



Your Invitation to Community Meetings

6 pm on Feb. 27, 2004, at Duquesne Heights Community Center, Sweetbriar Street, Mt. Washington

5:30 pm on March 9, 2004, at the South Side Planning Forum

6 pm on March 24, 2004, at Duquesne Heights Community Center, Mt. Washington

Let's Play Well Together

Editorial by Mark Rauterkus -- (okay to pass about and provide reactions)

The saga known as "Pittsburgh's budget crisis" contains two lessons. First, "If we don't do anything, then nothing will get done." We, in this case of parks and caretakers, means volunteers, parents, coaches, neighbors, teachers and citizens. We can fix this. And, we must act to do so.

The city's fumbles with closed outdoor pools and Rec Centers provides plenty of opportunities for others to rise and meet the challenge. The Great Race had an alternative flavor. The marathon is off, but our shared marathon of life for providing care for our youngest citizens never ends. We can't permit a "lost generation" to simply grow on their own without opportunities and direction. We all need to work together. Buck up Pittsburgh, as I expect this endeavor to proceed without the support of city employees.

The second lesson digs to the root of the problem. "At the parks, playgrounds, rec centers and pools we teach our kids how to play well with others." Parks and crossing guards were the first to go and the hardest hit. Grant Street leaders fail to understand and display a willingness of "playing well with others."

Playing well with the public and other agencies is the key to fixing our future. Pittsburgh deserves its "oversight board" as our elected leadership hasn't played well -- even among themselves. The oversight board might straighten the budget and mend its bond status. But sadly, the oversight board will overlook the tykes and teens.

We must work among ourselves to care for the youth. The city's distressed status is not so much as a pimple for those of distressing teen-age years. Act 47 may work for the Governor, but for tykes, we need other actions. How about Actions for 4 to 7s?

Grass-roots efforts to better handle the places and programs where we all come to play are starting. All are welcome to open community meetings on these issues. Contact Mark Rauterkus, Mark04@Rauterkus.com, <http://Play.CLOH.Org>, 412-298-3432 = cell.

Pittsburgh: Freeze Hiring, Freeze Spending! But we don't have the luxury of being able to FREEZE our children.