



janet

May 10, 2013 at 5:34 pm

If I'm not mistaking Mr Laing and Mr Wheatley are both members of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity if this is their definition of brotherhood remind me to not allow my son to join that organization. I thought those guys stuck together i thought wrong won't be supporting anymore of their events. Smh

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Justin

[Post author](#)

May 11, 2013 at 9:14 am

Janet/Michele, I don't know if we know each other, would you mind saying who you are? You don't need to shake your head at us. Hundreds of thousands of good brothers internationally, 100 years plus of being organized and locally an Annual Turkey Drive, Christmas Toy giveaway, Omega Dr. Carter G. Woodson Academy, Scholarships to college, golf outing (May 25th this year and a few spaces still available) and more, now you're forever leaving us over this post on a serious question as to election dynamics and consequences? It's our job as Omega Men to work for upliftment of the Black community and that may lead to disagreements over direction at times, but we are not called to be in lock step, and in this case I choose to cast my vote for Councilman Peduto and raise the questions I have raised. (period. dot. as a friend of mine says). Pushing past what appears a tenuous relationship with our illustrious fraternity, what do you think of the points and questions I am raising? Who will you vote for in this election and why? Hope to see you and your son at a future event.

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Bram R

May 10, 2013 at 8:21 pm

An interesting post. I do not suspect, and wager you also do not suspect, that a Peduto victory would result in any critically negative impact to the 28 acres development. It might be experienced by those who are personally invested in the current vision/direction (the Hill CDC, Hill House, I take it?) as a negative interlude, but between \$1/Car, several public transit notions and his insistence on organized community round tables for development (where all stakeholders are on a more equal footing) I see a brighter future for that land as something that can enhance living on the Hill. Having read how you arrived at your own decision, I feel decidedly more comfortable in my own.

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Justin

[Post author](#)

May 12, 2013 at 9:43 am

Thanks, Bram, I do think a dollar a car would be good for the Hill and the city because it puts the onus on the Penguins as recipients of the this massive public subsidy to give some returns to the community whose poverty and race they have benefitted from some so greatly (would anyone argue that the way eminent domain was employed in the 1960s had nothing to do with the fact the Hill was a lower income, predominantly African American neighborhood). Neither Mayor Ravenstahl nor Rep. Wheatley nor Councilman Lavelle have supported this idea so Councilman Peduto's as Mayor would be a great boon for the Hill and an example to the rest of the city in this respect. Will need to look more into the roundtable idea since that could also undermine neighborhood community development leadership, even if I am skeptical and question the choices of our particular community development corp. the Hill CDC. What I would rather see is a conversation on 501-C-3 accountability that stretches beyond the focus UPMC, so that we were building structural community level accountability rather than the mayor having to insist on it from his bully pulpit. You can see prior post on accountability, transparency and racism. To be clear, Councilman Peduto presents the best option for me in this day and moment, but as I also said in my post I do not see analysis on how this city has historically and structurally created racial disparities in this campaign or his prior work. The Democratic Party really responding to racism in a substantive way, rather than a various strategies to mobilize African American voters (like retweeting my saying I would vote for Peduto), is the issue that I think deserves the most attention from African American voters. Another point was that this campaign has particularly complex ways race is being employed. Still, thanks for following and bringing folks to the post.

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Bram R

May 15, 2013 at 7:04 pm

Justin, when you write: "What I would rather see is a conversation on 501-C-3 accountability that stretches beyond the focus UPMC, so that we were building structural community level accountability..." Yes yes yes.

[Edit](#)



Bram R

May 15, 2013 at 7:05 pm

Not “Yes yes yes” as in “Blah blah blah,” but “Yes yes yes” as in “I wholeheartedly agree.” It’s a concern I know resonates with many activists across the City.

