



East Allegheny Community Council 2016 Year in Review

Overview

According to the bylaws, the purpose of the East Allegheny Community Council is the following:

- a) To promote social, cultural, educational, and charitable events and programs in the East Allegheny community;
- b) To promote enforcement of city ordinances, maintenance of city property, and the performance of city services in East Allegheny;
- c) To promote public safety in East Allegheny;
- d) To promote renovation, restoration, and improvement of the houses and buildings of East Allegheny;
- e) To improve the quality of life in East Allegheny; and
- f) To promote the general welfare of East Allegheny.

The group is governed by a nine-member volunteer board of directors. To be eligible to vote in the board election each September, a member must pay yearly dues and have attended at least two consecutive meetings (and at least three total) in the previous twelve months.

This review details the decisions made by the board of directors during the year 2016. An electronic copy can be found online at deutschtown.org/eacc.

Further information about any of the information presented or meeting minutes is available upon request.

Meetings, Events, & Communication

One of EACC's bylaws states a purpose "to promote social, cultural, educational, and charitable events and programs in the East Allegheny community". To this end, the council organizes some special events itself, but more often supports the work of other organization and neighbors. In addition, the council plans and hosts community meetings. To communicate with the neighborhood, the council maintains several communication channels.

Events

1. Organized the 2016 Historic Deutschtown House Tour on September 25, which showcased 8 homes plus the park, brought approximately 300 people through the homes, and raised \$7,200 for restoration of Allegheny Commons Park's Northeast Fountain Restoration project.
2. Hosted a holiday party in December for members and businesses.
3. Served as fiscal sponsor for the July 8-10 Deutschtown Music Festival, which brought in 180 bands to at least 15 venues in the area. Approximately 15,000 people came to the neighborhood to enjoy the free festival.
4. Served as fiscal sponsor for the 25th Pumpkinfest on October 9, which brings more than 1,500 children to the neighborhood for a fun event.

Meetings

1. Held general membership meetings monthly in January to November. Coordinated relevant presenters at the meetings, including City Councilor Darlene Harris or representatives from her office, Pittsburgh Police, the mayor's office, Allegheny Commons Initiative, Northside Leadership Conference, Northside Community Development Fund, Urban Redevelopment Authority, Living in Liberty, GTECH, Ignite Northside, Allegheny Center Alliance Church, and Operation Safety Net.
2. Represented the neighborhood at meetings of associated groups, including the Northside Leadership Conference, Historic Deutschtown Development Corporation, Northside Public Safety Council, Northside Bike-Ped Committee, Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group, the One Northside Business District Façade Enhancement and Activation Program, and Allegheny Commons Initiative.
3. Supported special community meetings to gather feedback about Light of Life's relocation.

Neighborhood Communication

1. Maintained a neighborhood website (deutschtown.org), Facebook page (Welcome to Deutschtown), monthly e-newsletter, and bi-monthly printed newsletter. Each of these channels provides information about events and resources relevant to current and prospective residents and business owners.
2. Developed easily-editable electronic list of members and friends.
3. Responded to incoming inquiries to council email (deutschtown@gmail.com) and phone.

Homes & Properties

EACC works to ensure a high standard of neighborliness and property conditions. The board also works to maintain the neighborhood's heritage by ensuring appropriate renovations and restorations where possible, i.e. by placing covenants on the properties sold by the council and enforcing said covenants. When historic homes or vacant lots are for sale, EACC will sometimes make discretionary purchases, in order to protect the building from demolition or unwelcome use.

In 2016, there was considerable activity involving covenants, real estate transactions, and monitoring of property activity.

Upholding Covenants

1. Referred to covenants to approve a window installations in a home on Shawano Way and courtyard fencing for a home on Tripoli Street.
2. Referred to covenants to address deteriorating conditions on a home on Lockhart Street and an unsuitable exterior project on a home on Middle Street.

Real Estate Transactions

1. Sold lot for new construction at 1306 James Street.
2. Prepared a vacant lot at 627 Foreland Street for building by a future owner.

