

EARN FRONTIER (February 19, 2013)



**EAST ALLENTOWN RITTERSVILLE
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**
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Welcome to the EARN Frontier

Please Note --- Regularly Scheduled Neighborhood Meetings(Caucus) are held on the Third Monday of the Month at 7:00 PM ... The Location for our meetings is the St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church located at 1933 Hanover Avenue...

- Next Neighborhood Meeting
- Monday, March 18, 2013
- St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church
- 1933 Hanover Avenue, Allentown PA 18109

- **We are the Lookout for the Neighborhood**

- - President - Dennis L. Pearson
 - Vice President - Denton Kriebel
 - Secretary - David Schell
 - Treasury - Robert Jacoby
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East Allentown Rittersville Neighborhood Association MINUTES 1/21/2013

President Dennis Pearson called the regular monthly meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. on January 21, 2013 at St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church. ... Present: Four officers (Dennis Pearson, Denton Kriebel, Dave Schell, and Bob Jacoby) and three other neighbors were present at the meeting. Officer Richard S. Beidelman of the Allentown Police Department was also present to hear our concerns and answer questions. Since minutes were available for the meeting of December 17, 2012, they were approved without further reading.

Dennis Pearson started off with description of situation at Tony's Bar and Pizza. ...Denton Kriebel read a letter that he received from bar owner Tony Elchaar that was dated January 5, 2013, in response to the Association's previous letter concerning the garbage dumpster and loud music. Elchaar stated that the property is commercially-zoned and has a music license, so music will continue to be played. He will, however, attempt to soundproof the building better and deal with the trash situation. He also promised to be at the next neighborhood meeting. [He did not appear at tonight's meeting as we were led to believe he would.]

Kriebel noted that last weekend the music was still loud at 2:10 a.m. It ended at 2:20 a.m. but was followed by a loud argument by patrons at their cars. The situation was loud on December 26th and 27th. On December 28th Kriebel spoke with police Captain Schwartz about the situation. The bar was also loud on December 28th and 31st, and on January 2nd and 3rd. On January 5th it was reasonable and on January 6th it was semi-reasonable.

Officer Beidelman suggested that whenever noise becomes a nuisance that the neighbors call the non-emergency number. Question: How do multiple visits to same place for noise work? Beidelman: That depends on the officer who responds. A noisy location can be cited on second call, and the police have authority to close down a bar for the night if it is a nuisance. Concern was expressed about possible retaliation from the bouncer at the club. It was suggested that the neighbor signs up for and uses a "check mate number" rather than their name when reporting a problem, but in either case the complainant's name will not be available to the person being complained about.

A question was raised about people parking around the back of the building. This may be a code issue if they don't have enough parking in front. In any event, it can cause difficulties with people being out of view of Union Blvd. If they are in the front of the building passers-by can see their activities.

The discussion expanded to include the repeat troubles at the Club Horizon on Airport road. This compounds the problem of crime on the East Side since it is difficult to watch the rest of the area when all three cars are tied up in the same area watching a troublesome bar.

The group discussed the problem of people soliciting without a permit. It was noted that religious groups do not need a permit to come to the door. Hogar Crea, incidentally, is not covered by the religious exception. Several of those in the area recently have been electricity costs solicitors and home improvement solicitors, including those trying to sell siding at 7:00 at night, after the outside of the home is dark. A number of these solicitors have been found to be recovering drug addicts.

The group discussed the gang situation in the city. The police are watching a group in our area called the East Side Piru. This is a gang based in a rental property. Most of the members are young, with the oldest being around nineteen years of age. Officer Beidelman said that if there are difficulties a Disruptive Conduct Report (DCR) can and should be filed. Question: Have they had difficulties at Platinum Plus? Answer: Problems have been relatively minor there. The main difficulty is that if they need to make an arrest you need to take an officer off the street to handle that.

Due to the lack of progress on New England Avenue there continues to be a lack of light to cross Hanover Avenue in the area. Also discussed (again) was the problem with traffic attempting to make left turns across traffic at Albert Street and East Hamilton Street. One trucking company in the area appears to have closed on South Albert Street so there should be less truck traffic in the area.

East Side Fire Station still supposed to be built. We are uncertain if the bidding has caused the construction date to be shoved back longer. Also, if the department cuts the number of fire department personnel will they close a station—either East Side or Fairview? As to servicing the East Side, Officer Beidelman noted that at rush hour it is difficult weaving through traffic at Front and Tilghman Streets even with a police car, let alone a fire truck.

Pearson has been told that once the American Parkway Bridge is opened for traffic the Tilghman Street Bridge over the Lehigh River will be closed for renovations.

If everything goes according to plan, PPL will bring the bucket truck to take the decorations off the flagpole in the Irving Park tomorrow.

