
Walnut Hills Area Council: Business Group

Minutes

Minutes: November 17, 2016 - Walnut Hills Area Council: Business Group Meeting

Taken by Michael Rountree, Childress & Cunningham, Inc.

Attendance:

Jeff Brewster	Tracy Flanagan-Ryan	Beverly Odoms	Aimee Shinkle
Matthew Cuff	Bill Kite	Fred Orth	Kate Walker
Gary Dangel	Tim MacConnell	Officer Kandice Roper-Issa	Greg Warner
Chris Davis	Linda Matthews	Michael Rountree	Kevin Wright
Cindy Fischer	Toni Miller	Joe Sandmann	

Opening:

Meeting called to order at 11:45 AM. Tracy asked that members verify their eligibility to vote by paying current dues if necessary, and made ballots for officer elections available.

Jeff offered congratulations to Cincinnati for weathering tumultuous times, in light of the recent election, and noted that we are entering a time of transition. Jeff offered counsel that an organization's strength should come from the bottom, not the top, and noted that over the past 6 years we have struggled to fill all of our committee chair positions. Minutes from meeting on September 15 (deferred from prior month) were approved, Chris Davis 1st, Matt Cuff 2nd; Minutes from meeting on October 21 were approved, Chris Davis 1st, Greg Warner 2nd.

Committee Reports:

Safety – Officer Roper-Issa

Crime statistics were distributed. Violent crimes overall are down, though some of this may be relocation to other areas. Officer Roper-Issa had been out of the office for a few days in conjunction with the Tensing trial, and is getting caught up; in her absence we can reach out to Sergeant Neack or Captain Mack. .

Mr. Barry Whitton has not responded to Officer Roper-Issa regarding the City's policy for camera monitoring; she said she may have Captain Mack contact him. He can be reached at Barry.Whitton@cincinnati-oh.gov. Police do have body cameras deployed now, will be on every officer by this summer, and footage from these cameras can be requested.

Two persons who had been convicted of petty thefts have been released early; Police know who they are. There is an ongoing investigation of a robbery that happened near (but not in) Fireside Pizza; Toni said that she has seen lots of comments on Nextdoor. Nextdoor.com is a social media site focused on neighborhoods.

Jeff asked about the levels of activity around schools, including Life Skills and Dohn. Officer Roper-Issa said that the schools do a good job of communicating with neighborhood officers, and no uptick has been noticed, though the schools might not be reporting all incidents that occur within their premises. Often, youth from elsewhere are being drawn into WH by friends eager to hang out.

Planning & Physical Development – Kevin Wright

The Community Reinvestment Plan will go before the City's Planning Commission on Friday morning, and then before City Council next month; further support is not needed right now.

Gomez Salsa had a successful soft opening, and will have a planned grand opening sometime later. Video Archive is open and doing well, and was recently featured in a national article for their Black Mamba Cocktail.

Progress is being made on Chatham, and work will begin in the next few weeks on 2 buildings near / across from Fireside. Three pre-fab homes will be delivered and installed on November 29th, on Copelen and Morgan streets; these will be 3-bedroom, 2-bath homes priced around \$160k-\$180k. Rehab work on other houses across the street will begin soon, but that work will take longer.

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Paramount Square (Peebles Corner) development is expected to go forward, as there would be an announcement regarding Development Fund tax credits at around 4:00 PM today (11/17/16). CVS will remain but get a facelift as part of this work. The project would create about 50,000 s.f. of retail and offices, with residential apartments above.

Membership/Elections – Tracy Flanagan-Ryan

Tracy tallied the votes cast and confirmed that the three candidates, all running unopposed, have been elected as officers for 2017. Matthew Cuff will serve as Chairperson, Michael Rountree as Secretary, and Kathy Atkinson as Treasurer. Tracy commended Jeff for his hard work and the evidence that his heart is in the right place, having made so many efforts to ensure that members of the WH community are not marginalized by changes taking place.

Finance/CNBDU – Cindy Fischer

Cindy said that at the December meeting we need to vote on proposed budgeting of CNBDU operating funds. Notice given at this meeting serves to meet the requirement that such a vote be announced 30 days in advance. Cindy said that we can use the same categories and rough allocations as last year, though we will have \$4,600 available for this fiscal year. The proposed spending categories and amounts are \$2,000 for Beautification, \$800 for Communications, \$800 for Membership activities, \$650 for Insurance and Dues, and \$350 for Fiber Optic Lease.

Beautification – No Report

Education / Workforce Development – No Report

Other Matters:

Jeff listed some discussion items that we will need to continue to address in the coming year. Outdoor cameras will be installed at the Dillard building, which Jeff hopes will spur others to do likewise. Joe said that Gomez Salsa did put up two cameras, though they are not compliant with Police standards (due to lack of information from Barry Whitton); these cameras cover the northern half of 5-Points Alley. Chris said that The Brew House will also have cameras installed next week. Jeff suggested the formation of a committee to facilitate sharing of information and standards.

Another issue Jeff mentioned is public parking, beginning with the Dillard lot, as the BG has voted in favor of managing such public lots. We need to develop the proper managerial structure, in partnership with WHRF, and space is already at a premium. Kevin indicated that renovation work for the Dillard lot could begin in Spring, though ideally it would happen after completion of (or concurrent with) streetscape work. Kevin said that communities can tend to panic a bit early in regards to parking, as “inconvenient” parking may serve to generate foot traffic through a neighborhood.

Joe announced the upcoming Small Business Saturday on Nov. 26th, which has 6 participants currently. Others can participate, by letting him know the business name and the particulars of a deal that they will offer for the day.

Aimee thanked the community for its support of the Taste of the Neighborhood, run by Mercy Neighborhood Ministries, which was able to raise about \$75k.

Beverly J. Odoms let it be known that she intends to run for City Council next year, with a goal of making ours a safe and healthy community.

Linda Matthews said that she is serving on the Environmental Advisory Council for the City, and has planned to advise the Mayor on December 8th. If we have any environmental concerns that should be relayed, those should be brought to her attention, at millenniumgroup1183@gmail.com. Toni asked that she plan to come and present to the WHAC during their January meeting. Linda is also a Trustee for the Mill Creek watershed, and noted that the City offers certification for diversity, for which she can help to get an assessment.

Matt Cuff said that he is excited about the next chapter and will focus on the Business Group's mission, emphasizing what is best for our businesses and for our community.

Meeting adjourned at approx. 12:45 PM.