
Walnut Hills Area Council: Business Group

Minutes

Minutes: October 24, 2024 - Walnut Hills Area Council: Business Group Meeting

Taken by Michael Rountree, Childress & Cunningham Architects

Attendance:

Frank Arena	Chris Davis	Lexie Grimes	Alex Zyndorf
Simone Bess	David Estep	Mona Jenkins	
Cierra Bickel	Kathryne Gardette	Samantha Miller	
Matthew Cramer	Michael Graham	Michael Rountree	

Opening:

Meeting called to order by Kathryne Gardette at 9:08 AM, at Springhill Suites. Each person was asked what the community could do to support them or their establishment.

Minutes from the September 26, 2024 meeting were approved by Samantha Miller 1st, Frank Arena 2nd.

Treasurer's Report – Alex Zyndorf reported that there has been no change since the prior month. Samir's presence is still needed in order to sign over the current bank account. Samantha noted that an additional \$4,950 will soon be due to the Parks Department for maintenance of flower pots, and that she is owed reimbursement for the previous amount that she covered. CNBDU dues will be increasing to \$100, though this amount is usually included in the operating funds we request each year as a reimbursement item. Alex proposed that we organize some sort of fundraiser around the upcoming holiday(s).

Discussion Topics:

Lexie announced the ribbon cutting for Mortar on Friday, November 22nd.

Chris said that his building had been vandalized by tagging, and Kathryne reported that the same had happened to her building.

Simone presented a flyer for the upcoming “Kwanzaa Meets STEAM Camp” for kids 6-12 years old, which will occur November 25th to 29th. At \$100 per student, they will be given opportunities to learn the principles and symbols of Kwanzaa and be challenged with coding, 3D printing, robotics, as well as art & music.

November & December WHBG Meeting Schedule – Kathryne Gardette

The upcoming November and December meetings would conflict with holidays and so are rescheduled to occur on the prior week, November 21st and December 19th.

Presentation: Dialysis Clinic Inc. – Matthew Cramer

Matthew is an architect from Nashville, TN, who works with mostly medical clients. He presented a handout to show the proposed expansion and remodeling of Dialysis Clinic Inc, which is located on McMillan at the end of Essex Street, where traffic exits from I-71 south to go into Walnut Hills. The facility is one of the largest not-for-profit dialysis clinics in the region, and has been at this location for approximately 25 years. The site is 1.6 acres and the building has been added onto 3 or 4 times. Plans for an expansion were scaled back to economize after the pandemic, with about 13,000 s.f. on the eastern wing of the building to be demolished and that portion of the lot sold as the final phase of work.

They will be pursuing the continuance of certain Zoning Variances and will request a letter of support at a future WHBG meeting. The variances include parking on the side of the building instead of the rear, a reduced number of parking spaces, ground floor transparency (i.e. window area) less than the required 50%, and keeping the building inset from the street corner

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instead of fronting the street directly as required for the CC-P district. The facility is not one that would call for public street walk-up access, which the zoning code seems to encourage. A majority of patients are dropped off by others.

With a constrained budget, the aesthetics will be based on the existing northwest corner, which includes concrete block and EIFS. New metal panels are shown above the window heads for street-facing facades. Parking will be reduced from 64 to 58 spaces. Samantha asked about landscaping, which is not shown yet. Chris noted that the site serves as a gateway to Walnut Hills, and the landscaping and aesthetics are therefore important issues. It was noted that there is an opportunity for some kind of welcoming gesture, such as a mural, and Samantha suggested that it could be an NBDIP-funded project request. Kathyne said that the same concerns were voiced at the recent WHAC meeting. Michael Rountree noted that the eastern portion would remain in place until the final phase, perhaps 18 months, and has the most visual impact. Matthew said that the east wall, after demolition, will be given new materials to cover the concrete block, similar to the McMillan Street side. There were some concerns raised about the look of the metal panels as shown in the renderings.

Other Matters:

Kathyne encouraged all in attendance to VOTE, which she further explained as “Voice Optimism Tenaciously Everyday”.

Michael Graham introduced himself as the newly hired liaison to all three groups (WHRF, WHAC, and WHBG, with WHRF as managing employer), having begun just this week. He will be working towards getting together a communication infrastructure, and finding ways to support our various endeavors.

Mona expressed her concern for how the neighborhood is changing. When various events that could affect either the residents or businesses in Walnut Hills, we should assume that the leaders of WHAC, WHBG, and WHRF are notified. Folks should not be traumatized by development proposals.

Michael Rountree reminded the group about elections in November, and the slate of candidates for officers (chair, secretary, and treasurer) must be finalized. The current officers each assented to continuing in their roles, so the slate to be voted on in November is Kathyne Gardette as Chair, Michael Rountree as Secretary, and Alex Zyndorf as Treasurer.

Meeting adjourned at approx. 10:08 AM.