[Edit](#)



Drew Managh

May 11, 2013 at 2:02 pm

Well I would hope that Jake Wheatley gets the turn out he deserves. It’s critically important for cohesion in the A A community. To believe that Bill Peduto is better qualified to hand out benefits than Jake is ridiculous. It’s funny I remember when Bill and our standard bearer, not Tonna Pain, Daniel Lavelle, were buds back in the day. What happened? I think Daniel showed he didn’t need Bill to think for him so Bill doesn’t speak to Daniel anymore. That’s right in the Bill Peduto world of white elitists, that’s right drive thru the 1%’ers neighborhoods and all you see is BP signs, no not gas stations, young strong black men need to keep their mouths shut. That’s unless you’re spinning records for him.

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Justin

Post author

May 12, 2013 at 11:22 pm

Drew, the cohesion issue as though all Black people “come together” and agree on everything is not realistic from my life experience and I am not even sure how that could happen without us becoming unthinking drones. I’d bet that’s not what you are saying, but I don’t know for sure what you mean and I am not sure what you imagine when you say that a turnout for Rep. Wheatley gives the AA community cohesion. As I understand it from its website and what communications I have heard, The Pittsburgh Black Political Convention has been organized for the purpose of this mayoral election and that’s its central purpose, not what happens after the election. In fact there are already other orgs like the Western PA Black Political Assembly and the Black Political Empowerment Project who seem to be organized on a more permanent basis. Listening to what the now deceased Kwame Toure (formerly Stokely Carmichael and love and light to his spirit) used to say to Black people, cohesion could be operationalized to mean what he said in regards to we all need to belong to an organization that is working in the interests of Black people because we need to be organized. The Democratic Party is an organization for sure, I am saying that I only hear a message to Black people and an addressing of racism in saying Black people need to come together at election time and then as a voter mobilization strategy. That doesn’t offer any real benefits that I can see and I am not sure what you mean when you say Rep. Wheatley is more qualified to hand out benefits than Councilman Peduto. This assumes they have benefits to hand out and I am not sure how you imagine they get these benefits. Each winning the mayoral race or something else? The point I make that I don’t think you address is how Rep. Wheatley’s campaign could help Wagner’s campaign in the instance Rep.

Wheatley is not mayor or how the PBPC's most visible convener, Mr. Sala Udin, and his role as a board member of the Hill District Community Development Corp could provide incentives to not want to see Councilman Peduto elected. My problem with a lot of the Wheatley v. Peduto set up is that it let's off Wagner without making any specific overtures to African American voters. Google "Jack Wagner and African Americans" and see if it gets you specific messages designed by Wagner. Do the same for Peduto and you see he is making some more intentional efforts with AA voters in that he has surrogates giving a message. That seems to be likely to produce benefits for African Americans than Wagner in the case Peduto is elected, because he will have a broader set of stakeholders saying "you said X" and general AA voters can say "you said x about AA's and I remember". What will AA voters have to hold Wagner to and why did they give him so little support in the PBPC process? That deserves attention. However, don't mistake me to be saying Councilman Peduto is a longtime advocate for racial justice in this city. I am not saying that. I am sharing the calculations I am using to tell me what to do with my vote in this spring's May mayoral primary.

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Ty K.

May 12, 2013 at 6:48 pm

Hi Justin,

Happy to have found your blog. It's interesting to say the least! I agree with you on the importance of the mayoral election for our City and Black Pittsburgh. I could not participate in the PBPC because I was out of town, but I am happy that Sala stepped up to organize that event. What Pittsburgh's African American community needs is more solid integral leadership – not self serving and not scared.

And that brings me to some concerns.

I was surprised to see that you would diss your Omega fraternity brother out right, but if you feel as passionately as you seem about Bill Peduto, so be it.

