

# POLISH HILL CIVIC ASSOCIATION

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# The Polish Hill Voice

3060 Brereton Street ✨ Pittsburgh, PA 15219 ✨ (412) 681-1950 ✨ [phca@phcapgh.org](mailto:phca@phcapgh.org) ✨ [www.phcapgh.org](http://www.phcapgh.org)

*The PHCA's mission is to respect and preserve the sense of community in Polish Hill while promoting economic and housing development opportunities, and improving the quality of life for our community.*

## Polish Hill Civic Association Membership Application

All memberships expire each December. Join now to become a member through December 2018. September 30th is the deadline to join PHCA and vote in elections that appoint the 2019 PHCA Board.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

(Street Address) \_\_\_\_\_

(City) \_\_\_\_\_ (State) \_\_\_\_\_ (ZIP) \_\_\_\_\_

I'm not currently subscribed to the PHCA e-blast which comes out every other week — sign me up!  
(If you are already receiving the e-blast, there is no need to re-subscribe)

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

|   |        |   |
|---|--------|---|
| VOTING MEMBER<br>_____<br>(Polish Hill residents) | ~ Or ~ | SUBSCRIPTION MEMBER<br>_____<br>(Non-residents) |
| _____<br>New Member                               | ~ Or ~ | _____<br>Renewal                                |

*For office use only:*  
REC'D BY: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ GOT CARD \_\_\_\_\_ LOGGED \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to the Polish Hill Civic Association and mail with this application to:  
Polish Hill Civic Association, Membership Chair, 3060 Brereton Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219

### Benefits of membership



**Free courtesy admission to the Heinz History Center for yourself and up to three others**  
(Show your PHCA membership card at the front desk)



**Members who are also Polish Hill residents**  
*Can vote to elect PHCA board members*



**Knowing that you're supporting an organization that is working to make Polish Hill a better place to live!**

## Lead Water Public Information from PWSA

**In service to the health of our neighbors**, we are sharing recent information from PWSA regarding lead levels in drinking water and the action steps available.

Recent random sample testing by PWSA across its service territory found that 87.3% of homes resulted in zero lead or lead levels below the action level of 15 parts per billion. The remaining 12.7% of homes showed lead above the action level of 15 parts per billion, and so information and resources are being provided to the entire service territory. Lead can cause serious health problems, especially for children and elders.

Enclosed here are coupons provided by the City of Pittsburgh for water filters that are certified to remove lead.

PWSA recently investigated its water treatment practices and has new federal approval to change the water treatment chemicals in order to reduce lead corrosion. These changes require new treatment machinery, and expect to be installed and operating by late summer 2018 according to a PWSA press release.

PWSA is identifying and removing lead service lines in public space. As the Authority identifies the location of lead service lines, it will make the information available to the public at:  
<http://www.pgh20.com/leadmap>.

If customers decide to replace lead service lines, they should contact

PWSA's Lead Help Desk at 412.255.8987 or email [LeadHelp@pgh20.com](mailto:LeadHelp@pgh20.com) for information about coordinating efforts.

Depending on your income, you may be eligible to have your lead service line replaced at no cost.

Low-interest loans are also available to some homeowners for replacing lead service lines on private property through the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) ROLL program at [ura.org](http://ura.org).

PWSA is offering free lead test kits for all residents of the City of Pittsburgh and Millvale. To request a kit, go to [www.pgh20.com/leadform](http://www.pgh20.com/leadform) or call 412.255.2423. After the request is placed, kits are mailed to customers in approximately 14 days. Samples are then sent to an independent laboratory, and the results are provided to the customer via letter.

Further information from PWSA is found at <http://www.pgh20.com/lead-facts>

While our public water lines are updated, the best action that residents can take to mitigate lead exposure is to filter their drinking water.

A standard carbon activated filter **CANNOT** remove lead.

**Included in this printing are coupons for purchasing an effective lead filter for water.**

## 11th Annual Arts Festival Featured More Artists Than Ever!

**We believe** in amplifying the work of our neighborhood artist entrepreneurs, and so a team of volunteers leads our festival's annual success. Hundreds of attendees came throughout the day (even braving the rain!) to see more than 30 local artists selling a diversity of items including pottery, hand-forged metal, paintings and illustrations, stained glass, jewelry, wood work and terrariums, and more.

