

February 2021 – MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Downtown Residents' Council, Inc.

Date: February 8, 2021 @ 6:00pm

Place: Virtual via Zoom by Esther Wing, Interim Vice President
And Corresponding Secretary

Member absent: Cate Douglas, David Ostrander



President Alan Bunker welcomed the group and called the meeting to order at 6:05.

Items for Presentation, Discussion or Action:

1. Freedom Way Pedestrian Plaza Proposal -- Gio Rocco, Department of Community & Economic Development

Gio reminded the group that the pedestrian plaza will run between Marian Spencer Way and Joe Nuxhall Way. The goal is to open it on Opening Day (April 1), though not all planned amenities may be in place before summer. Gio showed pictures of different types of removable bollards being considered to block out the space; a decision will depend in part on whether retractable bollards are compatible with underground parking. In any case, some electrical work will need to be done, including additional lighting. Police and fire departments will have Knox Box emergency entry to the space (this is a type of lockbox made for quick emergency access.)

Gio explained that the plaza will go forward once approval to spend \$150,000 in TIF funds is secured from City Council. The matter is on Council's agenda on February 10. Proposal sponsors expect to secure an additional \$600,000 in private funding from the business community.

2. Review/approval of November Board meeting minutes – Jackie Bryson made a motion to approve, seconded by Mary Heimert, and all voted in favor.

3. Review/approval of Treasurer's report – There being no questions about the report previously sent out by Tricia, Lisa Sprague made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Teri Boland and passed unanimously.

4. Reports of Committees:

A. Finance – Tricia reported that IIN has confirmed receipt of our request for funding, but has yet to act on it. We await that action along with the release of our approved NSP funds.

B. Nominating – Jackie said that response to the email blast and other outreach seeking board candidates has been great, with 8 potential candidates identified. This means, unusually, that there are more candidates than seats to fill. There are now 4 upcoming vacancies, with

Mary Jacobs joining John Stringer, Tim Nolan, and Jan Hirlinger in stepping down. The imbalance means that votes will have to be counted directly, a challenge in a virtual environment. Victoria Pershick will check on how a vote might be processed using Wild Apricot. Jackie noted that there is a fifth unfilled board seat, which is held in reserve in case of the board's needing to fill a particular niche in special (as yet unforeseen) circumstances.

C.Membership – Jan Hirlinger drew the group's attention to an email she had sent earlier in the day, summarizing membership activity: no new members, but quite a few renewals among both individuals and businesses. Brochures and business cards are still on hold pending funding. Jan reported that some questions had been raised about the need for brochures. She feels that is critical to have something to give prospective members, especially businesses, as opposed to telling them to go online and look. Mary Heimert endorsed this view with respect to potential hosts for socials.

D.Information & Technology – Victoria said that there has been no reason for the committee to meet recently. She is doing some preliminary work on reviving our former discount program, and stresses that she is always available if anyone needs help.

E. Social – Mary Heimert is looking forward to the opportunity to greet people in person at social events and to help local businesses at the same time. She hopes that spring will be upon us soon, so that outdoor events at least might be scheduled.

F. Outreach – Mary Jacobs reviewed how our support of ABC has been disrupted by COVID. However, she said that she had been able to deliver hundreds of bags suitable for food-carrying to the organization, and more apparently are ready to be donated as well. Mary hopes that whoever takes over as Outreach chair will continue the work with ABC, which has hugely appreciated our support.

G.Clean, Green & Safe - Alan had previously emailed his report on this topic; there were no questions. Christian Rahe mentioned that he is working on an idea along the line of Adopt a Block. He envisions DRC residents taking responsibility for some litter pickup and keeping a watchful eye in their immediate neighborhoods. This is not intended to usurp the Ambassadors' role; it is a matter of getting members out and about, helping to keep the city clean and looking for problems and opportunities. Christian intends to bring this to the Board as a proposal when he has developed the idea further.

H.New Members – Like Mary Heimert, Hank Davis looks forward to live events to invite people to.

5.New Business: Mary Jacobs made a motion, seconded by Tricia, that we formally support the pedestrian plaza proposal. All agreed, and Al undertook to make Gio aware of this. Christian asked that we add request for attention to landscaping. Esther requested that results for businesses in the new operating environment be made publicly available as time goes on.

Alan let the group know that it should have voted to approve the nominating committee in January, though this failed to make the agenda. A motion was made by Esther, seconded by Mary Heimert, and all voted in favor of approval.

6. Announcements: Jackie shared the news that some members of City Council are extending an invitation to all community councils to develop a power point presentation showcasing who they are and what they do, and to present this information to the Council. Jackie suggests that this would be a good thing to keep in our organizational back pocket, updating it as necessary and using for orientation of new Council members and other city officials. She offered to spearhead a DRC effort and asked for volunteers to help with it.

Another invitation, Jackie said, comes for Keep Cincinnati Beautiful, which would like community volunteers to help in the spring with painting a mural planned for the block of 3rd Street between Main and Sycamore. Those interested were asked to drop Jackie an email. Mary asked whether we might somehow petition Keep Cincinnati Beautiful with respect to installing a mural on the Path to the Taft. Alan said he would like to urge the city to give our group more time to consider or suggest projects that they tend to want our (quick) support for.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15.

Next Meeting: Monday, March 8, 2021, 6:00 p.m., (Location TBA)