February 2015

Highland Park
Community Council Newsletter

Love Your Home!

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This winter, I have been focusing my energies on three priorities in the neighborhood.

The first is the HPCC “Love Your Home” Event planned for February 21st at Union Project. We have a neighborhood full of beautiful old homes that continuously need a lot of love to keep them in good health. With this in mind, the House Tour Committee has lined-up a terrific group of experts and resources to help residents in Highland Park care for their homes. The event is FREE to all Highland Park residents and you can read all about it in this newsletter.

My second priority is the off-leash exercise area (OLEA) for dogs. I am continuously being asked for an update on the project and completely understand everyone’s frustration and desire to simply move the project forward. As I have told you before, our OLEA project was put on hold by the City until they could develop an official set of criteria for OLEAs. That criteria was just released and is also included in this newsletter.

The Forestry location on Stanton Avenue can now complete the review process with DPW. Interviews with neighbors directly across from the site are also being taken into consideration.

Looking at the criteria, the site does offer some challenges. Please continue to be patient while I work with DPW and the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy to come to an amicable decision on a location.

The official OLEA criteria can be found [here](#).

My third priority is the Heth’s Run Ecological and Recreational Restoration Project. Now that the bridge has been replaced, the rest of the project can move forward. A kick-off meeting with all of the stakeholders was held last week. It was hosted by the Mayor and Councilwoman Deb Gross, who will be the lead on the project. David Hance of the HPCDC and I attended, along with many others. We are all looking forward to getting the project underway.

Community meetings to get feedback on the project are going to be held in March and April. Highland Park will be holding ours on March 19th at our normal HPCC meeting. Anyone with interest in the project should attend and have their voice heard. That includes all residents on Hampton, King and Cordova and any other homes surrounding the upper Heth’s Park as both upper and lower portions of Heth’s Run will be included in this overall planning stage.

I will continue to send updates via the ListServ.

Stay warm!

Monica Watt
HPCC President
Monica Watt, HPCC President, began the meeting at 7:05 p.m. with a quorum present.

Monica Watt reported that the notices to renew/join HPCC membership went out to the neighborhood and reminded everyone to renew if they have not already.

The "Love Your Home" resource fair is taking place on February 21st at the Union Project. This event is to provide information and advice on maintaining and repairing homes in the Highland Park area.

A motion was made and seconded to increase the amount of the budget for Special Events to $1000 to cover the expenses of the home fair. The motion passed with 9 Yes votes, 0 No and none abstaining.

Paul Miller, Treasurer, reported on the finances. We are still awaiting a reimbursement check from the City for the ROJ.

Bruce Robison, Pastor of St. Andrews, invited all to a discussion on recent police events in Pittsburgh and around the country. There is a planning meeting on February 22nd from 7-8:30 p.m. at the church to decide the best format for this public discussion.

Randy and Karen Woods spoke about their plans to turn the property at 1156 Portland Street into a bed and breakfast. They reviewed their plans for a 5-bedroom facility. They are going thru the process of zoning and occupancy to change the property from residential to allow the bed and breakfast.

The meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m. The next HPCC meeting is Thursday, February 19, 2015.
The HPCC is planning our first Homeowner Resource Fair on Saturday, February 21 to help educate the community on home improvements, general home maintenance, navigating City processes such as permitting and innovative approaches to enhancing the value of one’s residence.

The event is FREE for all Highland Park residents and will be held at Union Project, 801 N. Negley Ave., from 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. It will include a traditional Resource Fair in the Great Hall with table stations guests can visit during the event and special breakout sessions in the Atrium with selected speaker panels for a more in-depth look at certain topics of interest.

We realize it might be more challenging for people with children to attend the event so to make it easier the Children’s Committee will have an activities table in the Great Hall where kids ages 5 – 12 can spend time while their parents speak with experts or attend a break-out session.

I would also like to thank the House Tour Committee (Janine Jelks-Seale, Christine Tosatto Adams, Amber Quick, Vernon Simmons, Shawn Aversa, James McAdams and Jake Pawlak) for all of their hard work. Without them, this event would not be possible.

