
PENN HILLS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION 2014 ANNUAL REPORT

APRIL 15, 2015

Introduction from the 2014 President, Edward Zullo

The past year was one of reevaluation and reexamination of tearing down and rebuilding. Although the membership was well over 150 members, it appeared that the same 30 or so people actually showed up whenever real work was to be done. It became clear that the PHCDC was trying to be all things to all people and consequently was burning out the core group. Therefore a simplification and streamlining of operations was necessary if the PHCDC was to remain relevant in the future of Penn Hills. Prior to embarking on new projects, the Strategic Plan which had languished for a long time was tackled and completed. The Bylaws were gone over line by line and made better. The committee structure was changed and some committees were eliminated and others were combined to achieve a critical mass that could deliver a few projects well instead of many projects poorly. For example:

- The Housing Committee and the Economic Development Committee were combined to form the Community Economic Development Committee;
- The Membership Committee and the Communications Committee were combined to form the Organizational Advancement Committee.
- The Beautification/Sustainability committee remained intact because it already has a wide scope
- The Education Committee was eliminated because much of their work was already being performed by other organizations in the community with more resources available to them.
- The Barn that had served us so well as a meeting place and a great fundraising venue for a couple years was returned back to the Penn Hebron Garden Club by mutual consent. They now continue the great programs developed during the PHCDC tenure such as the Coffeehouse weekly musical performances.

Realizing that it is counterproductive to “reinvent the wheel” we now team up with other organizations like Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group (PCRG), Habitat for Humanity, GTECH, and Rebuilding Together Pittsburgh, The Penn Hills Rotary and the Penn Hills Kiwanis Club. When we synergize with these other organizations the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

In 2015, many exciting projects are in various stages of development and this will be a very good year for the Penn Hills Community. The following sections of this report bear this out.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Penn Hills Community Development Corporation (PHCDC) is to engage in activities that serve to unite the Penn Hills community and enhance the quality of life for its residents. In fulfilling this mission we seek to actively promote inclusion of the entire Penn Hills community, including all neighborhoods, as well as Penn Hills business owners and other community stakeholders.

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HISTORY

The Penn Hills Community Development Corporation began in the fall of 2009 when members of the Penn Hills community came together to hold a community conversation about the strengths and challenges our community faces. Out of this conversation it was decided that a community development corporation is the best way to build on our strengths and tackle our weaknesses. In the winter of 2010 our first CDC board was formed. Board members come from a variety of backgrounds with diverse strengths in the areas of housing, business, education, the arts, and community organizing. Above all, they share a love of Penn Hills and a desire to make improvements to our community.

LEADERSHIP

The Penn Hills Community Development Corporation (PHCDC) is governed by a Board representing a cross section of expertise. Board members meet monthly to oversee PHCDC operations and to provide professional guidance concerning business and policy matters. In addition, some Board members also serve as liaisons to our committees. Committee Chairs are responsible for leading the committees in their projects.

Board Members (2014)

- President – Edward Zullo
- Vice-President – Bryan Dolney
- Secretary – Marie Sandvig
- Treasurer - Janis O'Donnell
- Ray Luncher
- Holly Hudson
- Pete McQuillin

Committee Chairs

- Beautification/Sustainability – Pete McQuillin
 - Organizational Advancement – Bryan Dolney
 - Community Economic Development – Irene Mc Laughlin
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COMMITTEE REPORTS

Beautification/Sustainability

Mission: The mission of the Penn Hills Community Development Corporation's Beautification and Sustainability Committee is to give people an organized way to work on projects that improve the beauty of Penn Hills or help sustain our local environment.

Committee Description: When a person has a vision for a beautification or sustainability project, we help him or her realize that vision by appointing that person as the project manager for the project, get it approved by the CDC board, raise the funds needed to pay for the project and recruit needed volunteers.

