
Walnut Hills Area Council: Business Group

Minutes

Minutes: November 21, 2024 - Walnut Hills Area Council: Business Group Meeting

Taken by Michael Rountree, Childress & Cunningham Architects

Attendance:

Cierra Bickel	David Estep	Lexie Grimes	Michael Rountree
Heather Britt	Marcus Frierson	Mona Jenkins	Evelyn Vandivort
Kim Cooney	William Holthaus, CPD	Samir Kulkarni	Alex Zyndorf
Gary Dangel	Kathryne Gardette	Samantha Miller	
Sam Dobrozzi	Michael Graham	Bobby Minelli	

Opening:

Meeting called to order by Kathryne Gardette at 9:10 AM, at Springhill Suites.

Minutes from the October 24, 2024 meeting were approved, Alex Zyndorf 1st, Sam Dobrozzi 2nd.

Treasurer's Report – Alex Zyndorf said that the status quo has not changed, though she has been able to order new checks and we will need to pay for our portion of flower pot maintenance. Motion to accept Treasurer's Report was approved, Sam Dobrozzi 1st, Samir Kulkarni 2nd.

Discussion Topics:

Safety / Police Update – Officer William Holthaus was given the floor. A year ago we went from being part of District 4 to now District 2, but Officer Holthaus is assigned just to Walnut Hills. Wendy Martin is a neighborhood liason that covers multiple areas. Sam mentioned that one man who had been staying in Green Man Park has found new shelter, but there is another person, roughly 30 years old, black and skinny, who is being argumentative and even violent with strangers; Officer Holthaus said he is aware of someone of similar description. Samir brought up a middle-aged woman who has come onto his property on Gilbert partially undressed, and it was noted that there have been car windows broken in near May & McMillan.

Samir asked what we can do to help the police, and Officer Holthaus encouraged us to call them. There will be some Police Visibility Overtime during the next 90 days, with extra patrols in Walnut Hills. We can also send them video from our own surveillance cameras (use email).

Some tires were slashed near ETC Produce, which might be done by youth and can happen during the day. Kathryne mentioned gunshots heard near Concord & Morgan, and Alex said there were gunshots heard last night. Mona asked about incidents around Iowa Street, and Kathryne said there is transitional housing that may have levels of activity that go up and down. Officer Holthaus said that thefts from autos have gone down recently, and one guy got a 2-year sentence.

Mona pointed out the need to address issues like housing costs, why kids are not in school, poverty, or other causal factors. Now that it is getting cold, Samir asked where to send folks in need of shelter; Mona said that the Bush Rec Center serves as a warm-up station, and Kathryne said that there are compiled lists of options. Sam mentioned calling 381-SAFE, and Mona said we can message her for help, as she used to work for the homeless commission. Sam noted that some might not want to be helped or appreciative of shelter options.

Second Presentation: Dialysis Clinic Inc. – Evelyn Vandivort

Kathryne gave a recap of the presentation in October and Evelyn presented a handout to show the proposed expansion and remodeling of Dialysis Clinic Inc, located on McMillan at the end of Essex Street. Minor changes had been made in response to previous comments, but the same set of zoning variances are requested. Samir asked about the size of the facility and number of

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patients, and Evelyn replied that the expansion will enable them to go from 20 to about 30 to 40 patients, with a staff ratio of 1 to 3. Kathyne said that the variances requested would not result in a change from how things are now. Motion to approve the request for a letter of support was approved, Mona Jenkins 1st, Samir Kulkarni 2nd.

Planning & Physical Development – Kathyne, on behalf of Samantha Miller (had to leave early)

Samantha is working on a grant proposal for four wifi hotspots in the neighborhood; there are two already underway but not yet active. Bids were recently received for improvement to the parking lot.

Other Matters:

Kathyne celebrated the recent announcement of CLIMB Award winners, including Cincinnati Association for the Blind & Visually Impaired, Lighthouse Youth & Family Services, and others.

As of November 15th the public feedback regarding street calming approaches was closed. There was a State of the City presentation last week, which included mention of Walnut Hills and making it more easy for development to occur.

Lexie presented flyers for the Grand Opening House Party at Mortar's new location, 2453 Gilbert Avenue. This will be open to the public on November 22nd, from 3 PM to 7 PM, with a ribbon cutting by invitation preceding at 1 PM, to which all WHBG members are invited.

Kathyne said that last month we had discussed the possibility of organizing a fundraiser event, and that we have decided to try something on Wednesday November 27th. Businesses are asked to participate by running a special offer that day and dedicate a percentage of those sales to go to the WHBG. Heather said that DanceFix will be offering classes, Bobby said that Household Books could do Saturday rather than Wednesday, and Sam noted that Firehouse regularly hosts a monthly charity day with 10% of revenue donated to various organizations. Alex said she is compiling a list of participants.

David said that he will be installing a sign for Household Books, though at a different location.

After eight years of working with WHRF, Gary Dangel has decided to retire.

Sam said that he attended another business group's meeting, noting that East End Columbia-Tusculum hosts their meeting amongst three different groups, and it was good to see how they interact. He spoke about the velocity of money in the community, how we do business with each other, and Mona referred to solidarity economies. One issue for consideration is giving kids better things to do with free time, and Kathyne noted that youth did help out with restoration of Green Man Park.

Michael presented the slate of officers (Kathyne Gardette as Chair, Michael Rountree as Secretary, and Alex Zyndorf as Treasurer) each to continue in their current roles. Motion to approve this slate of candidates for another term was approved, Mona Jenkins 1st, Sam Dobrozzi 2nd.

Prior to concluding the meeting, each person was asked to share something for which they are grateful. Meeting adjourned at approx. 10:10 AM.