

**South Watch: The South Side Flats and Slopes Code Enforcement Project**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**May 10, 2017**

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**Mission: South Watch:** The South Side Flats and Slopes Code Enforcement Project works to improve the quality of life on the South Side by bringing people and institutions together to identify code violations, advocate for their remediation and monitor the outcomes. (This is also the mission of Oakwatch.)

I. **Introductions** (5 minutes)

a. Barbara Rudiak shared the mission of South Watch. The attendees introduced themselves.

b. **Attendees:**

Barbara Rudiak	SS Community Council, South Watch
Perian Reid	South Watch
Jim Battista aka Cookie	Resident
Candice Gonzalez	SS Chamber of Commerce
Ed Wallo	SS Community Council
Betty Kripp	South Watch
Jeff Neubauer	Resident
Anna Marie Kijanka	Resident
Roberta Jamison	Environmental Services
Bill Klimovich	Environmental Services
Evan Stoddard	Resident
Anne Mullarkey Sawa	Duquesne University
Tim Lewis	Duquesne University
Alexandra Kozak	Duquesne University
Bridget Vyas	South Watch
Ernest Rajakone	Office of Community Affairs
Commander Karen Dixon	Pittsburgh Police, Zone 3
John Fournier	Pittsburgh Parking Authority
Stephen O'Brion	SS Community Council

II. **Presentation(s) – Duquesne University** (15 minutes)

a. Tim Lewis, Director, Office of Community Affairs

- i. Last day of final exams; Graduation on Friday & Saturday, one of the largest graduating classes with 1700 students.
- ii. Communication with students – sent through e-mails, messaging, and Facebook, reminding them about proper trash removal, disposal of bulk items, encouraging them to donate items in good condition, including links to Goodwill, Salvation Army, St. Vincent de Paul, American Veterans Association. Also reminded them not to put out trash prior to 7 PM the night before pick-up day. Students receive reminders regularly, but Tim is strategic to not bombard them with e-mails.
- iii. Fall 2016 “South Side Guide” – distributed to all attendees, a 15-page color booklet that is sent in the fall to every address registered in the South Side, as well as a .pdf copy that is sent to every student that lives in the South Side. Tim edits this guide every summer, and adds information as necessary. The DU website also contains off-campus housing information, and 27 new articles are being added about off-campus living. Tim encourages comments or suggestions, and noted that his e-mail was at the back of the guide on page 14, [lewis@duq.edu](mailto:lewis@duq.edu).
- iv. Process for handling a complaint or concern – which could be raised in a variety of ways, such as from a resident, SS Community Council, SS Chamber of Commerce, or the 17<sup>th</sup> St Block Watch. Tim proceeds to gather as much information as possible, dates, times, exactly what happened. He calls students in as quickly as possible, either the next day or the next few days. He discusses what it’s like for residents living on the SS and to envision their own family subjected to disruptive behavior, and it is usually apparent if the student is comprehending the intention of the discussion or is likely to continue the behavior. He then gives them a verbal warning, and follows up with a written warning, letting them know if he gets another complaint then it will be out of his hands, and they will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

b. Anne Mullarkey Sawa, Director, Office of Student Conduct

- i. Key Takeaway – Every time a concern is shared with DU, it is addressed personally.

