

The CENTER

A newsletter from Mt. Oliver Borough

Mt.
OLIVER



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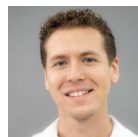
Manager's Minute

I'm going to keep it brief because I want to save some room for all the great content we have in this issue! A special thanks is in order to Siana Emery and Meg O'Brien of the Hilltop Alliance who helped pull together 90% of this issue. It's been so great to have the support – especially since I've been spending a lot of time these past few months coordinating approvals for and administering all of our small business programs. We've had these sorts of programs – Facade, Rent Abatement, and Marketing & Technical Assistance – for a couple of years now, but with this added capacity we've really been able to take them to a whole new level.

We're not slowing down, either! I received notice in October that we were awarded our six-year \$2.4 million Neighborhood Partnership Program (NPP) grant for commercial district revitalization, housing stabilization, and human services programming. You might recall that we've been busy implementing a similar single-year program that focused on housing and human services. The impact report for that is now complete and included in this issue. We'll be ramping up both focus areas with this larger multi-year grant and also adding small business programming to the triage.

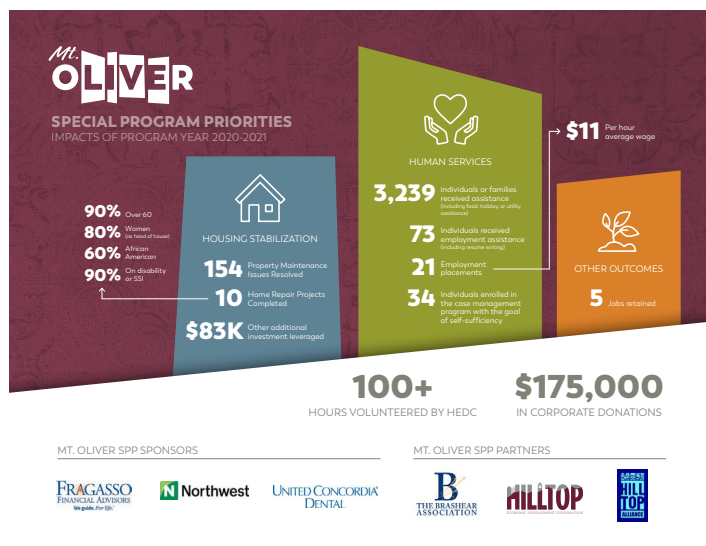
I was beyond pleased with the attendance and participation in our Fall Fridays series, as well as our annual community Light Up Night event. I wish I had room to include all of the great photos in this issue, but they're at least all up on social media. We hope to build off of the successes from this year and plan something similar for next year.

Finally, if you haven't picked up your Passport to Mt. Oliver yet, there are limited quantities available at the Borough Building and participating businesses. Never heard of the Passport Program? That's ok – read on! I hope all of you have wonderful holiday season and a healthy, happy, and prosperous new year!



Rick Hopkinson

Borough Manager
Mt. Oliver Borough



This is a Call

Mt. Oliver is looking for volunteers for this year's Snow Angels Program. Snow covered sidewalks can be hazardous for everyone. The Mt. Oliver Snow Angels Program pairs older residents and residents with disabilities with nearby neighbors who volunteer to assist them with snow removal on their sidewalks and driveways. When seniors call the Borough throughout the year, we will go to our database of volunteers and match them with a Snow Angel nearby.

Act Now! Here's how...

Contact Rick Hopkinson at 412-431-8107 x 106 or rick.hopkinson@mtoliver.com.



Small Business Spotlight

Located at 211 Brownsville Road, **Thrift-N-That** brings a wide array of thrifted items to Mt. Oliver. The store, which opened on September 23rd, sells everything from jewelry to clothes to comic books to figurines, and just about everything in between.

"I've been stockpiling this stuff for about a year," said Brandi Snowden, owner. "I had a storage unit and once it was filled, I decided it was time to open up."

Snowden settled on Mt. Oliver after searching across Pittsburgh for the perfect space to set up shop. As soon as she saw the space on Brownsville Road, she wanted it. "I thought it felt the most comfortable, and it's an up and coming area," said Snowden, adding that she is excited to see the Borough "making its move."

"I like the close network here. Everybody's really friendly. People will peek their heads in just to say hi, and see what I got in new that day. Everyone is really pleasant and welcoming," Snowden said.

The shop has a continually rotating stock, guaranteeing that no two trips to Thrift-N-That will be the same. Snowden says that her goal is to keep the prices fair, so that her shop can be accessible to all. "If you don't think the price is fair, I can work with you on that."



Thrift-N-That is open Wednesday - Friday 9am - 7pm, Saturday 11am - 7pm, and Sunday Noon-7pm. The store can be contacted at (412) 586-4406.