Existing 2014 Projects

Penn Hills community garden; Project manager, Kristin Hauman

The Penn Hills Community Garden is a project of the PHCDC Beautification Committee. Sprouting in 2010 with only 16 beds, the community garden has grown to 106 plots! Located at 1162 Jefferson Road between McKenzie and Laurie Drives below the Duquesne light power plant, the garden aims to bring fresh produce into the homes of our gardeners and our less fortunate neighbors through donated produce to local food

banks and senior centers. Most importantly, we are developing a rapport with neighbors we may not otherwise meet. Our belief is that a unified community is a stronger community.

Gardeners are given a 4'x12' plot in which to plant their produce. There is a fee of \$25 dollars for the growing season. This small fee defrays water, soil and repair costs. Our Garden Manager, Kristin Hauman and many volunteer gardeners that make day to day decisions to concerning garden issues.

Rodi Road litter clean ups; Project manager, Sandy Fabec

The Penn Hills CDC Beautification Committee continued its efforts at roadside cleanups along the Rodi Rd corridor. We are an official volunteer group with the State of Pennsylvania and its PENNDOT Adopt-A-Highway program. We routinely hold litter pickups along Rodi Rd during Earth Day weekend and at least two other times during the year. An all-volunteer group, mostly members of the CDC, does this litter pick-up project and on several occasions we have had volunteers from outside of our organization.

Recent changes in the duration of the pick-up, to a shorter length of time showed as an improvement in the general attitude of the volunteers. However, winter continues to be a difficult time to hold a volunteer event of this nature.

Mt. Carmel & Teris gardens; Project manager, Ruth Still

This site is located at Mt. Carmel Road and Tier Street and includes a flower garden and pavilion. Ruth is currently maintaining the site, but needs on-going volunteer help in maintaining the flower bed including spring cleanup, weed-pulling three times in summer and a fall cleanup. Money will also be needed for a contractor to perform periodic grass-cutting.

Allegheny River Blvd Turn-Outs; Project manager, Elouise Brooky

This 1930's era stone "turn-out" was constructed during the great depression by WPA workers. It is located on Allegheny River Boulevard between Nadine and Sandy Creek Roads. Elouise Brooky maintains the flowers and other plantings and PH Public Works provides grass mowing. It is to be the site of the first "Penn Hills Welcomes You" sign.

Rain garden; Project co-managers, Karen Lantz/Lois Wilson

The Rodi Road Rain Garden, a joint project between Rotary and the Penn Hills CDC, was designed to mitigate storm water flow from Frankstown Rd. and asphalt parking lots. The shrubs that were planted originally are growing successfully. The main concern is maintenance, specifically weed control. In the spring, 2015, weed removal, probably done by volunteers, will be necessary. Also, annuals, either bought or donated, could be planted as a border to add color. (Allegheny County does the grass cutting around the garden.)

Beautification below the Lamar electronic sign at Sandy Creek and Allegheny River; Project manager, Don Sanker

In July, Don Sanker together with Pete McQuillin and Howard Davidson met with Jim Vlasach of Lamar's real estate division to discuss the landscaping at the site. Jim agreed it needed substantial improvement. We called Kathy Raborn, a landscape designer, to provide us with a plan for the site. She also had the soil tested at the Penn State agricultural dept. Lamar agreed with the landscape design and in late fall had all the plants installed at no expense to the PHCDC. The planting was done by Sestili nursery out of Pittsburgh. The PHCDC's obligation is to maintain the site. Lamar has agreed to pay for any additional plantings if required. We will attempt to improve the motorists view the beautification area by removing unsightly Japanese knotweed and tree of heaven patches that surround the location.