- ii. Office was formerly known as Judicial Affairs – the change was made because higher education institutions should not function as a court system. If a student is cited or arrested, those issues are dealt with through the courts.
- iii. Office of Student Conduct approach – attempts to address issues in an educational way so that the students learn that (1) their conduct is inappropriate and why it is inappropriate and (2) to not repeat it again.
- iv. Process after receiving a report – the student is sent a letter outlining that they may have violated a policy of the university, which is written out specifically. The most common involve drugs/alcohol, excessive noise, disorderly conduct (public urination, for example), and the catch-all caveat “behavior that is not reflective of the mission statement of the university”. As part of the mission statement values, students are expected to respect themselves and respect the people they interact with in the extended community.
- v. Due process – is required even though the Office of Student Conduct is not a court of law. Students have the option of acknowledging and accepting the responsibility of the action, and there are sanctions or “educational opportunities” that are assigned. They are told what those are and the deadline to complete them. The objective is to promote successful behavior and to not repeat the mistake. Because of federal laws, the Office cannot share the actions taken with the person who originated the complaint, but it is absolutely taken seriously and personally. When a student does not acknowledge the incident, the student can opt for a hearing, either to be heard by the Director, who has already given some clue as to her opinion, or there could be a board hearing, including three trained members (faculty, staff, and student), who hear the case. Generally, Tim or a police officer represents the resident. Hearings have not taken place under the current Director.
- vi. Sanctions – include drug/alcohol counseling, meetings with campus police about parties, and almost always community service. The majority of the students who have done community service, which is assigned specifically on the South Side if the incident occurred there, find it beneficial and about 40% send a follow-up to let the Office know the positive impact, and some indicate that they plan to continue with the service on a regular basis.
- vii. Repeat behavior – the sanctions are ramped up, and could include suspension from the university. This has not occurred in the last two years because there was only one repeat offense. The Office attributes the decline in repeat offenses to the direct connection with the community.
- viii. Feedback is welcomed – the goal is to have as few problems as possible. Tim mentioned that he received positive feedback from a resident about some of the students.
- ix. Community service process – Candice conducts a meeting to organize schedules based on classes, work, family commitments, and deadlines, and it is made clear that the students need to contact her at least an hour in advance with any schedule changes. Clean red shirts, equipment, and gloves are provided to perform the service. An individual letter is produced for each person with the details of the service (hours worked, work performed, attitude). It could be individual or group service, and it could be assigned or voluntary. For example, 27 young men volunteered to clean during the soup contest as a fraternity function.
- x. Question raised about DU receiving 911 call information about house party complaints or how a resident should contact DU – per the 17<sup>th</sup> St Block Watch procedure, the resident calls 911, if necessary, and then also submits a 311 that is somehow routed to Tim and perhaps Officer Luffey. Tim said that method is fine or a direct contact with him is also fine. Perian noted the South Watch property form could also be completed. Cookie suggested there should be a decision as to the most efficient process for reporting. Tim noted there are postcards at the Chamber and Brashear with Tim’s direct e-mail, but this is not known to all residents.
- xi. Student address registration – about 8 of 10 students register; requested each semester.
- xii. Question raised about communicating information to students – Tim noted there is a dinner, walking tacos with PowerPoint presentations, fraternity/sorority meetings, and other opportunities. Jeff recommended two points be addressed during the dialogue (1) outside speakers and (2) decks with no safety rails, or students on rooftops. Point one may be related to the noise ordinance.

### III. **South Side Property Progress Report, Q & A (10 minutes)**

#### a. Bridget Vyas, South Watch

- i. Property review – 8 properties were submitted to 311 for May; 3 prompted action by ES; 3 had no violations at the time of ES review; and 2 were noted as having minor violations. The following points were noted:
  - 1. For two properties, there seemed to be a disconnect between the volunteer interpretation of a violation through the placard process vs the foreman interpretation based on the 311 response. (The volunteers considered heaping trash in a can with no lid to be overflowing,

but the foreman response did not consider this a violation and noted that the lids were in the yard and there was just a little refuse sticking out of the cans.)

