

Mt. Auburn Community Council

01/19/2021 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, Cindy Jo Holmes, Ryan Lammi, Anne Shannon, Alice Williams

Absent: Walter Hawkins, Sarah Vogt

Special Guests: Freeman McNeal from MACHDO; Monica Battle, new Principal of Rising Star Academy

1. **Call to Order and a Moment of Silence** – Zoom meeting of the MACC was called to order by MACC President Steve Gibbs at 7:04 PM.
2. **Safety Report (Officer Roper-Issa filling in for Officer Bower)** – 1. Crime is down fairly significantly in the Mt. Auburn area of District 4. No violent crimes in the most recent monthly report. 2. CPD speed wagon is being repaired, and will be placed on Reading Road between Helen and McGregor, near the hotel that is under construction. The next Mt. Auburn spot for the speed wagon would be somewhere along Highland. 3. CPD is seeing a new trend in auto thefts. Kids in a car driving around looking for cars that are left idling--cars warming up in driveways and even food delivery drivers' cars that are momentarily empty during deliveries. 4. CPD is working with the Parks Department and the Homeless Coalition to address a homeless encampment in Inwood Park. 5. CPD recently performed a coordinated Liquor Inspection at the Shell Station on Reading. Some minor citations were issued and will be addressed, but no big violations to report. **Questions.** Gary Offill, GM of Comfort Suites being built on Reading Road, asked if the police needed anything else (video evidence, etc.) from the hotel in regards to a recent shooting on Reading Road near the hotel. Officer Roper-Issa said she would contact Officer Bower and see if more information was needed.
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.
3. **Special Guests and Presentations** –
 - a. **Neighborhood Support Program 2021 (Cindy Jo Holmes)** – The Neighborhood Support Program provides annual funding to Community Councils for neighborhood projects and activities. The NSP proposal process is normally open annually beginning in the month of September through March of the following year. There are some restrictions and limitations to the program, but essentially Mt. Auburn residents should think of this as an opportunity to enrich our community.
For 2021, we have the opportunity to receive \$7,987 in NSP funds for neighborhood projects. We have to submit projects to the city, who will then allocate funds to us for these projects. The goal tonight is to approve a list of NSP project proposals with budgets. We have received proposals for a number of projects, which currently slightly exceed our total budget of \$7,987, however, some of the requests have preliminary budget amounts assigned to them and can be adjusted down. Cindy Jo presented the list of communication and beautification projects that have been submitted and then asked if there were any new proposals to consider.
Christian Huelsman submitted a proposal for \$3,130 for a project to continue clean-up of S. Wendel Alley, itemizing some of the costs. Steve Gibbs proposed funding a dumpster

and a scissor lift for invasive growth clean-up for a total of \$1,000. Cindy Jo said that we could squeeze that in, by reducing estimated budget amounts for some of the projects with higher estimates or for projects with less concrete plans and budget. There was general agreement that there were a few projects whose budgets could be reduced.

Carlton Farmer made a motion to approve the list of projects presented by Cindy Jo, including \$1,000 for S. Wendell Alley clean-up project. Joshua Gilbert seconded. Motion carried without objection from any of the 36 attendees.