Between the featured bands two Pittsburgh poets shared spoken word: Steppin Stanzas and Rachel, formerly known as Billie Nardozi, who graces the now iconic billboard at Bigelow and Herron with positive messages each month. Additionally, there were several hands-on activities largely led by Polish Hill residents including a musical instrument and lending library from the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, craft-making with assemble, metal work with the Mobile Sculpture Workshop, creative sculpting with Cojiform, and in support of our many neighborhood gardeners, soil testing from the Allegheny County Conservation District.

Local food vendors served a variety of eats including family-recipe pierogies and kielbasi from the Spak Brothers and coffee, donuts and tacos from our neighborhood cafes Kaibur and Liliput.

Over at the PHCA table we nearly sold out of special-run t-shirts printed by Polish Hill artist Reyghan Pierce whose design features the Polish Hill hillside and the Immaculate Heart of Mary church.

### Fire Site Redevelopment Update

The PHCA is pursuing a project that would offer permanent affordability. In November 2007 a fire destroyed 3111 Brereton Street and the surrounding properties. In 2010 a subsidiary of the URA purchased the 3 lots. Since then, the PHCA has worked with the URA and other strategic partners to: build a community plan for the site, conduct a development bidding process, and select an architect/contractor team to develop on the site. Unfortunately, due to the financing limitations of the project and the acquisition cost of the land, the developers were unable to move forward with the project.

The PHCA began collaboration with alternative, non-profit model for redevelopment. One specific approach, convened by Lawrenceville Corporation, is called a Community Land Trust (CLT).

A CLT is a nonprofit corporation that develops and stewards affordable housing by changing the way someone buys a house. A CLT maintains ownership of the land, leases it to the homeowner while you own the home. Income limits qualify homeowners, and limits are set on future sale prices. The impact is that a community directed nonprofit determines redevelopment of the land in perpetuity. CLT home owners build equity, make their mortgage payments, and are responsible for property taxes.

PHCA sees this model as closely aligned with the community plan that neighbors built in 2010 for the Firesite.

Please join our next community meeting to share your input! September 4, 6:30pm, West Penn Rec Center.

### Stormwater Infrastructure to Reduce Flooding

When it rains in Pittsburgh, an overwhelmed combined sewer system releases pressure into our rivers, including raw sewage. This threatens public health and violates the 1972 Clean Water Act. A long time infrastructure planning process is coming to fruition across Allegheny County to capture rain water before it enters sewage pipes, reducing sewage overflow.

In Polish Hill, PWSA crews are installing green infrastructure to capture rainwater: trees planted in deep soil basins that soak up stormwater runoff before it runs into sewers. Homeowners near this green infrastructure benefit from reduced property flooding. The cumulative citywide benefit of many installations will be a reduction in sewage overflow into our rivers, increasing the number of days that it is safe to use our public waterways.

Some neighbors have been concerned about driving safely around the basins on Melwood, but PWSA's engineers have explained that these basins extend into the street only as far as a regularly parked car. Other neighbors have been concerned about the overflow direction when a rainfall is larger than a green infrastructure basin's volume, and PWSA's engineers have explained that in high volume rains, water is released into the regular sewer pipes directly below, it does not overflow onto private property.

"The completed basin on Bethoven is very attractive, with grasses, stones and trees," says resident Mark Knobil.

The Finland-Melwood green infrastructure installation is over halfway complete.

Any questions can be directed to Matt Smuts, PWSA Construction Manager, at msmuts@pgh2o.com

### Immaculate Heart of Mary Continues Mass

Our neighbors at IHM continue Sunday mass and ceremonies in the heart of Polish Hill.

While the Diocese announced consolidation for parishes across the city, those plans do not take full effect until 2021.

Bishop Zubik states in a Post-Gazette article in April 218 that, "We go through some pain through change but what results is a church that is far more alive." This prompts "us to think about and create new ways to share and mobilize our resources to draw people deeper into the faith and serve those in need."

The IHM hosted a bake sale and rummage sale during the 11th annual Polish Hill Arts Festival, and we plan to see their annual Fish Fry next Lenten season.

