

July 2020 – MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Downtown Residents' Council, Inc.

Date: July 13, 2020 @ 6:00pm

Place: Virtual via Zoom

Members absent: Jackie Bryson, Mary Jacobs

Guest: Officer Tim Eppstein, CPD



President Alan Bunker called the meeting to order at 6:03. He welcomed Board members and Officer Eppstein.

Items for Discussion/Action:

1. Approval of previous meeting's minutes – An approval motion was made by Tricia Lynn, seconded by Mary Heimert, and approved by all.

2. Police report – Officer Tim Eppstein acknowledged that there had been several shootings and robberies in the Central Business District in the last month, and reviewed the various incidents. He spoke of the city's LEAD (law enforcement assisted diversion) program, under which police officers exercise discretionary authority at point of contact to divert individuals to a community-based, harm-reduction intervention for law violations driven by unmet behavioral health needs. Several individuals who would otherwise have been booked for crimes are instead undergoing voluntary psycho-social evaluation aimed at getting them into an appropriate treatment program. Tim also mentioned the growing problem of after-hours assembly (and some associated crime) in Smale Park. This is being addressed in a number of ways: police are setting up parking blocks and writing tickets, the Park Board is strategically scheduling (and aiming) its nighttime watering to act as a deterrent, and some streets leading into the Banks are blocked. Blocked streets are also a response to the continuing nuisance of motorcycles, Tim said, and reminded the group that officers are not permitted by law to chase motorcycles within the downtown area. He reported that tickets have been issued and four motorcycles impounded in recent weeks. Tim expressed regret that calls reporting motorcycle activity did not always generate police response, but noted that the 4th of July (when, for example, John Stringer placed two calls) was a very busy night.

Teri Boland asked about the number of police officers currently on the job. Tim replied that the whole police department includes about 1,000; of these, 53 are assigned to the Central Business District, spread over three shifts. District commanders, including Captain Wiesman, regularly petition Chief Isaacs for more officers. The Chief makes the decisions on how to allocate the resources among districts, but is limited in his ability to authorize increases by the department budget. That budget is in effect is \$1 million less for 2021 – with delays in a new training class and a bigger than predicted number of retirements -- under the budget passed by the city in June.

Alan thanked Tim for his participation and information.

3. Wild Apricot update – Victoria Pershick reported that beta testing of Wild Apricot was underway, and that a full transition was probably a month away. Jan Hirlinger said that the membership renewal process was also underway, after a three-month hiatus because of COVID. David Ostrander said that he had successfully renewed his membership using the new system. Tricia said that Wild Apricot's AffinityPay module was ready to go, and appeared to be seamless.

4. DRC role in gift cards – John reported on the Finance Committee's discussion of the proposed gift card project, and conveyed that group's recommendation that DRC members be invited to purchase 3CDC's Queen City gift cards and that DRC pick up the purchase-associated fees and add a matching contribution of 30 to 50%, depending on the magnitude of aggregate purchases. John gave as an example a potential purchase of \$12,400, which would be matched by DRC funds in the amount of \$4,300 (35%); the maximum match would be set at \$4500. A smaller gift total could be matched at a higher rate. Donations would be processed by the card contractor, Yiftee, which would send e-mail cards to donors.

John suggested writing to DRC business members who do not yet participate in the QC card program that it would be to their advantage to sign up. Cate Douglas offered to draft such a communication, which would also describe the DRC card initiative. Mary suggested that there should be a presentation for DRC members to encourage gift card purchase in support of downtown.

John asked for a motion to move forward with the gift card program. Teri so moved, Mary seconded, and all approved.

5. Committee reports – Finance and I/T had nothing to add to what had already been discussed. Jan asked that a Membership successor be identified in order that training could begin. Mary Heimert lamented that Social was unable to offer anything at this time. Mary Jacobs being absent and Cate having departed, there was nothing relating to outreach or speakers

6. Orientation – Prior to the meeting, Alan sent an email to Board members on the subject of Invest in Neighborhoods. It read as follows:

“Invest in Neighborhoods (IIN) is the coordinating agency for 51 community councils recognized by the City of Cincinnati, the Downtown Residents Council being one of them. (There are 52 Cincinnati neighborhoods, all but one of which has a community council.)

Community councils began in the 1970s when about 20 neighborhoods got together and asked the city for some financial support. Originally, the councils were given about \$500,000 per year (via the city's Department of Community and Economic Development's Neighborhood Support Program [NSP]). The amount has been dropping since then.

The IIN is headed by Elizabeth Bartley. She provides technical support to councils including leadership training for council boards, annual neighborhood conferences, and coordinates efforts of councils to appeal to the city on specific issues. She also hosts a monthly community council presidents' Zoom meeting and a current Issues meeting (both of which I attend). As a rep of the DRC, I have attended these Zoom meetings with about 30 other community council reps. We discuss timely subjects that affect us at the neighborhood level, such as the recent demonstrations and civil disturbances, citizen representation on our boards, and the city's TIF (Tax Incremental Financing) program."

Alan told the group that these meetings are open to all Board members, and that he will be happy to forward invitations to any who might be interested. If votes occur, only Alan has the power to vote, unless he has delegated someone in writing to stand in for him. Other IIN events are made public on the organization's website, investinneighborhoods.org.

7. Announcements

Esther raised the question of holding a virtual membership meeting. She said that her Zoom license will allow up to 100 participants. A meeting could be structured like a webinar, with invited speakers and a mechanism whereby members could type in their questions.

Teri asked whether a certain number of Board meetings had to be open. Alan clarified that all Board meetings are open to members, who may attend but not vote. Esther confirmed that invitations to recent virtual meetings had been sent to Board members only. She can let the full membership know about the next one, but sending only a notification, not the full log-in credentials; those who wish to participate will be invited to let her know by email.

Al called for a motion to adjourn at 6:58; John so moved, Jan seconded, and all approved.

Next Meeting: Monday, August 10, 2020, 6:00 p.m., (Location TBA)