

## NEWSBRIEFS

## With Appeal Officially Dismissed, Bottom Dollar To Start Construction

*Penn Avenue* – After two years of negotiation and compromise with the surrounding community, Bottom Dollar will finally begin construction of a full-service, 18,000-square-foot grocery store at 5200 Penn Ave.

In the interest of re-opening discussion with the four neighbors and one community group who filed an appeal of the site plans with the Court of Common Pleas, Bottom Dollar put forth a final compromise site plan in late May. The appellants agreed to the compromise, which includes a 4-foot, 4-inch brick wall along part of South Pacific Avenue, and Judge Joseph James officially dismissed the appeal on June 26.

C. Brantley Tillman, principal of Commercial Properties, Inc., the developer for Bottom Dollar, told *The Bulletin* that construction of the store could start as early as this month, with a grand opening in early 2014.

Preparations are underway for construction, with the glass mosaic mural by artist Daviea Davis, currently affixed to the A&M Market at 5224 Penn Ave., in the process of being removed for safe-keeping. When construction is completed, the mural will be remounted on the Penn Avenue facade of Bottom Dollar.

This will be the first Bottom Dollar store within the city's limits, and the first grocery store for the neighborhood since Giant Eagle closed its doors in 1987. The store is being financed entirely with private funds.

"We're moving the neighborhood in the right direction with this investment," said Aggie Brose, deputy director of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation. "With Bottom Dollar, the reconstruction project (*see related article, page 1*) and all the work our Main-streets Manager is doing, Penn Avenue is where it's happening." – *Paula Martinac, The Bulletin*

## Vandals Strike Lawrenceville Trees

*Lawrenceville* – Lawrenceville United, Tree Pittsburgh: Lawrenceville Tree Tenders and countless volunteers have come together over the years to plant hundreds of trees not only in new and old green spaces, but all along residential and commercial corridors. The trees provide improved air quality, water conservation and stormwater mitigation, as well as climate control, lower energy costs and increased home values.

Lately, vandalism has struck this urban forest. Tree damage – from accidentally nicking the bark with a garden tool, to breaking off branches, to "skinning" trees – can be fatal and cost thousands of dollars to replace. Tree Pittsburgh teaches in its tree tender courses: "The outer layer of a tree is where water and nutrients flow between the roots and leaves, so damaging this layer can cause significant harm to a tree. Young trees whose bark is still thin are especially vulnerable to damage from lawnmowers, parked bicycles, etc. These wounds often take years to heal and can even kill a tree outright if they are bad enough."

The most recent damage occurred during Lawrenceville's Independence Day Celebration, when someone completely skinned a tree in Arsenal Park, thus killing it. (*See photo above.*)

People can be ticketed for damaging a tree in any way, including by securing a bike to a tree with a bike lock or something similar. To help keep trees safe and protected, residents can report problems and any and all tree concerns to 311 and also email them to [Ivtreetenders@gmail.com](mailto:Ivtreetenders@gmail.com). – *from Lawrenceville United newsletter*



Photo courtesy Lawrenceville United

## Residents Invited to Garfield National Night Out Party

*Garfield* – The Garfield Community Action Team (GCAT) and the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC) are co-hosting a National Night Out (NNO) party from 7 to 9 p.m. on Aug. 6 at Nelson Mandela Peace Park on the corner of North Evaline and Broad streets. There will be free ice cream, kids' activities and live entertainment for all to enjoy.

"National Night Out was created to promote residents' involvement in crime prevention activities, police-community partnerships, neighborhood camaraderie and to send a message to criminals that crime is not welcome," Mayor Luke Ravenstahl said in a statement on the city's NNO website.

GCAT chose Mandela Park as the site for this year's NNO. This park has seen drug activity in the past, but several recent initiatives are reclaiming the park for the use of the local children. With the help of neighborhood volunteers, GCAT planted a butterfly garden along the park's fence in June. To complement the efforts of the volunteers, the Department of Public Works has promised to add two trash cans, replace the rubber surface and repair and paint the equipment by the end of the summer, according to Minette Vaccariello, GCAT volunteer and Garfield resident.

"The party on Aug. 6 is an opportunity for neighbors to come out and enjoy the new gardens, catch up with friends and perhaps meet some new neighbors," said Vaccariello.

In addition to the ice cream and activities, there will be handouts and displays about ways that the community can help to make the neighborhood safer. Free porch light bulbs and free gun locks will be passed out while supplies last. There will be a focus on gun safety throughout the evening, including the fundraising campaign of the Gun Buyback Initiative that ends on Aug. 31. Donations will be accepted online at [www.razoo.com/story/Gun-Buyback-Initiative](http://www.razoo.com/story/Gun-Buyback-Initiative) and by mail and in-person at the BGC's main office, 5149 Penn Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15224 through the end of the month. – *Carolyn Ristau, Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation*

## EVO Playground Variances Denied by ZBA

*Friendship* – The request for exceptions to zoning requirements for the natural playground that Earthen Vessels Outreach (EVO) has been planning for a year ["EVO Takes Playground to Zoning," *The Bulletin*, Vol. 38, No. 7] has been denied by the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA).

Concerns centered on a sign larger than permitted by city regulations; proximity to the property line of the church; and the safety of children playing on the very steep slope. According to the ZBA decision, "The applicant has failed to show that unnecessary hardship will result if the variance is denied because the applicant is already operating a successful, licensed daycare operation on the subject property, and failure to construct a playground in no way threatens the licensure of that operation."

Ryan England of EVO told *The Bulletin* that he hopes to find a new location for the playground in Garfield, and that he is exploring several sites. He said his hope is that The Heinz Endowments, which provided the funding for the natural playground, will allow EVO to use the funding for a new location.

EVO's official statement stated, "EVO is disappointed that we will not be building a natural playground in Friendship, but are excited to pursue building one in Garfield instead. We would like to thank the many neighbors who supported this effort to provide quality play space for local children." – *Jill Harkins, The Bulletin*

**Thank you!** The Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation would like to acknowledge its NPP partners, PNC Bank and Allegheny Valley Bank. Thanks also to BNY Mellon, Pittsburgh Partnership for Neighborhood Development, The United Way, Dollar Bank, Citizens Bank and all of *The Bulletin's* advertisers.