

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Homewood-Brushton Business Association Elects Founding Board Members and Officers

Homewood-Brushton Business Association (HBBA) came to fruition based on the results of a business survey distributed throughout the Homewood neighborhood. A total of 27 businesses were surveyed, in which they all expressed an interest in the creation of a business association that would address the needs of Homewood's businesses. A total of 22 out of the 27 surveyed businesses were not affiliated with a business association.

Between May 2014 and December 2014, over 50 Homewood based businesses and start-ups attended a series of planning meetings to identify the needs of Homewood businesses, create a set of goals and develop a mission and vision for a Homewood business association. The HBBA would like to be the hub for business development and support the revitalization efforts of the Homewood business district. Several representatives throughout the Pittsburgh region have attended and been guest speakers at the planning meetings, they came from the Small Business Administration-Pittsburgh District Office, Office of the Mayor, Operation Better Block, and Bridgeway Capital.

Urban Innovation21 strongly supports the Homewood-Brushton community and are actively working with a variety of partners to support and connect business owners to the economic transformation.

In January 2015, the following individuals were elected as the founding Board of Directors and Officers of the HBBA:

Board of Directors

Vernard Alexander
Owner - Minority Networking Exchange

Stephanie Durrett
President, SD Transit

Marvin Miller
Architect

Albert G. Reese Jr.,
Attorney at Law

Andre L. Young
President, Salutations Inc.

Officers

President - Diane Turner, Co-Owner of Toms Enterprises, LLC

Vice President - Brittee Clay, Co-Owner, Jones Printing

Secretary - Erika Turner, Co-Owner of Wine and Words PGH

Treasurer - Yahru Hood-Wilkerson, General Partner, Homewood Purpose

“I am truly honored to be elected to the founding president position with HBBA and within the Homewood business community. I have been a longtime member and supporter of the community. It’s been a tough planning year for us all, and while we’re starting to see signs of community economic development, there are sure to be more challenges as we power ahead. I look forward to working with the HBBA membership over the next year as we advance Homewood businesses,” said Diane Turner, Co-Owner of Toms Enterprises, LLC.

The formation of the HBBA was facilitated by Marteen Garay, the Homewood Innovation Zone Consultant at Urban Innovation21. Marteen worked to convene business owners and identify business development resources and service providers that would be interested in supporting the growth and development of the HBBA.

Homewood-Brushton Business Association’s mission is to foster the development and growth of the Homewood-Brushton business community, enhance its visibility, and preserve its history by increasing the capacity of businesses by providing access to capital, industry information, technical assistance and business support.

“The community is going to benefit from unification of businesses. Our goal is to strength the community as much as possible. We want to give the existing and future businesses the best possible foundation,” said Vernard Alexander, Owner or the Minority Networking Exchange.

The next general body meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 18, 2015, at 6pm. For more information please contact Marteen Garay at mgaray@urbaninnovation21.org. Meetings are held every third Wednesday of the month.