

CTM Meeting Minutes  
7:00 PM  
September 12, 2011  
Clifton Recreation Center

Meeting Called to Order:

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Clifton Town Meeting was called to order on September 12, 2011 at 7:07 PM at the Clifton Recreation Center at 320 McAlpin Avenue, by Trustee Karen Imbus, who chaired the meeting.

Trustees in attendance for the meeting: Eric Clark, Brian Curwin, Dick Druffel, Bill Fant, Linda Goldenhar, Christian Huelsman, Karen Imbus, Malcolm Montgomery, Ben Pantoja, Jeff Rose, Jim Segers, and Mary Jo Vesper, and Mike Willing. The presence of a quorum is duly noted.

**Reviewed and Approved:**

**Secretary's Report:** A draft version of the minutes of the July 25, 2011, special meeting and the August 1, 2011, regular meeting had been previously circulated to the Board for review and comment.

Motion: K. Imbus moved to approve the minutes of the July 25, 2011 special meeting. M. Vesper seconded.

Vote Results: The minutes of the July 25, 2011 special meeting were unanimously approved with one abstention.

Motion: K. Imbus moved to approve the minutes of the August 1, 2011 regular meeting. B. Pantoja seconded.

Vote Results: The minutes of the August 1, 2011 regular meeting were unanimously approved with four abstentions.

**Regular Reports:**

**Fire:** Report was given by Captain Kevin Campbell. The month of August saw 154 responses, which was about 25 less than in August 2010. The responses were comprised of 91 EMS, 42 non-fire (false alarms, system malfunctions, etc.), 17 actual fires, and 4 other. Captain Campbell said that residents are always welcome to visit the firehouse.

**Police:** Report was given by Officer Lisa Johnson. The station is willing to do safety checks for homes in order to review bushes, lighting, security, etc. Officer Johnston noted that air conditioner thefts have been on the rise. Copper thefts are also high. They have also noted an increased in book and magazine scammers in the neighborhood. She asked residents to call the department with any suspicious activity. They are also actively working on parking around Cincinnati State. Please email her with any parking concerns. She is working to get a graffiti committee together. A new technology that the department is employing for graffiti is

able to recognize similar graffiti with patterns akin to facial recognition. An audience member asked for residents to join Citizens on Patrol. Interested residents can join by visiting the Cincinnati Police department's website or by emailing Lisa Johnson. Audience member Don Miller asked about Clifton Hills parking issues. Officer Johnson said that they're working on writing more tickets. They're also planning to install additional "no parking" signs. Audience member Don Miller said that 12pm to 1pm is a good time to ticket. An audience member asked about the City's policy for late night parties. Officer Johnson asked residents to email her with any concerns: [lisa.johnson@cincinnati-oh.gov](mailto:lisa.johnson@cincinnati-oh.gov).

**Clifton Recreation Center:** Report was given by Tom Reese. He stated that the before and after school programs are now full. The Center is now starting up the waiting list again. There are over 80 children in both programs. Chris Biggam is the new CRC supervisor. Two new programs have been added: a storytelling workshop on Wednesday evenings from 7:30-8:30pm and a pottery class on Thursday evenings from 6-9pm. The pottery class is \$12 per night and comes with instruction from a master potter. Citizens on Patrol meets the first Thursday of the month at 7pm. Mr. Reese cautioned people driving near the CRC to be aware of an increase in students walking due to the increase in programs.

**Burnet Woods Trailside Museum:** No report.

**CCAC:** Tom Reese read a list of upcoming CCAC events provided by Ruth Dickey. L. Goldenhar said that the Golden Ticket Exhibit had over 250 exhibits, of which 78 were selected for display. The artwork is up through mid-October for viewing.

