
Walnut Hills Business Association

Minutes

Minutes: April 16, 2009 - Walnut Hills Business Association Meeting

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

Attendance

Tim MacConnell, Co-Chair	Jan Cameron	Lt. Chris Matzen
Jeff Raser	Steve Shipp	Kate Walker
Michael Rountree	Marcia Hartsock	Yakhin Israel
Donna Wolf	Kathy Atkinson	Yolanda Agbakoba
Michael Settembrini	Cindy Fischer	Fred Orth

Meeting called to order by Tim MacConnell, with introductions. Minutes from meeting on 03/19/09 approved, Steve Shipp 1st, Marcia Hartsock 2nd.

Financial Report by Steve Shipp, balance of \$10,853.20 currently. Version of the report that was emailed out did not show March, Steve said that he could get a correct version.

Committee Reports:

Safety – Lt. Chris Matzen

Officer Ross not present due to special duties related to Governor's visit. No crime stats were provided.

The Police Department is 1-1/2 months into a campaign against auto theft, "Put the junk in the trunk!" They ask that we conceal gadgets and valuables, and even the suction cup marks left on the dash can be evidence that a GPS unit is inside.

Tim asked about getting foot patrols active again, now that the weather is nicer. Lt. Matzen said the Police Dept. has \$1.8 million in total overtime funding, which has not yet been apportioned to Districts; crime data / analysis will determine allocations. They are moving towards intelligence-based policing, and are focusing on four main categories: Breaking and Entering (B&E), theft from autos, felonious assaults, and robberies. The Violent Crimes squad has been in uniform or in cars in the evening for high visibility. Capt. Isaacs has asked that Vortex (city-wide but originally focused on O-T-R) concentrate on Walnut Hills, while District 4 deals mainly with Avondale.

They are still working on robberies at Popeye's, but an arrest was made regarding crimes at Burger King / Duncan Donuts.

Planning / Development – Kathy Atkinson, Jeff Raser

Presentation was made, regarding the 2004 NRSA program, which created a 5-year designation from HUD. Six projects were to be funded: 1. renovation of the Bell Tower, 2. renovations/repairs at the Harriet Beecher Stowe house, 3. storefront improvements program, 4. refurbishing of parking lot on Curtis Street, 5. redevelopment of old car wash lot on MacMillan, and 6. a streetscape program. Of these, 1 and 2 were completed, 3 and 5 were partially accomplished and funded, 4 was not accomplished, and 6 came to a halt as it depended on City efforts and resolution of a Right-of-Way encroachment issue. Presentation spoke about an alternate proposal to spend remainder of NRSA dollars, which when combined with TIF financing would be about \$1.4 million.

There has been significant redevelopment in recent years, in areas to the east of Gilbert; the challenge is to bring that activity further west. Mayor's Institute last year focused on the SW quadrant of WH, which has become depopulated in recent decades. Four primary directives of this proposal are to Repopulate both SW and NW quadrants, Rebrand MacMillan west of Gilbert, Restore Peebles Corner, and Prepare for future vacancy at Kroger/CVS site.

This proposal is to involve two local private developers and secure funding for two target areas. The Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation (WHRF) would be assigned the "Firehouse Row" properties on MacMillan, west of Gilbert, while Gates of Eden Developers (GOE) would be assigned the "Southeast Peebles Corner" block of properties on the south side of MacMillan. Firehouse Row would create 24 to 42 dwelling units and 15,000 to 18,000 rentable s.f., receiving \$650,000 of the funds. Southeast Peebles Corner would create 18 to

22 dwelling units and 16,000 to 18,000 rentable s.f., receiving \$550,000 of the funds. The remainder of about \$200,000 would go towards MacMillan corridor improvements, such as infill of encroaching basement vaults or smart trash cans. This proposal was put together by a Working Group of private developers and representatives from both the WHBA and WHAC.

The WHAC made a motion of support at their meeting the previous week. Kathy said that this is time-critical, since elected officials look for unused dollars before the summer recess (June 1) and try to repurpose them to have something to show while campaigning for re-election. Michael Rountree asked if there was a danger of the City denying our proposed redirection of NRSA dollars, but Kathy said it was unlikely. Yakhin Israel said that the City already has an interest in the Firehouse, since it is under contract with WHRF. Marcia pointed out that money that does not get spent tends to discourage future grant approval.

Motion to support the WH Consolidated Working Group in its efforts to get the City to reallocate up to \$1.4 million from the NRSA Streetscape program to proposed redevelopment projects in the MacMillan corridor was approved, Steve Ship 1st, Marcia Hartsock 2nd.

CNBUDU – Steve Shipp

Steve said that he is unavailable to attend meetings, of which the next one is to be on the first Friday in May. We need face time with them, but Jackie May is also unable to participate, as her branch is down to just 2 employees. John Price doesn't return Steve's emails, and he just recently received the forms for 2010 project submissions.

Promotions – No Report

Other Matters:

Kathy pointed out that we have joined with the WHAC to provide \$10,000 to be a part of discussions on development of a Form-Based Code zoning overlay, which will be a 2-year planning process. Jeff said that the MLK interchange options and 2-way traffic on MacMillan are tied in too, with a parallel process. We need to be involved in these processes, to get what we want out of them.

Tim mentioned the Easter Seals Work Resource Center, which is asking for support for its project to get approx. 120 students from lower-income families placed in employment situations. They need businesses to consider hiring and providing job coaching to these students, for a 20-hour work week on whatever schedule is convenient. These job candidates are not likely to be skilled or ambitious, so employers need to bear this in mind. Motion to provide a letter of support from the WHBA was approved, Marcia Hartsock 1st, Kathy Atkinson 2nd.

Fred Orth announced that the Springhill Suites Marriott is now open, at 610 Eden Park Drive. The Baldwin Building is looking for a restaurant tenant; Marcia asked about Zizi's, but Fred said that he doesn't know about their status.

Meeting adjourned.