

AUGUST 2021 – MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Downtown Residents' Council, Inc.

Date: August 9, 2021 @ 6:00pm

Place: First Financial Innovation Center, 4th & Vine Streets

Members absent: Hank Davis, Andrew Naab

President Alan Bunker called the meeting to order at 6:02.



Items for Presentation, Discussion or Action:

1. Proposed zoning change for the Gwynne Building – Alan introduced Doug Moorman, Vice President, Development Strategies Group (who was present in person) and Mike Everett, CEO, NuovoRE, appearing onscreen from Denver. Doug explained plans to redevelop the Gwynne Building at 6th and Main as a hotel. (A slide deck had previously been provided to Board members.) NuovoRE, which has as its mission the creation/preservation of real estate investments with meaningful social and community impact, is the proposed developer; the property in this case will be part of the multi-city Pendry Hotel Group. It is estimated that the project will bring 182 construction jobs and 215 permanent jobs to a building that is currently 95.6% vacant

The partners in this venture successfully applied to the city of Cincinnati for a Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) tax abatement, and also to the state of Ohio for historic preservation status. Their proposal was approved by City Council. Only then did it emerge that the zoning code would not permit the Gwynne Building to become a hotel. Consequently a zoning change is being sought. Doug and Mike asked DRC to endorse such a change.

Board members asked some questions, including whether a residential rather than hotel conversion had been considered. Mike explained that his company was in the hotel business, and noted that no condominium developers had come forward with proposals for the building. Alan thanked Doug and Mike, telling them that the Board would discuss their request later in the meeting and get back to them with a decision. They thanked the Board for its attention.

2. Review/approval of previous meeting's minutes – Jackie Bryson made a motion to approve, seconded by Mary Heimert, and all approved.

3. Review/approval of June Treasurer's report – Christian Rahe moved approval, Joan Meyer seconded, and all approved.

4. Reports of Committees:

A. Finance – Tricia Lynn distributed a summary of Neighborhood Activation Fund requirements. These govern the \$10,000 available to each community council in federal COVID relief funds. The city has tapped the Neighborhood Support program to administer the NAF grants, though NSP annual grants are a separate proposition. Tricia asked Board members to read and consider the requirements with an eye to discussing our response at the next meeting. Salient points are that eligible activities are strictly defined by the city, that councils' requests must total \$10,000, and that there can be no carryover. The filing deadline is December 31.

Jackie then distributed draft guidelines for use in weighing requests for DRC donations, again asking for Board consideration in preparation for further discussion.

B. Membership – Heidi Shenk has agreed to take on this responsibility with a period of assistance from Jackie and former membership chair Jan Hirlinger.

C. Information & Technology – Victoria Pershick noted that she will also assist in the membership transition with respect to Wild Apricot.

D. Social – Mary announced a series of planned social events. September 14 the group will be at FB's Kitchen (126 W. 6th). Later will come Findlay Market, probably the Porch, and possibly the casino. Plans are underway for the holiday party December 6 and for a return to Music Hall in March for an Aretha Franklin tribute concert.

E. Outreach – Teri Boland took fruit, juice, and snacks to the Ambassadors. Christian, Andrew Naab, and Lorry Hartley will do the same for the police station at the Banks and both fire stations by the end of the month.

F. Clean, Green & Safe - Alan had previously emailed his report on this topic; there were no questions.

G. Speaker Coordinator – Cate Douglas announced that the new YMCA director was scheduled to speak in September and a representative from Tablespoon Cooking Company in October.

H. Young Professional Recruitment – Christian reported that the inaugural event for this target group was held at Rebel Mettle on August 5. He described it as successful for those who turned up, but wished there had been a larger group. (Next time!) At least two new memberships resulted.

New Business

The Board discussed the Gwynne Building zoning change, generally regarding it in a positive light. While some Board members expressed the wish that the building could be renovated as residences rather than a hotel, it was understood that NuovoRE had no competitive bidders and that the city

wants this project to go forward. Lisa Sprague made a motion to approve the request to endorse the zoning change; Mary seconded. All voted in favor but Victoria, who abstained.

Kurt Grossman reported on a July 29 safety forum sponsored by Council member Betsy Sunderman that he attended on DRC's behalf. He said that city residents in attendance were few and that there were no substantial results of the discussion. Similar forums are being held elsewhere in the city.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:03.

Next Meeting: Monday, September 13, 2021, 6:00 pm at First Financial Innovation Center, 4th & Vine.