

HIGHLAND PARK

Community Club
Newsletter for
April 2001



Edited by Ollie Rieley

Councilman O'Connor at HPCC *Assessment, Tax Rates and Appeals*

Ollie Rieley

Councilman Bob O'Connor, current President of the Pittsburgh City Council and candidate for the democratic nomination for Mayor, was the featured speaker at the March 15, 2001 Highland Park Community Club meeting. After a brief but glowing introduction by Councilman Ferlo, Councilman O'Connor took the floor before the standing room only crowd.

The primary topics covered by Councilman O'Connor were the recent reassessment, the city's tax rate and appealing assessments. He noted that the Court ordered reassessment was intended to bring all property assessments to their market values but he noted there were many cases reported where reassessments missed the target, some extraordinarily low and others similarly high. The reassessments contain two values, one for the land and one for the building. Two values were necessary to accommodate Pittsburgh's and a few other cities' two tier taxing system. The system, which is about 90 years old, was intended to discourage leaving land idle by setting a rate on the land about six times the rate on buildings. A problem arose because when Sabre System, who performed the reassessment, distributed the "preliminary" values in late 2000, they only listed the total, so property owners could not tell the breakout between land and building values initially. When the certified assessments were distributed in early 2001 and the city's tax rates were known, many property owners were in shock because the high land values coupled with the high rate on land resulted in large increases in their tax. Councilman O'Connor was an early and strong advocate for abolishing the two tiered rate system, replacing it with a single rate for both land and buildings. After several public meetings on the subject, Council approved the change to a single rate. Mayor Murphy finally agreed to accept the single rate scheme for at least one year.

Councilman O'Connor encouraged everyone who questioned their assessment to appeal. He noted that there must be a basis for the

appeal such as the relative sale values of nearby homes, the relative sizes, the presence of garages, etc. But if there's any reason to question the assessment, do it! If one obtains a reduction, there is a payback in reduced taxes for many years. Both Councilman O'Connor and Councilman Ferlo stressed that it would be wise to submit appeals by April 2. County Council has approved a later date of June 2, but both Councilmen questioned whether that delay might be voided because of objection by some governing body. Appeal forms and instructions were available at the meeting.

Councilman O'Connor also encouraged every homeowner to file for the Homestead Act exemption which would reduce city tax about \$108. He also encouraged eligible people to file for the Act 77 exemption (this has an upper income limit of about \$30000 and a minimum age of 50 for one owner). Forms for filing for these two exemptions were provided to attendees.

Councilman O'Connor noted that a major distinction between him and Mayor Murphy is that Councilman O'Connor would emphasize neighborhood improvement and development while Mayor Murphy spends energy and money on the downtown area. After a short question and answer session, Councilman O'Connor left with the thanks of the attending crowd.

HPCC Items to Think About

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Houses Needed Page 2

**You do read the newsletter backwards, don't
you?**

THE NEXT HPCC MEETING IS 7:30 P.M., THURSDAY, APRIL 19, 2001, AT ST. ANDREWS

Membership

Kelly Meade

There are currently 634 member of HPCC - the breakdown is as follows:

Renewals	501 @ \$20
	20 @ \$10
New	113 total new members
	83 @ \$5
	30 @ \$20

Reminders were sent out to those members who are late with their current dues. These reminders were sent out the week of March 11.

HOUSES NEEDED!

In order to have all details ready in time for the October 21st House Tour, we would like to have a completed list of homes by the end of May.

Please contact Dana Thomas at the phone or e-mail address below to volunteer your home or to nominate a home.

THANKS!

665 - 2992
webber@mindspring.com

HPCC March Meeting Highlights

DUBBLEBEEES

Dog Grooming



Corner of Mellon & Wellesley
Highland Park

Phone - (412) 361-4681

H. P. C. C.

Officers, Directors & Committees

President: Tania Grubbs (661-4054)
President Elect: Brandon Weber (665-2992)
Comm. Dev. V.P.: Mitch Kates (661-4995)
Treasurer: Kelly Vitti (361-7669)
Secretary: Paula Flaherty (361-2203)
Past President: Diane DeNardo (363-2092)

Directors

Tom Burns 363-3654 (01)
David Hance 361-4935 (01)
----- (01)

