

Mt. Auburn Community Council

04/19/2021 Full Council Meeting Minutes (Zoom)

Recorded and Prepared by Carlton Farmer (Recording Secretary)

Board Members in Attendance: Sandi Allen, Carlton Farmer, Ken Farmer, Carol Gibbs, Steve Gibbs, Cindy Jo Holmes, Ryan Lammi, John Pearl, Sarah Vogt, Alice Williams, Lee Wilson

Absent: Shawn Baker, Joshua Gilbert, Walter Hawkins, Anne Shannon

Special Guest Speakers: Gavi Begtrup, David Mann, Aftab Pureval, Raffel Prohett, Cecil Thomas, Councilmember Jan-Michele Kearney, OH State Rep. Catherine Ingram

1. **Call to Order and a Moment of Silence** – Zoom meeting of the MACC was called to order by MACC President Steve Gibbs at 7:02 PM.
2. **Mayoral Primary Candidates** –
 - a. Gavi Begtrup – New candidate, but I have experience. Policy advisor for Gabby Gifford, spending 3 years working for her in congress. Running because I believe that we need to clean-up corruption and get the city booming again. I am not taking any money from developers. I just don't think its right to take money from developers who are going to come to me later as an elected official with projects. Cincinnati Recovering Plan: 7 ideas, here are a few: monitory business seed fund, skills bank so people can get training and earn higher wages. We need big ideas, not more of the same.
 - b. David Mann – Technically, I was born in Mt. Auburn--Christ Hospital. We want to make sure that we use federal funds in a way that helps address some of the city's budget concerns, while also helping residents who have been impacted by COVID-19. The next mayor will need to work to restore trust at city hall. We need to create expectations that clearly establish the role of the mayor, city councilmembers and city departments.
Questions. What is your stance on Issue 3? Mann: I do not think Issue 3 is the right solution to address affordable housing. We have been creating 300-400 units of affordable housing for each of the last six years. We just applied for a HUD grant for \$34 million dollars. We are moving in the right direction and need to continue in our efforts. Stephen Gibbs: Is there a plan to finance summer youth and employment programs with coming federal funds? Mann: Yes, they are currently on the list, under the neighborhood activation line item.
 - c. Aftab Pureval – For many of our families the last year has been really challenging--COVID, corruption at city hall, economic downturn, and of course the pandemic. Our city needs strong leadership now. I'm running to represent all of Cincinnati, and lift the city up after COVID. The decisions we make in the next few months will impact our city for the next 50 years. I have a track record of taking on corruption and updating old systems. As clerk of courts, I worked to create the eviction help center and to ensure all Clerk of Courts workers get at least \$16 an hour. I've got the experience and the drive to take on the challenges our city faces. **Questions.** Lee Wilson: What is your stance on Issue 3? Pureval: I do not support Issue 3, but I understand why those who support Issue 3 are upset. The city needs a comprehensive plan for affordable housing. We have to fund our affordable housing fund and reform our tax incentives and VTICA. Right now, our tax incentives are being concentrated in our wealthiest neighborhoods. Another problem is that 90% of landlords are represented by an attorney,

while 90% of tenants are represented by themselves. We need to level this playing field. Darryl Frazier: Can you explain the difference between affordable and low income housing? Pureval: Affordable can be closer to market rate, where low income often relies on federal or state funds. Either way, Cincinnati has too little of both low income and affordable housing.