### PHCA Building Renovations

The PHCA Board has approved reserve funds to renovate a backlog of updates for the health of the PHCA office and apartments above.

This investment is so that our building is maintained as a sustainable revenue source for community projects.

The office will be closed until further notice.

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**URA**  
URBAN REDEVELOPMENT  
AUTHORITY OF PITTSBURGH

**URA home improvement loans help homeowners rehabilitate or renovate their properties.**

Visit  
<https://www.ura.org/pages/home-improvement-loans>

### Graffiti Monitoring by Volunteers

Several walls in our neighborhood are continually tagged with graffiti. Volunteers regularly paint over these walls and telephone poles to keep our neighborhood clean.

Anyone noticing graffiti can also report it to 311. The report will be forwarded to the Graffiti Task Force. However, Graffiti Busters cannot remove graffiti from a property until the owner has filled out the permission form.

### Gardens Are Bountiful

Polish Hill's gardens and green spaces are enjoying another successful season with the leadership of neighborhood volunteers. Wiggins Garden and Harmar Garden are filled to capacity with residents growing food and flowers. The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy gateway garden at 30th and Brereton is blooming bright. Tree Pittsburgh's forest restoration along Brereton is healthy, and new perennial wildflowers were planted this spring thanks to volunteers from BNY Mellon.

Several years ago the PHCA partnered with local nonprofits to plant food garden beds at the West Penn playground. As volunteers changed, these beds were left fallow and are now covered in thistle and weeds. New volunteers have adopted the garden with permission from the West Penn Rec Center Director. This summer the soil is covered in plastic to burn out the thistle roots and seeds, and in Spring 2019 there are plans to re-plant the garden with perennial food and flowers.

This spring, the neighborhood was proud of an article in NPR that celebrated lifelong resident Terry Doloughty's leadership in building our neighborhood's gardens and green spaces. For nearly 40 years Terry has managed the Wiggins Garden, whacked knotweed to keep trees healthy along Melwood Avenue, established a second community garden on Harmar Street, installed rain barrels, and planted trees throughout our streets. "As we have children in the neighborhood again, I'd like to see them have the opportunity to have a wonderful, green, safe place to just go and explore," Doloughty said.

### Monument Committee: Memorial Day, Independence Day



**Thank you** to Deb and Janice for your ongoing stewardship of the Polish Hill Memorial site.

A special thank you for watering and caring for the new tree!



The annual Polish Hill May Day Parade featured brass instruments, dancers, costumes, speeches and poems.

### Pedestrian Safety

Neighbors are strongly concerned about pedestrian safety. All four corners of Polish Hill are used as shortcuts during rush hour. Our community plan promotes pedestrian safety measures, and we have the first speed humps in the city to slow cut-through traffic, located along Melwood Avenue.

This winter, the PHCA worked with our community police officers to use speed-monitoring units. The average speed found during that monitoring was just 24 MPH. Residents discussed careless driving in narrow streets being the issue more than speed.

For example, parallel parked cars along Melwood Avenue often use cones to alert drivers that the street is narrow, in response to years of hit and runs. A neighbor on Bethoven reported that during an infrastructure project's road closure, "The reduction of traffic off Bigelow Boulevard onto Finland has been a relief."

The PHCA is working with Councilmember Gross' office to hold a community forum on October 2nd, 6:30pm at the West Penn Rec Center. The meeting will: document neighborhood observations and concerns, and identify pedestrian safety tactics available to the neighborhood. The PHCA will collaborate to identify funding opportunities to install the infrastructure. The PHCA and Councilmember Gross' staff will choose traffic calming tactics that are most supported by Polish Hill residents and which are shown to be most effective in pedestrian safety guides across the country.

### Community Meeting

**September 4th, 6:30p.** Basement, West Penn Rec Center  
*Project updates: gardens and greening, pedestrian safety, monument care, housing development, annual arts festival, and any other ideas from neighbors!*

**October 2nd, 6:30p.** Basement, West Penn Rec Center  
*Pedestrian Safety Forum: Guest speaker from the City Department of Mobility and Infrastructure to take our feedback about rush hour safety.*