Ollie Rieley 661-1205 (01)
Kathy Ziegler 363-1252 (01)
----- (02)

Amy Enrico 362-2970 (02)
Paula Flaherty 361-2203 (02)
Karen Raffensberger 363-9750 (02)
Jan Stajanos 363-8208 (02)

Kevin Bivins

Debbie Harl (03)

Christina Lagnese 441-6696 (03)

Kate Zober 661-9312 (03)

Bob Staresinic 441-8972 (03)

Committees

Beautification: Dell Ziegler 363-1252

Block Watch: Jan Stajanos 363-8208

Children: Tania Grubbs 661-4054

Commercial District: Muzz Meyers 661-2315

Day Camp: Janice Burgett 361-2195

Education: Kevin Bivins

Hospitality: Kate Zober 661-9312, Kate Maurin 363-2145

House Tour: Dana Thomas 665-2992

Membership: Kelly Meade 362-0331

Newsletter: Ollie Rieley 661-1205

Program: Bruce Robison 361-4892

Public Safety: Mercine Nefores 661-5425

Recreation: Charlie Peterson 441-2766

Reservoir Covers: Dave Hance 361-4935

Restoration: Dave Hance 361-4935

Super Playground: Steve Pettler 363-3978

Yard Sale: Judy Wolfe 441-7830

Voice Mail: Paula Flaherty 361-2203

Welcoming: Bob Staresinic 441-8972

Zoning: Brandon Weber 665-2992

Voice Mail 734-5261

C. O. P. 665-3644 - Pager 690-6008

HPCCD/HPCC Web: www.highlandparkpa.com

Paula Flaherty

Meeting called to order by Brandon Weber at 7:35 P.M.

Report from C. O. P.: Officer Christine Scalise reported a very quiet month. There was an attempted theft of an ATM from Peppi's. Officer Scalise also reported that a neighborhood clean-up campaign is scheduled April 21. The police are working on abandoned vehicle identification for removal on that date. They are also looking into reports of loitering in the 900 block of Mellon St. Welcome to the new Commander of Zone 5, Commander Dan Quinlan.

Program:

The Club welcomed City Council President and Mayoral Candidate Bob O'Connor who spoke on the issues of property taxes and filing appeals of the reassessments. Questions were taken from the floor and Mr. O'Connor urged that appeals be submitted by April 2.

Committees:

Beautification: No report.

Block Watch: Jan Stayianos sent letters to those who expressed interest in participating in Block Watch and welcomes them and any others who are interested.

Children's: April 7 at the Rhododendron Grove in the Park is the date and place for this year's Easter Egg Hunt. The Hunt begins at noon. Tania Grubbs would appreciate some assistance with the event. Please call her to volunteer.

Day Camp: Janice Burgett was concerned about the availability of the Farmhouse for this year's camp. Councilman Ferlo suggested this would not be a problem. Ideas were offered to boost enrollment, for example: fliers to churches, preschools, etc. Janice requested the same amount of scholarship money (\$500) as had previously been given. There was no objection and the matter will be brought to the Finance Committee for approval.

Education: No report.

House Tour: Dana Thomas needs help with publicity and with house suggestions. The tour date is set as October 21. A silent auction is being planned as well.

Hospitality: Thanks to the committee for refreshments and snacks.

Membership: No report.

Newsletter: Articles are needed.

Program: No report.

Public Safety: No Report.

Recreation: Tania reported there will be a change in time for this year's Reservoir of Jazz series in the Park. The time will shift from 1:00 P.M. of past years to 5:00 P.M. The change is being made in hopes of getting better attendance. Food vendors are being sought to support the series. WDUQ has agreed to sponsor. Several different types of music will be offered including blues and big bands. The Club has given \$1000 each year. There will be a request for this year at a later date. More details in the next Newsletter.

Old/New Business:

Operation Clean sweep will be held June 5. A separate article gives advance details and requests input from residents.

Dillworth: A thank-you note was received for the Club's \$500 donation for the Library.

Board Election: The planned election to replace two directors was tabled due to the lack of a quorum of directors to vote.

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 P.M.

