

## Brookline Together Community Meeting

March 11, 2024 at Brookline Teen Outreach

**Attendance:** Caitlin McNulty, Blake Plavchak, Melissa Distel-Kilmer, Lisa Wilson, Don Mudrick, Bill Kim, Mark Hopkinson, Jr.

**Excused:** None

Meeting called to order by Caitlin McNulty at 7:02 PM.

February Board Meeting minutes were approved. Motioned by Caitlin, seconded by Bill.

**Saw Mill Run Watershed Master Plan:** Lisa Brown (Watersheds of South Pittsburgh) and Thomas Scharf (City of Pittsburgh Planning)

- The Watersheds of South Pittsburgh was an offshoot of the Economic Development South organization and is funded by Richard Mellon Foundation, Heinz Endowments, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and grants from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- A watershed can be defined as an area of land where precipitation ends up, which also includes pollution carried by precipitation. The streams are nested, smaller tributaries flow into the streams, which flow to rivers (i.e. Ohio and Mississippi) and eventually into the ocean.
- Goal of the organization is to focus on the Saw Mill Run watershed within the city of Pittsburgh limits, focusing on the water quality, flooding and land use around Saw Mill Run.
  - Section includes portions of Brookline, Overbrook (up to Library Road) and the West End.
- Advisory Committee was formed to evaluate the current situation of Saw Mill Run and to identify stakeholders and community partners to draft a master plan for the Saw Mill Run watershed area.
  - Previous studies only focus on traffic on Saw Mill Run Boulevard/Route 51.
  - Committee identified that there are no services for many of the local residents and the area is not safe for pedestrians and bicyclists.
  - Current regulations do not address the need for a flood plain.
  - The area is overdeveloped (i.e. 28 used car dealerships)
- Planning process included stakeholder interviews, public engagement and technical analysis.
  - Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority, Pittsburgh Regional Transit, Allegheny County, State Rep. Jessica Benham's office and PennDOT are all partners engaged in the strategic planning.
- Strategic plan has 11 goals that include mobility alternatives (for walking and biking), ability to report issues, create a brand for Saw Mill Run, refine regulations against illegal encroachments and transformation of underutilized spaces.
- Group formed in 2021, Request for Proposal developed in early 2022, and strategic plan delivered to the Department of City Planning (awaiting approval).

- Technical analysis reviewed demographics, housing, zoning, flooding, parks, pollutants and green space access.
- Study to be released in July 2024 focuses on economic activity around the Saw Mill Run area.
- Design focus on several areas including West End, Seldom Seen Greenway, Woodruff Street “bathtub”, Red White and Blue (thrift store area), Ansonia Place and Accamondo Center.
- Current challenges are the lack of coordination between all stakeholders, enforcing policy changes to existing developments and improvement needed for degraded stream and right of way under the current conditions.

**Treasurer’s Report:** Bill Kim

- Taxes filed for 2023

**Membership:** Melissa Distel-Kilmer

- 32 Business Members, 23 Neighborhood members.
- New online portal allows business members to post their own events on the Brookline Together website.
- Food trucks start March 19<sup>th</sup> with Big Lou’s
- Farmers Market to begin June 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Cornhole tournament at Red’s Good News at 7 pm on June 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Beautification:** Lisa Wilson

- Jacob/Whited – looking for regular lawn care over the spring/summer seasons. Fencing for the beds should be arriving soon.
- Boulevard Beds – They have been numbered with a stake for tracking purposes. Sixteen of the beds have been adopted from a total of 19 beds available.
- Community Clean Up April 6<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM.
  - Mulch to be delivered the day prior.
  - Pitt students will be assisting with planting and mulching.
- Bulletin Board is scheduled to be repaired on May 11<sup>th</sup>.
- Cannon Park Historical Designation – The application must be reviewed by the Historic Review Commission twice before approval, the second review is scheduled for April 3<sup>rd</sup> Historic Review Commission meeting for a vote. Still on target for completion by Memorial Day of this year (May 27<sup>th</sup>).
- New resident packets: 12 sent in February, 13 in March. No notable transfers.

**Events:** Melissa, Don Mudrick and Lisa Wilson

- Calendar distribution is complete.
- Yard Sale: Saturday June 1<sup>st</sup> and Sunday June 2<sup>nd</sup> \$10 registration until May 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Breeze registration opens April 1<sup>st</sup>, Early bird pricing of \$20.
- Breezefest vendor registration is already open, \$55 for vendors, all food truck spots are taken.
- Breeze and Breezefest are on August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

### **Election of Secretary position:**

- Renee - owner of Posh Local on Brookline Blvd.
- Amber – lawyer at Edgar Snyder
- Victoria – Long-time Brookline resident

### **Open Forum:**

- Paul Scott – Engagement Manager for City of Pittsburgh (covering for Ashley)
  - Mayor’s newsletter is available for residents of Pittsburgh.
  - Learn and Earn program (Brookline Teen Outreach is a Learn and Earn center)
    - Assistance available to complete applications.
  - City is hiring lifeguards for the pool season (more lifeguards means more pools open).
- Kate – Seton Center
  - March 23 – Career and Community Resource fair.
  - Local organizations are needed to table (few Brookline organizations have signed up)
    - Brookline Together members get a discount on a table.
  - Free headshots available to participants.
  - Event is posted on the Seton Center Facebook page. Share it!
- State Representative Jessica Benham
  - Budget will be prepared on time this year; increase in funding for public schools.
  - PennDOT will begin replacing traffic lights within 2-3 years to a more high-tech system to improve traffic flow, but they’re expensive to purchase.
  - Free Paper Shredding Event 9am-11am – Date/Location needed.
- Don Mudrick
  - New Division 4 public works building will begin construction within a few weeks on site of previous building.
  - Should be available for staging for Winter 2024, fully operational for Winter 2025.
  - New salt dome being built on Route 51/Saw Mill Run Blvd.
- Blake Plavchak
  - FEMA grant is in procurement to aid in buying out properties along Saw Mill Run Blvd as part of a pilot program (and part of the Saw Mill Watershed plan). To be voted on March 12<sup>th</sup>.
- Thomas Scharf & Nancy from Department of City Planning
  - Nancy to replace Thomas for the Brookline region.
  - Comprehensive Land Use policy covering zoning is coming.
  - Using “just transition” by using FEMA grants to help those in vulnerable positions by buying their property and turning the space into an asset.
  - Reach out to Lisa Brown to get involved.
    - Lisa@wospgh.org