That brings me to my second observation though, your support of Bill Peduto seems false, vindictive and self- serving. I say this because your support seems to hinge on Peduto supporting the dollar a car campaign by the Hill District Consensus Group, your wife 's employer. You seem critical of just about everything/everyone else, although in my opinion the Hill is finally moving forward. This intrigues me because if my memory serves me well, this is the same group that sold the Hill District down the river a few years back under the name One Hill when they signed that pitiful community benefits agreement. I think One Hill and Wheatley had a disagreement regarding what was ample give back from the Penguins. One Hill was connected with Tonya Payne and they simply didn't do a good job representing the Hill's interest. And it seems that's why you're now fighting for a dollar a car. Something's just questionable about your whole setup, man. Not trying to diss, just keepin' it real.

And that brings me to this most important question... are you supporting Tonya Payne? Because as interesting as your blog is, I will stop reading immediately. That Lady is death on wheels. I would think that if you are supporting Bill Peduto you are also supporting Tonya Payne? If Peduto doesn't speak to Lavelle as the other post said, how in the world will that benefit the Hill? Sounds like a set

up for dysfunction to me.

I just wonder if the shake up you desire is not about what is best for the Hill, but what is best for you and yours.

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Carl Redwood

May 13, 2013 at 4:10 pm

It's not the man it's the plan. None of the candidates have a plan for our people. They all carry the Democratic Party plan. Their plan is similar all over the US. It leads to gentrification and greater disparity. It is the same in cities with Black Mayors and councils. They all ignore the black community until before an election. This includes local black Democratic Party candidates. Peduto is the "left wing" of the Democrats. Wheatley and Wagner are the "conservative" wing.

The only way to change this will be to organize our people independent of the Democratic Party and fight to make all politicians accountable.

It's funny that supporters of the State Representative and councilperson for the Hill criticize One Hill for not getting enough community benefit but what was negotiated by the community without the councilman and representative support was more benefit than they have secured from their seats in office. We agree that we must continue to fight for additional community benefits. That's why we fight for \$1 a Car for the Hill District.

You criticize One Hill but what have the politicians you support secured for the community besides additional public subsidies for corporations?

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Kufere

May 17, 2013 at 10:43 am

Ty,

As a Hill District resident and Omega man, I do not understand why our fraternity is our first concern regarding this post. The fact that we are Omega men has no role in this political discussion and was not mentioned in any critique of Mr. Wheatley. Moreover, the decision not to support Mr. Wheatley is not a diss to a fraternity brother, but rather a political choice. Lastly, the role of our fraternity in this political discussion is up for us, as Omega men, to decide. I hope this solves your first concern.

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Justin

[Post author](#)

May 17, 2013 at 7:46 pm

well said, son

[Edit](#)

Pingback: [Race4PGH Must Read from Hillombo | Progress Pittsburgh](#) ([Edit](#))



Ty K.

May 13, 2013 at 5:10 pm

You're half right, bro. It's not just the man, but the plan. Most important is the ability to make the plan happen though. I think your group, the Hill Consensus Group, struggles with this and the whole community pays. You and your group need to deliver real results and stop creating unnecessary battles to stay relevant, like One Hill. Poor Peduto is just scrambling for any Black support he can find in the Hill, and it seems he's been able to find solace in your Group. I can't speak to who has supported what elected officials, except I do remember that One Hill and your group, the Consensus Group, were in bed with Tonya Payne. And I do remember that Tonya Payne tried to put a casino in my neighborhood. So that is why I am asking brotha Laing about his sideways analysis and questionable foundation of reason.

The other thing I just noticed is that brotha Laing's employer, the Heinz Endowments Foundation funds your group; man come on. According to Heinz's website the Hill District Consensus Group has received over \$450,000 in the past four years, so I don't find it surprising at all that in addition to being brotha Laing's wife's colleague or boss, you are also getting your paycheck from him. What kind of game are y'all runnin'?

As for Wheatley being a conservative, again...that's funny.

