



Public Comment
May 21, 2020 Special Board Meeting

Name: Jordan Smith

Public Comment: It is important that the URA, The City, and the Developers involved remain clear on their commitments made to the Hill District Community. While the current economic climate in our city is apparent, by no means does that give permission to disregard a community as whole for the advancement of this development. It is critical that the City remembers its history of the destruction of the Hill District once before in the 1940s-50s, which is having an impact closely repeated today in 2020. I encourage the URA as a whole to practice better transparency within their staff regarding this development. There seems to be an individual focus on creating jobs and giving finances, which is also critical, but it is not enough. There are various elements outlined in the community's CCIP and Masterplan that were agreed upon by stakeholders to be fulfilled that would ensure social as well as economic justice and opportunity for the Hill District. Without staying true to the certain documents and commitments before approving the transfer of ownership, for free, of these parcels would be a blatant display of disrespect and disregard towards the Hill District. We cannot loose sight of the fact that residents of this community are who make up The City we earnestly seek to develop. Without benefiting these tax paying individuals who are we really developing for? I ask that there be serious considerations made before approving this transfer.

Name: Carey Evans

Public Comment: The U.R.A. and the Penguin must comply with the existing legal agreement. There must be a compliance plan created and a schedule for completing commitment in the compliance plan.

Respectfully,

Carey Evans

Name: Joyce

Public Comment: I am asking the URA and URA board members to not vote to GIVE the PAR (Penguins) the Lot G1 at no cost. They have been getting rich for years off the profits from parking lots and new arena. It is now time for the residents from the Hill to see some profits going back into our community. Where are the homes and businesses that will profit the Hill District?

We did not need a park or a connector that still cuts off the residents from downtown and we are still seeing our neighborhoods struggling while residents downtown continue to live off our misery.

Ac now and protect the people you were elected and sworn to protect.

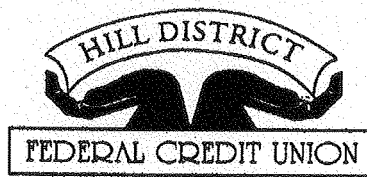
Joyce Rogers
Hill District Resident

Name: Joyce Rogers

Public Comment: Please do not let the PAR (Penguins) get that valuable piece of property free of charge and no commitment to the residents of the Hill District. It is time for broken promises to be fulfilled. Stop It Now.

Name: Richard Witherspoon

[\[Letter Attached\]](#)



HILL DISTRICT FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

OUR COMMON BOND: A COMMUNITY FIGHTING FOR SURVIVAL

HILLDISTRICTFCU.ORG

May 20, 2020

URA Board of Directors
Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh
412 Blvd. of the Allies. Suite 9
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Dear Board of Directors:

I am writing this letter regarding our relationship with First National Bank (FNB). Since 2017, FNB has been a strong banking/community partner with the Hill District Federal Credit Union (HDFCU). When it comes to services that the members of the credit union are unable to receive due to our limited capacity, FNB is the institution we refer them to. And transversely, when there is a service that FNB is not able to offer in our community, such as potential borrowers that do not fit into their guidelines, they send them our way. As a financial institution whose mission is to serve the underserved in a depressed community such as ours, this type of relationship is needed and welcomed to help us fulfill our mission.

A couple of examples of FNB's of commitment to our relationship are:

- They allow all our members to use their ATM machines at no cost which is significant based on the income levels of those we serve.
- FNB has an uninsured capitalization deposit in the HDFCU which is used to shore up the internal reserves which makes us a more stable institution.

Looking to the future of our relationship, we are currently in the process of rehabilitating our facility and expanding services to potentially have a mortgage program. We have been in negotiations with FNB to figure out what part they would be willing to play in this effort. I anticipate that it will be significant.

Sincerely,

Richard Witherspoon, CEO
rspoon@hilldistrictfcu.org

Name: Johnnie Comer

Public Comment: I am not sure why the (PAR) Penguins have not reached out to the Hill CDC, but I certainly would find out why before I transferred any blocks. I hope Mr. Gainey and Mr. Lavelle can speak to this issue.

Name: William Hill

Public Comment: I am unable to understand why none of the documentation for the items listed in the URA Director's Report have been supplied to the community for review, including the Executive Management Committee, which is appointed to ensure implementation of the Community Benefits Agreement for the Lower Hill, aka the Community Collaboration and Implementation Plan (CCIP). We must have a signed community reinvestment plan for Block G1 BEFORE the URA vote to begin transferring land ownership to the Penguins. This is the only way Hill District residents can ensure that you hear our voice and consider our interests. We know that in the past, developers did not consider the interests of Hill District residents. You should not allow this to occur again.

Name: Esther Scott

Public Comment: What is included in the community reinvestment plan to ensure Hill District residents will fairly receive economic stimulus by way of businesses, employment, and investment?

Name: Gene Boyer III

Public Comment: I support the efforts of the Hill CDC to secure firm and tangible and unequivocal commitments for resident support and entry into the building trades. The history is the history and with respect, it is unreasonable for the Hill District residents to accept promises not backed up in writing and penalties with teeth for failure to meet those commitments. We cannot and will not accept a repeat of the Civic Arena Round 1.