April at St. Andrew's

Bruce Robison

Easter Sunday, April 15, is the highlight of our year at St. Andrew's, with festive services of Holy Communion at 9 a.m. (in the Chapel) and 11 a.m. (with full choir, brass, and timpani) in the church -- and with the traditional Easter Egg Hunt and Champagne Reception in the Church Yard following the 11 a.m. service. Neighbors, friends, and the whole community are of course welcomed with much enthusiasm for this great celebration.

In the weeks of April leading up to Easter other special Lenten and Holy Week events will include a service of Choral Evensong on Thursday evening, April 5, at 8 p.m., with St. Andrew's Choir singing music by Philip Moore and Roger Petrich, and with a recital immediately following the service by well-known Pittsburgh soprano May Catherine Dykhous. Sunday, April 8, is Palm Sunday, with the Blessing of the Palms at both 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. services, and on Holy Thursday evening, April 12, a service of Holy Communion celebrated "around the table" in our Parish Hall is followed by an informal potluck supper.

Good Friday, April 13, will be observed during the Great Three Hours, Noon - 3 p.m., with Stations of the Cross at 12 noon, a Good Friday Service of prayer, scripture, sermon, and hymns at 1 p.m., and a special musical recital at 2 p.m. The Great Bell of St. Andrew's will toll 33 times at 3 p.m., to mark the traditional hour of Jesus' death.

Looking past April, members of the community are reminded that an Eastertide service of Choral Evensong, with musical recital, will be held on Thursday evening, May 3, at 8 p.m., and that a special "St. Marathon's Weekend" service will be added to our worship schedule in the first weekend of May, with a service of Holy Communion at 5 p.m. on Saturday afternoon, May 5th, for those who find travel to St. Andrew's (or their own churches) difficult on the Sunday morning of the Pittsburgh Marathon.

St. Andrew's has been located in the midst of the Highland Park neighborhood for over 90 years, and we hope that everyone in the neighborhood will feel a sense that you are a part of a wider St. Andrew's "circle of friends." For information about services and activities at St. Andrew's, feel free to call our Church Office: (412) 661-1245.

Clean Sweep

Bob Staresinic

The City of Pittsburgh is once again coming to Highland Park for their Operation Clean Sweep on June 5, 2001. Operation Clean Sweep is an intense one day "total cleaning" of the neighborhood in which City departments and residents, in partnership, work together to beautify our community.

In order for this to be successful, we need input from all of the residents of Highland Park to point out what needs to be done. All City departments will be involved if we identify specific concerns and request action.

Some of the action they will take:

- sweeping streets (I think includes running the street cleaners down the streets)
- removing graffiti
- painting street lines and crosswalks
- trimming trees and shrubbery
- removing junk cars
- cleaning city-owned vacant lots
- painting fire hydrants
- citing code violations
- fire safety checks
- Super-Bulk pickup

What we have to do is put together a list of what we want done. We need to include specifics and as much information as possible about the concerns. So if you have something that is bothering you that the City can fix, write it down. Put down the address, lot & block number (if you know it); color/make and license number of that unregistered car that blocks your alley; describe the tree and what it is doing to your head when you walk under it; how many bottles are broken in the alley; how many steps are covered with wet, slimy leaves; the street address of the big pothole; the address and color of the graffiti. This includes public areas like the park and pavilions.

St. Andrew's Church

5801 Hampton Street * Highland Park

Sunday Morning Services - April

9:00 a.m. Holy Communion in the Chapel

11:00 a.m. Choral Morning Worship

Nursery and Church School at 11:00 a.m.

Wednesday Morning Holy Communion 10:30 a.m.

Maundy Thursday Holy Communion -

April 12, 6:30 P.M.

Good Friday Service April 13, 12:00 to 3:00

Visit our Homepage:

www.forministry.com/15206saec

The Super-Bulk trash pickup is a great opportunity to clean out your basement, attic, garage or back yard. The City will not pick up construction materials, but they will tow that rusty clunker out of your alley. (Notice it is scheduled for the week after the yard sale, so all the stuff that doesn't sell can be put out for bulk pickup).

The City will need the community input or they will think nothing needs to be done. They would also like community participation around the Clean Sweep. This could be folks out sweeping the streets, a community project, Adopt-A-Block, or others.

I would like to gather all of the concerns, organize them and give them to the City. I would also like to organize a community event to be done around the Clean Sweep. I can't do it alone, and am looking for some help in pulling this all together. I have ideas of an event or project, but will need some input from others. Just remember that if no one gives input, we go with my ideas.

