

**‘Ohio City Incorporated
Regular Board Meeting
Meeting Minutes
June 17, 2020**

Attendance

Board - Schmitt, Benjamin, Doyle, Frondorf, Greer, Knittel, Nosse, Rocha, Smith, Trares, Trivisonno, Malone, Wimbiscus

Not Attending – Gill, Scheve

Staff - McNair, Miller, Raber, Shaw, Trimble

Meeting began at 6:02 PM

Minutes

The February and April minutes were passed unanimously.

Executive Director Report - Tom McNair and Chris Schmitt

Board Members of the Terrible Year 2020 - Don Malone, Andy Trares, and Chris Schmitt - for their great work and communication during COVID-19.

Financial issues have caused us to have bigger conversations regarding our organizations. Councilman McCormack will be hiring a Ward 3 Safety Coordinator. Staff, Safety Chair Helen Smith and Councilman McCormack will be having conversations on how this new position will interface with OCI and the Safety Committee. Chad Bigger will be transitioning to a new role within the organization but will still retain some of his previous duties. OCI response to COVID-19 has included:

With NWR not having sports this year, the NWR employees have taken on new responsibilities and have done great service in the community, including taking over the e-newsletter responsibilities, raising \$3,000 to distribute activity bags to families in the community, and weekly equipment giveaways. They are also planning the safe return of NWR.

Julie Dahlhausen is the new Community Engagement Specialist for Near West Partners.

OCI has been very involved in small-business support during this crisis. Tom discussed the many initiatives that the organization has been involved in during the pandemic.

Ohio City Improvement Corporation hired a District Manager who is currently part-time and will be starting as full-time on July 15th. OCI worked with the City on billing and collections after the City failed to timely place the OCIC fee on the property tax.

OCI worked with partners to install 10 sanitation stations with restrooms and handwashing across Downtown and Ohio City. They are emptied weekly and sanitized daily. Partners have raised over \$160,000 to sustain the project.

OCI has continued advancing an equitable housing agenda and Tom provided examples to the Board.

OCI secured a \$129,000 forgivable loan from CF Bank. Restructured certain loans with the City of Cleveland.

OCI has had to completely rethink community engagement. Much more digital engagement now as in all areas of our lives. OHCTV is every Friday at 3:15 PM and has had some great guests and the audience is growing. There will be more interactive engagement in the future, including a neighborhood cleanup for Irishtown Bend on June 27 from 10 AM to 5 PM. Staff has also been working to try and interact with people who may not have internet access via text message and phone calls.

Tom discussed OCI's role in racial equity and inclusion initiatives and presented a timeline of some steps that have been taken in the neighborhood in these areas.

The new office is now done and came in just under budget. The office will be "reopening" and people will have to make appointments to go in and masks are required.

Annual Meeting will be held June 25th at 5:30 PM. Election letter went out this week and includes a ballot that people can mail or drop off at the office. Ballots must be returned by July 25th.

Tom said that the Ohio City Street Festival will not be held this year due to COVID-19, but they are brainstorming ways to do something around the name in order to support small businesses.

Chris said that we need to work on plans on how to communicate with the City regarding its lack of preparedness for the protests and riots that occurred on May 30th, as well as for the City's uncoordinated and confusing response to those events.

Chris also believes that we need to do more to facilitate conversation with the black voices in our community and consider initiatives that the organization can spearhead in this area.

Committee Reports – presented by Committee Chairs

Finance Committee - Maria Nosse

Starting to talk about how our budget will look going forward. The Committee would like to know from the Board what its “deficit threshold” would be as we are looking at a deficit budget. Currently the organization has \$409,572 cash on hand while the organization burns approximately \$56,000 per month in payroll. The Committee is having conversations about both the short-term and the long-term.

Real Estate and Land Use - Joel Wimbiscus

Apartment project proposed for 4005 Detroit. Staff and residents are having conversations with the developers regarding the building height and other issues.

A lot more trees have been cut down as part of the Fulton Road project. There is not much that we can do about it unfortunately.

City Architecture sent out a vision plan that painted a picture of how we want the neighborhood to grow and develop. Tom and Ben are meeting next week with City architecture to discuss the shortfalls in the plan.

Joel and Ben discussed and answered questions regarding the organization taking over some properties that are currently managed by Cleveland Housing Network that the organization had inherited as part of a merger.

Economic Development - Andy Trares

Committee has not had a chance to meet but Tom laid out some of the things that OCI is doing for small businesses.

Governance Committee - Brendan Doyle

Board elections will be done by mail this year. A letter will be sent out this week and ballots will be included in the envelope. Ballots must be mailed and postmarked by July 25th or dropped off at the OCI office by that date.

Safety Committee - Helen Smith

Arrests have been made in the Clinton Avenue carjackings. The Committee will be following these cases.

The Committee will be talking to the Councilman regarding the new Safety Coordinator position and how that person will interface with OCI. OCI will still be responsible for the safety camera program.

Tom said that there is now a written plan regarding the safety cameras and how they will be replaced or fixed. There needs to be approximately \$23,000 of work to fix the cameras. Some of the funds will come from the Special Improvement District. This new system will be much better than the current system.

Community Engagement - Helen Qin and Priscilla Rocha

Staff has been doing a great job of engaging with residents in the neighborhood.

The Committee will be working with the City on its declaration that racism is a public health crisis. There will be a Board resolution voted on regarding this issue.

Resolution 2020-0617-01 declares racism is a public health crisis and supporting the City's legislation regarding the same and sets forth action steps. A discussion ensued. Kathleen Knittel moved to approve the resolution and Alex Frondorf seconded. The resolution passed unanimously.

Advancement Committee - Chris Schmitt

No update at this time.

The meeting ended at 7:32 PM.