

## **FEBRUARY 2023 – MONTHLY MEMBER MEETING MINUTES**

Downtown Residents' Council, Inc.

**Date:** February 14, 2023 @ 6:00pm

**Place:** First Financial Innovation Room, 4th & Vine

**New members:** Christopher Harding, Lorraine Horine



President Alan Bunker called the meeting to order at 6:00 and welcomed new members

### **Monthly reports:**

Officer **Chris Loreaux** of the Cincinnati Police Department gave a rundown of upcoming downtown events:

- February 25 FCC season opener
- March 3-6 Bockfest
- March 9- 12 Disney on Ice
- March 11 St. Patrick's Day parade

Chris moved on to the crime statistics report, noting that the numbers are "not good," i.e., higher compared to the last three years and above the five-year rolling average. The CPD attributes this primarily to groups of kids, particularly around Government Square. Many of these are students of the Dohn School, who up to now have been able to ride Metro buses free at any time of day. CPD and the school have worked out a new arrangement whereby the school will provide private buses to carry students from their neighborhoods directly to the school. He related a story of a recent arrest in which a group of 14 year-olds were reported for breaking into a car and taken into custody in possession of guns and stolen property. In response to a member question, Chris agreed to look into whether CPD thinks that changing downtown demographics (more people with higher incomes) have a bearing on theft-from-auto crime.

Chris praised GeneroCity 513 and the outreach team for doing a great job over the winter in serving the homeless and connecting them with service.

**Sara Bujas** of 3CDC gave an update on Ambassador activities. She reported that the recent DRC follow-up survey, focused on cleanliness and safety, showed that most complaints are concentrated in the NW and NE quadrants of downtown. 3CDC is concentrating Ambassador presence to the north. The Outreach team reports that the number of homeless clients is down to 37, chronically homeless down to 6.

Sara talked about the IKE (interactive kiosk experience) kiosks that are being installed in several locations downtown. These are supported by revenue from the advertising they display, but visitors can also access maps and information about transportation and events by use of a touch screen. A

member made the point that the existence of this information could be more prominently displayed, as people see only the ads.

Sara invited all to purchase tickets for and to enjoy the Mittenfest craft beer event in Washington Park on February 18 and 19.

**Katie Westbrook**, 3CDC Development Director, talked about plans for the Convention District, focusing specifically on the Whex Garage, which runs off 4<sup>th</sup> Streets just west of Elm Street. 3CDC is purchasing the 750-space garage and will renovate it as part of Convention District development. There will be community engagement meeting on the project, including its proposed use of TIF funds, on February 22 at 4:00. Anyone wishing to attend should register with Jesse Urbancsik at [jesseurbancsik@cincinnati-oh.gov](mailto:jesseurbancsik@cincinnati-oh.gov).

### **DRC Reports**

Treasurer **Tricia Lynn** reported an opening balance of \$10, 278.41 on January 1 and a closing balance of \$10,738.32 on January 31. **Sue Byrom**, speaking on behalf of social chair **Mary Heimert**, reminded the group of the social at Fountain Square following the meeting. Members who had registered were told each could pick up two free drink tickets from Sue or **Joan Meyer**.

### **Old Business**

**Mary Jacobs** made a motion to approve the previous meeting's minutes, **Rick Dieringer** seconded, and all voted in favor.

### **Speakers**

**Seth Harmon** introduced **Mark Samaan**, Long-Range Planning Manager with Cincinnati Metro/SORTA. Mark summarized the Reinventing Metro plan, enabled by additional funding from the passage of Issue 7 in 2020. Its objectives include expanding weekday and weekend service, investing in new buses, instituting 24/7 service along major corridors, enhancing regional connectivity not dependent on a downtown hub, and contributing to the economic development of the region.

Bus service is being extended throughout Hamilton County and to the border of Butler County. Seven major routes now offer 24/7 service. It is estimated that 40,000 more jobs are now accessible via Metro. A big system addition, rapid bus transit, is in the planning stage. Its initial routes will be Reading Road and Hamilton Avenue, with Glenway Avenue and Montgomery Road set to follow. Rapid bus transit will allow for faster and more convenient travel with features such as dedicated lanes, signal priority, and off-board ticket purchase. New stations will be constructed. Environmental studies and design work are in progress, with construction anticipated in 2025 and full operation in 2027.

Another new program, known as Metro Now!, is designed to provide regional transit access to neighborhoods that historically have lacked such access. Riders will be able to request services on demand, for example, from their neighborhood to a location where fixed bus service is available.

Metro Now! will debut in the Springdale/Springfield Township/Colerain area this spring. The overall vision is to establish direct, less downtown-centric connections throughout the county.

### **Announcements**

**Margaret Swallow** let members know that Cincinnati World Cinema (719 Race Street) will be showing a program of all the Oscar-nominated short films for the next four weekends.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00.

Next meeting: Tuesday, March 14, 2023 at 6:00 pm, First Financial Innovation Center, 4th & Vine.