

Mt. Auburn Community Council

03/15/2021 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, John Pearl, Anne Shannon, Alice Williams, Lee Wilson

Absent: Walter Hawkins, Anthony Thompson, Sarah Vogt

Special Guest Speakers: Will Yokel, Christian Huelsman, Tom Conlan and Risa Kaneko, CPD District 4 Captain Mark Burns

- 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 Bower)** – 1. There was an issue with the crime stats not populating on the map. This is being addressed. 2. Police did not object to the sale of land near and including the tennis courts near Hollister. There is no issue from a police perspective, meaning it will not have an impact on policing or emergency response. 3. There is an officer in Mt. Auburn policing speeding in the neighborhood. Will have more information about his work at the April meeting.
Questions. Steve Gibbs: Can you talk a little bit about the homeless encampments in or near Mt. Auburn. Bowers: The nearest, recent one was in Walnut Hills near Children's Hospital. We worked with the Quick Response Team through the Talbert House. This means that we accompany them if they ask us to. Anna Linders: There have been reports of plants being stolen in the Prospect Hill area. I just wanted to make you aware of this since we have had this issue in the past. Darryl Frazier: I have contacted you and District 4 about men hanging out at the park on Burnet, but have not received a response and we still need help addressing this issue. I think that this group might be just moving around the neighborhood. Captain Burns: We have addressed this in the past, but displacing these groups can be difficult. Christian Huelsman: Do the police work with social agencies in this effort? Carol Gibbs: We have. We worked on this for over a year. David Barnett: There are issues with drug dealing on Carmalt Street. I wish there would be more presence in this area. I have even taken pictures of cars and tried to share those with District 4 officers, but they weren't interested. Captain Burns: The issue is that we can't really use photographs like that, since we don't have any proof that these cars were involved in drug activity. But I would plead with you all to keep calling these incidents so that police can respond and take note of that area. Tom Conlan: I think some of the issue is that District 4 can be a challenging area to police. We at Church of Our Savior have worked with District 4 over the years and have found them responsive and helpful. Darryl Frazier: I understand that the police have a difficult job, but I feel like we need more of a presence and better results in Mt. Auburn. If this were Hyde Park or OTR this wouldn't be happening. Captain Burns: I don't want to start comparing districts, other districts and neighborhoods have their issues just like our neighborhoods. But I can assure you we do not let these problems go unchecked when they are reported. Cindy Jo Holmes: Is there anyway that an officer can be posted at a specific area for an amount of time to see if we can get some reduction in this activity? Captain Burns: We can't just post officers in one area, but calling in activity when it is happening and reporting it at these meetings allows us to focus on these areas. Cindy Jo Holmes: Are there city resources beyond District 4 that could be utilized? Captain Burns: Yes, and we use those here in District 4. I will

work to use them in some of the areas brought up this evening. Shawn Baker: Issue of officers not responding if there is not someone on the scene to speak with. Captain Burns: Thanks for bringing that to my attention. I will make it clear that we should be responding to calls regardless if the person reporting wants to speak with officers or not when they arrive on the scene. If you have specific addresses or areas in the neighborhood, email or call those in to your neighborhood officer.

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. **Urban Sites Land Acquisition (Will Yokel)** – Urban Sites has been in talks with the city about purchasing the oddly-shaped vacant lot (218 Mulberry) on the west side of the Main Street Steps, between Mulberry and Seitz. Urban Sites already owns the two parcels of land immediately west of this parcel. The very preliminary plan would be to build a new building that would be two stories on Seitz and four stories on Mulberry due to the elevation change. We are asking for a letter of support for the sale of this land.

Questions. Christian Huelsmans: Did this go to an RFP? Will Yokel: The city did not send it to a RFP because they deemed the land undevelopable due to the lot configuration. Huelsman: There is a Ballard sign along the stairs that we would like to be maintained. I would also hope that some improvements can be made regarding lighting and landscaping along the stairs. Will Yokel: Definitely, we would work with the council on any requirements or requests of the neighborhood. Would work to move signage if it were on our land and if it is not on city land, we would not mess with the sign. Brad Cooper: What benefit the neighborhood was getting from the sale of this land. Will Yokel: You would be getting 10 apartments, density is important in a neighborhood. Steve Gibbs: The board objected to the parking spaces adjacent to the Main Street Steps, and I believe you indicated that this could be changed? Will Yokel: Yes, we could remove those spots. We understand how that could be an eyesore, being close to the public steps. *Carlton Farmer made a motion to send a letter of support for the sale of this land to Urban Sites with the stipulation that Urban Sites work with MACC on beautification and lighting at least along the portion of the Main Street Steps that borders the property that they are attempting to acquire. Ken Farmer seconded. Motion carried with one vote in objection.*

- b. **Church of Our Savior and CCM (Tom Conlan and Risa Kaneko)** – Risa Kaneko: I am the program coordinator for Lives United, a collaborative program between CCM and Church of our Savior. We offer free music lessons and programs, which are currently being held through Zoom or through Youtube videos. We are working with Taft Elementary to see what kind of programs we can bring to their students and are also looking to help musicians and artists find performance spaces. Please contact me if you have any questions on this or if you are interested in lessons or a performance space.