Name: Neashia Johnson

Public Comment: Though COVID-19 has increased the urgency for job creation, it is imperative that a decision of this scale is made responsibly. As it is clear that PAR and their partners remain committed to the redevelopment of the Lower Hill site, the onus lies on URA board members to continue encouraging and facilitating collaboration between these parties and Hill District stakeholders, postponing the take-down of Block G-1 until consensus is reached.

Name: Rhonda Hall

Public Comment: While I'm not 100% trustful of PAR or the URA, the Hill District needs this to begin our revitalization process. That is why I'm in support of the project moving forward. We must start somewhere. It was refreshing to come across documents from the City and URA outlining the 11 million dollar investment that could potentially help the Centre Avenue development projects, along with other projects in the Hill District. The Centre Avenue business projects could spark more development in the Hill District. Also, I'm hopeful that Ammon Recreation Center will get the much needed attention required for Hill District children to thrive. Hill District schools are not where they need to be and providing an enrichment space for children could be a boost for their self-esteem. I lived on Somers Drive until my early twenties and I benefited from Ammon Recreation Center during my childhood. Through the years, the community has heard about money coming to the Hill District (e.g. Casino funds) and when I drive through my community I see no evidence of those funds. The Hill has continued to deteriorate. While this deal may not be ideal, we need to start somewhere and begin rebuilding the Hill District.

Name: Kira Henderson

Public Comment: We must have a community reinvestment agreement signed before any land is distributed.

Name: Felecia Bute

Public Comment: I am submitting comments as a consultant who has worked in the Hill community for over twenty years on various projects for Hill House and Hill CDC.

In the day of Covid 19 it is important to remember that when the Civic Arena was torn down there were high hopes that this was a sign for the Hill Community and downtown Pittsburgh to unify as a bold new destination location for sports fans and residents in the region.

There have been starts and stops along the way however, the Hill community once again acted in good faith. A community that was asked to dream about their community and plan the dream did that from green space to affordable housing, artist lofts all of these long evenings with developers and contractors as well as long hours for City staff (staff) who were paid to attend and the community leaders who volunteer their time to protect and plan the Hill community future.

So here we all are at 11th hour and the community has been wined and dined the developers have spent time listening to those dreams and has decided along with the URA that they did not have to live up to their end of the partnership.

Now, we all know that no one is moving out of the Hill community these are the same people who teach in our public schools and work in our local hospital's and universities.

The future of this city is focused on this project working for downtown and the Hill Community!

The Penguins and FNB have their future in the city as well, but this is a statement about who the city of Pittsburgh will be after Covid 19 . Can we move our city to a new beginning, as our country faces its biggest challenge since the Great Depression. Can we put people to work? Invest in a healthy and diverse development, that full fills the future of the region and highlights all the gifts that the Hill Community has produced from August Wilson to Teenie Harris to countless others in the entertainment field, education& arts.

Inviting the world to see what we were able to accomplish to move Pittsburgh forward!

FMB & Associates

Felecia Bute

Name: Brenda Tate

Public Comment: My soon to be 100 year old aunt Margaret is among the still living residents in the Hill District that benefited from the vibrant lower Hill District when she arrived in Pittsburgh in 1940. She was a young women coming from Birmingham. Her first stable job was working for Lena Horne's Father Teddy Horne as a waitress. As she made a life for herself on land that was eventually decimated and wiped out for the sake of Urban Renewal and ultimately demolishing the economic heartbeat of an entire community without any benefit to thousands of families and businesses. Now fast forward 50 years she and I will witness the same arguments that was made by the URA back then that are being made now. Today, my aunt and I are living witnesses to your actions in 2020. We are asking the URA, and the Mayor to not fail our community once again. We are asking you to require PAR and any other parties to sign a community reinvestment plan before you begin to transfer ownership to them. Remember, you will always have living witnesses to your actions 50 years from now.

Best

Brenda Tate, Lifelong Hill District Resident

Name: Michelle Hardeman

Public Comment: As a resident of the Hill District I wanted to comment on the items to be voted on today, particularly the Housing Reinvestment Fund. The proposed new development in the Lower Hill will certainly improve the Hill District in the long run, but the existing Hill District Residents need help now. Our homes and businesses buildings are ancient, decayed or decaying to the point of ruin. We residents who live in the Hill now and have been paying property taxes need a right now solution to address home repair and remodeling. Creation of the new business and housing in the Lower Hill will be of benefit, but will mostly benefit folks that could be potential residents. It is great to prepare for the future, but not at the cost of the present. Hill District tax payers have waited far too long to see the benefits of reconstruction of its lower corridor. We were promised funds for improvement when our main business district was up-ended by the Civic Arena Development, the Crawford Square Development was the next opportunity but the greater Hill has never seen a dime of its revenue, only the City of Pittsburgh has benefited. The Hill District resident understand that the City has a goal to serve everyone, but the Hill District should not be the area that always has revenue and revitalization taken from it for every other neighborhood benefit. Next we had the CONSOL development that has not benefited the Hill District. Let us not forget the failed Casino project also. For far too long repair and remodeling funds have been promised to the tax payers and the promises that the Hill will be greatly improved from these

developments has proven to be empty promises. The URA of Pittsburgh should vote yes to the 25% Monetize the Hill District Reinvestment Fund because it is well overdue. City of Pittsburgh DO YOUR JOB, Represent your own policies and comments by ACTUALLY KEEPING YOUR WORD.

