
Walnut Hills Area Council: Business Group

Minutes

Minutes: February 17, 2022 - Walnut Hills Area Council: Business Group – Executive Committee Meeting

Taken by Michael Rountree, Childress & Cunningham, Inc.

Attendance:

Samir Kulkarni

Kathryne Gardette

Michael Rountree

Jerod Theobald

Opening:

Meeting called to order by Samir Kulkarni at 9:16 AM. Attendance at this meeting was only required of those serving as part of the Executive Committee (officers and appointed chairs), however a General Body Meeting was held for the first portion in order to vote on NBD funding (see below). Meeting was held as a video conference using Zoom software.

Minutes from the January 20, 2022 meeting were not approved, vote will be deferred to the next general body meeting.

General Meeting & Discussion:

Funding (formerly “CNBDU”) – Samir Kulkarni, on behalf of Cindy Fischer

A motion to approve the proposed spending categories for this year's \$3,500 of operating NBD funds was approved, Samir Kulkarni 1st, Kathryne Gardette 2nd. The spending categories are as follows:

CNBDU dues reimbursement	\$50
Overhead expenses	\$500
Membership	\$250
Beautification	\$1,200
5K Consultant	\$1,500

As in prior years, these amounts represent money that can be reimbursed through the program, when spent towards the appropriate category. The amounts can be shifted later amongst the approved categories, if necessary. Invoices must be during the current fiscal year, which runs until the end of June.

Beautification – Samir, Kulkarni, on behalf of Tim MacConnell

We are unable to expand the flower pots program with the Parks Department, as they enforce a limit of 30 pots per neighborhood (we had hoped to increase to 50). Last year we actually had 36 pots that they tended; Tim will check to see if we can continue with that number. Jerod said that a pot insert or sign to carry a QR code is not really feasible.

Other committees did not give any specific report.

Kathryne mentioned that WHAC has a subcommittee looking into funding for landscaping in the medians along Gilbert; they have procured a bid of \$21k for a 3-year timeframe. They are drafting a letter to ask businesses that front on Gilbert to contribute towards this, and request concurrence from WHBG. Hope to get entire amount collected up front, though WHAC has funds that can pay for the first few months at least, so there is no immediate deadline to secure funds.

Kathryne reported that the City is considering density changes to zoning that would affect about 46% of housing in WH. The WHAC's concern is that the proposed rules could eliminate the need for developers to seek Area Council input, as long as they comply with density targets, which might skew the balance of affordable housing over time. Mount Auburn has raised issues with the proposed height limits which might affect hillside developments. To review the changes that are being considered, please use this link:

<https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/planning/planning-projects-and-studies/active-ongoing/proposed-removal-of-density-restrictions/>

Executive Committee Discussion:

Current appointments to subcommittee chairs were reviewed: 5K/Race = Samir Kulkarni; Events = Ben Gaimon; Communications/Marketing = Jerod Theobald; Beautification = Tim MacConnell; Traffic/Safety = Jane Keller; Finance = Tim MacConnell; and Membership = TO BE DETERMINED. Samir spoke with Ben who is willing to handle Events and aim at

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scheduling something at least quarterly. Michael requested confirmation that Cindy Fischer will continue to work with Tim as part of Finance.

The Peebles 5K is set for October 16, while WHRF has moved their Street Food Festival earlier into September. We should begin planning and marketing efforts for the 5K in the next month. We are considering adding a neighborhood awards ceremony (perhaps based on Golden Walnut Awards from years ago) to this event.

Jerod said that he would be sending out a letter to those who contributed towards last year's flower pots program, for tax charitable deduction purposes. He also asked whether all dues-paying members should get a similar notice.

Jane will be asked to help get community input to the City regarding various forms of traffic improvements, which may include bumpouts, crosswalks, or other traffic calming such as radar signs.

Membership subcommittee is still in need of a chair.

Jerod said that he has recently shared a few news articles via Facebook that highlight positive news in Walnut Hills. He will also be sending out some questionnaires to local businesses, using our Mail Chimp account.

Proposed edits to a new By-Laws document were discussed. Michael raised a question of whether there should be any reference to a Board of Directors, as the initial draft being considered was written in terms of a Corporation with an elected Board. Michael's comments were to change all references to "Organization" instead of "Corporation", and remove the section that defines a Board, and instead just define the Officers and Executive Committee. The concern is whether we would be able to function if we were unable to fully populate a Board, if it were in our adopted By-Laws. Other technicalities were reviewed, such as defining a process for adoption, since WHBG would essentially be voting to terminate its current structure (as a standing committee of the WHAC) and form a new independent body. Samir agreed to implement the review comments that were discussed, and to seek review by an attorney, prior to presenting to the WHBG general body for further input.

Samir said that he would like to have a conversation with Emily Ahouse (at the City) regarding the zoning density changes, as well as neighborhood business district banners, and Jerod said that would be interested in joining in on that conversation.

Samantha Reeves is submitting the proposal for a CNBDU project grant that will fund a resumption of the WHRF's previous facade improvements grants, which assisted local businesses by reimbursing a portion of their costs associated with eligible facade work. Samir commented that we might need to ask what is really important to our business community, and Michael said that we need to specifically invite Samantha to attend the Executive Committee meetings.

Samir suggested that we conduct a poll to determine an optimal meeting time for Executive Committee, in order to ensure better attendance at these bimonthly meetings.

Meeting adjourned at approx. 10:03 AM.