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## Walnut Hills Area Council: Business Group

### Minutes

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Minutes: April 24, 2025 - Walnut Hills Area Council: Business Group Meeting

Taken by Michael Rountree, Childress & Cunningham, Inc.

#### Attendance:

Frank Arena	Lexie Grimes	Michael Rountree	Alex Zyndorf
Trent C. Arthur	Lauren Harris	Stacy Sims	
Cierra Bickel	Mona Jenkins	Jessica Vasquez	
La Tanya Cobb	Samantha Miller	Ciarra Wooten	

#### Opening:

Meeting called to order at 9:08 AM.

Minutes from the March 27, 2025 meeting were approved, Samantha Miller 1<sup>st</sup>, Jessica Vasquez 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Treasurer's Report – Alex reported a balance of \$1,437 (at the end of the meeting).

#### Discussion Topics:

Samantha mentioned the Planning Committee meeting which occurs on the first Thursday each month. An upcoming issue for discussion is the cemetery at the northeast corner of MLK and Gilbert, which has acquired some parcels. They will be seeking community support for rezoning of these parcels.

Jessica went over the upcoming Grand Opening event for ArtWorks, which would feature drums for peace and a gallery opening to the public, as well as an address from Mona Jenkins. Also, it was noted that crosswalks that ArtWorks had been instrumental in requesting have now been installed.

Alex noted that the Street Food Festival is planned to occur on September 20<sup>th</sup> and we hope to have more events over the summer, before then. Reds Community Fund will be in Walnut Hills on July 24<sup>th</sup>. Frank mentioned Final Fridays, in the Pendleton Arts Center, which will be expanding to Vine Street; Alex said that it would be good to check it out, and see if there is anything we might emulate or learn from. Samantha proposed a summer activation meeting, to consider what activities could be planned, as there are funds of up to \$10,000 available. Juneteenth might be a good date to plan something; Lauren agreed to work on developing some options.

Stacy asked about our updated website, and Samantha replied that it will be coming soon. Lexie said that Mortar will have seniors this summer who could help with sharing content and events. Jessica noted that we can post any arts/cultural events through the ArtsWave app. It was noted that Essex Studio has an open house on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, as well as on October. Alex said it would be good to have an event throughout Walnut Hills. Jessica mentioned the Discover Together campaign which ends on May 20<sup>th</sup>, and there is a mural in the works for the Flying Pig marathon.

Stacy commented that it is permissible to paint the base of telephone poles, up to their serial number, and Michael said that we have previously requested funds for community wayfinding. Samantha brought up the neighborhood map that is to be funded by a portion of our CNBDU operating funds (\$3,000 allocated). We need to determine things like how many to print, how far it will extend (Harriet Beecher Stowe House in north down to Art Museum in south?), and illustrative or artistic style.

Alex said that Model Group is looking for an appropriate active use at the retail space on Peebles Corner, which has 2,700 s.f. and a current price of \$350k. Also, the Taste of Belgium Commissary space is for sale.

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Stacy reported that The Well will be hosting four upcoming events at Mortar, on May 16<sup>th</sup>, May 27<sup>th</sup>, June 8<sup>th</sup>, and June 24<sup>th</sup>, as described in a handout. They will also be planning some weekday dates (perhaps Tuesdays and Thursdays) to gather at Green Man Park for mindful meditation.

Mona spoke about a learning opportunity and possibly hard truth, in light of the fact of a new veterinary office coming to Walnut Hills, as compared to the ongoing struggle to get a full-sized grocery store in the neighborhood. She reported that it can appear that the local residents are of less value than pets. There have been many excuses given over the years, for the failure to find funds to support a new grocery store. Cierra asked whether ETC Produce should be considered a grocery that meets the need, but Alex noted that at about 3,500 s.f. it is only about a third the size of a full grocery, though it is independent and minority-owned. Mona clarified that the efforts to establish a grocery store have been focused on creating a cooperative that is owned by the workers.

Alex commented that it we should be supportive of the new vet office as it fills a gap in the market with affordable services. People at all income levels have pets, and as an independent provider we may expect notably cheaper fees. For those without insurance, a high vet bill could mean debt on a credit card. Mona stated that she is not saying the vet is not needed, but the timing of the announcement could be different, and we should do a better job of letting residents know of the benefits of having an independent and affordable vet.

Trent voiced concern that a number of things have been just dropped on us. He said he knows of three business owners who are upset, regarding parking meters that had been removed but recently have been put back. La Tanya said there is a disconnect in understanding who is in charge of what. Trent also noted that the WHBG meeting time can be an issue for some businesses. Samantha said that a special meeting could be arranged with City personnel, to share small business resources, and WHRF is working on a survey of small businesses; they could include meeting time preferences in that.

Lexie mentioned how good the monthly “Mona's Table Talk” events are, which occur each 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month, from 6:00 to 7:30 PM at the Library. The goal is to increase understanding and create economic opportunities broadly, and there is a family-style meal served at the end.

Stacy mentioned Arts Innovation and a grant proposal for Space Between Us, which seeks to spark conversations and reconciliation, working with artists. There would be a community conference at the end of the week. LaTanya asked what the takeaway would be, and Stacy replied that there won't be a dictated outcome, the participants will decide if they want to push for any particular project or endeavor.

Meeting adjourned at approx. 10:18 AM.