It was moved to award two \$200 mini-grant scholarships this year. This will leave us with a balance of about \$300 after paying for the awards.

Pearson was spotted on Channel 69 at the City Council hearing with water proposal meeting and asked to comment. Meeting was about referendum to put issue of voters needing to approve major sale or lease of city assets on the ballot. If Council had approved the ballot issue it would have been voted on in this year's primary election.

Council refused to approve the issue so it will not be voted on until the general election in November. By then it is possible that the water lease will already be signed. Concern was also expressed that if we continue to attempt to bring industry into town including the former Agere property the system will not have enough capacity. There is also the possibility of a new brewpub in the Neuweiler facility on Front Street. That facility has not been in operation for over forty years and may contain toxic items on the property.

We understand that the Allentown State Hospital property may be up for sale by March.

There being no further business, adjournment was moved and seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully,

David A. Schell, Secretary

East Allentown Rittersville Neighborhood Association MINUTES 2/18/2013

President Dennis Pearson called the regular monthly meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. on February 18, 2013 at St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Present: Three officers (Dennis Pearson, Denton Kriebel, and Dave Schell) and six other neighbors were present at the meeting, as was Phyllis Alexander, from Allentown's Bureau of Planning and Zoning. Also present at the beginning of the meeting was a member of the press, who spoke with several neighbors in the continuing matter of the East Side Fire Station.

Since minutes were available for the meeting of January 21, 2013, they were approved without further reading.

Dennis Pearson asked for an update on the bar situation on Union Boulevard. Denton Kriebel reported that the loud music has not stopped. The liquor control authorities need regular reports if they are to enforce the nuisance regulations. The bar has a music license. We understand that bars prefer loud music since then patrons talk less and drink more. Question: Do they have an outside seating area? Answer: No, but it is a converted car wash so the noise deadening materials are minimal.

Fines are \$100 after the initial warning. The establishment can be closed for the night once it is declared a nuisance. We are not certain what precisely needs to happen to declare the site a nuisance. Some of the neighbors are afraid to complain due to a gang presence at the facility.

Kriebel is in regular communication with police Captain Schwartz. The police have checked the area regularly. The problem is that the facility is too close to a residential area. Question: Have the police checked the noise level with portable noise meters? Answer: We have not heard of that from the police. Property owner Tony Elchaar has promised repeatedly to come to our neighborhood meeting, but has failed to do so.

We continue to be concerned about the length of time to rebuild the East Side Fire Station. The city has now indicated that they are unable to do the project in-house, and is putting the project out for bid. There was a bond issue for the Union Street Bridge near Joe Daddona Park in the west end, and the fire station.

The architect came up with the plan. It went out for bids and came back one million dollars over budget. At this point they removed some square footage, the glass windows with the fire pole behind it, and changed the roof in order to lower the cost. The bids are to go out on April 15th and be due by May 15th.

Construction could then commence in June, with a completion date no later than December 2013. Councilman Joe Davis, one of the neighbors present, indicated that barring some major disaster the new station should be occupied by the end of this year.

Our concern is that at one time we had two fire stations on the east side. These were combined into one station several decades back but we still had two trucks. We are now down to one truck. There are supposed to be three on each truck. Ideal would be four per truck, but this is beyond the ability of the budget. We have an agreement with the Bethlehem Fire Department to dispatch their truck from their facility on Catasauqua Road if needed in east Allentown.

Pearson mentioned a state scholarship program through the state representatives (details can be found on Representative Justin Simmons website). The scholarship pays one semester of tuition for each of four years to two recipients.

Pearson suggested that we might want to consider a fund-raiser for a historical marker commemorating Central Park, on the border between Allentown and Bethlehem. The cost would be approximately \$2400. The state museum commission no longer covers this cost.

There are numerous sculptures paid for by the Berman trust that are in storage. The trust has asked for suggestions as to possible locations.

Phyllis Alexander distributed videos on emergency preparedness and information on the city's 2013 Leadership Institute. It will take place at the Sacred Heart Hospital Conference Center on Saturday, March 2nd and Saturday, March 9th. This will involve both adults and teenagers.

Alexander asked if we have any other concerns that she can take back to the city. We mentioned the continuing delay in getting New England Avenue completed. This has lengthened the time during which no traffic light exists on Hanover Avenue between Carlisle Street and Graham Street to assist pedestrians in crossing to the store across from the Overlook Park community center. In addition, the construction site just north of Union Boulevard has a water hole that collects mosquitoes in warmer weather.

Pearson noted that there will be a League of Women Voters-sponsored forum tomorrow to discuss the mayor's proposed leasing of the city water and sewer system. One day later there will be a meeting concerning the Lehigh County Authority's relationship with the Allentown water supply system.

The former site of the 7-11 on Hanover Avenue at Kiowa Street will be an Asian market. Another will open in the site of the former Carmine Pizza on Union Boulevard.

