



2013 SPRING NEWSLETTER

March 2013



**OFFICE OF COUNCILMAN
R. DANIEL LAVELLE**

Proudly Serving:

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414 Grant Street
 510 City-County Building
 Pittsburgh, PA 15219
 412-255-2134 ph
 412-255-0737 fax

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Message From the Councilman

Greetings from District 6:

2013 is shaping up to be a momentous year within District 6. City Council is set to review the application for expansion of the Mexican War Streets historic district, infrastructure is being prepped to commence on the former Civic Arena site, my office preparing the final touches of legislation aimed at holding creditors accountable for maintenance of vacant properties, and a basketball tournament and job fair scheduled to take place this spring.

Please take a moment of your time and review the information contained in this newsletter. I hope you find it informative. However, should you have additional concerns, questions or thoughts please feel free to contact me by phone at 412-255-2134 or by email at daniel.lavelle@pittsburghpa.gov. You can also reach us via our newly restructured website at www.pittsburghpa.gov/district6/.

Councilman Lavelle to Introduce Vacant Property Registration Ordinance for REOs

Blight prevention is a challenge. Vacant and abandoned structures increased dramatically with the 2008 recession brought on by the mortgage crisis. What results is a domino effect, whereby the deterioration of an abandoned property affects the property values of neighboring homes. Whole communities can be negatively impacted unless an effective strategy is implemented to reverse the trends of vacancies in our distressed neighborhoods.

Part of the puzzle in addressing blight and vacancy issues has been holding financial institutions accountable for the maintenance of properties they own as a result of foreclosures, also known as REOs (Real Estate Owned). The tell-tale signs of these vacant structures are familiar to all: overgrown lawns, broken windows, accumulating debris, and overall physical deterioration of the building. Without incentive, creditors won't invest on the

maintenance of foreclosures if the costs exceed the expected return on investment.



In an effort to address the maintenance issues of REO properties, Councilman Lavelle has been working on an ordinance aimed at motivating creditors to maintain the properties on their REO portfolio. The intent is to create an additional tool for the City to use in its blight prevention strategy, and it is modeled after vacant property registry ordinances that have been passed across the country in recent years.

The stated goal of the bill is to establish a blight prevention model that incentivizes creditors to get REO properties up to code. It would require creditors to register with the city vacant properties to which they have initiated foreclosure proceedings. Thereafter, inspections of these structures would be mandated on a regular basis, as well as maintenance of the properties to meet minimum HUD standards. Should the creditor fail to meet these requirements, they will be subjected to penalties and fines for each day the violations remain.

Councilman Lavelle is putting the final touches to Pittsburgh's version of a vacant property registration ordinance for introduction in the spring of this year. It is an exciting development in the struggle to fight and push back against the rise of vacant and abandoned structures in the City of Pittsburgh.

2nd Annual ‘Job Start’ Employment & Resource Fair

Employment is key to a community’s self-sufficiency, and fostering job creation has always been one of the Councilman’s central policy goals. Councilman Lavelle, in a partnership with the Northshore Community Alliance, will host the second ‘Job Start’ Resource

and Employment Fair this spring. The job fair will build off the success of last year’s inaugural event, which was held in the fall and targeted individuals who are unemployed, underemployed or have been formerly incarcerated.



**Tentative Date: May 4
11:00AM—4:00PM
Northside Institutional Church
302 West North Avenue**

For more information or if you have any questions, please call Bernelle Wood at 412-255-2134.

“Fit in Six” Spring Basketball Tournament



Councilman Lavelle’s “Fit in Six” initiative promotes healthy and active lifestyles in District 6. Events hosted by the District 6 office under the “Fit in Six” banner have included health and wellness fairs, a basketball tournament and a soccer tournament.

With the success of the first “Fit in Six” basketball tournament, the Councilman is pleased to announce the 2nd Annual 3-on-3 basketball tournament for the spring of this year. The tournament is for youth ages 10-18.

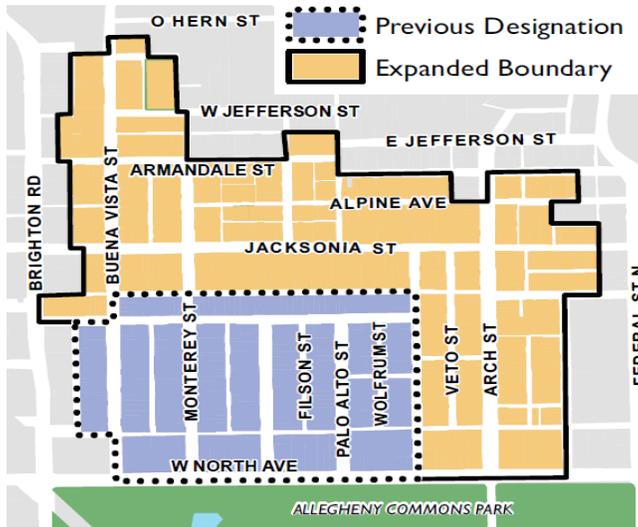
**Saturday, April 13
10:00am
Thelma Lovette YMCA
2114 Centre Ave**

Teams will be split into the age groups of 10-12, 13-15 and 16-18. If you would like to volunteer or know anyone who is interested in participating, please contact Bernelle Wood at 412-255-2134 or at: bernelle.wood@pittsburghpa.gov

Update on Mexican War Streets Historic District Expansion Application

An application for expansion of the Mexican War Streets’ historic boundaries was formally received by the City of Pittsburgh in the fall of 2012. A review of the proposal was conducted by the Historic Review Commission (HRC) in December of 2012, which approved the application with recommendations, as well as the City Planning Commission in January of 2013, which also approved the application. Council introduced the legislation on March 12, 2013, and will schedule a public hearing in the near future.

