

Ohio City Incorporated
Regular Board Meeting
Meeting Minutes
February 3, 2021

Attendance

Board - Schmitt, Benjamin, Brown, Doyle, Mallory, Frondorf, Greer, Knittel, Rocha, Smith, Trares, Trivisonno, Qin, Scheve, Wimbiscus

Staff - McNair, Biggers, Raber, Long-Jones, Shaw, Trimble, Grigonis-Bailey, Lowery

Meeting began at 6:03 PM

Minutes

Brendan presented the December minutes. Kathleen made one correction to those minutes and Brendan made the change. Helen made a motion to approve the amended December minutes and Kathleen Knittel seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Helen made a motion to ratify the Cuyahoga County Supplemental grant that was consented to via email and GiGi seconded. Priscilla and Brendan abstained. Joel was not present at the time of the vote. The ratification was approved by the Board.

Committee Reports – presented by Committee Chairs

Tom announced that Andy Trares is Board Member of the Month because he is so helpful and all-around awesome.

Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee

Chris said that the Committee is considering a consultant and scope of work. Two consulting companies submitted bids. In light of financial considerations, the Committee asked that the two consulting candidates to re-work their bids and resubmit. The Committee intends to move fast in selecting a consultant and moving forward with the strategic plan. More updates to come.

Governance - Brendan Doyle

Brendan introduced three candidates for appointment to the Board: David Rico, Shauna Sanders, and Patrick Valletta (St. Ignatius).

Kathleen moved to approve Resolution 2021-0203-01, Resolution 2021-0203-02, and Resolution 2021-0203-03 and Roger seconded. The Resolution passed unanimously.

There is still one open Board seat remaining. Tom has been in discussions with Skylight Financial for this Board appointment and we should have an update at the next meeting.

Helen Qin, Priscilla Rocha, GiGi Benjamin, and Brendan Doyle are up for election this spring. Tom and Chad are working on the membership databases. The Board will present more information on elections at the next meeting.

The Governance Committee will also discuss the Board meeting schedule.

Real Estate and Land Use - Joel Wimbiscus

Tom presented some internal development matters. 2525 Market Avenue has been signed to a 5-year lease to a finance company. The office at Fodor Realty is finished. Near West Land Trust has begun its work.

Donna presented the proposed Fulton House development at Fulton and Woodbine. The drawings went before Design Review last week and will go before Landmarks Commission next week. Changes will need to be made before the plans goes back before Design Review. No votes have been taken.

Donna also presented the proposed Bridgeworks development by Mike Panzica and Graham Veysey. It would be a hotel and housing. No votes have been taken.

Joel said that the Committee has spent a lot of time talking about the projects just discussed, but there is nothing to formally weigh in on yet.

Joel said that there is a house on West 47th that a developer wanted to tear down. It is on the Committee's radar because the proposal flies in the face of the character of the homes on the rest of the street. No designs have been released. The developer was scheduled to meet with the block club several times and has cancelled each time.

The Committee has been editing the Vision Plan frequently.

The first building to be demolished as part of the Irishtown Bend project will be demolished next week.

Finance Committee - Andy Trares

OCI qualified for PPP and submitted an application and is waiting for approval and finalization. The amount would be for approximately \$136,000. It is a forgivable loan so long as the terms are met.

The office space at 2523 Market will be renovated and upgraded at OCI's expense and will cost approximately \$25,000 and the lessor will pay approximately \$80,000. They are leasing for \$19 per square foot. If a buyer comes along, the building could still be sold and having a lessor in the space makes the building more attractive.

Tom discussed CDBG funding and that OCI received approximately \$316,000 which makes up 29.6% of total revenue, but about half of our operating income. The CDBG money can only be used for operating support under City of Cleveland requirements. Tom presented some of the details of OCI's CDBG application.

Kathleen moved and Andy seconded Resolution 2021-0203-04. The resolution was approved unanimously.

Economic Development - Andy Trares

Ashley Shaw told the Board that staff was informed last week that Room Service on West 25th was told by the building owner that its lease would not be renewed. The owner will be bringing a bank into that space. Ashley said that this likely qualifies for utilization of the organization's change-of-use policy. If the building owner seeks a change of use and requests OCI's support, it would not be given. Kathleen asked if changing from retail to a bank even required a variance and staff does not know yet.

Safety Committee - Helen Smith

Not much to update other than we are trying to find out the results of some of the criminal cases in the Juvenile Court, but it is very difficult.

Alex asked whether Councilman McCormack's safety coordinator has been hired yet and Helen said that the City is still working on creating the position.

Advancement – Chris Schmitt

No update

Community Engagement - Helen Qin and Priscilla Rocha

Chris said that Tom will present the Community Engagement Plan but that it is dense enough that he will be calling a special meeting to really dig into the meat of the Plan.

Whitnye stated that the genesis of this Plan was to determine how OCI can increase community engagement and that development of the Plan has been approximately a two-year process. Currently the process is unclear, slow, and potentially excludes important voices. The proposed Plan seeks to be easily understood and transparent. Whitnye explained parts of the Plan, including the idea of a monthly community meeting that focuses on issues aside from development.

Chad got into some of the details of the proposed monthly community meetings and a new Ohio City development process. Chad and Whitnye fielded questions from Board members. Helen Smith noted that the Plan is very, very well done and one can tell that this has been a real labor of love for the staff and the members of Community Engagement.

The Board took a break at 7:28 PM.

The Board reconvened at 7:35 PM.

Executive Committee

Ashley discussed the Vision Zero Initiative the goal of which is to make our streets safer. As part of this initiative, there are chapters of Families for Safe Streets all over the country. The City has asked OCI to pass a resolution supporting this program.

Kathleen made a motion to approve Resolution 2021-0203-05 and Priscilla seconded. The resolution was approved unanimously.

Chad introduced a resolution in support of “pay to stay” advocacy to the City and to the County that would protect tenants from eviction.

Helen made a motion to approve Resolution 2021-0203-06 and Kathleen seconded. The Board discussed the resolution. The resolution passed with GiGi, Roger, and Brendan abstaining.

Executive Director Report

Tom is very excited that the first building will be demolished for Irishtown Bend on Monday. This is a major first step.

Tom said that we are not broke anymore because people (the City of Cleveland) are paying us!

GiGi made a motion to go into executive session and Kathleen seconded. The Board went into executive session at 7:59 PM.

The Board came out of executive session and the meeting ended at 8:29 PM.