The Love Your Home Event is sponsored by the Highland Park Community Council (HPCC) with generous support from RickJohn Roofing.
Resource Fair Participants in the Great Hall
10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

- Public Sidewalks & Trees - Dept. of Public Works, Forestry Division
- Permits, Licensing and Inspections (PLI) - formerly Bureau of Building Inspections
- PWSA
- Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation
- Design Center
- Construction Junction
- NeighborWorks
- Roofing Expert - RickJohn Roofing
- Painting Expert - Home Depot
- Electrical Expert - Home Depot
- Plumbing Expert - Home Depot
- Plastering Expert - Michael Dell’aquila Plastering
- Stained Glass Restoration Expert - Kelly Art Glass
- Composting Expert - Shadyside Worms
- Landscaping Expert - Shadyside Nursery
- Realty Expert - Dan Landis, Berkshire Hathaway Home Services
- Realty Expert - Kelly Meade, Howard Hanna
- Home Inspection Expert - Richard D. Malin & Associates
- Home Security Expert - Guardian Protection Services
- Restoration Expert - Zane Vaughan, Price & Vaughan Company
- “Ask Me Anything” Expert - Jeff Wetzel, Architect, AE7
- City Council District 7 - Deb Gross’ Office
- Cookie Experts - The Girl Scouts

Breakout Sessions in the Atrium

Navigating City Services
10:15 – 10:40 a.m.

Navigating the different departments of the City of Pittsburgh can sometimes be overwhelming. This is the perfect opportunity to for Highland Parkers to ask questions about which projects require a permit, where you can put a dumpster, how to apply for sidewalk replacement reimbursement caused by City tree roots and the latest reimbursement amount, what to do about a tree that is on a City right of way that is dead, unsafe, needs to be pruned, requires root pruning due to sidewalk issues or a request to plant a new tree. Departments on the panel include: Permits, Licenses, and Inspections (PLI formerly BBI), Forestry, Sidewalks.

Who to Use & Where to Start
10:45 – 11:10 a.m.

Considering a home remodeling or renovation project and don't know where to start or which professional to choose? The Design Center, a non-profit organization committed to connecting community members with architects, landscape architects, and interior designers for affordable design consultations, will share their expertise on how to best approach projects and choose the contractor that is right for your project.
Maximizing Your Return on Investment (ROI)
11:15 – 11:55 a.m.
A panel of realtors in the Highland Park area will cover topics including making choices that maximize your return on investment, what works in the marketplace and re-purposing an area for better living and better resale (i.e. create a walk-in closet, powder room, etc.)

Sustainable Living
12:00 noon – 12:25 p.m.
A panel of experts in sustainable design, energy efficiency, and residential alternative energy will provide information and take questions on how to incorporate ‘green’ features, building materials, and systems into your home, either as a stand-alone project or part of your other renovation plans.

Ask Your Neighbors: Renovation Stories
12:30 – 12:55 p.m.
Hear renovation stories from fellow Highland Park residents that truly love their homes. Listen to first hand experiences of three neighbors who have gone through the renovation process on large and small projects and can share with you how they navigated the process.

Design Center Consultations
Sign-up for a FREE, 15-minute design consultation during the Love Your Home Event. In addition to a breakout session, the Design Center will provide on-site consultations to residents to discuss property improvement ideas and renovation options. During these FREE, 15-minute mini-consults, designers will provide advice and ideas to homeowners. To sign up for a FREE design consultation during the event, e-mail housetour@highlandparkpa.com and make sure you include your name and preference of meeting with an architect, landscape architect, or interior designer. Homeowners should bring in photos, measurements and questions about their renovation projects to the event. Attempts to accommodate preference will be made but are not guaranteed. Consultations slots are limited to one per resident.
Looking for Inspiration?

Maybe one of these neighborhood projects will get you thinking…

**PROJECT #1: Sunporch Floor Restoration**

**Challenge:** After spending years completing the rest of the house, the homeowner realized that the unfinished sunporch was one of the first things people saw when they entered the home. The sunporch itself is L-shaped with the long narrow side mostly out of view. The goal was to give the small space a bigger feel with more charm.

**Solution:** The homeowner painted a tile floor pattern on the wood floor and placed the tile design on the bias to make the room look larger.

