

JANUARY 2022 – MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Downtown Residents' Council, Inc.

Date: January 10, 2022, 6:00 pm

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

Members participating remotely: Jackie Bryson, Kurt Grossman, Christian Rahe, Heidi Shenk.



Guests: Rob Denham, Department of Community and Economic Development, City of Cincinnati; Anoop Davé and Chris Braatz, Victrix LLC

President Alan Bunker called the meeting to order at 6:00; however, adjustments of A/V equipment delayed the actual start by a few minutes.

Presentation:

Anoop Davé introduced himself and his company, Victrix LLC, which he described as being engaged in “adaptive development,” saving and modifying existing buildings. They have been looking at Cincinnati (among other cities) for several years. Now they have a proposal for the Macy’s (formerly Federated) headquarters building at 7 W. 7th Street. Another developer will own the first seven floors, while Victrix will be responsible for floors 8 – 21. Their plans envision 338 apartments, ranging from studio to two-bedroom, with prices varying according to size, floor, and view.

Other plans for the building include a “maker space” for artists, potentially practice rooms for musicians, and maintenance of an existing rooftop way station for butterflies. Anoop anticipates that parking on lower building floors will be ample for tenants.

Kurt Grossman raised a question about how rents will compare to the average median income (AMI) for the area. Anoop said that they calculate a level of 80-100%. As the AMI is an index of affordability, these figures indicate that most low-income earners would be priced out.

Rob Denham said that the city is requesting that DRC provide a letter in support of this development project. Alan said that we would get back to him once we had a chance to discuss the matter. Alan thanked Rob and Anoop and Chris for being with us.

Items for Presentation, Discussion or Action:

- 1. Review/approval of previous meeting’s minutes** – Mary Heimert made a motion to approve, seconded by Joan Meyer, and all voted in favor.
- 2. Review/approval of Treasurer’s reports** – David Ostrander moved approval of the November report, Esther Wing seconded, and all voted to approve. Lisa Sprague moved approval of the December report, seconded by Mary Heimert, and all voted to approve.

3. Reports of Committees:

A. Finance – Tricia Lynn noted that the \$29,521.74 ending balance for December includes \$5,000 that will be paid to the Ziegler Park STEM program and another \$5,000 to Saturday Hoops from Neighborhood Activation funds. Our responsibility is to collect receipts documenting how the money is spent. Kurt is drawing up an agreement to this effect for the recipients to sign. Other disbursements (of Neighborhood Support Program funds) will be made for Activities Beyond the Classroom, neighborhood beautification, and GeneroCity.

B. Information & Technology – Victoria Pershick reported work on a membership directory that can be stored on the DRC website.

C. Social – Mary reported work to correct a problem with the Wild Apricot event registration process that surfaced in connection with the holiday party, where only one member of a household was recorded as a member while a spouse showed up as a guest. Mary also suggested that we offer Sara Bujas, newly hired to replace Cate Douglas at 3CDC, a free membership since the person in that position is so helpful to DRC. There was general agreement. In time, we may also wish to approach Sara about taking over Cate’s speaker coordinator role.

D. Clean, Green & Safe - Alan had previously emailed his report on this topic. He thanked DRC volunteers who helped to take down decorations in Piatt Park. These will now be stored at the Covenant – First Presbyterian Church. Rich Cappel, recently retired owner of Cappel’s, sent Alan a note of appreciation for working with us over the years.

E. Nominating Committee – Jackie Bryson reminded the group that Christian Rahe had agreed to sit on the committee; she would like to have another Board member and also a member at large. She said that three seats are up for renewal, for a total of five, taking into account the seats vacated by Cate Douglas and Hank Davis. [Note: Hank previously announced that he was moving out of the city; however, he has not submitted a formal resignation as yet.] In answer to a question, Jackie explained that the Board has the option to appoint Sara Bujas to fill the remainder of Cate Douglas’s term. The Nominating Committee will have a proposal regarding a slate of candidates to present to the Board at the February meeting.

New Business

Discussion of Letter of Support for Redevelopment of Macy’s Headquarters:

Andrew Naab raised a question about streetscaping plans for the building; even though Victrix will not own the ground floor, they can be expected to have an influence. A general sense emerged that the earlier presentation did not give the Board sufficient information to come out in support. For example, is parking really “ample”? What about the issue of affordability? Do downtown occupancy rates really justify another 338 apartments?

Andrew proposed tabling the letter of support indefinitely. David objected to “indefinitely,” suggesting that instead we compile our questions and ask Rob to respond before a decision is made. It was agreed that Board members send their questions to Alan by Monday, January 17. Alan will transmit the compiled questions to Rob and indicate that a decision about our support is contingent on receiving answers. Andrew made a motion to table a decision pending our receipt of those answers. Lisa seconded, all approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55.

Next Meeting: Monday, February 7, 2022, 6:00 pm at First Financial Innovation Center, 4th & Vine.