2. Properties listed as "Monitor" mean that no 311 was submitted due to minor violations or improvement, but not yet fully remediated.
  3. The tally of past remediated properties was 19, and 12 more will be added to the total for next month.
  4. The 43 Eleanor St property that had a warrant in effect was not submitted to 311, but the question was posed to the group as to potential next steps.
- b. Bill Klimovich, Assistant Director, Department of Environmental Services
  - c. Roberta Jamison, Administrator II, Department of Environmental Services
    - i. To item 4 above – Bill responded that they could continue to issue citations, but if the person does end up in court, enforcement will be decided by the judge.
    - ii. To item 1 above – Bill responded that the timing could result in a disconnect of people seeing different conditions for a single property. Barbara clarified that the differences in interpretation of the violation were based on the same condition being observed. Bill explained that the ES opinion is that if there is a can with a lid on the ground and no trash in the can, it is not a violation. If there is trash in the can, then the lid should be on the can in a perfect world. Barbara reiterated that it is important to have a consensus so that ES is not frustrated with the number of 311s and the volunteers are not frustrated with perceived inaction. ES wants to enforce all the ordinances on the books, but it's very difficult. The foremen are told if the lid is not on the can, notify the resident, but there is less concern for trash that is contained within a can without a lid than for accumulation of trash. The reality is that residents will blame ES for breaking the lid or the lid has blown away or they can't afford to buy another can. ES provides literature when lids are not used, but the main concern is that the trash is inside the can and not thrown all over the area. Roberta noted that it will be communicated that all the actions that have taken place should be written in the 311 response so that the verbiage is clear. She stated that the foremen do normally take extra steps to educate, and they did so for the properties under discussion, but did not record all of the actions taken.
    - iii. Community education – Barbara noted that as we educate the community to support ES efforts, we want to be consistent with ES. Barbara gave an example of her effort of educating by sending individual letters to the residents at a multi-unit property in addition to the property owner, and had successful results, which she followed up with a thank you note.
    - iv. Impact of initial placard efforts – Bill noted that ES is seeing a reduction in the list of 311s, which is more manageable and allowing resolution to occur. Barbara noted that repeat offenses may then eventually be cited and go to housing court.
    - v. McArde properties – the suggestion was to call when violations are seen for addresses other than 930, so ES can observe and issue the citation. Betty noted that they do not always put their trash out for pick-up causing further accumulation. Roberta noted that there were two instances where the property owner was issued the citation because the rotation of residents made it difficult to determine who to direct the citation. Betty noted that the landlord-tenant agreement may not be in use, and Barbara noted that the owner may need to be contacted to ensure the agreements are being put in place. Bill noted that owners tend to direct the responsibility to the residents when people move out and leave furniture, etc. and that is the mindset. Barbara suggested that a standard letter could be developed to educate owners to arrange for ES pick-up when residents move out and other responsibilities related to ES ordinances.
    - vi. Question raised about the foremen coming to inspect on Wednesdays instead of Sundays – foremen inspection days vary, and it is not always possible to get them there on a specific day because they will be coming from other parts of the city at the end of the day. Generally, they have been dedicating resources to the South Side on Sundays.
    - vii. Comment about North Side program – Pittsburgh Resource Council distributed small recyclable containers to determine if that impacted the participation rate (container vs blue bags). Not yet conclusive based on sample size and other factors.

#### IV. **South Side Crime Report** – Trends in crime for the month, **Q & A** (15 minutes)

- a. Commander Karen Dixon, Pittsburgh Police, Zone 3
  - i. Purse snatching – incident involving 89-year-old victim was highly publicized, and there was a similar incident two days prior with similar suspect description in terms of age, but other description notes that did not match. Both cases are open and under investigation.

ii. Saturation Patrol statistics for April:

	April (12 days)	Average per shift
Officer shifts	191*	16
Physical arrests	17	1.5
Non-traffic arrests/citations	122	10
Traffic citations (Cycle officers 10 pm – 2 am)	498	41

\*Comprised of 152 Detail + 22 Cycle + 17 Supervisor shifts

There were over 204 zone-assisted calls.

- iii. PED – in April, enforcement began for the public safety lane including towing; 78 cars were towed. Cycle officers will be added to keep the lane clear. Looking to add signs to reinforce the parking restriction, but the situation is proving to be more difficult than anticipated. The lanes have been beneficial to officers on multiple occasions thus far, and it is also providing a place for Uber and Lyft drivers to use for pick-up. They need to orbit and not sit in the lanes.
- iv. Question raised about the progress on underage violence – coming from hookah bars (considered retail stores), house parties, etc. Commander Dixon noted that reports have been forwarded to the Nuisance Bar Task Force involving intoxicated individuals who were in a hookah bar, and one was underage. Hours of operation are a problem, similar to the situation at CoGo’s. The Councilman is aware, and this is being seen as the next big problem. Barbara mentioned that Philadelphia is also experiencing a problem with hookah bars, and this may need to be raised with State Offices.
- v. Opioid epidemic – Commander Dixon mentioned an article in the Post Gazette about the demands on paramedics, entitled “As the opioid epidemic grows, paramedics feel the weight of tragedy” May 10 <http://www.post-gazette.com/local/city/2017/05/10/opioid-crisis-narcan-overdose-pittsburgh-emergency-first-responders-paramedics/stories/201705100029>

V. **Pittsburgh Parking Authority, Q & A** (5 minutes)

a. John Fournier, Director of Meter Enforcement and Residential Permit Parking

- i. The South Side Parking Enhancement District (PED), which includes a dedicated patrol for Residential Permit Parking (RPP) enforcement and dedicated meter enforcement on Friday and Saturday nights, switched over from education to enforcement, eliminating the warning tickets.
- ii. Statistics for April (22 enforcement days)

	Tickets	Licenses Checked
RPP Violations*	327	22,957
CC	55	5,129
DD	51	4,490
II	120	6,497
KK	101	6,841
Non-RPP Non-Meter Violations**	87	
Non-RPP Meter Violations	1,475	

\*Resulting in a 1.4% illegal parking rate

\*\* Includes blocking driveway, fire hydrant, handicap parking, etc.