![Before and After images of the sunporch floor restoration project](image1.jpg)

**PROJECT #2: Adding a Powder Room on the First Floor of an Old Victorian**

**Challenge:** After purchasing the house in 2013, the homeowners decided to add a much needed powder room to their main floor. After consulting with an architect, they decided to repurpose a former side entrance to the house, which had been converted into a closet beneath the first floor staircase by the previous owner. Most importantly, the homeowner’s primary goal was to design the bathroom to look as though it was original.

**Solution:** The homeowner identified a local artisan to create a custom-paneled door to match the existing wood paneling; they then converted the closet into a powder room by replacing the existing exterior door with a window, adding fixtures, period lighting, and unique design accents.

![Before and After images of the powder room addition project](image2.jpg)
PROJECT #3:
Old Victorian Home Gets New Life

Challenge: When the house was purchased in 2012, it was split into three poorly-maintained rental units. The homeowners immediately began renovations, tearing out drop ceilings and wood paneling to reveal hidden pocket doors, original moldings, and eleven-foot ceilings. The first floor kitchen was located in a small addition with no heat and a rotting exterior wall.

Solution: The homeowners re-imagined the first floor layout, removed a wall and installed a new kitchen in the main living area. A vintage Tappan stove and repurposed butcher block countertops paired with stainless steel appliances and timeless cabinets unites a modern feeling with the house's original details. In addition to the kitchen, the homeowners have had to tackle rebuilding box-gutters, replacing cedar siding, and updating plumbing and electrical in their effort to restore the integrity of the house.

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Super Playground –
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Yard Sale – Paul Miller (412) 365-0675
Welcoming – Janine Seale
Zoning – Dell Ziegler (412) 363-0742
We Get Homes Sold!
2 Heads are Better than 1
Contact Us...We Are Available!!
Pursuant to Section 633.22(d)(1) of the Pittsburgh City Code, Off-Leash Exercise Areas benefit the community by allowing a place for dogs to exercise and socialize safely. These areas also help prevent off-leash animals from infringing on the rights of other community residents and park users. When properly applied, these rules should facilitate enforcement of leash laws and help promote responsible dog ownership. The Current list of authorized OLEA is as follows:

1. Allegheny Commons Park (West Commons), Central Northside
2. Bernard Dog Run, Lawrenceville
3. Frick Park, Squirrel Hill
4. Olympia Park, Mount Washington
5. South Side Riverfront Park, South Side
6. Riverview Park, Perry North

The following Site Selection Standards and Recommended Design Standards are to be used when establishing a new off leash exercise area or relocating existing OLEA to a new location. These standards will help to avoid issues such as noise complaints, physical impact on the site, and conflicts between dogs, dog owners and park guests and neighbors.

**Site Selection:**
When selecting an OLEA site, the site must meet the following criteria:
- The land must be 1.5 - 2 acres in size, well-drained, with a maximum slope of 5%.
- It should avoid interference with other established uses or sponsored activities.
- The location must have high visibility; ideal locations would be adjacent to roadways, visible from other uses such as roads, parks, public buildings, or trail corridors.
- An ideal distance between the OLEA and adjacent residences and businesses is two hundred (200) feet. However, changes in topography or landscape can reduce the need for spatial separation.
- Sites should have near-by parking to accommodate both residential use and dog park visitors and minimal impact on the visual character of a park while avoiding spillover into non-dog areas.
- These areas should also avoid sensitive environmental habitats; including hillsides, riparian areas, high-valued habitats, or protected watersheds.
- Normal public process, including public meetings, design review, and planning meeting processes should be adhered to in developing and finalizing design

**Recommended Design Standards:**
The standard OLEA should consist of a safe surface for play, a water source, runoff mitigation, and visual screening. Amenities should include signage. The surface of any OLEA should include all necessary drainage systems, installed prior to installation of surfacing.
• The preferred surface should be produced from decomposed granite, no greater than .25 inches in size, laid to a depth of at least six inches. If decomposed granite is not able to be used then alternate materials can include: shredded bark, pebbles, or synthetic materials. OLEA designs should also include a paved pathway spanning 8-10’ wide that loops around the park. The use of grass or turf for the surface of OLEA is discouraged.