Name: Deborah Williams

Public Comment: We are suffering without a grocery store. We need fresh vegetables and foods like all other neighborhoods in the city. Are there plans for a grocery store in the old shop n save? Where are our politicians supporting this effort!

Name: Darnell Chambers

Public Comment: We should be finding alternatives ways to support minority businesses on the Hill without having to sacrificing land that belongs to the people. BPG and PAR already owns land and much of it. If they were interested in the betterment of the Hill District they would be supporting minority businesses on the Hill without compensation of land. Too much of the Historic Hill is being taken away from its residents and not enough support of cooperatives

Name: Deborah Parker

Public Comment: This land is public land it has been given to the Penquins without them signing the Cmty benefits agreement. I want this agreement signed before you vote on transferring and land parcels to this entity.

Name: Carol Hardeman

Public Comment: Dear URA Board Members,

My name is Carol Hardeman and I am a lifetime Hill District resident. I'm also employed with the Hill District Consensus Group. I'm writing to say that the Pens are not loyal or committed to their Lower Hill development plans especially since they have been going around this same mountain for over ten years. So, I don't think its fair for them to still make money off of the Lower Hill parking lots or insist that the URA give them more public land in exchange for a redevelopment delay! The Hill District future is important to residents and the Pens should not be allowed to reap all the benefits!

Thank you!

Name: Gary English

Public Comment: To the URA Board;

The saga of the arena development project in Lower Hill District began with owner Mario Lemieux's threat to move the team to Kansas City if he didn't get a new publicly funded arena.

The URA needs to be reminded that on March 13, 2007, Gov. Ed Rendell penned the "Pittsburgh Arena Term Sheet" which agreed to fund a new arena and demolish the Civic Arena, approved as a historic landmark by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) in 2001. The demolition also violated the RAD law to "preserve" regional assets, wasting millions in county sales tax revenue.

The term sheet agreed to pave the Civic Arena into a parking lot and give all future parking revenue to the Penguins, who have raked in millions from daily commuter and event parking.

The Penguins also received naming rights to buildings they don't own — Civic to Mellon to Consol to PPG Paints, an estimated worth of \$200-plus million. Each time, the taxpayers paid for new highway signs to reflect the name changes.

Since the Penguins received exclusive redevelopment rights, why did the city and county apply for millions in state and federal grants and give tax increment financing and Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance tax breaks?

Contractual redevelopment of 2.8 acres per year have yielded multiple extensions and broken proposals.

After 13 years, it's time to stop this madness.

The Penguins must refund the parking revenues and hand over the naming rights revenues as damages to the taxpayers.

Gary J. English

I nominated the Civic Arena as a historic landmark in 2001 and was approved by the PA Historical & Museum Commission

Name: James hough

Public Comment: I am saddened by the URA's & Penguins organization's continuous inability to deal fairly & honestly with the Hill District community. As a remedy, there must be immediate good-faith steps taken by the above-named organizations before any further progress on these development projects. They both can start by honoring the agreements they have already committed themselves to concerning previous Hill District development promises they've ! made.

Name: Darlene Harris

Public Comment: Community housing Benefits fair housing prices. Benefits for the Hill and Oakland Community.

Name: Sala Udin, Hill District Resident

Public Comment: Dear Board Members:

I know you are anxious to get the start of this Lower Hill District project moving. We who live in the Hill District are also anxious to get the project started. But we are equally anxious to get it started correctly. That is especially true for those members of the Hill District (like my family) who were included in the huge displacement of the Lower Hill District community in the late 1950's and early 1960's. At that time, the URA and the Allegheny Conference told those families, "Just trust us. We are going to build brand new houses which you will be able to come back to when the redevelopment of the Lower Hill District is completed." Here we are a half century later, staring at a 28 acre parking lot where our homes once sat.

The CCIP is the best that we could negotiate to guarantee some level of community benefit as a partial repayment of the damage that was done by the URA to the whole Hill District, not just the Lower Hill District. Our complaints are not intended to be obstructionist, but we cannot be expected to just sit by and wait for the promise, "Just trust us. This is going to be a great benefit to the Hill District." The benefits we demand are codified in the CCIP, which you signed on to. Please, honor the agreements in the CCIP, FULLY. And our complaints will be silenced. But if you continue to ignore and skirt around the details contained in the CCIP, you will continue to invite strong opposition.

Just do the right thing, (as Kevin frequently promises).

Sala Udin

One of the “Displaced.”

Name: mel packer

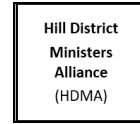
Public Comment: There must be NO vote to approve moving forward on the Penguins development plans for the G1 parcel until community needs are met. This can only be accomplished by meeting with the community and by the community having its own meetings to consider the proposal with results reported to the URA. The URA has a chance to serve the community’s interests and not just wealthy developers with whom the city administration sides on every issue. The Penguins have benefited from parking fees for years with little going to aid the community and it is time to bring a halt to business that only aids corporations and not the Hill District residents.