Throughout the process, residents affected by the expanded historic boundary proposal have spoken out passionately in favor and against the application. However, our office has become keenly aware that there is a lot of misinformation in the community.



Map of proposed historic district expansion boundary.

Therefore, prior to the public hearing, our office, together with Council President Harris’ office, will host an informational meeting on the application.

The purpose of the informational meeting is to provide a background of the application up to the present point, discuss next steps, review the guidelines of historic districts, and answer any questions residents may have on any of these matters. This meeting will solely discuss the facts as they pertain to the aforementioned subjects. It is not meant to be a debate on the merits of the application. That opportunity will be afforded once Council schedules a public hearing on the issue.

PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING

**Thursday, April 18
6:00pm
Northside Institutional Church
302 W. North Avenue**

For more information please contact Daniel Wood at 412-255-2134.

Councilman Lavelle Works to Ensure Community Benefits in Development of Former Civic Arena Site

The development of the Lower Hill District provides us with a unique opportunity to ensure a new wealth legacy for African Americans, the Hill District specifically and the City of Pittsburgh in general.

I am committed to ensuring the aforementioned are able to take full advantage of the economic potential in the development of the Lower Hill. In doing so, we must define the outcomes on the front end, during the preliminary planning stages of the 28 acres site, to guarantee our best interests are taken into account.

Towards that end, I assembled a working group comprised of representatives of the Hill District, workforce development organizations and business development organizations to draft a set of goals and objectives that will guide developers through the pre-construction, construction and post-construction phases of development. We are currently engaged with the master developer of the site, the Pittsburgh Penguins, in a series of weekly meetings to define these goals in the form of employment, business and housing opportunities.



Preliminary sketch of Lower Hill site. Not a final draft.

Some of the topics being discussed include wealth building, minority and women business participation, employment and contracting opportunities, housing, workforce development and business development to ensure residents are prepared for the economic opportunities that will exist. In addition, the importance of building the local capacity to support the needs of each development phase cannot be overstated. We must prepare residents and local businesses for the opportunities coming down the pipeline as soon as possible.

To provide you with more insight, my office, together with the Hill District CDC, will be hosting a series of community outreach meetings to update residents on the discussions of our weekly meetings, as well as to discuss and receive input from residents on the development of the Civic Arena site.

Come learn how we got where we are today, what the next steps are, and to provide your input on how we can realize the full potential of the site for the greater good of the Hill District and the City of Pittsburgh.

COMMUNITY INPUT MEETING ON LOWER HILL DEVELOPMENT

Wednesday, April 10
6:00pm—9:00pm
Kaufmann Auditorium
1835 Centre Ave



A Long Time Coming, but...



Shop n Save Under Construction and Expected to be Completed by Summer 2013



Office of Councilman R. Daniel Lavelle

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District 6 Remote Site Visits Schedule

In order to keep the lines of communication open with the constituency he represents, Councilman Lavelle hosts a series of monthly remote site visits throughout District 6. All are invited to attend the meetings to speak with the Councilman and share with him their thoughts, issues and concerns. Come meet the Councilman and other residents to engage in a lively conversation on how to make District 6 a better place to live.

Northside: Every second Tuesday at 5:00 pm at the Northside Coalition for Fair Housing. Located at 1821 Brighton Road.

Oakland: Every second Wednesday at 6:00 pm at the Community Human Services building. Located at 347 Lawn Street.

Manchester: Every second Thursday at 5:30 pm at the Manchester Citizens Corporation building. Located at 1319 Allegheny Avenue.

Hill District: Every fourth Monday at 5:00 pm at the Hill Carnegie Library. Located at 2177 Centre Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15219.

Councilman Lavelle Hosts First Online Town Hall in Pittsburgh

Good governance is keeping the lines of communication open with constituents, so that they remain involved and engaged in the political process. Building upon his monthly remote site visits, and in order to reach residents that may not be able to attend the physical meetings, Councilman Lavelle became the first political official in Pittsburgh to host an online town hall meeting in February of this year.

It was an opportunity for Pittsburghers to ask questions and interact with the Councilman live, via webcam, in the comfort of their own homes.



Councilman Lavelle interacts during 2nd online town hall

Participants interacted with Councilman Lavelle on issues ranging from garbage collection Downtown, concerns of crime and safety, to the redevelopment of the Centre Ave business corridor.

Based on the success of the first online town hall, a second online town hall took place in March. It is the objective of the Councilman to have at least one online town hall every month, the goal being to have a continual conversation on how to make District 6 a better district to live and play.

The next online town hall will be:

**Tuesday, April 9
7pm**

@ www.concert-oh.com