### **Special Reports:**

**Cincinnatians for Progress:** David Dawson presented. He is the co-chair of Cincinnatians for Progress (CFP). He stated that two years ago, CFP defeated Issue 9, which would have made all rail spending subject to vote (the issue failed 56% to 44%). This year, Issue 48 is on the ballot. Issue 48 takes away the right to accept federal, state, local, and private money for 10 years. Mr. Dawson left behind a sheet explaining the issue. He stated that the rail project does not compete with city funds. If the issue passes, there will be a ten year ban on construction, operation, planning, and design of rail projects. He stated that two years ago CTM passed a resolution for a "no" on issue 9. Mr. Dawson then opened the floor for Q&A. He encouraged residents to visit [cincinnatiansforprogress.com](http://cincinnatiansforprogress.com). An audience member asked about how this issue would affect the streetcar. Mr. Dawson said that it not only blocks the streetcar, but it also blocks all other rail projects. Mr. Dawson stated that he is a proponent of the streetcar, but that this issue is basically a gag rule on rail. He said that Cincinnati would be the only city in the nation to have an issue like this. An audience member asked who proposed the issue. Mr. Dawson said COAST is a large proponent. An audience member asked about the difference between spending millions of dollars on the streetcar vs. buses painted like streetcars. Mr. Dawson said that there has been no city since 1941 that has shut down a fixed rail line and that fixed rail provides a fixed line for transportation and that developers highly prefer this over bus lines which can be moved.

**BearCAT (Community Action Team):** Four members of BearCAT gave a PowerPoint presentation: Shannon Ballard (public relations chair), Michelle Matthews, Ryan Azbell, and Josh Adler. The group was started in 2005 and is looking to expand their services to a broader audience. Supporters include UC's student government association, UC's alumni association, Clifton Heights Improvement Association, Cincinnati Fire Department, St. George food pantry, and others. They have three main activities each year: (i) Freestore Food Bank (4 times in the winter), (ii) Adopt a Family (10 different families through St. Monica/St. George), and (iii) a holiday lighting contest. New activities this year include the Littering is Wrong Too Campaign and Daffodils and Daylilies Program. The organization's next step is to find organizations to partner with around U.C. Additional info can be found on the group's website at: <https://sites.ucfilespace.uc.edu/sga/bearcat>. Jim Segers stated that he's very excited to see this as a volunteer resource from U.C. BearCAT would provide a great liaison with the University. BearCAT stated they would be willing to help with StreetScapes on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of September. Clifton Chronicle's editor, Tom Lohre, stated they could publish an article with their activities in each quarterly newsletter. C. Huelsman asked if the group works with the Center for Community Engagement and mentioned Make a Difference Day. They stated they work closely with CCE. M. Montgomery asked if a certain time of the year was better for the group to find volunteers. Michelle said that volunteers are always available (although fall is their busiest time). Summer events are difficult due to students going home.

**Fair Elections Ohio – HB 194:** Aaron Bly said that HB 194 is a voter suppression bill created by Governor Kasich. Ohio residents will no longer be receiving an absentee ballot in the mail, along with other initiatives that will make it tougher to vote. The group is looking to repeal the bill. L. Goldenhar said she has circulated two petitions. Aaron said that by 9/29 they need 31,200 votes. If they do not gather enough signatures, then the bill automatically goes into effect. These barriers will hurt the opportunity to vote for many. Early voting hours will be restricted and will not be open the Saturday, Sunday, and Monday before elections, which is usually the busiest days of early voting. An audience member asked if this bill would help to curb voter fraud. Aaron said that he had not seen any proof supporting this. Aaron's phone is 513-376-2323.

**Candidates Forum:** K. Imbus stated CTM was approached by Northside to hold a joint candidates evening. She said that it would provide a great way for the communities to work together and would provide an excellent forum for the communities' residents to interact with candidates. Northside has proposed October 20<sup>th</sup>. K. Imbus asked about Board interest. M. Montgomery said that it's a great idea and thinks that this opens up more avenues for communication. He stated that several communities approaching the City would be a stronger voice than one community. L. Goldenhar asked about inviting CUF. K. Imbus said it was a great idea and mentioned using CCAC as a venue. The event will need to utilize strict rules and timelines to make it an impartial forum. C. Huelsman mentioned that there is a candidates' forum on 10/12 at Northside Tavern for Green candidates. D. Druffel asked about inviting all of Uptown. K. Imbus said it could be a large event and thinks Northside would most likely be receptive. An audience member stated that the League of Women Voters could be the official timekeepers and run the meeting to be impartial.

