

September 2020 – MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Downtown Residents' Council, Inc.

Date: September 14, 2020 @ 6:00pm

Place: Virtual via Zoom, Coordinated by Esther Wing

Members absent: Jan Hirlinger, David Ostrander, John Stringer

Guests: John Reiser and Gio Rocco, Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED), City of Cincinnati
Carol Glotfelter



President Alan Bunker welcomed Board members and guests and called the meeting to order at 6:10.

Items for Presentation, Discussion or Action:

1. **Urban Housing Overlay Proposal** – This presentation was in part a reprise of a similar presentation given by John Reiser and Rob Denham at the March Board meeting. The project was subsequently put on hold because of COVID, but is active again. In essence, DCED seeks a change to city zoning laws that would remove limitations on land use density, i.e., the number of permitted residential living units based on lot size. The goal is to expand available, affordable housing in downtown, Pendleton, and parts of the West End, and Mt. Auburn neighborhoods. Gio outlined expected benefits as improved economic and environmental sustainability, better affordability, and the protection of open spaces. He emphasized that protections against tenement-style buildings remain in the building, fire, and safety codes and historic designation rules.

Council member Jeff Pastor on July 28 introduced an ordinance that would accomplish DCED's expanded housing goals. DCED seeks support from a variety of stakeholders, including DRC; this may take the form of direct support of the ordinance or a more general endorsement of the increased density concept. Mary Jacobs moved that DRC draft a letter of support. Seconded by Christian Rahe, the motion passed by a vote of 11-2. The "nays", Mary Heimert and Teri Boland, indicated their receptivity to further discussion and more information.

2. **Approval of previous meeting's minutes** – Mary Heimert's motion to approve the minutes was seconded by Tricia Lynn and passed unanimously.
3. **Review/Approval of Treasurer's Report** – Esther Wing's motion to approve was seconded by Tim Nolan and passed unanimously.
4. **President's Report** – Alan announced that John Stringer had submitted his resignation as Vice President as of September 14; John will continue to serve as a Board member until December 31.
5. **DRC Gifts Cards Update** – John had previously circulated draft letters to members and

downtown businesses explaining this initiative. Jackie Bryson said that she would work with John on next steps and revisit this topic at the next Board meeting.

6. Committee Reports:

- a. Membership - as detailed in an email to Board members, the membership committee has been looking at revitalizing the DRC business membership through outreach, closer relationships, and maintaining accurate membership information that will be available to all members. Carol Glotfelter offered to join the committee as the business member chair to spearhead revitalization efforts, with the Board's approval. Mary Heimert made a motion to approve this arrangement, Jackie seconded, and all voted in favor.
- b. Social – Mary Heimert announced that 3CDC had approved plans for a DRC social at The Porch in Washington Park on September 29 from 5:30 – 7:30. Social distancing will be maintained, and masks worn when members are not seated at a table. An invitation will be sent in advance. Attendance will be limited to 50.
- c. Outreach - Mary Jacobs reported on a recent discussion with staff at Activities Beyond Classrooms (ABC), in which she asked whether CPS elementary schools had particular needs at this time. She was told that, while various food programs were meeting children's and families' needs, personal care items were hard to come by. Mary proposes to offer DRC members the opportunity to donate such items, which she will collect and deliver to ABC for distribution at Taft and Rothenberg schools. The idea readily garnered Board approval. Mary will collect donations in the lobby of her building, Current at the Banks, 121 E. Freedom Way (south side of street) on September 23 from 3:00 to 6:00. Al agreed to send an e-blast to members advertising this opportunity.
- d. New Members – Hank Davis said that the resumption of social activities would be a big help in an effort to attract new members. He explained that he could not be at the September 29 event, however, since he will be getting married that day. Congratulations were offered.
- e. Speakers – Cate Douglas said that she had held off on making arrangements for meeting speakers until it could be determined that a virtual membership meeting would be successful. She passed on to the group the expressions of enthusiasm by the Piatt Park community when they learned that DRC still intended to do holiday decorating this year.

7. New Business Items – Hank had previously let Board members know that Tom Demeropolis of the Cincinnati Business Courier was interested in talking with residents about life downtown since quarantine began. Hank asked whether there could be a DRC spokesperson. A survey was suggested as an alternative; if the Courier developed a survey, DRC could provide a link to it and invite members to respond if they choose.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:14. **Next Meeting: Monday, October 12, 6:00 pm.**