
Walnut Hills Business Association

Minutes

Minutes: February 19, 2009 - Walnut Hills Business Association Meeting

Taken by Michael Rountree of Childress and Cunningham Inc., Architects

Attendance

Tim MacConnell, Co-Chair	John Haney	Samuel E. Ghee III
Officer Wiley Ross	Fred Orth	Ken Furrier
Steve Shipp	Marion Haynes	Michael Settembrini
Kathy Atkinson	Jim King	Michael Rountree
Laura Davis	Gayle Thatcher	Cindy Fischer

Meeting called to order by Tim MacConnell. Minutes from meeting on 01/15/09 approved, Laura Davis 1st, Jim King 2nd.

Financial Report by Steve Shipp, based on handout presented and previously emailed to members, was approved, Laura Davis 1st, Kathy Atkinson 2nd.

Committee Reports:

Safety – Officer Wiley Ross

Crime stats handout was presented. There was a recent homicide on Chapel, in which the shooter had been mugged, but shot his assailant; the second robber is being charged with aggravated robbery and aggravated murder. Also, a robbery at Popeyes was caught on security camera footage, the police hope to apprehend the suspect soon. A similar robbery happened at Marathon, in the late evening (around 7 PM); police have talked to some stores about possible restricting access or hours of operation.

Paw-Paws has been cited both for health code and building code violations, and they had been selling tobacco products without a license, though they now have the license. Police are aware that this store operates as a haven for illicit activity. The Dollar & More store at 924 E. MacMillan has changed how it works internally, such that the counter is towards the front of the building with a lot of hidden space behind. Cincinnati Metro has complained about parking in front of the check-cashing store, as it interferes with bus operations.

Ken Furrier mentioned that students had been accosted and even robbed recently, just east of Beck's Hardware, and requested police presence there at the end of the school day (around 3 PM). Officer Ross commented that recently, four persons presenting themselves as students got on a bus and robbed a girl's bookbag. The school sign at Kemper/MacMillan is down, needing repair.

Police have cited the panhandling couple that is frequently seen on Essex; they move around a lot and can be seen throughout the City. Marion asked whether a license for panhandling was required, but this is only true in the downtown business district. However, entering the street to collect money is illegal.

Tim MacConnell noted that according to the crime stats, total calls for service so far this year are down compared to last year.

CNBDU – Kathy Atkinson

Invest in Neighborhoods has been taken out of the loop, contracts are being made directly with the City now. The WHAC has received revised application forms for 2009 operating budget, and we assume WHBA will get the same soon. The City put out a "Needs Assessment" survey form, which was received by Kathy and by Tim, and which should be promptly filled out and returned. Motion to empower the Executive Committee to fill out the form and send it in was approved, Laura Davis 1st, Ken Furrier 2nd.

Promotions – No Report

Membership – No Report

Other Matters:

Tim was elected President of the NeighborhoodWorks.net fiber-optic co-op. They hope to have the fiber lit and working within the next month.

Laura inquired about getting a bus stop relocated, as she intends to open up her storefront this spring and would prefer not to have loitering right in front. Kathy said that there had been some conversations in regards to the streetscape project, but that project is currently on hold. Laura was encouraged to contact Metro and talk about it again, but perhaps we ought to include other issues like the turnaround at National City Bank.

The Mayor's Institute initiative last fall produced a recommendation for "Form-Based Codes", a new type of Zoning Code. There will be a community engagement process to determine how to proceed with this. General approach seems to be that the existing zoning code will have exceptions created, for projects that adhere to the FBC, and during the transition period an Interim Control District will be asserted to require public hearing for project approval until FBC overlay is complete.

There is an approximate \$10,000 investment required by a neighborhood in order to launch the FBC for that area, and there is a 10-group limit. The first 10 groups or neighborhoods to put together this funding will get on the list. The money is required to hire staff to facilitate FBC development; at the moment, this is not a City-funded project but rather one Council Person's initiative. We might be able to pull as much as \$9,000 from our CNBDU operating budget, but beyond the money it will require participation at meetings for the next 18 to 24 months. Marion commented that there will be much work to be done, to codify architectural elements.

Tim asked whether there is any guarantee that \$10k will be all it takes on our part. Marion said that the hope is that once the list of 10 neighborhoods is established, the City will pick it up and complete the project. Jim King said that the greater fear is that we won't follow through with participation in the required meetings. Fred Orth said that he may be able to talk to Bill Fischer about possible sources of funding. Ken and Laura both proposed going 50-50 with WHAC (i.e. spending \$5,000 each) if necessary, only if other funding sources have been exhausted. Motion to provide up to \$5,000 towards Form-Based Code development, if no other funding source is found, was approved, Laura Davis 1st, Ken Furrier 2nd.

Meeting adjourned.