
Walnut Hills Area Council: Business Group

Minutes

Minutes: May 25, 2023 - Walnut Hills Area Council: Business Group Meeting

Taken by Michael Rountree, Childress & Cunningham, Inc.

Attendance:

Kathy Atkinson	Karen Hordinski	Julie Martin	Federica Von Euw Tetrault
Kim Coleman	Jane Keller	Samantha Miller	
Merret Collister	Samir Kulkarni	Michael Rountree	
Christina Hartlieb	Tim MacConnell	Andrew Tetrault	

Opening:

Meeting called to order by Samir Kulkarni at 9:30 AM, following a tour and discussion of the remodeling work done at the Palomar, formerly the Church of the Assumption.

Minutes from the April 20, 2023 meeting were approved, Samir Kulkarni 1st, Jane Keller 2nd.

Treasurer's Report – No report, Tim had to leave the meeting early. Samir noted that we will be seeking contributions from local businesses to fund the street flower pots, which the Parks Department is maintaining.

Committee Reports:

Planning & Physical Development – Samir Kulkarni

Samir noted that 719 East McMillan has been bought by the owner of The Fix. There was some discussion about the PNC / UC parking lot, as well as the lot that is next to Fireside Pizza. Samir asked if there was any way we could work towards improving that lot, and Jane commented that it is tough to park there due to the low maintenance. Samantha said that one difficulty is that the lot is co-owned by the City and by the Dillard Building, and that funds that might be useable dont cover as much these days.

Samantha said that a fresh food retailer (not a grocery though) will be coming to the tenant space at Paramount Launch (the new development at the former Kroger store site). She also said that the Kemper side will be very similar to the Launch, but they have not yet closed on financing for this building yet. Jane commented that it would be good to have someone from Model Group in attendance at our meetings. Merret asked what the community's feeling was, regarding having one building (on Gilbert) that is mostly low-income units, while the Launch os mostly market-rate. Samantha said that her opinion is that it is good to have a mix, but the funding structures tend to prohibit this, so the close proximity of the buildings is deliberate.

The new spaces for Artworks and Mortar are being developed (at the former Race Refrigeration and Durner buildings), and WHRF will gain a presence on Peebles Corner. Jane said that the Artworks space is not ready for a tour yet, but might be later in the year. Work will include using part of the basement as a studio, retrofitting an elevator, and other renovations. The intention is to do the work during Summer of 2024, and move in by the end of 2024. There may be a need for blocking or diverting street lane(s) in order to do work in the basement, and there are undecided questions pertaining to parking.

Traffic & Safety – Jane Keller

Samir commented on the potential for driver distraction by power lines, noting that when possible Solica Construction prefers to talk with Duke about burying power lines as part of their renovation projects.

Jane said that the WHAC committee is working with DeVou on developing a dedicated bike lane, and she will have more information for us later. Red Bike stations are coming to several locations in WH.

Membership – No Report

Communications & Marketing – No Report

Events – No Report

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Other Matters:

Jake Dietrich with Onyx and East made their first presentation requesting a letter of support for zoning variances that are being sought for a townhome development at May and McMillan, which will include 42 units. Jake was not present but gave a presentation by phone while their presentation was shown on a laptop screen. The presentation was for two projects, one on May Street and one on Concord. At May Street, 1.63 acres will contain 34 townhouses and 5 rowhouses, and the variances sought would include minimum lot depth, maximum front yard, drive width, and others. At Concord, 5 rowhouses are planned, and variances are needed for accessory structure separation, protrusion of steps in excess of 5', and drive width. Samir commented that years ago, a development of 192 units as apartments was rejected by the community, and that townhomes were preferred. Samantha stated that the WHAC has already voted in favor of the setback variances, but not in favor of any other variances. A second presentation and vote by WHBG will occur at the June meeting.

Merret announced that LaSoupe will be hosting an open house on July 11, from 4:30 to 6:30 PM, at their location 915 East McMillan.

Christina mentioned an upcoming birthday celebration for Harriet Beecher Stowe, on June 11 from 1:00 to 4:00 PM. She said she would get info sent to Michael, who can send an email to the Group.

As there were some new faces in attendance, each person introduced themselves and their business or organization.

Meeting adjourned at approx. 10:08 AM.