Name: DRP Updated Public Comment 5-21-20

Public Comment: Good Morning,

Please find an updated memo from the DRP for Block G1.

[\[Letter Attached\]](#)



MEMORANDUM

Date: March 21, 2020

To: Mayor Peduto, via email

SEA Board Members

State Senator Fontana, via email
Michael Dunleavy, via email
Sala Udin, via email
Jill Weimer, via email
Councilman Coghill, via email
Rev. Grayson, via email
Councilman Futules, via email

URA Board Members

Sam Williamson, via email
Rep. Gainey, via email
Councilman Lavelle, via email
Jodi Hirsh, via e-mail
Lindsay Powell, via e-mail

RE: Lower Hill Redevelopment Block G1 - UPDATE

Dear Mayor, SEA Board Members, and URA Board Members,

On behalf of the **Hill District's Development Review Panel (DRP)**, we offer this letter notifying you that after receiving unsatisfactory scores of alignment against both the **Greater Hill District Master Plan (GHDMP)** and **Community Collaboration and Implementation Plan (CCIP – The Community Benefits Agreement for the 28 Acres)** the development team for **Block G1** (Pittsburgh Arena Real Estate Redevelopment, aka PAR – the Penguins, and Buccini Pollin Group aka BPG) **did not** provide the additional documentation requested by the Hill District Development Review Panel by the deadline of May 20, 2020. **Meeting this deadline was essential to continuing this project through the process and we are disappointed by PAR and BPG's failure to reply to keep the project on track.** The DRP, as the Hill District's unified community review process, works hard not to be an impediment to development, but to support the needs of developers who seek to bring beneficial developments to the neighborhood. As of the time of submission of this public comment, we have, in fact, received **no** response from the development team for Block G1.

The mission of the Hill CDC is to work in partnership with residents and stakeholders to create, promote, and implement strategies and programs that connect plans, policies,

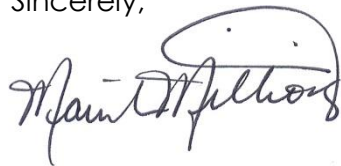
and people to drive compelling community development opportunities in the Greater Hill District. The Hill CDC is responsible for facilitating the implementation of the GHDMP, specifically addressing any community concerns regarding redevelopment and economic opportunities in the area. **The DRP is the Hill District's recognized and unified community review process.** It is a **partnership** with the **Hill House Association (HHA), Hill District Consensus Group (HDCG), Uptown Partners (UP), Hill District Education Council (HDEC), Hill District Ministers Alliance (HDMA),** and the **Center that Cares** that streamlines community level review while assuring transparency and sufficient community feedback.

As you prepare to vote today, Thursday May 21st, whether to approve site control to Buccini Pollin Group (BPG) and Pittsburgh Arena Real Estate Redevelopment (PAR), as the development team, initiating the process of ownership transfer of the parcel identified as Block G1, **please be advised that they have not complied with the requested and preset timeline to continue to move their proposal through the community review process.**

As holds true from our previous memo, this block has not yet successfully completed community review. The DRP Committee, **Hill District Residents appointed by the membership organizations,** has provided **multiple points of feedback** for this development to align with the **GHDMP** the **CCIP** before advancing them through the process to a public presentation.

We look forward to attending the URA Board Meeting this afternoon and awaiting your decision.

Sincerely,



Marimba Milliones
President and CEO

Cc:

Greg Flisram, URA
Daniel Gilman, Mayor's Office
State Representative Jake Wheatley

Name: Richard Taylor

Public Comment: To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Richard Taylor, and I am legal counsel to Macedonia Church of Pittsburgh. Macedonia's Senior Pastor, Brian J. Edmonds, requested that I submit the attached public comments on his behalf for today's Special Meeting of the URA Board of Directors. Please let me know if you have any questions, or if you need any additional information.

Regards,

Richard

[\[Letter Attached\]](#)

**Public Statement of Brian J. Edmonds
Senior Pastor, Macedonia Church of Pittsburgh
Urban Redevelopment Authority Board
Special Meeting, May 21, 2020**

The last time I came before this Board was in October of last year when you were deliberating whether to approve the Penguins' proposed Term Sheet for the Lower Hill District Development. In amending that Term Sheet, this Board directed that the Penguins and Macedonia Church should collaborate on proposed improvements to Ammon Recreation Center. Given the matters before you today, I believe it is important and relevant to update you on that collaboration to date.

In short, there has not been any meaningful or substantive collaboration so far. We had an introductory phone conversation in November 2019 to provide background on Macedonia's long history relative to Ammon Recreation Center. At that time, the Penguins indicated they were developing some preliminary plans that they would share at a later date. As of February of this year, we had not heard back, so we contacted them to inquire about updates. We did not receive a response, so we tried a third time in March.

Once we connected in early March, we had a few brief conversations in which we were told that there was nothing new to report, until we were notified that the Penguins had provided an update to this Board at your April meeting on plans for Ammon. We did not receive any of the information they provided to this Board until a week after your April Board meeting, and we still have not received all the information despite multiple requests.