• Fencing, if applicable, should be five to six (5-6) feet tall and made of commercial grade vinyl-coated chain link, with footings buried to a depth of one (1) foot and panels buried to a depth of six (6) inches. Fencing should also include two access points. Any gates or entrances should be lockable and be the same height as the fencing. One of the two access points should be a double gate to provide public access to a twelve (12) square-foot minimum paved area; this area serves as a buffer between the OLEA and the rest of the park. The second access point should be a single sliding gate to provide maintenance access and should be a minimum of ten (10) feet wide, controlled by the Department of Public Works (DPW).

• OLEAs that do not require a fence should be more than 200 feet away from nearest street. Unfenced areas typically exist within large community or regional parks.

• All specimen trees within the OLEA will be protected by fencing designed to keep dogs from marking on the tree trunk.

• The water source should be equipped with a standard hose-bib or quick coupler on 150’ radius in each fenced area. One accessible drinking fountain for people and one dog drinking feature should be provided in each fenced area.

• Plant beds should be placed along the outside of the fence to help reduce runoff and screen the OLEA from other park users.

Special care will be taken to work within design standards for OLEA designs located in historical parks.

• All OLEAs will have permanent signs, stating the hours of operation, rules and regulations, and contact information for DPW.

• Design for OLEA should include sufficient waste disposal plans. This includes waste bag dispensers near trash receptacles, at the OLEA entryway, and a minimum of one per acre. One waste receptacle should be placed at the OLEA entry and a minimum of one per acre. Waste receptacles should be an appropriate distance from seating. The Department of Public Works will ensure an adequate supply of bags and will empty the waste receptacles at least once daily.

• Sponsoring groups may provide additional amenities by submitting a funded proposal for review by the DPW. Amenities may include seating (3-4 accessible benches per acre), shade structure, agility play features, dog wash-off station, lighting, etc. Amenities may need approval from the City’s Art Commission.

• Designs may consider a separate area for small dogs because they can sometimes be injured or frightened by larger dogs. Many dog parks designate separate areas for smaller or younger dogs so that they can play safely. Simple metrics for delineating small from large dogs such as height or weight can be utilized to distinguish size.

• OLEA should not be installed on a dead end street, as to avoid congestion or traffic problems. It is also advisable to consult a traffic engineer or city planner for instruction about parking and traffic.

• Long-term and sustained maintenance should be considered in the planning phase of the project, to ensure enough funds are allocated to this aspect.

• Public-Private Partnerships should be considered as a means to improve maintenance, monitoring and community support for OLEA. Sponsorship/advertising is limited in parks and must comply with applicable City laws/MBROstandards.

Rules for Conduct/Behavior at OLEAs
The following are rules to be established for OLEAs. These rules and regulations should be posted on permanent signs that should also state the hours of operation and contact information for DPW.
Dog owners are required to remove all waste.

Dogs must be on a leash to and from the park access points.

Dog owners are required to have voice control over their dog(s).

Dog owners are required to always keep their dog(s) in sight.

Dog owners are required to be present at all times.

Children under 8 years are not permitted inside fenced areas. Children age 9-15 must be accompanied and supervised by an adult. Dog handlers must be 16 years of age or older.

A maximum number of three (3) dogs per owner/handler.

No smoking, alcohol, or food is allowed in the dog park.

No pet grooming is allowed outside of established dog wash areas.

Dogs must be healthy and at least four months old.

Full immunizations of dogs are required.

Dogs must be spayed or neutered; dogs in heat are not allowed.

Dogs must display a current license.

Dogs showing signs of aggression or defined as “dangerous” by City Code are not allowed.

Additional rules are not precluded

**Rules Specific to Unfenced OLEA**
The following rules should be applied for unfenced exercised areas in addition to the aforementioned rules.

Dogs must be kept on leashes expect for times designated for off-leash hours.

- Examples of this would be:
  - Dogs must be kept on a leash between the hours 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
  - Between the hours of sunrise – 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. until closing, dogs may be allowed off leash
  - Parks will close at dusk for non-lighted parks and 11pm for lighted parks.

- During prohibited hours or in non-off-leash locations, there is a $100 fine for violators
- Owners must not allow dogs to dig holes, as they create safety hazards for people.
- Dogs should be kept away from ponds, pond banks, shrubs, wooded areas, and other areas that contain sensitive vegetation, for environmental protection.
- Dogs are not permitted off-leash outside of the OLEA, including on children’s playgrounds or athletic fields.
- Additional rules are not precluded

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**December 26, 2014**