
Walnut Hills Area Council: Business Group

Minutes

Minutes: November 18, 2021 - Walnut Hills Area Council: Business Group Meeting

Taken by Michael Rountree, Childress & Cunningham, Inc.

Attendance:

David Estep	Christina Hartlieb	Emma Lopez	Samantha Reeves
Cindy Fischer	Jane Keller	Tim MacConnell	Michael Rountree
Kathryne Gardette	Samir Kulkarni	Jason Radachi	

Opening:

Meeting called to order by Samir Kulkarni at 9:10 AM. Meeting was held as a video conference using Zoom software.

Minutes from the October 18, 2021 meeting were approved, Tim MacConnell 1st, David Estep 2nd.

Treasurer's Report – No major changes in the past month. Tim and Samir said they would meet later to resolve a bill from the City, and to discuss online account access.

Committee Reports:

Membership – Michael Rountree, on behalf of Sahir Rama

Officer elections were conducted. Motion to approve the slate of returning officers (Samir Kulkarni, Tim MacConnell, and Michael Rountree) was made by Michael Rountree, seconded by Cindy Fischer, and approved unanimously.

Beautification – no formal report

Communications – no formal report

Events – no formal report

Planning & Development – no formal report; see discussion regarding Solica Construction request for letter of support at 726 E. McMillan below.

Safety – no formal report

Jane mentioned that the crosswalk timing at Peebles Corner has been changed and now there is a countdown while flashing.

Other Matters:

Representing Solica Construction, Samir presented a second time his request for a letter of support to obtain city tax abatement for 726/728 McMillan (at the northwest corner of Hemlock). The WHAC has already granted their support, at their meeting the prior week. The building, called “The Stephan”, will be Solica's fifth project in Walnut Hills, and they had hoped to begin work in December though this might be pushed back a bit. Michael asked what the outcome might be if the City does not grant the tax abatement, and Samir said that they would probably need to create more smaller dwelling units inside. The building contains well-detailed woodwork that they are hoping to keep. Motion to draft a letter of support for Solica's request for tax abatement was approved, Michael Rountree 1st, Jane Keller 2nd, with abstention by Samir Kulkarni and by Kathryne Gardette.

Bylaws for an independent WHBG were discussed. Currently the WHBG operates as a standing committee of the WHAC, but this was not always the case. Michael noted that the change was implemented many years ago in order to gain the 501-c3 status held by WHAC as well as improved status with the City, since they tend to bring issues of concern to the WHAC and value their input. Kathryne pointed out that WHAC is in the process of updating its bylaws now, and those bylaws cover WHBG's structure as a committee. Tim noted that independent formation of bylaws may help to resolve bank accounts, as ours is currently configured as a sub-account to WHAC's account(s).

Samir said that our partnering with WHAC would not necessarily diminish as an independent body. It will be good to maintain some cross-representation with a business group representative among the WHAC membership or even on their board, and vice-

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versa. Kathyne asked whether we might have reached out to Invest-In-Neighborhoods to ask about how other business districts might be structured. It was noted that for some kinds of businesses, a morning meeting time might not be ideal.

Cindy asked how soon we might be able to obtain our own 501-c3 status, and Samir said that the paperwork is ready to be submitted whenever we vote to adopt new bylaws. Tim and Jane agreed that it will be a good idea to look into how other neighborhoods are structured; Cindy said that it has not been clear from her participation in CNBDU meetings downtown how the various other bodies function, but she may be able to get some ideas from speaking with Joseph.

Jane said that she is willing to help by reaching out to other organizations and researching. Samir said that such research will be the next step, and we will distribute a set of bylaws from circa 2008 (for WHBA) for review and comment. The executive committee will be collecting input in order to make recommendations.

Meeting adjourned at approx. 9:59 AM.