- b. **New Principal of Rising Star Academy (Monica Battle)** – First year as Principal of Rising Star Academy. The academy is a feeder school for Fairview German School, meaning that they hold 50 seats to the Fairview German School. Rising Star Vine Street’s current enrollment is 104 students, which is a little lower than typical because they have only enrolled the number of students that can be kept six feet apart in our classrooms. **Questions.** Steve Gibbs: Is the plan to continue operation at the current location for the foreseeable future or are there plans to move the school. Battle: As far as I know, the plan is to remain at our location on Vine and Mulberry. Joshua Gilbert: What percent of your students at the Vine Street location are from the Mt. Auburn or nearby neighborhoods? Battle: I know that the majority live in the area, but I would have to get back to you on exact numbers. Christian Huelsman: If you can share statistics with me regarding students that walk to school, rather than riding, we may be able to help address pedestrian issues in the area. Carol Gibbs: We could reach out to the parents of students of the school and get their opinions on pedestrian safety in the area. Battle agreed to reach out to parents regarding walkability and pedestrian safety near the school. Battle thanked the MACC for the watercolor sets that the council sent to the students of Rising Star Academy.
- c. **Proposed MACHDO Project at 316 McGregor (Freeman McNeal)** – The Mt. Auburn Community Housing Development Organization (MACHDO) owns the property at 316 McGregor. The plan is to tear down the building currently on the property and build a new 3 unit building, maintaining the look of the architecture on the street. Ryan Lammi: Have you looked at rehabbing the existing building? Freeman McNeal: Yes, the foundation is too damaged to repair. We have permission from the city to tear down the existing structure. Anne Shannon: What is the price point for these condos? McNeal: They would be affordable housing. Anne Shannon: Is the financing from a bank or a private investor? Freeman McNeal: From one private investor. Shawn Baker: Does the private investor live in the neighborhood? Freeman McNeal: I am not going to answer that question. Cindy Jo Holmes: Is the plan to have the new building use the same footprint of the existing building? Freeman McNeal: Yes, the goal is to use the same footprint. Cindy Jo Holmes: Do you have architectural drawings? Freeman McNeal: No, not at this point. Architectural drawings are expensive. Once we raise funds for the project, we will get architectural drawings and can share them with this group. Brad Cooper: Would the three units own the land, or just the condos? Freeman McNeal: The owners would own the condos, but MACHDO would retain ownership of the land. Anne Shannon: Do you know if there would be an HOA fee associated with these units? Freeman McNeal: No, the exterior of the building would be maintained by MACHDO. Anne Shannon: Who would the letter of support be addressed to? Freeman McNeal: MACHDO. Anne Shannon: Usually these letters of support go to the city. McNeal: Yes, sending the letter of support to the city would be appreciated. Ryan Lammi: I don’t think you need our support to demolish the existing structure, but I would personally ask that you hold off doing so until you have funding lined up for the project, so that the neighborhood doesn’t run the risk of having another empty lot. McNeal: I understand

that. I am simply asking for the same courtesy that was given to City Gospel Mission and Uptown Rental Properties when they came before this group without plans. Shawn Baker: Those groups had plans that they presented to the group. City Gospel Mission had detailed architectural plans. Freeman McNeal: I didn't mean City Gospel Mission, but I can't remember the name of the group that I'm thinking of. Ryan Lammi: Have you reached out to the adjacent property owners? Freeman McNeal: Yes, they support the project. Steve Gibbs: Freeman please send the community council board a letter on MACHDO letterhead detailing the project, even if architectural drawings are not yet available, so that we have something to refer to in our letter of support. We need more details as to what our letter would be supporting. Rev. Dobbins: Is this the normal process for projects such as this? Steve Gibbs: Usually, developers come to the MACC board and present prior to coming to a full council meeting with their proposed plans. I recognize that you guys may not currently have the funding to produce detailed drawings or plans, that's why I'm proposing your group send a letter detailing as much about the project as you can. *Steve Gibbs made a motion to table this discussion until the MACC board receives a letter from MACHDO providing more details on the project. Carlton Farmer seconded the motion to table. Motion to table carried.*

[Note from the Recording Secretary: I reviewed the minutes from previous board meetings and full council meetings. Uptown Rental Properties presented project and architectural plans to the board and to the full council before the full council voted to support the preliminary planned development. City Gospel Mission also presented project and architectural plans to the board and the full council before the full council voted to support the project.]

- d. **Open MACC Trustee Position (Ryan Lammi)** – There is an open trustee position on the MACC board. When Steve Gibbs was elected the MACC President this past fall, he vacated his trustee position. The appointee would be filling this position through the upcoming trustee election in October 2021, at which point all trustee positions would be open for any members wanting to run. The MACC by-laws state that you must be a member of the MACC and must have attended at least four MACC events, which would include monthly meetings, in the last 12 months. If you are interested, please send a brief bio to MtAuburnCincinnati@gmail.com, letting us know why you are interested in a trustee position. Please send your letter of interest by February 7, 2021. **Questions.** Lee Wilson: What are the duties associated with being a trustee? Ryan Lammi: There aren't specific duties for MACC trustees outlined in our by-laws, but there is plenty of work with special projects and committees for trustees to get involved with. Their vote is equal to the vote of MACC officers. Derrick Blassingame: Since there were a few months this year that the MACC did not meet due to COVID-19, should we still require that people have attended four events in the previous 12 months. Lee Wilson stated that she thought the attendance requirement made sense. Carlton Farmer noted that a key part of being an effective MACC board member is attendance, but recognized that Derrick Blassingame's comment on canceled meetings due to COVID-19 was valid. *Ryan Lammi made a motion for a one-time, temporary suspension of the attendance requirement outlined in Article VI, Section H, Paragraph 1b of the MACC by-laws. Shawn Baker seconded. Motion carried.*