Planned Future Beautification/Sustainability Projects for 2015

Lincoln Park Community Garden; Project Managers, Ed Zullo and Joyce Davis

Project Activities:

- Mend Existing fence (if necessary)
- Water source (rainwater collection or water buffalo)
- Partnering with Penn Hills NAACP
- Plant vegetables, fruits
- Benefits:
 - Provide vegetables and fruit to the Lincoln Park Food Bank.
 - Plots for local residents.
 - Community building
 - Promote good will.
 - Schedule: Spring 2015

Monarchs and Milkweed Project; Kathy Raborn Project Manager

Objective: To promote the importance of growing native milkweed to help save the monarch butterflies and to provide the seedlings and the information necessary to grow it successfully in our home gardens and throughout Penn Hills. Milkweed are not easy to grow from seed. Our subcommittee will propagate 3 species of milkweed, *Asclepias syriaca* (common milkweed), *A. tuberosa* (butterfly weed) and *A. incarnata* (swamp milkweed), using a variety of methods: seeding, division, cuttings and possibly purchasing small plants (plugs). We will give the plants to interested PHCDC committees and Penn Hills residents. We will have considerably more knowledge and expertise on which propagation methods work best for future years. (More detailed information on the importance of these host plants for the survival of the monarch can be provided.)

Plan of action

- Complete paperwork to form official PHCDC committee and to get necessary funds;
- Marketing to Penn Hills residents;
- Find out which PHCDC committees are interested in planting milkweed;
- Write care instructions that will accompany seedlings, divisions and cuttings;
- Buy materials;
- Decide on indoor growing locations;
- Germinate seeds and grow plants;
- Propagate plants from divisions and cuttings;
- Harvest seed pods in the fall for next year

Penn Hills Welcome Signs; Project manager, Howard Davidson

Welcome Sign Designs are being evaluated and bids for creating and installing the signs are being solicited.

Star Triangle at Frankstown/Coal Hollow; Project manager, Jim Beck

The PHCDC STAR Project is a neighborhood beautification project to be installed upon the existing triangular-shaped plot of ground at the intersection of Frankstown, Coal Hollow, Beulah and Laketon Roads. The project will consist of both perennial and annual plantings, a triangular-shaped sign (design pending, but intending to incorporate donor names, and consistent with the Sign Design/Remarkable Roadsides theme) at the center of the plot, and a low, bowl-shaped planter on the existing 8 x 8' concrete pad.

PHCDC STAR Project Facebook page established September 2014 to promote project to community and beyond URL: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Penn-Hills-Community-Development-Corporation-STAR-Project/1491933057723065>

Organizational Advancement

Mission: The mission of the Organizational Advancement (OA) Committee is to develop, establish and project a high-caliber image for the Penn Hills CDC, its vision, Board of Directors, committees, members, residents and other stakeholders.

Year in Review for OA

In April of 2014 the Membership and Communications Committees were combined into the Organizational Advancement Committee. The OA Committee is chaired by Bryan Dolney.

OA Committee Accomplishments and Events

- OA Committee prepared and passed a Privacy Policy.
- Media Policy was prepared by the committee and passed by the Board of Directors October 16, 2014
- Completed and printed color tri-fold brochure.
- Completed and printed business cards.
- Adopted Strategic Plan that was passed by PHCDC as guiding document for OA. We developed several components of Strategic Plan as activities for OA for 2014 and beyond.
- Hosted Membership Appreciation event at the Barn in July.
- Web Site Update
 - In February 2014 the PHCDC board applied for a free web site assessment from HandsOn Tech. HandsOn Tech was created by the Points of Light Foundation, AmeriCorpsVISTA, and Google. Started in 2011, this program was intended to be a three-year effort and came to an end on August 22, 2014.
 - We were lucky to be chosen as a recipient of this program and worked with Kevin Grande, a technical consultant with the program. A working group was formed that includes Marie Sandvig, Bryan Dolney, and Erik Hardy. The group met several times with Kevin over a 6 month period to update the web site and learn how to better utilize the tools used to run the site.
 - While a web site is always a work in process, the updated site pennhillscdc.org is up and running. Take a moment to browse the site. You may learn something new about the Penn Hills CDC!