Trending in MTO

Take a trip through the Hilltop with Mt. Oliver and Allentown Business District Passports

This holiday season, two Hilltop business districts are inviting you to shop small and explore all they have to offer. Launched on Small Business Saturday, the Mt. Oliver Borough and Allentown Business District Passports encourage patrons to venture beyond what they know and discover exactly what these two unique business districts have to offer.

While separate programs, they will run in tandem, promoting the patronage of small, locally owned businesses during the holiday push. The two business districts, located primarily on E. Warrington Avenue and Brownsville Road, are a mere half a mile away from each other, further encouraging customers to visit both neighborhoods. "Building on the success of Allentown's first passport program last spring, we are launching a similar model in both business districts to kick off Small Business Saturday and the holiday season," said Meg O'Brien, Director of Economic Development at the Hilltop Alliance. "It is great to work across the two districts, leveraging the insights and lessons learned from Allentown's passport program to further improve creative incentives and programming across both business districts"

The inaugural Mt. Oliver Passport Program features 28 businesses along the Brownsville Road corridor. Once you spend \$10 at a business, you receive a stamp. Collect 5 stamps to receive a \$25 gift certificate to the business of your choice. Collect 20 stamps and also be entered into a grand prize drawing. Cards can be returned to the Mt. Oliver Borough Building either in person during business hours or by placing the secure dropbox by the door. "We're excited to bring this program to Mt. Oliver," said Rick Hopkinson, Borough Manager. "We hope it not only encourages people to shop local this holiday season, but also have some fun exploring the district - maybe stop in a business you've never been to before." In both districts, passports will be located in participating businesses while supplies last.

PASSPORT

TO MT. OLIVER

**SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES.
EARN GIFT CARDS.
WIN PRIZES.**

1. Anzo Nails Spa
2. A&E
3. Beckman Motor Company
4. Charlie's Used Furniture
5. Don's Bar
6. Family Vision Care
7. Flavor of Puerto Rico
8. Gerald Izaj's Antiques and Collectables
9. It Gurlz Fashions by Tonjae
10. Izaj's Stained Glass
11. Lahore Autos
12. Maietta's Restaurant
13. Metro T-Mobile
14. Miller ACE Hardware
15. Mt. Oliver Bodega

16. Mt. Oliver Dental
17. One5210
18. Pete's Beer
19. Shirtz 'N Thangz
20. Mt. Oliver Fire Dept. (\$10 min.)
- Donation times: December 1, 5-7pm, or Thursdays 6-8pm
21. PMC Barbershop
22. Priceless Fashions
23. Reese's Soul Kitchen + Catering
24. Taste of Teete's
25. TC Candy
26. Temwa African Braiding Salon
27. Thrift-n-That
28. Trizade Salon

1. Spend at least \$10 and get a stamp from any business above. Fill out the passport back & return to: Mt. Oliver Borough Building (150 Brownsville Road)
- 2.
- 3.
4. Collect 5 stamps and receive a \$25 gift certificate to any business listed
- 5.
- 6.
7. Questions? Contact Meg O'Brien at meg@pghhilltopalliance.org
8. ALL PASSPORTS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY DECEMBER 31, 2021
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Meet MTO's Newly-Elected Officials



Mayor-Elect JoAnna Taylor, a high school science and ASL teacher, has resided in Mt. Oliver for 7 years alongside her husband Brandon, who will also be joining the Borough Council, and their three children. For years, she has been an active member of the community, frequently attending events, Borough meetings and participating in volunteer activities.

"Our current leadership in Mt. Oliver is always working really hard for our community," Taylor said. "Through those interactions, I realized there was an opportunity to serve my community further"

Over the course of her four year term as Mayor, Taylor is excited to put energy into improving a variety of aspects about Mt. Oliver, including development in the business district and issues surrounding property ownership. However, her main interests lie in community building.

"What I really want is to help build back a stronger community, where people know their neighbors, and feel comfortable and safe," she said. "There are a lot [of people] in leadership right now who support that vision, and I can help work toward that strong sense of neighborhood."

Community is what drew Taylor and her family to the Borough, and it remains something she finds special about Mt. Oliver. "We could have chosen anywhere in the city, and we chose to come here," she said, adding that the residents are "really what makes Mt. Oliver special."

In her free time, Taylor plays viola with the Pittsburgh Civic Orchestra, a volunteer community orchestra. She also is a hunter, noting that during the last deer season, she got a ten point buck.

"I'm very humbled and excited to have the opportunity to serve," said Taylor. "I do this as a service to the community. I hope people feel comfortable reaching out to me, to help us make all these changes happen."



Local politics is a family affair in the Taylor household. **Brandon Taylor**, husband of Mayor-Elect JoAnna, will be joining his wife on the Borough Council. Taylor has been involved on the Board of HEDC, as well as with the Board of the Hilltop Alliance, for several years, bringing ample expertise in the world of politics and nonprofits to the Council.