[Note from the Recording Secretary: The MACC missed three meetings in 2020 due to COVID-19. The March, April, and May full council meetings were canceled. Meetings of the full council resumed in June 2020, with Zoom meetings.]

4. **Treasurer's Report (Joshua Gilbert)** – Our current balance is \$1,346.37. Carol Gibbs asked if we were collecting membership dues in 2021. Anne Shannon confirmed that the MACC had previously voted to roll any 2020 memberships (including those rolled-over from 2019) over into 2021. Any new members joining this year would need to fill out a membership form and pay the \$3 membership fee. *Carol Gibbs made a motion to approve the treasurer's report. Cindy Jo Holmes seconded. Motion carried.*
5. **Board Report (Steve Gibbs)** – Steve quickly recapped what the board discussed at the January 2021 board meeting. Noting that most of the items were part of this evening's meeting agenda and discussion items. *There were no questions about the board report.*
6. **Previous Month's MACC Minutes** – *Ken Farmer made a motion to approve the November 2020 full council minutes. Tami Hendrickson seconded. Motion carried.*
7. **Old Business** –
 - a. No old business
8. **New Business and Announcements** –
 - a. 5-Way Intersection – Construction work on changing the 5-way intersection at Auburn and Dorchester should start toward the end of this year.
 - b. Flat Iron Building – Permits have been pulled for the flat iron building and work should begin soon.
 - c. City Gospel Mission Project on Goethe – The city planning commission asked the group to come back with some changes that the planning commission requested, including addressing parking, changes to the facade and potentially a switch to zoning changes rather than a “notwithstanding ordinance.”
 - d. Alleys and Steps in Mt. Auburn and Adjacent Neighborhoods (Christian Huelsman) – Spring in Our Steps is partnering with UC School of Design, Art and Planning on a project to connect public alleys and stairways in Mt. Auburn, CUF and Over-the-Rhine. The project is looking to apply for a grant that is administered through the University of Cincinnati. The application for this grant requires a letter of support from each of the community councils. The plan is to rehab these public alleys and stairways and turn them into walking outdoor exhibits. The hope is to use the alleys and stairways in Mt. Auburn, CUF and Over-the-Rhine as a pilot or model to expand to other neighborhoods.

Questions. Steve Gibbs: What is your time frame on this? Huelsman: I believe the deadline is February 15, 2021, so we would need a letter of support relatively soon. I sent you a draft of the letter of support. Carol Gibbs: How much would the grant get you? Huelsman: The grant would get us about \$5,000. *Ryan Lammi made a motion to approve the board to issue a letter of support for this project. Shawn Baker seconded. Motion carried.* Huelsman said that he would likely have more information on this in the coming weeks. Steve Gibbs invited Huelsman to present to the MACC board at the February meeting if he had more information.
 - e. Balanced Development Scorecard – Barbara Bell from Councilmember Greg Landsman's office stated that details for the scorecard from Landsman's office are being updated. Brad Cooper noted that the Peaslee Center has been working on their equitable development scorecard for a few years now. Steve Gibbs noted that these are two competing scorecards, and that the MACC has their internally developed questionnaire that they require of developers. Lammi noted that we should send Freeman the MACC developer questionnaire. Steve Gibbs agreed, noting that he will. Brad Cooper asked if the MACC would be interested in someone from Peaslee presenting to the council. Steve Gibbs said that we would at some point, but we may be a few months out on that. Shawn

Baker noted that it would likely make sense to hear from our elected city officials first before we hear from a private non-profit organization.

- f. February MACC Meeting – The full council MACC meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 16th, due to Presidents Day falling on Monday the 15th.

9. Adjournment – *Carlton Farmer made a motion to adjourn. Brad Cooper seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM.*