Monitoring property use

1. Cross-referenced occupancy permits for businesses operating within the residentially-zoned neighborhood (i.e., nonconforming use permitted by zoning variance/occupancy permit) against the current, actual use. Where discrepancies between the permitted use and actual use exist, EACC board will consider taking action. Uses that are more intensive than permitted can be reported for citations and possible suspension of the occupancy permit. For uses that are less intensive than permitted, the EACC can pursue getting the occupancy permit updated to the current, less-intensive use to reduce the risk of the property reverting back to more intensive use in the future.
2. Evaluated the rate of renovation progress on a home previously owned by EACC on Cedar Avenue; determined that it was progressing sufficiently.
3. Alerted city officials to increased incidents of garbage cans being left on sidewalks, resulting in unsightly and unsafe pathways.
4. Supported several noncontroversial zoning variances. (Even though our residential neighborhood is zoned as very high density – attached, variances must still be obtained for proposed structures/accessory uses that will occupy the “required” set-back from property lines.)

Neighborhood Beauty, Safety, and Quality of Life

EACC works to improve the quality of life and safety in East Allegheny. Working with local businesses, city departments, and political figures, the council coordinates public safety initiatives as well as neighborhood beautification and maintenance projects. Much of this work is subsidized by grants and public funding.

In 2016, several new projects were addressed and a few longstanding issues were resolved or sustained.

Business District and Business Relations

1. Supported non-controversial variances at 414 E. Ohio St.
2. Supported a grant request for façade work at 608 E. Ohio St.
3. Represented the neighborhood on a committee for the One Northside Business District Façade Enhancement and Activation Program, which provides matching grants of up to \$8,000 to Deutschtown businesses.
4. Represented the neighborhood at several series of special meetings about the following topics:
 - a North Shore parking garage
 - traffic changes to Allegheny Center
 - Allegheny General Hospital’s upcoming institutional master plan (IMP)
 - the E. Ohio St. liquor store
5. Helped to refine and distribute a community member’s survey of grocery shopping habits to local residents, for use in ongoing communications with Giant Eagle.
6. Supported The Bridge Music Hall to locate in Nova Place.
7. Supported a proposed redevelopment area in the neighborhood, a designation which could increase grant funding in the future.
8. Worked with a prospective buyer of the former church at 501 Avery Street to discuss options for future use of the church building and community house, taking into account neighborhood preferences and concerns. Invited community members to provide feedback.

Neighborhood Beautification

1. Coordinated hanging flower baskets along East Ohio Street.
2. Planted petunias in the flower bed at the public pool along Stockton Avenue.
3. Continued work to improve the landscaping in the parking lot of Giant Eagle by enforcing the official landscaping plan.

4. Received a \$10,000 grant from the Buhl Foundation for design and installation of a large mural on the exterior wall of 607 Foreland Street, facing the municipal parking lot. Invited community members to evaluate artist submissions. The mural was completed in July 2017.
5. Considered and approved a concept for art along the walkway on Tripoli Street between East Street and Madison Avenue.
6. Maintained seven EACC-owned vacant lots.
7. Coordinated volunteer maintenance of the neighborhood sign at Nash and E. Ohio streets.
8. Hosted Neighborhood Redd-Up events on April 16 and October 22.
9. Sponsored an Adopt-a-Block program for ongoing litter pick-up.

Public Safety

1. Represented the neighborhood at monthly meetings of the Northside Public Safety Council.
2. Coordinated with Pittsburgh Police to make footage from security camera at 528 E. Ohio St. available to them.
3. Monitored effectiveness of a beat officer assignment in the neighborhood and provided formal letter of support for continuation of such strategy.
4. Met with City Councilwoman Darlene Harris to discuss East Ohio Street lighting projects.

Quality of Life

1. Began documenting incidents at several nuisance or vacant properties in the neighborhood owned by the same landlord.
2. Facilitated discussions regarding Light of Life's relocation to a new site near the Heinz Lofts. In 2003, the EACC board deferred to CASGED on the relocation decision, because at the time, the proposed site was located in the CASGED neighborhood. After Northside neighborhoods decided to pursue the relocation, the proposed site was shifted to a site that is technically located in the EACC neighborhood.
3. Represented the neighborhood at meetings of the Northside Bike-Ped Committee and Allegheny Commons Initiative.
4. Distributed fruit trays to elderly neighborhood residents.
5. Formally opposed efforts to cut through Allegheny Center for vehicular traffic.