Questions. Carlton Farmer: Do you think that your involvement with Taft Elementary would be different than your current online offerings? Risa Kaneko: We have yet to meet with them, but we are hopeful that we can plan for in-person programs and activities. Tom: We recently donated a piano to Taft Elementary for them to use in their music instruction. Carol Gibbs: Once volunteers are allowed back in schools, we hope to have CCM students come to the school to give lessons.

- c. **Stairway Lighting Near Wendel Alley (Christian Huelsman)** – A nearby resident was concerned about lighting being added to these stairs, thinking that it would make it more likely that people would cut through his yard, which is currently not fenced in. Currently

these stairs are closed. If these stairs were to be reopened, it would involve repairing the stairs and the wall along the stairs. **Questions.** Carlton Farmer: If these stairs were to be reopened, is there a viable path that does not involve people walking through the yard of the person you said raised concerns? Christian Huelsman: Yes, there is public space that those coming down the stairs could use. However, the path of least resistance for some may be this person's yard. Steve Gibbs: Can you talk a little about the Main Street Steps? Christian Huelsman: The Main Street Steps are the oldest permanent public steps in the city. I think it would be great if they could get some refurbishment and perhaps even a plaque identifying them as historic steps. Perhaps this is something that could be rolled into the proposed Urban Sites project that we heard about earlier this meeting.

4. **Treasurer's Report (Joshua Gilbert)** – There were no expenditures or deposits since the previous Treasurer's Report. *Shawn Baker made a motion to approve the treasurer's report. Brad Cooper seconded. Motion approved.*
5. **Board Report (Steve Gibbs)** – *There were no further questions about the board report.*
6. **Previous Month's MACC Minutes** – *Shawn Baker made a motion to approve the February 2021 full council minutes. Ryan Lammi seconded. Motion carried.*
7. **Old Business** –
 - a. There was no old business.
8. **New Business and Announcements** –
 - a. Upcoming clean-up of North Wendel Alley near Rice Street (Christian Huelsman) – We will be out there at 11:00 AM - 2:30 PM on Sunday April 4th. Coffee and sandwiches will be provided to volunteers. We will provide you a mask if you don't have one.
 - b. New Playground at Inwood Park (Carol Gibbs) – Equipment has arrived and the installation should begin soon and will likely be finished in about six weeks.
 - c. City Gospel Mission Project on Goethe (Carol Gibbs) – This project was approved by City Planning and will soon go on to the full council in the coming weeks.
 - d. Flatiron Building (Carol Gibbs) – Adjustments had to be made to the permits due to the deck. Permits should come back soon. Construction is likely to begin by April.
 - e. Developer Questionnaire (Brad Cooper) – Brad Cooper noted that some of the suggested changes to the MACC developer questionnaire mirror what is in the Peaslee developer document, and asked if the board was planning on inviting Peaslee to present their developer scorecard document. Steve Gibbs: The board has not made plans to invite either Peaslee, Landsman or any others to present on these documents. However, if you have recommendations please share those with us, Brad. The board is working on some minor updates to our developer questionnaire.
 - f. All Cincinnati Mayoral Candidates are being invited to speak at the upcoming April meeting of the MACC.
 - g. Cable House Building (Carol Gibbs) – Port Authority has contacted two developers (Dan Neyer and Dan Shimberg) to see if either of them can make a quick proposal. They would like to have a plan so that they don't have to fill this in, as that would make the property harder to develop. Christian Huelsman: Were any architectural pieces saved? Carol Gibbs: Yes, the stone plaque about the original building being destroyed by fire and some bricks were saved. The current idea is to make a decorative planter out of these pieces that could eventually go somewhere on the site after it is developed.
 - h. Recording of Community Council Meetings (Brad Cooper) – Brad Cooper asked if there was ever a vote to record these meetings. Shawn Baker: We have been recording these meetings since we started meeting through Zoom. *Carlton Farmer made a motion that the meetings continue to be recorded, noting that the recordings are often helpful in*

completing the minutes. Carol Gibbs seconded. Shawn Baker noted that Zoom will automatically delete recordings after a certain amount of time and asked why Brad was concerned about these meetings being recorded. Brad Cooper stated that his default is always to not record unless it is necessary but noted that the points made by Carlton made sense. Motion carried with one vote in opposition.

- 9. Adjournment** – *Carlton Farmer made a motion to adjourn. Carol Gibbs seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:47 PM.*