- d. Raffel Prophet – I was born, raised and educated in Cincinnati. Spent 32 years as a firefighter, rising to the rank of District Chief and President of the Cincinnati African American Firefighters Association. Over the years, the mindset of those in city hall has become too self-interested. Too many of our leaders are selfish leaders, rather than being selfless leaders. As COVID laid bare the socio-economic disparities in our city, our current leadership wasn't up to the task. We don't need another yes-man city manager, we need a competent manager that gets our city back to good governance. We've had 3 different city managers under our current mayor, we should ask ourselves why that is. I love this city, I've served here as a firefighter and with the state and national guard.
Questions. Lee Wilson: What is your stance on Issue 3? Prophet: I support Issue 3. I came out early in support of Issue 3. Cindy Jo: How do you plan to attract new businesses? Prophet: By crediting a fair and equitable city. People want to live and work in a city that has a higher equity.
 - e. Cecil Thomas – I'm a former city councilmember and in my seventh year as an Ohio State Senator. I am Mt. Auburn's state senator. Mt. Auburn is a diamond in the rough. There is so much personal equity in the neighborhood. Communities should be defined by the people living in that community, not by developers interested in building in the neighborhood. Every neighborhood has pockets of problems. If those problems go unattended, they can start to create real problems for the rest of the neighborhood. I remember when the neighborhood started working on our neighborhood plan. I think it's important that the strategic plan for Mt. Auburn stays on course, and that the mayor and the rest of the city work to help execute this plan. The city needs to work as a partner with each neighborhood.
Questions. Lee Wilson: What is your stance on Issue 3? I don't support Issue 3, because I don't support the way it goes about funding affordable housing. The Greater Cincinnati Foundation and LISC finished an affordable housing study in 2018. That led to the creation of a 10-year plan to get us where we need to be on affordable housing. We need to bring those supporting Issue 3 to the table to help us better execute on the affordable housing plan that we already have. Christian Huelsman: How would you work to prioritize projects that perennially get overlooked in the city budget? Thomas: We will have to think outside the box to address the needs of our various neighborhoods. For example, alternative transportation is important. We have a large number of citizens who aren't able to drive. We need to ensure that public transportation exists and that communities are walkable.
3. **Safety Report (Officer Bower)** – Officer Bower was not in attendance. Our neighborhood liaison officer can be reached at (513) 569-8679 or Maggie.Bower@Cincinnati-oh.gov. The non-emergency police number is (513) 765-1212.
 4. **2021 NSP Funds (Cindy Jo Holmes)** – We have processed all of the paperwork and are just waiting for NSP funds to be deposited to our account. Once we have the funds deposited, we'll send a note out to all parties who submitted a project proposal
 5. **Board Report** – *Carlton Farmer made a motion to approve the board report. Sarah Vogt seconded. Motion carried.*
 6. **Treasurer's Report** – *Alice Williams made a motion to approve the treasurer's report. Cindy Jo Holmes seconded. Motion carried.*

7. **Previous Month's MACC Minutes** – *Carlton Farmer made a motion to approve the March 2021 full council meeting minutes. Ken Farmer seconded. Motion carried.*
8. **Old Business** –
 - a. There was no old business.
9. **New Business and Announcements** –
 - a. Filson Pool – Steve Gibbs asked Jan-Michele if pool or summer employment funding came up in the council committee meeting today, and specifically if Filson Pool came up. Jan-Michele was not sure, but said she would gather some information and get back to us.
 - b. Wendel Alley Updated (Christian Huelsman) – Near Loth and Rice Streets. The next steps to reopen this alley would be a petition signed by adjacent residents, letters of support from residents and a letter of support from MACC. At which point, the city would work to identify funding for this. Steve Gibbs: When would you need letters of support? Huelsman: I would expect we would be looking for letters of support by June. Steve Gibbs: I would recommend that you reach out to the port authority. Carol Gibbs: Christian, get me the information regarding your concerns around the site and I can help with that. Sidenote: Main Street steps were the first concrete stairway in the city of Cincinnati. Groundbreaking took place on 4/20/1908.
 - c. Speeding on Sycamore Hill (Chris Secaur) – I live near the corner of Liberty and Sycamore and there is a lot of speeding in the area. Is there anything I can do to help address this? Steve Gibbs: I know that this has come up over the years, but I know some of the issue is that speedbumps can't be used. Steve Gibbs asked Jan-Michele if she and her other members of council can work to give neighborhood guidance on how we can address speeding issues. Steve Gibbs also asked Chris Secaur to send MACC an email and that we would work on this.
10. **Adjournment** – *Carlton Farmer made a motion to adjourn. Ken Farmer seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:21 PM.*