

Housing Justice Movement Building in Pittsburgh  
May 11, 2019 Meeting Notes

Next meeting: **Saturday June 29, 2019 10:15-12:00 Noon @ Carnegie Library/ East Liberty**  
130 S Whitfield St. (Refreshments will be available)

Website with background and past notes: [Housing Justice Movement Building](#)

**Purpose of this network/group:**

To support and strengthen work of the larger Housing Roundtable organized by Pittsburgh United and support the implementation of the [Affirmatively Forwarding Fair Housing Task Force Recommendations](#) by:

- 1) helping expand public awareness and engagement in work for affordable housing through public education/consciousness raising events;
- 2) Working to shift the housing debate away from the prevailing market framework to emphasize housing as a human right; and
- 3) Expanding connections with national and global networks of housing and human rights defenders.

Previous meetings and discussions with organizers led to the following projects, and task forces are working moving each one forward. **We need you! Please help with one or more of these specific task forces—please contact [pghrights@riseup.net](mailto:pghrights@riseup.net) to volunteer for a task, or message pghrights on Facebook.**

**Task Force Summaries/ Volunteer updates**

1) **Tenant/Resident bill of rights:** *Developing and working to pass state legislation to protect residents and the right to housing.* Rep. Sara Innamorato's office has been helpful with background work, and this needs to be taken to the state level given how the law is written. We will review and adapt as necessary the [Washington DC as Model](#) and work to try to move legislation on this. (Volunteers: Emily Cummins, Marcia Bandes, Roger Rouse)

2) **Host Teach-in on the human right to housing/ People's Tribunal on Evictions.** Task force will work to organize public event in fall to raise consciousness. Idea of following NYC model of a People's Tribunal on Evictions (<https://www.tribunal-evictions.org/>), which groups around the world have used to draw attention to the moral outrage behind the commodification of housing and rising numbers of evictions. This could help build tenant union organizing and widen support for better housing policies. This could link to the Alliance of Inhabitants' [Zero Eviction Days in October](#). New York is doing a People's Tribunal this October, and we can try to model that here? (Volunteers: Roger Rouse, Dawn, Jackie, Jo)

3) **Democratize Policy Process**—Promote greater awareness of the recent legislation to limit public participation in development debates by requiring a single, approved [Registered](#)

[Community Organization for each designated neighborhood](#). Find out what action is being taken and how we can support opposition or improvements to this legislation. Also, we'll revisit Penn Plaza Support and Action Coalition's work to get the Planning Commission to adopt a Resolution of Concern in 2018 (Volunteers: Swain, Quinn, Lisa)

**4) Reporting on Human Rights Conditions in Pittsburgh:** In 2019-2020, the United States is undergoing a comprehensive human rights assessment through the United Nation's [Universal Periodic Review \(UPR\)](#) process. The Human Rights City Alliance will be working with other Human Rights Cities to provide local documentation for this review of the US human rights record (See: [UPR Cities Project](#)). There is a need for volunteers to help us document the state of the right to housing (and other rights) in our city and to put forward recommendations that will be brought to local, national and international officials in Geneva.

For anyone interested in learning more about how we can bring Pittsburgh stories into the UN Human Rights review of the United States, you're welcome to join this week's webinar, Thursday May 16, 6:00PM.

In order to improve human rights practices in our communities and nationally, we are working across U.S. cities to strengthen connections between people in local communities and global human rights bodies. Work at local levels is critical to building a national and global constituency of human rights defenders who can help protect rights locally and strengthen our global capacities for protecting and promoting human rights, dignity, and justice for everyone. The human rights cities movement is an effort to help further this work, and the [UPR Cities Project](#) provides tools to help local activists take part in this important review process.

**Webinar Details:** Thursday, May 16, 2019 6:00pm EDT

1. Click to join the meeting via computer: <https://chime.aws/5508387865>  
Meeting ID: 5508 38 7865

or 2. Call in to join the meeting via phone: United States: +1-267-866-0999  
Meeting PIN: 5508 38 7865

**Related Housing Action:** We're working with other housing justice groups to send copy of letter by [UN Special Rapporteur Letter to US Government On Housing Policies as Human Rights Violations](#), to City Council and Mayor, and copy to local Real Estate Investment Companies operating locally. [Letter to Blackstone Investment Corporation](#), [Blackstone's response](#). [More details here: [Housing is a Human Right](#)]

## HOUSING JUSTICE ACTIONS

**Every Friday- 5:00PM** at Whole Foods entrance in East Liberty. Penn Plaza Support and Action Coalition invites everyone to help call on public officials and Whole Foods/Amazon to

provide reparations to Penn Plaza residents and to stop development that displaces residents from our city and undermines our communities.

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Carnegie Library/ East Liberty 130 S Whitfield St. (Refreshments will be available)

**Annual Human Rights Cookout/Potluck** –Sunday August 25, Mellon Park shelter,  
Penn & Fifth (across from Bakery Square). Watch for more details!