
Walnut Hills Area Council: Business Group

Minutes

Minutes: March 27, 2025 - Walnut Hills Area Council: Business Group Meeting

Taken by Michael Rountree, Childress & Cunningham, Inc.

Attendance:

Abby Beausir	Ashley Gibbs	Michael Rountree	Cole Weirich
Sam Dobrozzi	Christina Hartlieb	Stacy Sims	Katrina Weiss
Kathryne Gardette	Bryce Kessler	Jessica Vasquez	

Opening:

Meeting called to order by Kathryne Gardette at 9:08 AM.

Minutes from the February 27, 2025 meeting were approved, Sam Dobrozzi 1st, Christina Hartlieb 2nd.

Treasurer's Report – no report.

Discussion Topics:

NBDIP Project Proposal – Ashley Gibbs

The preliminary proposals for major & minor project funding through NBDIP are due, and Ashley reviewed the project recommendations. For the major project, \$250,000 for branding and wayfinding throughout the business district will be requested. This would include marketing graphic design, signage, and possibly sculptures. For the minor project, \$50,000 for improvements to Green Man Park will be requested; there will be a meeting on April 3rd to discuss the park's needs. Michael asked whether these dollar amounts are appropriate and how they were determined, and Kathryne noted that it is best to ask for a greater amount, as they may get approved but for a lesser amount. Motion to support submitting an NBDIP request for each of the projects described was approved, Sam Dobrozzi 1st, Christina Hartlieb 2nd.

Meeting Schedule – discussion

Due to a couple of scheduling conflicts, there are two schedule changes that Kathryne noted as necessary. The first is that the April meeting, instead of changing to a new location, will be held at Mortar again, with the change of location to occur in May. The second change is that July 24th will be the same day that Reds Community Fund comes to Walnut Hills, which will mean that many volunteers will be tied up with related activities. Lighthouse Youth & Family Services (the meeting location) also has a schedule conflict that day, and so the meeting will occur on July 31st instead. The Reds Community Fund first came to Walnut Hills about 7 years ago, and they pick a place to make an impact. Potential areas of focus mentioned were Ashland Park, the playground at Douglass school, and Gilbert median plantings. It was asked how we might handle feeding all of the 400+ volunteers on the 24th, and both LaSoupe and Fireside Pizza indicated they may be able to help.

Other Topics – discussion

Abby mentioned an internal staff campaign by United Way, together with ArtsWave, with an “art after dark” theme. They are looking for in-kind gifts, like gift cards to Walnut Hills establishments, to include in a WH basket. Kathryne noted that when you donate via the ArtsWave web site, you can choose where those donations will go.

Kathryne called attention to a recent Business Courier article about the partnership between La Soupe and the Joe Burrow Foundation. Cole said that La Soupe is delivering food to various places including to Joe Burrow's hometown of Athens, Ohio.

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ArtWorks presented a flyer for their Grand Opening on April 26th, from 1- 4 PM, at 2429 Gilbert Avenue. The art park will open soon, with an event to be held at the Harriet Beecher Stowe House. There is a permit process underway to get road closure; details will be forthcoming later. Artworks also has produced a rough draft of a business district map for consideration; it might be reduced in size to a half sheet instead.

Jessica mentioned The Hub, at 911 Evans Street in Price Hill, whose mission is to change how folks think about waste, promoting recycling and reuse. They have a reuse store that operates on the principle of “take what you need, pay what you can”. They will host swap meets for bikes on April 12th, garden supplies on April 19th, and pots/pans on April 26th. They will have a birthday celebration on April 23rd, for which Fireside Piza will be donating some of the profits to benefit the Hub's Tinker Team.

Stacy said that she has enjoyed seeing the transformations happening in Walnut Hills. The Wellbegan by serving young women, but now is open to all. They are hoping to hire 14 teams of youth to create art that brings our river history alive. This might include audio/visual presentations that can be shared in classrooms, as well as poetry or artwork galleries, and there will be an even on April 22nd at King Pigeon, at 5:30 PM. The Well is in process of moving out of the Mortar Building, hoping to stay in Walnut Hills. Stacy noted that there are opportunities to be featured in local media, and asked whether it would be right to represent Walnut Hills as an artistic/creative corridor. Kathyne replied that it cannot be denied that we are an Arts & Culturally focused community.

Meeting adjourned at approx. 9:55 AM.