We have been told that Keck Park will be opened this year, in April. It will be available for sports such as baseball and soccer. Keck Park has a skate park as well.

There being no further business, adjournment was moved and seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully,

David A. Schell, Secretary

President's Message ----

Having dealt with the City of Allentown many times in the past I know the process is slow.

This is the case even with projects that have been approved by Council. Therefore those concerned about the progress of an approved project must not sit back and wait.. We don't want the Administration any excuse to put approved projects on a back burner to simmer.

Such is the case of the reconstruction of the East Side Fire Station. The process has taken much too long and the City has just confessed at a Council meeting that it did not have the expertise to handle the project without the assistance of an outside consultant and contractor.

In our September 2012 neighborhood newsletter EARN attempted to address this issue when we said : "We ask - How much time does it take for this City to complete a project for something they say is budgeted? What does City Council and the Administration say about this lack of perceived productivity?"

Unfortunately, that newsletter was not printed with the assistance of the City as most of our newsletters are as City Authorities thought the above statement was not within their policy standards for printing. But the fact is, our comments were proven right.

Concerning the East Side Fire House, we are still waiting but our patience is wearing thin. Should we be happy when and if the project is completed... Yes... Should we bow down to the Mayor and Council in praise... No.

Any good teacher knows that when an assignment is given and the completion date passes, an incomplete is given to the unfinished project or something worse a failing grade

Well, so far the Fire House Project gets an incomplete grade and when and if it is finally completed late this year it won't be given an A rating or a B rating...At best it would be given a C

Dennis Pearson

President's Message 2 ---

The Lehigh County Board of Commissioners has heard on first reading an Ordinance which essentially would re-charter the County water and sewer Authority for 50 additional years. Of significance, approval of the Ordinance would facilitate the Lehigh County Authority to enter into a financial agreement which would allow it to potentially takeover Allentown's water and sewer infrastructure and manage it for 50 years. ...The irony here is that the LCA was the agency whose malfunctioning pretreatment plant fouled up the operation's of Allentown's Waste Water treatment operations to the discomfort of resident's in the first and six wards of Allentown and Allentown's North East and South East sections. But as it happened, citizen complaints from these areas resulted in little action to correct the problem until the same level of discomfort expanded into Allentown's Downtown areas and into the west ... I note that in 1983, Harry Forker and myself made an impact move in regard to the problem by taking a sleeping bag to the Office of Allentown Mayor Joe Daddona to remind him of his campaign promise to sleep at Kline's Island 1 day week until the problem was otherwise solved. Daddona responded that he never promised to stay there 1 day a week until the problem was otherwise resolved. Instead he offered that he promised to stay there 1 day a week until there was a workable plan that his advisors deemed would solve the problem.

Which is interesting, because we have no public record that the late mayor ever slept at Kline's Island 1 day a week until there was a workable plan that his advisors deemed to solve the problem.

Dennis Pearson

President's message 3

According to a Morning Call report of February 4, 2013 The state Department of Education has placed nearly all Allentown and five Bethlehem Area schools on a list of failing schools, making their students eligible in 2013-14 for vouchers to seek a better education at private or other public schools.

Under the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit program, students can receive \$8,500 to \$15,000 in scholarships if their schools' combined standardized math and reading scores fall in the bottom 15 percent among public schools across the state. The list was based on 2012 test scores.

The voucher program is funded through business tax credits and is run by the state departments of Education and Community and Economic Development.

Glad to see that Ritter Elementary School is one of two school buildings in Allentown which met its educational standards goal last year. and whose students won't be eligible to participate in the failing school program. And our wish for Ritter's future is that it again meet its educational goals for 2013.

Unfortunately Mosser, Ritter's sister school in the North East section of Allentown, did not meet its educational goals for 2012 with the result that its students do fall under the Opportunity Scholarship Tax credit Program. As does Harrison-Morton Middle School and Louis E. Dieruff High School.

Dennis Pearson



Established in 1976, EARN wants your input and ideas. If you live, operate a business, or simply have a vested interest in Allentown's East Side, please come!

- ✓ Know what is happening in your neighborhood and be a part of the flow of information – have your voice heard.
- ✓ Have a direct communication link with local government officials and other influential groups.
- ✓ Help to preserve and improve East Allentown.
- ✓ Plan social activities for your neighborhood.

Let's get together, share our ideas, thoughts, and feelings and work cooperatively to make Allentown's east side a better place to live.

All neighborhood residents and guests are welcome ... This is your neighborhood ... Help it be a strong one ... Get Involved ... Be part of the adventure ... Be a Frontiersman for the neighborhood.

Have any questions? Contact: Dennis L. Pearson, President 610-434-1229
dpearson@enter.net

Or visit EARN on the web: www.eastlehighearn.com

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