Last week, we expressed our serious concern to the Penguins that this manner of dealing was not consistent with the letter or spirit of this Board's direction to us to collaborate on plans for Ammon. The Penguins understood our concerns and expressed their desire for us to work together in a much more collaborative way going forward. We have every hope that we will do so, and we look forward to resetting the relationship and process.

While we are looking forward, I believe this history is relevant and important for two reasons. First, it underscores how important it is for there to be real accountability for commitments made to the community. Although commitments may be made in good faith, without meaningful accountability, those commitments are too easily pushed to a lower priority, and the public's trust and confidence in this Board's decisions will get undermined. As you deliberate on the matters before you today, I encourage you to ensure that any decision to advance development on the Lower Hill District site is tied to verifiable compliance with the terms of the Community Collaboration and Implementation Plan for the Lower Hill.

The second reason this history is important is to set the record straight. On yesterday, I received a document produced by the URA entitled "Explanation of Neighborhood Benefits" which was posted on the URA website. As it relates to the Penguins and Macedonia, it states that "Negotiations with Macedonia Church are ongoing (Impacted by COVID-19)." I think it would be more accurate to say that "Negotiations with Macedonia Church have not yet begun." It is important that this Board and

the public have an accurate picture of the process to date, and as we go forward. For future updates, it would be helpful for the URA to confer with Macedonia directly before additional updates are provided to the public.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

Name: Rebecca Altes

Public Comment: I am writing to share public comment on the transfer of Block G1 to PAR.

The Penguins, with the help of Kevin Acklin most recently, have been exploiting the resources of the Hill District for years. Meanwhile, they have proven that they will not make good on their promises, doing everything they can to get out of anything owed to Hill District community and residents.

Just three years ago, the Penguins negotiated a sweetheart deal with the URA when Kevin Acklin was board president, agreeing to far off penalties (on parking revenues that shouldn't have been theirs to begin with), if they did not finally make good on their promises. They rewarded Acklin with a job. Now, once again, the Penguins are trying to get all the benefit without having to give anything back to the community. More broken promises.

They Penguins must provide the requested documentation and sign a community reinvestment plan before transfer of the property.

If they want to pull out of the deal, they should owe the Hill District community (as they always should have), all the parking revenue for that parking lot backdated to when they first started collecting funds, and all tax dollars spent on their stadium to *all* city residents.

It is far past time for investment in the Hill District community and its residents, and it is a disgusting that the Penguins have been allowed to exploit the community and give nothing back for so long.

The URA must support its community and residents.

Thank you.

Rebecca Altes

Name: Suresh Ramanathan

Public Comment: I am just one voice among many but having walked through the old Savoy building in the Hill District and seeing how our city let it decay, I realize that it is time for this City of Pittsburgh to do things differently. The Savoy was a symbol of the vibrance and culture in the Hill District.

I beseech the URA Board to request the following: The Block G1 Community Reinvestment Plan be signed before you vote on transferring ownership!

Name: N/A

Public Comment: Let the people of the hill have a say so and a benefit from the sale of these properties. Don't Gentrify our community. Don't keep robbing use like the city did with the Civic Arena. Stop always taking!!!!

Name: Celeste Scott

Public Comment: Good morning

My name is Celeste Scott, I live in Homestead and am commenting as a concerned citizen who grew up in Pittsburgh and works in Pittsburgh. Pre Covid19, I have traversed the Hill District and gotten to know many and converse with many residents there. One thing is for certain, the people of the Hill District are a force to be reckoned with. They are savvy, intentional, smart, and they show up to fight for their community. I am extremely concerned that the community's needs are not being met in this development as-is. The Hill District is the crown jewel of Black Pittsburgh in so many ways. When something happens there, the stress and impact reverberates throughout the City, the County, the State, the Nation, even globally. If you know about the great legacy of the Hill District, you know that is hardly an overstatement.

When I have traveled outside of Pittsburgh, many times the first thing folks ask me about is what is going on with the Hill District. I urge the vote today to center the communities well thought out wishes for land that they have long been pushing back unchecked gentrification on for many, many years. I know the deal is complex and there are many moving parts, but today, this moment is important. I defer to Hill comrades whom I have great love and respect for to communicate their asks. Transparency, accountability, and authentic community decision making at every table are a must in the equitable development of Pittsburgh. With Covid19, it has become even more apparent that we need to be deliberate and intentional about land acquisition

in our city, what happens on that land, and who gets to make decisions about that- especially in historically Black communities. I urge you to do the right thing by the people of the Hill District today. I lift up their voices and the community's blood, sweat, and tears that has gone forth to bring us here to this moment today. Thank you.

Name: Gabriel LaBelle

Public Comment: Please do not do this. The lower hill and it predominantly minority residents have been continually screwed by the city for close to 100 years. Please do not let this happen. It will be a true wrong.

Name: Naomi Chambers

Public Comment: Not enough benefit to the residents (no buy in for residents at all) and timing feels shady

Name: Phyllis Ghafoor

Public Comment: Honorable URA Board Members,

Last week, I had the occasion to review an article written by the Pittsburgh Post Gazette which stated that the Pittsburgh Penguins wanted out of the development of the Lower Hill District.

