

Mt. Auburn Community Council

06/21/2021 Full Council Meeting Minutes (Zoom)

Recorded and Prepared by Carlton Farmer (Recording Secretary)

Board Members in Attendance: Sandi Allen, Shawn Baker, Carlton Farmer, Ken Farmer, Carol Gibbs, Steve Gibbs, Joshua Gilbert, Ryan Lammi, John Pearl, Anne Shannon, Alice Williams, Lee Wilson

Absent: Walter Hawkins, Cindy Jo Holmes, Sarah Vogt

Special Guest Speakers: Gene Recher from City Gospel Mission; Pat Wittberg from Fair Districts; Dutch Cambruzzi and Jonathan Evans from Camden Homes; Christian Huelsman from Spring in Our Steps

1. **Call to Order and a Moment of Silence** – Zoom meeting of the MACC was called to order by MACC President Steve Gibbs at 7:01 PM.
2. **Safety Report (Officer Bower)** – Officers were in Mt. Auburn this month on a traffic enforcement blitz. Officers focused on hotspots identified by the community, including Highland, Burnet, Dorchester and Sycamore. Will have details on the number of citations as a result of this blitz at next month's meeting. There was a robbery on May 22 on Wellington Place. Some residents confronted someone who was breaking into a car, at which point that person told the residents he had a gun and took some items off of them. The case is still currently open. Our neighborhood liaison officer can be reached at Maggie.Bower@Cincinnati-oh.gov or at (513) 569-8679. The non-emergency police number is (513) 765-1212.
3. **Speaks Guest Speakers** –
 - a. **Gene Recher (City Gospel Mission project update)** – After meeting with and getting feedback from neighbors, we have revised the design of the facade of the building on Goethe, to make the building look more like three separate buildings. This building will be constructed at 211-219 Goethe, which are currently empty lots. We expect to be submitting for building permits early in the fall, with construction starting in October 2021. We hope to start occupying the new building in January of 2023. **Questions.** Christian Huelsman: Are there plans for lighting or finistrations along the portion of the building that runs along the Main Street Steps? Gene Recher: There will definitely be some items to soften this area and we are concerned about general safety, so we are open to the idea of additional lighting. Cathy Ingram: Is this project funded with federal dollars? Gene Recher: No, this is funded through money that was raised by City Gospel Mission. We did not apply or receive any tax credits for this project and it was not funded through city or federal funds. Steve Gibbs: City Gospel Mission have been on this street for years and have been great neighbors. We are looking forward to this project moving forward.
 - b. **Pat Wittberg (Fair Districts Presentation)** – Back in 2015 and 2018, Ohioans passed some redistricting provisions to address gerrymandering, but nothing has changed yet because we had to wait for the 2020 census. The first time we will be using these new districts will be in 2022. After the federal census, state and federal House and Senate districts are redrawn. Some of the rules of the new districts include: making the districts contiguous; keeping counties, cities, townships whole; public hearings; redistricting commission. The new rules are not perfect, but they should reign in the worst practices of gerrymandering. The problem with gerrymandering is that it creates safe districts and

predictable election outcomes. This makes representatives much less responsive to their constituents. This leads to candidates who have little incentive to compromise.

Due to delays in getting census data, the timeline for this new redistricting process will not be possible. So what can we do? 1. Tell Gov. DeWine to convene the Ohio Redistricting Commission. 2. Tell your elected representatives to start working on fair districts. 3. Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper. 4. Pay attention to this issue as it moves forward. **Questions.** Shawn Baker: Is Hamilton one of the counties that will be in a single district? Pat Wittberg: In theory, yes. Hamilton County could and should be in one district. Cathy Ingram: A bill will be introduced soon to send district decisions to the President of the OH Senate and the Speaker of the OH House rather than the OH Supreme Court. I recommend contacting Gov. DeWine and asking him to convene the redistricting commission, which he has yet to do.

