
Walnut Hills Area Council: Business Group

Minutes

Minutes: March 21, 2019 - Walnut Hills Area Council: Business Group Meeting

Taken by Michael Rountree, Childress & Cunningham, Inc.

Attendance:

Emily Ahouse	Kathleen Colley	Anne Leeman	Michael Rountree
Kathy Atkinson	Gary Dangel	Tim MacConnell	Greg Warner
Brieyanna Braxton	Laura Davis	Fred Orth	Soloman Wodruth
Rich Chamlis	Kathryne Gardette	Samantha Reeves	Allen Woods

Opening:

Meeting called to order by Kathy Atkinson at 9:03 AM, with introductions.

Minutes from the February 21, 2019 meeting were approved, Tim MacConnell 1st, Allen Woods 2nd.

Treasurer's Report by Kathy Atkinson presented as handout, showing NBD funds of \$3,800 have been received and contribute to a total of \$8,123.70. Kathy noted that we will still need to seek for approx. \$5,000 of funding to go towards hosting a run/walk event. Treasurer's Report was approved, Laura Davis 1st, Anne Leeman 2nd.

Committee Reports:

Planning & Development – Chair not present; WHRF update presented instead by Emily Ahouse

A contractor has been selected for the Durner Building (4-story building south of Peebles Corner) and work will begin soon. The Sundry & Vice Bar is expected to open in the former Comfort Station this summer. RFPs have been put out to seek for a grocer operator to utilize the former Kroger building.

Workforce development surveys will be going out to local businesses soon. The owners are looking to sell the Alexandra building and RFPs for affordable housing (due April 4th) will be reviewed; Model Group has expressed interest only if an affordable housing subsidy will apply (based on tenants with 30% of median income in the area).

Allen noted that there have been several alcohol-serving establishments starting up in WH and asked whether this was controlled. Kathy replied that we did support the creation of an Entertainment District with 5 liquor licenses initially, to be under the supervision of WHRF. Samantha said that it includes 7 licenses now, with 3 having been issued and another 3 pending. Kathleen said the district extends through most of the business district but not entirely. Allen asked how we might influence the disbursement of these licenses, to be more strategic than what took place in OTR. Kathy said we held lots of conversations when the district was created with 5 licenses, but she does not know how it expanded to 7 total. Emily noted that such licenses can be necessary for restaurants. Laura commented that she purchased a license prior to creation of the Entertainment District for approx. \$25,000 and this type of license is still available; it is more expensive but it can be employed anywhere, not being tied to the geographic district. Emily said that WHRF has not been getting notices of requests for a liquor license aside from Ent. District, and Kathy said this would be a State not local issue. Kathy noted that license renewals tend to come up in April, and the Police will bring any objections they are aware of.

Samantha reported that WHRF has created a template for collecting commercial space inventory information. Kathy commented that there is a balance to be struck between attracting new businesses and customers to the neighborhood, and serving those already here. Kathy said this is part of the charge of the Planning & Development Committee, and encouraged WHBG members to participate.

NBDIP – Emily Ahouse

Applications for grants for a major (over \$30k) and minor (\$30k or less) project are due in April. For the minor project, neighborhood gateway art development and installation can be proposed. This would be a further development of initial work done with Artworks in 2017, to result in final designs for four themes and installation at

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one location (to be determined by community engagement). Allen suggested determining the location first. For the major project, continued implementation of streetscaping along the south side of McMillan (both east and west of Peeble's Corner) can be proposed. This would combine \$200k of requested funds with \$200k of funds already awarded for a similar purpose (a prior proposal was not approved initially but the award winner failed to make use of the funds and so they came to us). Kathy noted that turning down Gilbert may bring up the unresolved issues pertaining to basement encroachments into the right-of-way; Samantha said there could be changes in scope based on DOTE recommendations. Motion to draft a letter of support for major and minor project proposals as presented was approved, Samantha Reeves 1st, Emily Ahouse 2nd.

Safe & Clean – general discussion (no chair present)

WHRF will be taking the lead with a youth program to do street cleaning; Emily noted that this is taking over from what was previously a privately-funded effort by a local developer. Kathy said that of our approved CNBDU funding of \$3,800, the \$1,300 we requested for Youth Engagement as well as \$200 for beautification can both be directed to this program. There were conflicting reports about how much the prior individual (Leonard) was paid, but Emily said that their budget has been based on actual expected costs. Anne whether sidewalk snow removal could be coordinated by having a non-profit hire a manager with WHBG paying for actual labor. Kathy said that ideas like this should be discussed in the Safe & Clean Committee, which is in need of participants and particularly a chair.

Fred Orth said that a volunteer force of about 50 will be doing neighborhood cleanup this coming weekend.

Kathleen commented that street trash cans are not enough to support more frequent cleaning. The City is reluctant to install additional street cans where residents or businesses end up using them as though they are private cans. Kathleen said that we need to work together to identify locations in need, as well as consider levying fines for improper usage of public cans.

Following up on discussion regarding a Special Improvement District (SID) from a prior meeting, Emily noted that it would be easier to obtain this sooner rather than later, if it is a goal. There is no other SID in the City currently aside from Downtown Cincinnati Inc (DCI), and Kathy said that the prior discussion was very preliminary and it would be a 3 to 5-year goal if pursued.

Communications & Membership – Allen Woods

The job description for a social media manager has been posted; it was clarified that the initial contract term is through the end of June due to the approved NBD funding schedule. Kathy said that we may need to cover costs for a few months if we keep this position going past June; it was suggested that we amend the notice to refer to a further 3 months of continuance based upon satisfactory performance. Allen will work together with Samir to supervise the hired individual.

Allen said that our web site needs to present clear benefits to belonging to WHBG and may thus require some thinking about redesign. Kathy noted that we have taken in \$650 in dues for the year, but that she is not the Membership chair and there needs to be someone more focused on recruitment involved.

Events – Laura Davis

Meetups will continue each month, to be on the 4th Wednesday from 6-8 PM, with the next one to be at Cafe Vivace, then at Fireside in April and at Mortar in May. Laura is working with a professional organizer to develop a 5k run/walk in the fall, tentatively to be on Sept. 29th. As this would be the same weekend as the Street Food Festival, it was suggested that the date be changed to mid-October. They will be looking for sponsors, and Anne gave an invitation to make use of Green Man Park for gathering after the race. Gary asked about expected street closures, and noted that prior races have finished on an uphill segment as a challenge feature.

There will be a back-to-school swap meet on August 3rd; Anne said that Green Man Park can also be available for this.

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Other Matters:

Anne announced that Green Man Twist will be opening for the season on April 12th.

Brieyanna said that there will be an event on April 13th from 6:00 to 7:30 PM at the Melrose YMCA sponsored by Center For Closing The Health Care Gap, and said that she will send an email to Michael to be forwarded.

Allen said that Mortar will be hosting an event on April 20th regarding branding and financial training for E-businesses, with input from 5th/3rd Bank.

Meeting adjourned at approx. 10:15 AM.