
Walnut Hills Area Council: Business Group

Minutes

Minutes: April 21, 2022 - Walnut Hills Area Council: Business Group – Executive Committee Meeting

Taken by Michael Rountree, Childress & Cunningham, Inc.

Attendance:

Samir Kulkarni
Brent Gallaher

Jane Keller
Tim MacConnell

Michael Rountree
Jerod Theobald

Jason Chamlee (presenting)
Zach Woolard (presenting)

Opening:

Meeting called to order by Samir Kulkarni at 9:05 AM. Attendance at this meeting was only required of those serving as part of the Executive Committee (officers and appointed chairs). Meeting was held in person except for those who joined via Zoom.

Tim noted that he is still trying to get issues with the bank resolved, since the accounts are in the WHAC's name and they tend to refuse Tim access the that he needs. Tim also noted that the only mail he finds in our PO Box tends to be bank-related.

Samir said that the agenda was to discuss by-laws, and to consider a presentation by Model Group.

By-Laws Discussion:

Michael asked whether WHAC has formally adopted new by-laws yet, and the answer was not known.

Samir had distributed a draft “Code of Regulations” for consideration. This document would establish a Board of Directors in order to allow us to incorporate, which will need to be done in order to claim our own 501c-3 status. Samir said that this would serve as a stepping stone, as a separate document from actual By-laws, which could be drafted and adopted later. It would create an overseeing structure, and the elected Board would not necessarily be the same thing as the functional Executive Committee or the elected officers.

Michael noted that certain language seemed to indicate that the Board would be composed of all members of the organization, which could lead to difficulties related to quorum. Jane asked whether the WHAC would get some input or representation on our Board, and it was agreed that we should encourage ex officio cross-pollination.

Other points of clarification were discussed, and Samir said that he would have the attorney who is helping to compile the document make the necessary changes. The intent is to vote on this incorporating document at the next full WHBG meeting, as well as naming at least three initial Directors.

Model Group Presentation:

Jason Chamlee and Zach Woolard joined the meeting at approximately 9:30 AM to make their first presentation regarding Paramount Launch, which is the proposed development at the former Kroger site. They had presented to WHAC the prior week.

Fronting McMillan with 60 units of market-rate apartments and some ground floor retail, Model Group is seeking support for their request for a zoning variance as well as for tax abatements. They have conducted a community engagement process over the past couple of years, with the assistance of Yard and Kathy Atkinson, reaching about 500 respondents. The resulting preferred model utilizes three new 4-5 story buildings around parking in the middle of the block, and one building with 42 units of affordable housing facing Gilbert is already going forward. The project will also include office renovations in the Durner and Race Refrigeration buildings, which may be awarded some historic tax credits.

The zoning variance request is to allow a building with more than 150' of frontage, as they are proposing 183' width. The building will abide by zoning code requirements to use forms and materials that make it resemble a series of buildings each no more than 75' in width.

The proposed tax abatements would be for as much as possible, for a period of 12 to 15 years. Samir asked whether the project would result in job creation, and they noted the inclusion of 33,000 s.f. of office or retail space among the multiple buildings. For Paramount Launch they intend to achieve LEED Silver rating, and they agreed to augment the presentation with a matrix showing the unit mix and rental rates.

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Other Discussion:

Model Group was asked whether there are any plans regarding CVS, as it was noted that they are currently in a year-to-year lease arrangement. It would be a huge loss if they leave, and Model Group has been trying to get a commitment from them since their presence would help units in Paramount Launch and the similar building facing Kemper to sell.

Brent asked about the Greenwich, and Jason said they had nothing to report. Brent said that former workers have said that they don't feel safe in relation to operating on weekends.

Samir asked Jane whether Artworks might support the 5K race by doing art installation(s) along the route, and she said that they will consider it.

Meeting adjourned at approx. 10:20 AM.