If you have input about an event/project or have concerns that a City department can alleviate, let me know. I would prefer a note so I will be sure to not miss any details. Mail me, or drop a note thru the slot in my door at 931 Mellon Street. Be sure to include your phone number or address so I can contact you if I need more details.

Thanks, Bob Staresinic



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Conversations

Jon Rieley-Goddard

The following was written by our son-in-law, Jon Rieley-Goddard for his congregation at the Pierce Avenue Presbyterian Church, Niagra Falls, NY. While this was written for a Church community and includes some "churchy" language, I believe the principals stated apply to any organization especially any based on voluntary participation. So I reprint it here with hopes that it may stimulate some "conversation". Just substitute "HPCC" or you other favorite for "Church" and use this in your daily life.

Dear friends:

Markets are conversations. — Agree? — Disagree?
Need some context?

I didn't make up the assertion that markets are conversations. I stumbled across this idea in a computer magazine that I subscribe to. The person who advanced the idea that Markets are conversations was talking about the marketplace, and he was talking about how companies and corporations develop and sell products to meet demands in the marketplace.

Markets are conversations.
Not statistics.
Not the killing fields of capitalism
Not zones of profit or loss.
Not cold corridors of exploitation and greed.
Not faceless junk-mailings to the masses.
Markets are conversations.

Traveling salesman make money because they create relationships through conversations, not because they necessarily offer a better product for a lesser price (though this is a plus if you can offer it, too). The person who gets the sale is the one who asks for it, and asking for the sale works well when there has been a connection through conversation, when there is a relationship between the seller and buyer, when the one knows the other, and the other knows the one.

You might wonder where I'm going with all this ... Listen further:
Churches are conversations, too, just as Markets are conversations

Churches are not doctrines.
Churches are not budgets or tithes
Churches are not committees or boards.
Churches are not sanctuaries from The World and Its Evils.
Churches are conversations.
Which is also to say, Churches are relationships.
And to go a step further:
Churches grow when they understand themselves as places of conversation. Or, if you will, churches grow when they nurture relationships among persons. In other words, let's change the way we talk about Church. Rather than atomizing the situation, and addressing the bits and pieces of the puzzle that we call Church,

let's simplify.

Churches are conversations.

Churches are relationships.

You have a part to play in all this, and in Fact if you refuse to play your part, the picture will have little odd-shaped gaps that chart the history of your silences, because Churches are conversations, and the only one who can communicate through silence is our God.

We must speak.

This means that you continue to do what you are already doing. This means that you continue to talk to those whom you love to talk to when you are at church, and when you are on the phone, and when you write a friendly note of encouragement. This also means that you look for new persons with whom to talk, both persons you know and persons you don't yet know because Churches are conversations, Churches are relationships. This also means that you can listen to your inner voice of comfort, and that you can stay inside your comfort zone. If it is natural for you to reach out to strangers do so. If the idea of reaching out to strangers frightens you, do what you can: You can convey openness to strangers by your body language as well as the words you say or don't say. Maintain the relationships that you already have, because Churches are conversations, and Churches are relationships.

This is your assignment for the coming year:

- * Have conversations with friends and strangers.
- * Maintain relationships.
- * Create relationships as you are able

The rest is God's work

Blessings and peace, Pastor Jon

(Ed. Note: Did you remember to substitute "HPCC" for "Church"?)

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SUNDAY JUNE 2, 2001 9 AM - ?

Put this date on your calendar because it is once more time for the

Highland Park Community Yard Sale

I will now give a quick explanation, in case you are new to the neighborhood:

Every year your Highland Park neighbors get together and have yard sales at their homes on the same day - the first Sunday in June (so put it on your calendar for next year, as well) The Community Club handles the advertising, typing, copying, distributing maps and list of items for sale, and gives all the "seller" families signs and balloons to identify them as being part of the wonderful event - all for \$12.

Each year we have about 100 families participating and we have distributed about 600-750 maps to buyers. We have volunteers who hand them to people at two street corners in the neighborhood and we leave bunches at several stores. These buyers come from near - sometimes your next door neighbors - and far, to browse and generally visit Highland Park. It is a great way to bring people to our neighborhood and show them just how welcoming we can be.

