
Walnut Hills Area Council: Business Group

Minutes

Minutes: September 15, 2022 - Walnut Hills Area Council: Business Group Meeting

Taken by Michael Rountree, Childress & Cunningham, Inc.

Attendance:

Aaron Bley
Sam Dobresi
David Estep

Christina Hartlieb
Mona Jenkins
Samir Kulkarni

Tim MacConnell
Samantha Reeves
Michael Rountree

Greg Warner
Annetta Waters

Opening:

Meeting called to order by Samir Kulkarni at 9:08 AM.

Minutes from the August 18, 2022 full meeting were approved, Greg Warner 1st, Christina Hartlieb 2nd.

Treasurer's Report – Tim said there were no changes, deposits, or expenditures during the last month. Last month it was reported that account balances were approximately \$728 for beautification, \$142 for the 5K race, and \$6,600 in general operating funds. Volunteers are needed to help follow up on the sponsorships for street planters, as well as to ask for membership dues and renewals. Samir said that he has letters from last year for the planter sponsors that could be adapted.

Committee Reports:

Events – Samantha Reeves

WHRF had requested that WHBG sponsor the “Queen of the Hill” food festival for \$500, but no vote had yet been taken. Though the event had just recently taken place, she said that they can update their web site to credit us as a sponsor. They have raised about \$38,500 of their \$40k goal. Motion to contribute \$500 sponsorship for the festival was approved, Tim MacConnell 1st, David Estep 2nd.

Traffic & Safety – no formal report

Jane Keller provided an emailed update since she was unable to attend, and this can be forwarded on to members. Samir noted that they have developed a flyer to solicit feedback on traffic issues, along with two other flyers pertaining to other issues like social capital and art. These flyers will be distributed at the Alms, among other venues.

Regarding safety, Samir noted that there was a shooting recently that occurred near the Comfort Station, which did not appear to be a random targeting. One person had a stray bullet tear through a pant leg, which could have been more severe. Better lighting was mentioned as a strategy, and Samantha said that we should report lights to Duke that may need attention. Security camera systems on the outside of buildings can offer footage to help police, and Samir said that just having cameras in visible locations can help. More people on the street generally results in better safety, as does cleanliness. Tim said that he has spoken with Officer Johnson to request his attendance at our meetings.

There was also discussion of social factors like poverty and disconnection, suggesting there should be more opportunities to make social connections. Christina said that Harriet Beecher Stowe House has been trying to generate more events, but they don't get a lot of community participation aside from their nearest neighbors. Sam said that it's not just a matter of hosting more events but of being intentional and inviting people. Some people don't get notifications via email, or attend WHAC meetings, so we need to get information into venues like Fireside Pizza, schools, etc. Sam said there are a lot of factors in play, such as rent increases, effects of the pandemic, and a general “survival economics” mood. Tim said that he makes it his habit to walk through the neighborhood and say hello to those he encounters, making eye contact, and engaging like this is up to each of us. Samir expressed some doubt regarding a causal relation to social connectivity, regarding specific crimes.

Tim asked whether there is an active Citizens On Patrol option, and Samatha said that the safety committee has discussed starting one up.

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Beautification – no formal report

Planning & Physical Development – Samir Kulkarni, Samantha Reeves

Fencing around the former Kroger building site will go up in November, as work will begin on the new apartments.

The Palomar (former Church of the Assumption) on Gilbert is undergoing repairs and renovations to become a wedding event center, hoping to open in June 2023.

Communications & Marketing – no formal report

Finance – no formal report

Membership – no formal report.

Other Matters:

Christina mentioned that Harriet Beecher Stowe House is hosting a jazz concert on October 2nd, on the lawn.

Sam said that he often does some form of outreach, and can assist Jane Keller to distribute flyers while out.

One attendee noted that they were not aware that Officer Darren Johnson is now our assigned neighborhood officer. We have not had a police officer in attendance since prior to the pandemic.

Meeting adjourned at approx. 9:47 AM.