof structure, and rebuilding of the turrets and arches at the top of the tower. This extensive reconstruction work will come at a significant, yet presently undeterminable, cost.

It was therefore determined by the ACHA, in consultation with construction and engineering experts, to remove the top quarter of the tower including the open arches, turrets and upper roof, down to the existing roof currently in place below and subsequently rebuilding the turrets

with the intent to restore and preserve as much of the remaining original structure as possible.

The sidewalk adjacent to the structure along Penn Avenue will be closed off to pedestrians due to the placement of the scaffolding for the restoration of the tower.

The Allegheny Cemetery Historical Association was established in 1980 to raise and manage funds for preservation, restoration and conservation of the historic Cemetery. Over the last five years, more than \$2 million dollars has been raised through the generosity of individuals, the board of trustees, and numerous local foundations.

The ACHA concluded that, due to the

numerous historic buildings on the property, its efforts should prioritize the historic structures utilized by the public. Despite the tower's majesty, it primarily serves as an icon of the Penn Avenue gateway; the tower has rarely been utilized, or accessible to the public, since its construction.

"While we regret to have to alter the appearance of the top of the tower, the focus of [our] efforts and financial resources are being applied to the restoration and preservation of the many historic structures, sculptures, and landscape," Michener explained, "encompassing 300 acres that are primarily used by the public, the cemetery's administration, and the families we serve." ♦

CARE ABOUT BLOOMFIELD? JOIN THE BDC BOARD!

The Bloomfield Development Corporation (BDC) is now accepting applications for new board members; applications are due by Jun. 1. We work to make a "Bloomfield for Everyone" - accomplishing our mission through small business support and promotion, housing support, mobility & infrastructure planning, and the Bloomfield Saturday Market.

As the Registered Community Organization for the neighborhood, we host community meetings about different developments and city-led projects.

For more info, visit bloomfieldpgh.org/board. To apply, send a resume and brief bio to board@bloomfieldpgh.org. Please refer any inquiries to this email address or call 412-681-8800.

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vehicles, leasehold improvements and more.



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