This was of great concern to us who live and work in the Greater Hill District since many of us attended meetings in October, 2019, and November, 2019 at your board meeting, and the SEA board that indicated this project was a GO.

This project is more than a take down of real estate for housing and an office building. It is an actual AGREEMENT for all parties to pursue constructive movement away from the racism, classism, lack of vision, trickery of purpose, and downright meanness of an economic system that FAILED over 60 years ago.

The One Hill Initiative of the last decade with a signed community benefits agreement, and the development for a Master Plan reflected the seriousness that something more needed to be done. We continue to lose population and young people by the thousands. We have lost a supermarket, our beloved Hill House Association, and by fire sale the Hillman multipurpose center, and senior center.

If the Pens walk away, we will lose jobs, new construction of retail and housing, and our share of LERTA funds for the middle and upper Hill.

I have attended personally 80% of Hill meetings, 60% of SEA, 90% of URA and PAR meeting, 90% of HACP Bedford Choice meetings, all with a broken back, in pain, unemployed, and through community politics.

Pens, you are tired of waiting? The Mayor just wrote his support of the project. If the Pens want to walk away open bid to a better developer!!! I am semi-retired, turned 66 on Sunday, but am still around.

Phyllis D Ghafoor

Name: Brittani Murray

Public Comment: As a longtime city resident, organizer and activist, I am calling on the board today to not let history repeat itself. I'm grateful of the work of the board and their attempt at ushering in tangible solutions for a community that's been abused by this city for decades. The path the hell is paved with good intentions, and we've already bore witness to this cities best intentions displacing Black families without providing any form of restorative justice or reparations. I implore you to consider what you're being told, versus the actual impact. Enough is enough, and this neighbourhood is OWED by PAR. PAR (Penguins), Buccini Pollin Group (BPG) and relevant parties need to sign the Block G1 Community Reinvestment Plan drafted by members of the Executive Management Committee BEFORE they vote to begin transferring ownership to PAR (Penguins) and their affiliates (Buccini Pollin Group - BPG). There was no cost for this public land to PAR, make sure that there is public benefit to the Hill District as a result of this development. VOTE NO TODAY!

Name: Brittany Reno

Public Comment: To approve the free transfer of Block G1 to PAR without having in place a signed community benefits agreement is to risk (and likely guarantee) that this development will perpetuate the shameful tradition of this city failing Pittsburgh's black communities. To move forward with this transfer for the sake of saving a development that won't necessarily serve the people who call this area home, to reinvest in brick and mortar development without an iron-clad reinvestment in the people and their vision for their community, will actively harm Hill District residents, small businesses, and

nonprofits--so many of whom have been working in good faith for years, despite setbacks, power imbalances, and broken promises--to develop reasonable and actionable CBA terms that ensure that this for-profit development actually serves and doesn't directly displace the community it's in. Please consider rejecting this transfer until after an enforceable community benefits agreement is signed and made public to the community. Thank you.

Name: Laura Wiens

Public Comment: PAR (Penguins), Buccini Pollin Group (BPG) and relevant parties need to sign the Block G1 Community Reinvestment Plan drafted by members of the Executive Management Committee BEFORE they vote to begin transferring ownership to PAR (Penguins) and their affiliates (Buccini Pollin Group - BPG). There was no cost for this public land to PAR, make sure that there is public benefit to the Hill District as a result of this development. VOTE NO TODAY!

Name: Chele Lee

Public Comment: We deserve our childhood memories. Growing up on the hill taught me how to love in ways that the media would never know how to portray!!!! We fight for our lives and for the preservation of our memories, legacies, where we grew up! "When I think of home I think of a place where there is LOVE overflowing!" The hill is home to far too many of my brothers and sisters...to feel like anything else, would be tragic.

Name: Kathryn Stabile

Public Comment: The hill district is an important and thriving black community. The PAR should be making the investment to benefit the local people above all else. Condos, etc are not helpful.

Name: Brianna Lewis

Public Comment: PAR (Penguins), Buccini Pollin Group (BPG) and relevant parties need to sign the Block G1 Community Reinvestment Plan drafted by members of the

Executive Management Committee BEFORE they vote to begin transferring ownership to PAR (Penguins) and their affiliates (Buccini Pollin Group - BPG). There was no cost for this public land to PAR, make sure that there is public benefit to the Hill District as a result of this development.

Name: Melanie Root

Public Comment: PAR (Penguins), Buccini Pollin Group (BPG) and relevant parties need to sign the Block G1 Community Reinvestment Plan drafted by members of the Executive Management Committee BEFORE they vote to begin transferring ownership to PAR (Penguins) and their affiliates (Buccini Pollin Group - BPG). There was no cost for this public land to PAR, make sure that there is public benefit to the Hill District as a result of this development.

Name: Shequaya Bailey

Public Comment: Please prioritize the communities needs first. Too many times Black folks are placed last. It's time we come first especially in Our community. I am a Pittsburgh native, I grew up in Larimer. I'm tired of being priced out and looked over.

Name: Marimba Milliones

Public Comment: Hello,

Please see attached.

Marimba Milliones

[\[Letter Attached\]](#)



A Deal is a Deal

What's missing is process.