- c. **Dutch Cambuzzi and Jonathan Evans (Camden Homes)** – New construction project on Bigelow across from Hopkins Park. The proposed project is three buildings with three units in each. On the corner of Carmalt and Bigelow. All three buildings face Bigelow with front-yard setbacks. Each building will have a garage in the rear, with access from a common drive off of Carmalt. We have submitted to the City of Cincinnati for their Coordinated Site Review (CSR) and have initial approval from city departments. We are requesting 3 variances. 1. Square footage of the lots. These are relatively minor variances. 2. Fifteen-foot setback rather than a twenty-foot setback. This would provide room to access the garages in the rear of the buildings. 3. Three-foot setback rather than a five-foot setback from the northern property line. Price Point of upper \$600k. **Questions.** Ryan Lammi: Will these buildings be constructed at the same time or individually? Dutch Cambuzzi: Individually, but we expect that they will follow each other quickly. Shawn Baker: Will there be decks or terraces? Dutch Cambuzzi: There will be small open spaces off the back, but they will not be visible from the street. Christian Huelsman: The drive off the back being 40-feet wide seems excessive. It is nearly as wide as Bigelow. Jonathan Evans: It is 40 feet to the back line, so the width is closer to 37 feet. We want to make sure that residents have enough space to get in and out of their garages safely. Steve Gibbs: Ken, do you know if God's Bible College has any plans for the adjacent land to the east? Ken Farmer: No, not that I'm aware of at this time. I will put Dutch in contact with the President of the school. *Carol Gibbs made a motion to approve these three zoning variances. Shawn Baker seconded. Motion carried with one vote in opposition and no stated abstentions.*
- d. **Christian Huelsman (Spring in Our Steps)** – Our group has been working in the St. Joe and Wendell Alley area. We have been cleaning up this area in hopes of reopening the public stairs. Previously, we worked to establish stairway and alleyway signage to increase the presence of these spaces, which are being regularly used by pedestrians, including children going to school. We removed hazardous and dense plant growth along Wendell Alley with the help of NSP funds from a request made through the Mt. Auburn Community Council. The DOTE has set forth three requirements for reopening the stairs: 1. letter of support from MACC, 2. 70%-100% approval from residents in the area, 3. letters of support from the three property owners north of the alley and one property owner to the south. We are currently collecting these signatures and letters of support from adjacent residents. Matthew Gilliam: I live on Loth and would love to have these steps opened. They really connect the lower area of Mt. Auburn to the other parts of the neighborhood. *Matthew Gilliam made a motion to support the reopening of the steps. Willa Ronney seconded. Motion carried with no stated opposition or abstentions.*

- e. **Bylaw Revisions Update (Steve Gibbs and Ryan Lammi)** – Steve explained that he is very happy with the work Ryan Lammi has done, but thinks that we should table the discussion until our July Meeting due to some concerns about a membership map of the borders of Mt. Auburn and the impact this could have, given citywide discussions about neighborhood boundaries. Steve asked Ryan for his thoughts. Ryan noted that he does not feel that we need to table this, since we could address the map through an amendment after the second reading of the bylaws at the next meeting, prior to voting to accept the bylaw revisions. Ryan also explained that if the bylaws discussion is tabled, the first reading would be at the July MACC meeting. Then at the August meeting, we would entertain any amendments, and then could vote on the proposed changes, with any amendments. Ryan noted that the revisions are available on our website, MtAuburn.org and that people can reach out if they have any questions about proposing an amendment. *Ken Farmer made a motion to table this discussion. Joshua Gilbert seconded. Motion carried with one vote in opposition.*
4. **Board Report** – no report given
5. **Treasurer's Report (Joshua Gilbert)** – NSP funds were deposited last month and those projects have started to get their funding. *Ken Farmer made a motion to approve the treasurer's report. Carlton Farmer seconded. Motion carried with no noted opposition.*
6. **Previous Month's MACC Minutes** – *Shawn Baker made a motion to approve the May 2021 full council meeting minutes. Ken Farmer seconded. Motion carried with no noted opposition.*
7. **Old Business** – none
8. **New Business and Announcements** –
 - a. E. Hollister potentially returning to two-way (Carol Gibbs) – Planning commission has approved this and it will likely go to the full city council this week.
 - b. Sale of tennis courts near Hollister (Carol Gibbs) – The RFP for this land has gone out. Responses are due mid-July.
 - c. Neighborhood getting \$10,000 from Federal Funds (Shawn Baker) – We were just notified of this earlier today. There will be federal guidelines for the use of this money. We should have more information at the next MACC meeting.
9. **Adjournment** – *Lee Wilson made a motion to adjourn. Ken Farmer seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:04 PM.*