

Date: April 11, 2023 @ 6:00pm

Place: First Financial Innovation Room, 4th & Vine

President **Alan Bunker** called the meeting to order at 6:01 and welcomed new members



Monthly reports:

Captain **Adam Hennie** of the Cincinnati Police Department reviewed the latest crime statistics report. He acknowledged increases in some categories, notably three reported rapes in 2023, which CPD officers are investigating. He noted that the figure for total Part 1 Crime is on the lower edge of the average range. Hennie informed the group that CPD chief **Teresa Theetge** will soon announce a reallocation of resources aimed at putting more officers on the street. Their focuses will be Government Square, Piatt Park, and Smale Park. In addition, Kroger-on-the-Rhine as emerged as a new hotspot. Kroger management is cooperating in with the CPD to address instances of theft, assault, drug use, and loitering. Adam asked DRC members to contact him with information about crimes they become aware of anywhere in downtown. His cell phone number is 513-497-5027, email adam.hennie@cincinnati-oh.gov.

A DRC member asked whether the crime statistics could be modified to add information about the times of day crimes occur so that residents could be aware of particularly dangerous periods; Adam said yes. Another question had to do with excessive noise downtown and what ordinances were in effect to deal with this. Adam explained that there is a “loud” ordinance. Obtaining a noise meter reading is not necessary: an officer’s attesting that noise is abundant and a nuisance is sufficient basis for a ticket to be issued.

Alan announced that regular appearances by the Fire Department at DRC meetings are scheduled to resume; however, Captain Coletta had a conflict on this particular evening.

Sara Bujas of 3CDC gave an update on Ambassador and Outreach activities. She said that a new team leader had been named for GeneroCity 513 and that interviews are being conducted for a fifth seasonal outreach worker. She reported 256 stakeholder requests for the year to date, 94.2% of which have been resolved. Ambassadors continue working hard to keep downtown streets clean.

Sara outlined events scheduled for the spring season. These include Salsa on the Square (Fountain Square) beginning in May. Court Street will host the Asian Food Fest the last weekend in April. Saturday Hoops will commence in May in Ziegler Park, where the pool will open on May 13. Movie nights will be relocated from Washington Park to Zeigler. Washington Park will resume Workouts on the Green and regular band concerts.

Brandy Del Favero, 3CDC Development Director, announced a community engagement session on plans for the Findlay Community and Recreation Center, to be held April 19 at 6:00 at the OTR Rec Center (1715 Republic Street).

DRC Reports

Treasurer **Tricia Lynn** reported an opening balance of \$11,082.72 on March 1 and a closing balance of \$19,402.08 on March 31. The increase is largely due to receipt of NSP funds in the amount of \$9,872.00, leaving \$9,530.08 in unobligated dollars. Social chair **Mary Heimert** reminded the group of the social at Prime following the meeting, for which tickets would be distributed at the meeting's conclusion. She also drew attention to the recent email inviting members to purchase discount tickets (\$25) for a Pops performance of *Ragtime* at 2:00 on April 30.

Old Business

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

New Business

Alan announced that it was time for the annual election of a DRC Board. Two motions, he said, would be required. In regard to the first, Alan explained that, per DRC's Constitution under Numeral Four, Section A describing DRC Membership, voting membership may be extended to nonresident property owners, representatives of businesses and others as determined by a vote of members who reside within the geographic boundaries of the organization at the annual meeting each year. Alan inquired whether there was a motion to allow DRC members not living within the geographical boundaries of the DRC to vote in this election. Gary Bryson so moved, seconded by Craig Hudson. Alan called for a vote. Sixty members voted in favor, one voted against, and one abstained. The motion passed.

Alan then thanked **Jackie Bryson**, chair of the Nominating Committee, and other Committee members for their work preparing for this election. He explained that **Victoria Pershick**, **Christian Rahe**, and **Heidi Shenk** were leaving the Board, Victoria because of term limitations, Christian because he moved out of downtown, and Heidi by choice. Alan thanked all for their service. New Board candidates are **Sue Byrom**, **Sally Donovan**, and **Tim Nolan**. Current Board members seeking another two-year term are **Jackie Bryson**, **Lorry Hartley**, **Mary Heimert**, **Tricia Lynn**, **Joan Meyer**, **Andrew Naab**, **Lisa Sprague**, and **Esther Wing**. These ten candidates constitute the slate being offered. Alan asked whether there were nominations from the floor. There being none, he declared nominations closed and asked for a motion to approve the slate. **Mary Bunker** moved approval and **Rick Dieringer** seconded. Sixty members voted in favor; none opposed or abstained. The motion passed.

Speakers

Seth Harmon introduced **Michael Sauer**, Director of Convention Services at VisitCincy. Michael immediately explained that the organization formerly titled Cincinnati USA Convention & Visitors

Bureau has been rebranded as VisitCincy. Its destination marketing mission is to bring people to Cincinnati, both leisure travelers and meeting professionals. Staff now comprises 20 people. The level was 40 before COVID, but is expected to rise again. There is a new direct collaborative agreement with MeetNKY which provides that both organizations will promote the entire region rather than just one side of the river.

Michael reviewed some recent convention experience: 8,000 choral directors, the Heartland Travel Showcase for bus tour operators, 5,000 participants in the National Council for Education for the Ceramic Arts convention (which had tie-ins with art galleries and other venues throughout the city). VisitCincy maintains an information table at all convention center events, offering recommendations for local attractions, restaurants, etc. Those who might be interested in volunteering to take part in this activity should email Michael at MSauer@VisitCincy.com.

The first big step in a renewed and improved convention center complex focuses on a new 800-room hotel, construction of which will be managed under contract with Portman Holdings. Construction is expected to begin in the first or second quarter of 2024. In response to a member question, Michael said that convention center expansion in both size and services will happen. However, trying to do everything at once could mean years of no convention activity at all. For now, the center itself will be refurbished and modernized, with expansion deferred until the hotel is completed.

Another member asked whether there were plans to reopen the Cincinnati Visitors Center. Michael said yes, likely on 6th Street rather than Fountain Square, but could offer no firm timeline.

Tricia Lynn introduced a second speaker, **Alena Smith**, principal of Rothenberg Preparatory Academy at Clifton and McMicken Avenues, a recipient of DRC grant funds. Alena described the school and some of its innovative programs for students; Resource Specialist LaTasha Kimbro amplified on these. After-school programs, study support, an expanded sports menu, and a rooftop garden are among these. Alena is particularly proud of the Student Enterprise Program, which seeks to teach students to be entrepreneurs. Projects have included selling herbs from the rooftop garden, Thanksgiving pies, and holiday salt dough ornaments. Alena closed by thanking DRC for its support, saying “Your contribution goes a long way.”

Announcements

Jackie drew the group’s attention to a flyer on the back table describing ArtsWave’s fundraising campaign and urged members to consider a contribution.

Alan thanked **Mary Auer** for her annual filing of DRC’s required legal paperwork with the office of the Ohio Attorney General. He also thanked **Carol Glotfelter** for her assistance with DRC’s information technology activities and **Rick Dieringer** for posting the monthly minutes to the DRC website.

Kurt thanked Alan for his effective and efficient service as DRC’s President.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:02.

Next meeting: Tuesday, May 9, 2023 at 6:00 pm, First Financial Innovation Center, 4th & Vine.