Marimba Milliones, President & CEO
Hill Community Development Corporation
May 21, 2020

In May of 1955, the City of Pittsburgh and URA approved the demolition of the Lower Hill District, ultimately displacing 8,000 residents and 1,300 businesses and institutions. Famed Harlem Renaissance poet, Claude McKay, and Pittsburgh deejay, Mary D, coined the area as the “Crossroads of the World” because of its lively, energetic and cultural contributions to our City. Ironically, “Crossroad” is the perfect word to describe this moment. Pittsburgh is at a Crossroad. We’re standing at the intersections of Courage and Contempt; Prosperity and Poverty; Equity and Erasure.

We’re staring history squarely in its face while carrying the shame and failures of previous generations. It’s a heavy responsibility, no doubt. But it is our responsibility, no less. Today, “our” fate once again rests in the hands of the URA’s board of directors. The very agency responsible for the utter destruction of the center of Black culture and life within our City. A designation of shame still burdening our City’s progress.

So today, 65 years later, the Hill District’s request is simple -- honor the deal that was made between the Hill District community, the Pens, the City and the County. The Community Collaboration and Implementation Plan (CCIP) is clear on what is needed, and the items therein cannot be viewed as an inconvenience for any reason. COVID-19 only intensifies the need to fulfill community commitments. Certainly, you understand that if there is a threat to enterprise businesses during this time, then the average Hill District resident and business is barely scraping by, assuming they survived at all. Please do not use COVID-19 as a reason to deepen the *epidemic* of economic despair within the Hill District.

To cause no further harm to the Hill District community, the Lower Hill District’s redevelopment, and our City, the URA board needs an implementation strategy that

confirms alignment with key parties before initiating public-to-private land transfers on this site. We must end the unnecessary delays caused by last minute submissions, lack of follow-up, poorly vetted concepts and disregard for the Hill District community's intellectual and technical capacity. Such activities only harm us all, and have almost killed this project more times than I care to count.

Today, I implore the URA to adopt a procedural policy at the strongest level that requires Lower Hill Developers to submit a Community Reinvestment (& Implementation) Plan for each Lower Hill Block (including Block G-1 and others in-process). This would serve as a condition of approval for transferring publicly-owned land to a private corporate entity for the purpose of protecting public resources and assuring fulfillment of the CCIP. The Plan should be submitted with the Developer's preliminary request and endorsed by the same parties who are signatory to the CCIP to assure veracity. Other essential parties, such as anchor tenants or equity holders should also endorse. This document would be used to measure progress and would be a formal agreement of accountability between parties. The intent of the Community Reinvestment (& Implementation) Plan for each Block is to ensure alignment with the governing agreement, the CCIP, on a site-specific basis. Such an approach will reduce conflict and disruption to development and bring transparency and accountability to all essential parties. It will take trust and hard work among and between parties, but this site is worth the effort -- and history requires it.

For context, in October 2019, the URA began transferring ownership of public land to PAR (and affiliates) and they have struggled to follow through on the most basic community commitments they made in good faith at that time. The Community does not have the capacity to manage business deals made in good faith; the Hill District Community prefers the written word to assure clarity for all parties.

If the URA Board cannot accept this reasonable condition to protect the Hill District community from further exploitation and indifference, it should not approve the request by the Pens and affiliates for preliminary approval and begin transferring the ownership of public land to private ownership.

Fair is fair -- a deal is a deal.

I humbly submit this request in memory of Frankie Pace, Mary A. Walker, Jake Millions, Nate Smith, Robert R. Lavelle and the 1955 members of Mother Bethel AME Church who pleaded with the URA to prevent the demolition of their majestic church located on the Lower Hill District site.

Name: Michelle Clayton

Public Comment: PAR (Penguins), Buccini Pollin Group (BPG) and relevant parties need to sign the Block G1 Community Reinvestment Plan drafted by members of the Executive Management Committee BEFORE they vote to begin transferring ownership to PAR (Penguins) and their affiliates (Buccini Pollin Group - BPG). There was no cost for this public land to PAR, make sure that there is public benefit to the Hill District as a result of this development. VOTE NO TODAY!

Name: George Gaines

Public Comment: PAR (Penguins), Buccini Pollin Group (BPG) and relevant parties need to sign the Block G1 Community Reinvestment Plan drafted by members of the Executive Management Committee BEFORE they vote to begin transferring ownership to PAR (Penguins) and their affiliates (Buccini Pollin Group - BPG). There was no cost for this public land to PAR, make sure that there is public benefit to the Hill District as a result of this development. VOTE NO TODAY!

Name: Felicity Williams

Public Comment: Good Afternoon,

The below is public comment for the history of the LERTA creation for the Greater Reinvestment Fund Guidelines on behalf of the Hill CDC:

The CCIP was the result of a multi-year process that included the convening of community members, residents and stakeholders. When the City of Pittsburgh Planning Commission decided to exclude formal adoption of the community benefits agreement (CCIP) as a part of the developer's (Pens) Lower Hill regulatory plan (Preliminary Land Development Plan), the Hill CDC independently filed an appeal in the Court of Common Pleas to safeguard benefits for the Hill District and its residents. This historic bold action of the Hill CDC lead to the establishment of what was then the largest tax financing district in the history of the City of Pittsburgh (the LERTA), the formal establishment of a Citywide Affordable Housing Taskforce, and a compliance monitor to assure implementation of the CCIP codified via the Hill CDC settlement agreement. The LERTA, established by the Hill CDC's Settlement Agreement in 2015, is now seeding the Greater Hill District Reinvestment Fund, for which the URA is providing a briefing on

the guidelines for this afternoon. The LERTA is estimated to yield \$40 million back to the community. More information can be read at www.hilldistrict.org/lowerhillfacts. There is a link to the settlement agreement. The creation of the LERTA is stipulated on page 4 of the Settlement Agreement.