- iii. PED revenue – since last month was \$13,612, which is meeting expectations. Lower revenue days due to the marathon and for the holiday weekend (Good Friday).
- iv. PED enforcement issues – no issues reported from officers, which are being accompanied by police.
- v. New RPP System – in effect since May 1. RPP applications will be completed on-line (the portal can be reached at [pittsburghhrpp.com](http://pittsburghhrpp.com)). Documents can be uploaded and payment information entered through the system. Physical permits will no longer be issued, and all enforcement will occur through license plate readers. Walk-in and mail-in applications will still be accepted, but the on-line registration is strongly encouraged. If a manual application is submitted without an e-mail, then the Parking Authority will set up an account that they will use to register visitors, and the resident would need to call or e-mail the details to be entered. Visitor passes are only to be used for 3 consecutive days as the law is written. There is misuse of the paper visitor pass, and it slows down enforcement and the error rate is high due to inconsistent or blocked display of the pass. The system allows the resident to assign the visitor pass to a vehicle through the portal for 3 days, then it can be re-issued for another 3-day interval after a one day break. Proof of residency is a current signed lease or a

utility bill (not including a water bill) with a matching service address. There is one visitor pass per household. A question was raised about visitors staying beyond 3 days, and John noted that variances are only issued for special situations like contractor work or a medical situation, both of which require documentation, but not for situations like friends staying beyond 3 days. This was noted as being a change from past variance practice. More than one person can pay the \$1 fee and register for access to a visitor pass for one address, but only one person can use it at a time.

- vi. Reporting issues – John noted there are many circumstances to consider and the system isn't perfect, but he is eager to hear of any problems that are encountered, so they can work through them.

**VI. News from Duquesne University Q & A (5 minutes)**

- a. Previously addressed in presentation

**VII. News from the Mayor's Office, Q & A (5 minutes)**

- a. Ernest Rajakone, Community Affairs Liaison
  - i. Ordinance related to outside speakers – Ernest and Commander Dixon checked for the appropriate ordinance and noted that the noise ordinance addressed amplified devices, in which a violation was either by decibel reading or sound heard from 75 feet away; however, the noise ordinance is difficult to interpret and use. John commented that the ordinance was crafted in such a way to be legally enforceable.
  - ii. Yard waste collection – the first of the City of Pittsburgh's special biannual curbside collection is coming up on Saturday, May 20. Resident participation in this program helps the environment by diverting valuable resources from the landfill. Yard waste includes: leaves, branches (four-inch diameter or less), brush, grass. Place at the curb in the normal recycling/refuse pick up spot before 6 AM in paper bags weighing less than 35 pounds, bundled with fiber twine or natural rope in branch lengths of five feet or less. Yard Waste should not contain any of the following prohibited materials: Plastic bags, metal or wire, rocks, blocks, bricks, soil, dirt, gravel, glass, metal or plastic. Yard Waste found not meeting collection guidelines will be left at the curb.
  - iii. Safe Water plan – the first phase of obtaining free water filters and lead test kits for all City residents has begun with initial priority being given to households with expectant mothers and children under six. Water filters are half gallon pitchers w/ 4 replacement filters, lasting about 6 months. (Information can be accessed at [pittsburghpa.gov/safepgh20](http://pittsburghpa.gov/safepgh20)). Barbara noted that contact information from the Snow Angel initiative may be useful to notify elderly neighbors.

**VIII. News from City Council, Q & A (5 minutes)**

- a. Not present.

**IX. News from State Offices, Q & A (5 minutes)**

- a. Not present

**X. Community Announcements & Events**

- a. Planning Forum – May 13 at 5:30 PM at Brashear Association
- b. South Side Home Tour – May 20
- c. Open Streets – May 28 – 9 AM to 1 PM

**XI. Meeting adjournment**

Next meeting will be on Wednesday, June 14<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM at Brashear Association.