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Justin

[Post author](#)

May 14, 2013 at 12:49 am

Character assassination is your tactic, Ty K. So, if everything you say/imply about me, my relationship with my wife, The Hill District Consensus Group, my fraternity, The Heinz Endowments, Mr. Redwood, Tonya Payne is true then what I have written is of no consequence and essentially false. That doesn't hold water. However, you can talk about me easily, because all of the information you have on me I have provided because I know there is no such thing as non-interested, objective parties. (and they definitely don't exist in politics.) In this way, the reader can decide for themselves how my position in the world could impact my view. You call me brotha Laing, but I have no idea who you are. Please say who you are so the readers can make the same assessment of you that you ask them to make of me and the list of folks you disparage.

If my argument is sideways then dismantle it quickly to advance the discussion. I'll make the points I made into questions to make it simple. (a) Does and will Rep Wheatley's campaign attract voters more likely to vote for Councilman Peduto than Jack Wagner? (b) Does the former Councilman, Sala Udin, and current Hill CDC board member have significant political incentive to not want Peduto? (c) Who did you imagine would win the PBPC's endorsement? (d) If Wagner wins, in part because Rep. Wheatley is a more compelling candidate than Peduto to a substantive number of AA and liberal white voters, what will be the sum contribution of the PBPC process? A new one: does the fact that the organization chaired by Mayor Ravenstahl, Committee for a Better Pittsburgh, has given \$10,000 to the Wheatley campaign and spent significant money on an anti-Peduto commercial framing Peduto as having failed African American neighborhoods give credence to my point that the Wheatley campaign is seen as a positive force by Pro-Wagner parts of the electorate? You can't just say my analysis is sideways, Ty, you have to show it's sideways. Just like you can't dismiss that Rep. Wheatley is part of the conservative side of the Democratic Party, you have to go to his policies.

My interaction with Rep. Wheatley's policies are largely through his support of the Hill District Development Corp (see my initial post on the Hill District Growth/Casino Fund) and his and their lack of support for the HDCG's work on such ideas as dollar-a-car, the planning forum or the anti-displacement principles, ideas that encourage structural participation and discuss the issues of race and income. I have heard a number of times from the Hill CDC, in the personage of ED Ms. Marimba Milliones, a concern about the way the anti-displacement principles could inhibit development. I have expressed my concern at a recent meetings that the work in the lower hill does not take advantage of the Master Plan's core principles, around culture, work, etc. and that it risks

leaving this community at greater risk of gentrification and changing the racial makeup of the community in such a way the neighborhood loses its distinctive African American cultural feel, which is bad for this community and bad for the region. The general focus on market solutions i.e. attracting development or new businesses is by definition more conservative (the focus of the Greater Hill Development Fund/Casino Fund) when compared to active support for community based governance, (planning forum, HDCG board elected by membership) or investments in people via grants for transportation for seniors, remediating current housing, programs for youth and beatification of main avenues (Dollar a Car). You dismissing out of hand that Rep. Wheatley is part of the more conservative wing, at least at the current moment, is the position that lacks analysis, actually. And, saying someone is liberal or conservative or socialist or Black nationalist or.. or.. is not a "diss". It's analysis. The question is whether it's accurate or inaccurate and we agree the Mayoral election is important, so it's a discussion worth having.

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Bonnie Laing

May 14, 2013 at 7:10 pm

Ok, Ty K we get your take....but you have not answered the question: how does Jake's campaign improve the likelihood that Pittsburgh will have Mayoral leadership that will address the issues of the economically challenged residents and businesses in the Black communities like the Hill. Further, how does his campaign make it more likely that we will have a Mayor interested in police and corporate accountability? These are my interests and the interests of my organization the Consensus Group. Again, in your 2 posts you have yet to speak to these issues. Check out our website for a look at some of the stuff we are doing including accurate detail on the CBA and Dollar a Car.

On another note, as a Black woman who comes from the more disadvantaged segment of the Hill District population (Chauncey Drive, Ike!), I find it disturbing to read what I consider to be your and Drew Manaugh's classist, and perhaps misogynistic characterizations of Ms. Payne. Whether or not you agree with her politics, as fellow humans (and children of god) why denigrate, dehumanize and de-personalize her with slurs and verbal caricatures; all while invoking fictive Black unity.