If you would like to join your neighbors in the fun of selling, please fill in the form below and return to me:

Judy Wolfe
5910 Wellesley Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15206
with a check for \$12 written to the HPCC

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

(not for distribution, just for me in case I have questions)

Items you wish to sell: _____

You will receive no information from me, but you should pick up your packet with signs and balloons on my porch on Saturday June 1, 2001. If you have any questions call me at 441-7830.

Deadline for submission is May 29, 2001

Community Portrait

Dubblebbes --

Dog Grooming Extrodinaire

Bob Staresinic

Do you remember La Bellissima Salon? At the corner of Wellesley and Mellon was a hair salon for many, many years (it was there when I arrived on the corner in 1972) in a nice little insul-brick covered building. After several years of not being used, Bill Reiger and Bill Connolly bought that building and opened Dubblebbes Dog Grooming, and began cutting hair. The sound of blow dryers was back!

Dubblebbes opened in the Spring of 1997 at 945 Mellon Street, taking its name from the initials of its owners. Since they are both Bills, we have taken to calling them "Big Bill" and "Little Bill" to distinguish them. With the grooming skills of Little Bill and the shampooing skills of Big Bill, the dogs are in good hands.

Bill and Bill took out the 13 sinks, installed a bathtub, and kept all of the mirrors. With a bright paint job and new floor, the inside is bright and cheerful. In the Summer of 2000, they covered the exterior with vinyl siding, put up a new awning, and replaced the storm door. This once drab eyesore is now a nice looking little building.

With Bill Connolly grooming in front of the window, and the full glass storm door, nothing escapes notice at Dubblebbes. Bill and Bill keep an eye on the neighborhood. They also pick up the trash that accumulates in the street and along the sidewalk at their corner.

Bill Reiger drives in from Butler every morning, so he knows all of the good routes to avoid the Route 28 construction. Stop in and ask him about them.

If you stop in to visit, be sure to say hello to Benjamin, the guard dog. Benjamin has his table in the corner where he can spot and noisily greet anyone who enters the building.

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Editor's Thoughts

Ollie Rieley

Last month I mentioned all the jobs that need help - a co-Chair for the Yard Sale, a Chair for the Recreation Committee, help with the House Tour, Block Watch Captains, helping with the Welcoming Committee. It is a continuing challenge to staff all the jobs necessary to keep our club going. I haven't heard that all those jobs were filled this month so I'll repeat: "Won't you volunteer for one of the jobs that must be filled to sustain our programs. You only get out of the club what you put into it!"

On another front: there are two vacancies on the board of directors. Candidates were nominated in the February meeting to fill these positions and it was planned to have the directors vote at the on these candidates or others nominated from the floor at the March meeting. Unfortunately, there wasn't a quorum of directors at the March meeting so the vote had to be tabled until April. Directors - we need you at the meetings so we can conduct our business!

I was told we will be having our annual Marathon Party but no specific information is available yet. Look for details in the May

newsletter. In the meantime, save some time Marathon Sunday morning to drop by at the festivities on Bryant Street.

Reminder

This year the Vintage 5K Master Race, 2 mile walk & walk around the block will take place on Saturday, April 21. North Highland Avenue will be closed from 8:30 to about 11:00 A.M. for this event. See the March newsletter for details including ways around the closure.

Last Call Contractor's List

A revision to the contractor's list is planned to be issued in the May newsletter (assuming I get it done!). This is a last call for names to be included. Send them to me by the 10th of May. Mail or e-mail, please.



**HIGHLAND PARK
COMMUNITY CLUB, INC.**

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The Next HPCC meeting is 7:30 p.m., Thursday, April 19, 2001, at St. Andrew's

APRIL CALENDAR

<i>APRIL 7</i>	<i>PASSOVER BEGINS</i>
<i>APRIL 15</i>	<i>EASTER</i>
<i>APRIL 19</i>	<i>HPCC MEETING, ST. ANDREW'S, 7:30 P.M.</i>
<i>APRIL 21</i>	<i>VINTAGE 5K MASTERS ETC. N. HIGHLAND AVE.</i>
<i>APRIL 21</i>	<i>NEIGHBORHOOD CLEANUP DAY</i>