OA Goals for 2015

- Complete adaptation of PHCDC Strategic Plan into an Operating Plan for OA.
- Hold 10 events.
- Attend at least 10 events (tabling etc.).
- Engage 50% of members in at least one event.
- Increase membership in OA Committee.
- Increase membership.
- Hold a fundraiser(s), goal to raise at least \$5,000.
- Track volunteer activities and hours. For reporting in Annual Report and for grant applications.
- Assist other committees and BOD on promotion of events.

Community Economic Development

Community Economic Development Committee Mission: This committee endeavors to enhance the quality of life for the citizens of Penn Hills within an economic landscape of healthy, vibrant and attractive residential and business districts.

2014 Year in Review for CEDC

- Shop Local
- Golden Broom
- Code Enforcement

In the spirit of effective citizen engagement, advocated at Penn Hills' Council Meeting for full staffing of the Code Enforcement Department with particular emphasis on filling the Fire Marshall/Code Inspector position and the 2015 Budget process in the Fall of 2014;

In the spirit of partnership with the Municipality of Penn Hills, CEDC

- promoted PHCDC membership attendance at Council meetings;
- enjoyed the consistent and engaged participation by Planning Department with CEDC, &
- learned from Deputy Mayor Sarah Kuhn and Code Enforcement Director John Mccafferty during their guest appearances at CEDC meetings;
- In support of Mayor and Council, provided input and testimony on its newly drafted, introduced and adopted Property Registry Ordinance

In the spirit of support for Penn Hills' Code Enforcement, organized about a dozen members to observe municipal prosecutions against Dov Ratchkauskas at court hearings in May and June before Magisterial District Judge HRomyak; followed appeals until final guilty adjudications on November 25, 2014.

Ongoing Partnerships/Projects

In partnership with the Municipality's Planning Department, continued to engage with the Municipality's project called 'Frankstown West' by attending planning meetings in the target area, reviewing parcel data maps for the targeted area and continuing to develop PHCDC's role in the project.

Duff Run Acid Mine Drainage remediation project – continuing to identify and seek grant funding. Need to establish relationship with owner of Pennysaver Building Property where limestone treatment channels will be located. This has been a stumbling block to receiving grants.

Goals for 2015

- Host a Homebuyers' Fair in March 2015
- Increase Shop Local participation
- Monitor Dov Ratchkauskas Federal Mortgage Fraud indictments proceedings

Financials

The report shown in Attachment A is for the year 2014. It has two sections, PHCDC Operation and the Penn Hebron Garden Building [Barn.]

PHCDC Operations: [Attachment A pages 1 to 3]

There were four sources of income, Local Government Grants, Individual and Business Contributions, Membership Dues and Community Garden Fees. The total income from these resources was \$7,380. The local government grant is the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) awarded to the PHCDC for the community garden and for other expenses in support of low- to moderate-income residents. Individual and Business Contributions funds are largely the donations from the participating Shop Local businesses.

The total PHCDC expenses were \$6,653. The Operations Financial Data tables provide the distribution for expenses for the various components of the operation including the various major projects.

Barn: [Attachment A pages 4 to 6]

The Lease to operate the building ended October 31, 2014. This financial report for the Barn is January 1, 2014 through the last deposit on March 18, 2015 when essentially the financial activity for the Barn ended.

The tables for Barn Financial Data provide the distribution of income and expenses for this period.

The rental activity was the major source of income for the Barn. The In-Kind Income is offset by the Total Rent Expenses. These are IRS categories set up to account for the estimated rental value of the building. The PHCDC operated the facilities for ten months in 2104. The In-Kind Income of \$12,445 is the sum of the estimated rental value plus a \$445 rebate from the Penn Hebron Garden Club (PHGC) to account for the payments made by the PHCDC for taxes and insurance for twelve months less the utilities for the month of October paid by the PHGC.

For the period January 1, 2014 to March 18, 2015 the total income was \$27,772 with total expenses of \$28,955 leaving a net loss of -\$1,183