Ms. Payne is reflective of a large contingent of Hill District residents who have not had the benefit of relative social privilege. Are you judging her for where she comes from and the challenges she has had to face and overcome to gain a City Council seat?

Ms. Payne won one election and didn't lose by much to Mr. Lavelle the second time. Could you do that? When you disparage her you also disparage those who thought she spoke for them. So about a thousand Hill residents are not worth listening to, if we are to hear you tell it? Where do you get off looking down your nose at Ms. Payne? As my husband asked, who are you?

Also, you are so familiar with Hill goings on, I am sure you know that Mr. Lavelle, Mr. Wheatley, Ms. Milliones and my own criticism's of Ms. Payne were surrounding her close relationships with Pens leadership. Interestingly enough, Mr. Lavelle, Mr. Wheatley and Ms. Milliones are now taking a page from her book by working closely with the Penguins administration on Lower Hill Development, and are there is no evidence that they are including community generated negotiation points including the dollar a car campaign and anti-displacement strategies both of which could greatly benefit poor and working class Hill residents.

So, is it Ms. Payne's working class social markers that make her "death on wheels" or "Tonna Pain"? or are you denigrating her for the "keepin' it real", you yourself claim to value? If so, you are part of a long standing and now growing trend of elite and middle Blacks who have abandoned racial uplift to blame the black poor/working class (ghettocracy) and who feel ashamed to be associated with them. They have instead adopted the more conservative Black middle class political agenda Mr. Redwood spoke of; Michael Eric Dyson describes these folks as the Afristocracy.

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Calvin W.

May 15, 2013 at 2:30 pm

Interesting that one's loyalty to a fraternity is cited as a driving force for voting for a mayor. I'm a Greek but it certainly has nothing to do with my need to support a candidate with the chops to run this city and have the political capacity to create policy and influence people outside a small ring of loyal minions. Sadly Udin and crew continue to prop up their straw men and do a last minute sell to the black community to 'keep it real' and elect or re-elect those who this conman deem leadership

worthy. Doing things the same way will give us the same results. His hand picks have done little to help our community and Lord knows we don't need them at the Mayoral level to ensure the whole city suffers from their ineptitude, not just the current Hill District constituents. Their incestuous relationships have not been healthy for anyone but themselves and we are no longer interested.

[Edit](#)

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Justin

Post author

May 16, 2013 at 9:22 pm

thanks, Calvin W., yes, the implication that fraternity members should not disagree publically on an issue such as this one is actually asking us to play into the worst criticism of us, namely that we would protect each other over all else. I haven't found our current political leadership to be beneficial either...

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Ty K.

May 15, 2013 at 11:42 pm

Bruh, I am sorry you feel that I am attempting to assassinate your character by highlighting how your personal situation and conflicts of interests are motivating your political perspective. It seems to me that you posted all of these notes about yourself so we could understand who you are and what you are about. Now that I have done so, you're accusing me of character assassination? This would be another example of a sideways analysis.

To your question, I am not suggesting your political analysis is true or false, I actually am not sure. I am only speaking on the things that I do know. And I do know that Tonya Payne was a nightmare for my neighborhood. You wrote a long answer, but somehow you failed to answer that singular question. Are you supporting Tonya Payne?

Queen Bonnie, I think it's clear who the Afrostracatics are by reading your overly academic responses to my simple comments and questions. Sometimes folks create chaos and suspicion around others to distract from their our own agenda. You dig?

My point about your sideways analysis, Brotha Justin, is not in reference to how reasonable or unreasonable your political theory may be, but rather that your entire motivation is packaged in community, but is really self serving. This was the only reason I pointed out that your employer at the Heinz Foundation is also the funder of your wife's employer and your communal affiliate, Hill District Consensus Group. So is it surprising to anyone that you are supportive of their work even when it is not in the best interest of the community? Is it possible you are blinded by the self-interest of your family and job?