"I think the Borough is heading in the right direction," said Taylor. "I want to be a part of that, involved in it."

Taylor's priorities heading into his term in office include the continued revitalization of the commercial district, as well as putting energy into increasing the percentage of owner-occupied houses in the Borough. In addition, Taylor hopes to redevelop and improve the community's outdoor spaces and existing assets, such as a restoration of the clock tower, the installation of speed bumps, and the addition of more trash cans in the commercial district. "We can make the area more accessible and friendly to residents and businesses," Taylor said.

"I want to make opportunities for my kids, to continue seeing development," said Taylor. "I'm not planning on going anywhere."

From his background with HEDC and Hilltop Alliance, Taylor knows that in some areas, there is only so much the Borough can control. However, he notes that Mt. Oliver, being a small, self-contained government, is in a unique position not available in the City of Pittsburgh. In discussing the process of getting licenses, permits and other bureaucratic measures, Taylor said, "The Borough can go out of the way to support and help people who want to set up here. The council will do whatever we can to cut red tape."

Taylor works as a software engineer at a robotics company. Despite growing up in Missouri, Brandon Taylor has always been called to Pittsburgh, having been a Pirates fan since childhood. He made the move to Pittsburgh to pursue a PhD at Carnegie Mellon University, and fell in love with the city. Taylor lived in Knoxville before moving to the Borough a little over two years ago.

Taylor says the Borough has the best of both worlds, being "in Pittsburgh, but having a small town government."

"When I moved up here, people thought I was crazy," he said. "But there's a lot of cool opportunities. Being in the Borough government, we can step up and make Mt. Oliver what it was 50-70 years ago, when it was the place to be on the Hilltop."



Lisa Pietrusza has resided in Mt. Oliver since 2014, and currently owns a home alongside their spouse and two cats. Pietrusza decided to run for Borough council as an effort to bring more diversity to the council, therefore moving toward a board that is more representative of the demographics of Mt. Oliver residents.

As they enter their four-year term, Pietrusza hopes to work on directly addressing the needs of Mt. Oliver residents. "I want to do a thorough community needs assessment, and analyze that data," they said, noting that already residents have expressed interest in working on business retention, traffic safety, environmental concerns, and code enforcement.

While there have been recent initiatives from the Borough to address some of these issues, such as grants for home and business facade repairs, there is still a long way to go.

"People's safety and self-worth is highly impacted by their surrounding environment," said Pietrusza, noting that factors such as developing ways for businesses to settle long-term and providing resources for disadvantaged residents will help increase the health and well-being of the Borough as a whole.

Pietrusza works as a family and psychiatric nurse practitioner in a federally qualified health center, and has a background in working with low-income people, housing insecure individuals, and those struggling with mental illness and/or substance use disorders. "My passion has always been duty to the community, which is driven by volunteering," they said. "These are the areas I've been drawn to. I've pretty much spent my entire career on it."

Like Brandon and JoAnn Taylor, Pietrusza likes that Mt. Oliver Borough offers a life that is the best-of-both-worlds. "It's living in a small community in the middle of a city," they said. "There are so many opportunities around us, but everyone knows each other. It's cool to have those connections." In addition, Pietrusza points to the racial and ethnic diversity of the Borough as being a huge selling point. "It was one of the biggest things that drew my spouse and I here," they said.



Upcoming Events

Council Meetings

3rd Monday of every month at 7:30 PM
Borough Building - 150 Brownsville Road



Upcoming Trash Collection

The following dates are upcoming trash collection dates and changes due to holidays:

Dec 14	Regular Collection	Feb 1	Regular Collection
Dec 21	Regular Collection	Feb 8	Regular Collection
Dec 28	Regular Collection	Feb 15	Regular Collection
Jan 4	Regular Collection	Feb 22	Regular Collection
Jan 11	Regular Collection	Mar 1	Regular Collection
Jan 18	Regular Collection	Mar 8	Regular Collection
Jan 25	Regular Collection		

Trash must be placed curbside between 6:00 p.m. the day before and 6:00 a.m. the day of scheduled pick-up. Residents may put out up to 15 bags and no more than 2 bulky items.

The following days are considered holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. **If the holiday falls on a Wednesday through Sunday, then trash pick-up in Mt. Oliver will not be delayed.** For specific questions or service issues, please contact Waste Management at 1-800-866-4460.

Please note that TVs and other electronics are never accepted. For these and other hard to dispose of items, contact Evolution E-Cycling at 412-390-3450.

Advertise with Us!

Business Card = \$85 Quarter Page = \$165
Contact 412-431-8107 x106 or rick.hopkinson@mtoliver.com

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