Thank you,
Felicity

Name: Arbie Bankston

Public Comment: Regarding announcements 3A, 3B : The take down of Block G1 must include a LERTA funding schedule that requires money to be deposited with 90 days of the Block G1 land ownership transfer. The total LERTA value is \$80 million, PAR keeps \$40 million of the future real estate tax payment. THEREFORE all costs to borrow the \$40 million for the Community cannot be deducted from the \$40 million to be deposited in the Hill District Reinvestment Fund. This concept also applies to the parking tax diversion. The loan costs to capitalize the 25% (\$3 million) for the Hill District Housing Reinvestment Fund must be paid for from the 75% (\$9 million) that PAR is to receive. There must be a funding schedule. The take down cannot be completed until a compliance plan and completion schedule are published. The Block G1 term sheet must be published with one weeks of today's vote.

Name: Tracey Thacker

Public Comment: PAR (Penguins), Buccini Pollin Group (BPG) and relevant parties need to sign the Block G1 Community Reinvestment Plan drafted by members of the Executive Management Committee BEFORE they vote to begin transferring ownership to PAR (Penguins) and their affiliates (Buccini Pollin Group - BPG). There was no cost for this public land to PAR, make sure that there is public benefit to the Hill District as a result of this development.

Name: Stevie Gallo

Public Comment: PAR (Penguins), Buccini Pollin Group (BPG) and relevant parties need to sign the Block G1 Community Reinvestment Plan drafted by members of the Executive Management Committee BEFORE they vote to begin transferring ownership to PAR (Penguins) and their affiliates (Buccini Pollin Group - BPG). There was no cost for this public land to PAR, make sure that there is public benefit to the Hill District as a result of this development.

Name: Rachel Dowden

Public Comment: I vote no on this matter. It is important to have community agreement as well as retribution or payment for this matter.

Name: Crystal Noel

Public Comment: As an artist in the Pittsburgh area with roots in the Hill it is absolutely discouraging and outrageous that the Penguins have been able to dictate what happens or not to the lives of Hill district residents so carelessly and unironically freely. Black people made the Hill what it is. To discard them and provide very little of the basic needs that the Hill CDC is telling. The Penguins absolutely do not care enough about the lives of black people to ensure they have adequate housing or long term employment.

Name: Lance Harrell

Public Comment: URA Board,

Please take this memo in consideration for today's Special Board Meeting.

[\[Letter Attached\]](#)

LOWER HILL EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MEMO

Date: May 21, 2020

To: URA Board of Directors

From: Lower Hill District Executive Management Committee (EMC)

Subject: Block G1, Board Consideration

Please accept this memo as formal notification that at a meeting of the EMC held on Monday May 11th, the body reached consensus that the current community reinvestment plan for Block G-1 is incomplete, and is therefore requesting that the URA postpone authorizing the preliminary approval of a redeveloper and a conceptual development plan for that site within the Lower Hill District.

Keeping in mind the urgency of this matter, the EMC will continue to work with the developer to achieve better alignment with the Community Collaboration and Implementation Plan (CCIP) and will submit to the URA Board, in writing, notification once that objective has been met.

Please direct inquiries to Lance Harrell, CCIP Project Administrator for the Lower Hill EMC. Contact information is attached for reference.

Name: Mollie March-Steinman

Public Comment: PAR (Penguins), Buccini Pollin Group (BPG) and relevant parties need to sign the Block G1 Community Reinvestment Plan drafted by members of the Executive Management Committee BEFORE they vote to begin transferring ownership to PAR (Penguins) and their affiliates (Buccini Pollin Group - BPG). There was no cost for this public land to PAR, make sure that there is public benefit to the Hill District as a result of this development.

Name: Myrah-Ashly Wilcox

Public Comment: The on going concern of another grocery store being opened in the community, is not being addressed. This is an ongoing conversation among Hill resident's and this needs to be addressed and rectified soon. What are the plans to adhere to this need? Thank you

Name: Tiara George

Public Comment: Will there affordable housing in the Lower Hill?

Name: Jonathan Glance, AIA

Public Comment: Development is a careful balance between different and sometimes opposing positions; also known as a compromise. While this development may be an imperfect compromise and that the residences of the Hill wish this development would do more to right the many, many wrongs that this community has faced, no single development can undo generations of segregation and unequal economic opportunity. It should also be considered that the cost of delay may do greater damage to the Hill than moving forward with this imperfect compromise. Finally, it should be noted that this project's economic influence stretches across the entire Pittsburgh region - not just in those adjacent communities. This project is too important - especially in these uncertain times, to risk not moving forward.