If I'm an assassin, you're suicidal.

— About Ty K

Hill born, Hill bred.

I read and pay attention to what is happening in my community, but I'm not obsessed.

I vote.

I'm intolerant of regressive politics.

I do not like being misled or intentionally misguided.

I am a parent and a caretaker of my elderly relatives.

Now you know me, so can I please call you Brotha?

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EdnaCouncil

May 16, 2013 at 4:29 pm

Come out of the dark, and say who you are,
if you fell you are right

[Edit](#)

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Carl Redwood

May 16, 2013 at 5:14 pm

In this current Democratic Party campaign votes for Representative Wheatley = votes for Wagner. Representative Wheatley will not take votes from Jack Wagner. Ravenstahl is a large supporter of the Wheatley campaign. Why?

Brother T. It's clear you are not a supporter of the Consensus Group and don't think the

group is a positive force in the Hill District.

It's ok to choose different paths to make our community a better place. Lets keep working in our different ways to secure community benefits for residents. For me that is the yardstick to measure organizations and candidates. \$1 A Car for the Hill District.

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Justin

Post author

May 16, 2013 at 11:34 pm

Ty, you ought to think about the points I made before you dismiss them. Absolutely, the work of the Hill District Consensus Group (HDCG) and my wife influences my decision on who I will vote for for Mayor. I support her in this effort and others because I believe in the substance and values behind the ideas The dollar-a-car campaign is an important policy for the Hill and the city and one Rep. Wheatley has not supported. It says that corporations should have to give public benefits for public subsidies and a dollar-a-car program in the Hill will help change the dialogue in the city about how we view public subsidies just as the Community Benefits Agreement was an example that people took notice of across the city. (The HDCG didn't get anything material in the Hill CBA agreement.) Peduto is a better choice for the things I care about in the Hill, and I have disagreed with Rep. Wheatley on One Hill and the structure of the Casino Fund and the time it took to give support to the grocery store. In my view, Peduto has the greatest mastery of local issues and policies, so he represents the best of current choices as far as I am concerned.

As for The Heinz Endowments, and I don't speak now as a representative of the Foundation, I don't make the grant recommendations on the HDCG and the Endowments relationship with them is not a motivator for my position. Tonya Payne-not sure, but I haven't agreed with much Councilman Lavelle has done, so why not. Former Councilwoman Payne used to get all kinds of grief because she was supposedly "in bed with the Penguins" and now I truly can't see the difference between the relationship that Councilman Lavelle and Rep.

Wheatley have with them, which may be one of the reasons they don't support dollar-a-car. Anyway, votes for Wheatley pull from Peduto (I think a real chance to win would have required a more inclusive style and more prep. If this was so important, why need Ravenstahl to drop out?) and if it puts Wagner in the Mayor's seat it puts the person who polls lowest in the AA community and keeps the current Hill and City wide order in place. At a minimum that's an irony that deserves thought. Of course one could postulate other ways it plays, but that's the one I see as for 2013. As I said at the outset, the current political arrangement could use some shaking up, so that's why I'll vote Peduto.

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Ty K.

May 17, 2013 at 11:54 am

Thank you for answering my question. If you are considering a vote for Tonya Payne, you've clarified all things I need to know about you and your positions. I do appreciate your response though. God bless you and yours.

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Carl Redwood

May 17, 2013 at 1:24 pm

Democratic Party candidate differences at the Council level are not great. Tonya Payne did her job. Dan Lavelle did his job. Sala Udin did his job. Each can point to one or two or ten economic development projects they supported in some way.

In the Hill there is split in the Democratic Party between the Payne and now Lavelle factions.

There is also a split between the Hill Consensus Group and HiLL CDC.

Differences are not that great. Small differences create great distance between the sides and then it can become personalized which makes it irrational.

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