Motion: K. Imbus proposed that CTM hold a candidates' forum in collaboration with either Northside or all of the uptown neighborhoods, with details to follow. E. Clark moved to approve the motion. M. Vesper seconded.

Vote Results: The motion passed unanimously.

**Clifton Senior Center:** Irene Wander came to spoke about the chain of events that led to the decision to close the Clifton Senior Center along with Robin Lee, and Jack Brand. Others were also available in the audience to speak. Irene said that the Center has been in place since 1974 and has been in its current location in Clifton Place Apartments since the early 1980's. Two years ago, the Center was told that they only had enough cash to operate for three more months. They managed to stretch their operations for two years. Their services include medical transportation for those over 60 years old, congregate meal (breakfast and lunch) for seniors, social development, and supportive services. Meals served per month have increased from 800 to 2,000. Supportive services have increased from 300 hours to 800 hours. Medical transportation has increased from 5,000 trips to 7,000 trips. The United Way has cut funding almost 3% every year. The Council on Aging's funding was cut by the State of Ohio around 40% two years ago. In aggregate, the Center is incurring more costs for the same services year-over-year, and receiving less funding. Two years ago, they had to start dipping into their main fund to operate and have been running at an average of a \$100,000 deficit each year. The Center's Board met last month and said that September 30<sup>th</sup> would have to be the last day of operations to ensure that the staff was paid through the end of the month. The staff was provided 30 days' notice of termination, even though no early notice was required. On September 1<sup>st</sup>, all supporting agencies were notified of the pending closure. However, the building manager asked the Center not to speak to the Center's clients until the building owners were notified. Thus, the clients were not told until a week later in order to honor the building manager's request. The Center has repeatedly used CTM's list-serv, Chronicle, and website to recruit volunteers and ask for other forms of help. Mr. Brand stated that the largest problem is the annual deficit. Reimbursements have gone down, and there are ceilings on reimbursement for several services that don't cover the costs of providing those services. In order to close the Center down in an orderly fashion, September 30<sup>th</sup> had to be the last day. The Center has been working with all of their client to ensure they have alternative sources for their services. Ms. Wander stated that of the 276 seniors currently served, many are residents of Clifton Place Apartments. Due to the Center's services, they have been able to keep 75% of these individuals independent for a long time.

M. Montgomery asked if anything could be done at this point to save the Center. Audience member Candy Harr stated that she is a Board member and works for Tri-Health. Tri-Health will be sending social worker to the Center. Audience member Lynn Wasnak said that she created a statement about how she learned about the Center's closure. She moved here in 1984 and has lived and worked in the gaslight area since. She is an avid patron of the neighborhood's businesses and now, at the age of 67, has been diagnosed with advanced cancer. She learned about the Center's weekly medical transportation and has been incredibly grateful for this service. On September 8<sup>th</sup>, she received a call from the transportation coordinator that September 30<sup>th</sup> would be the last date for service. The coordinator referred her to Ms. Wander. Ms. Wasnak stated that, in her opinion, she did not receive an adequate response for the need to close the Center. The community should have been alerted earlier in the year. She also asked why the Clifton Senior Center was not on the agenda and in her opinion, felt that the entire issue was being kept quiet. She asked why the community was not notified earlier and stated that property values could decline with the disappearance of this service. She also asked why this news was not spread over other media and to the Cincinnati's community council. She provided several examples of fundraisers to support the Center and stated that she was not being accusatory toward anyone but wanted the Center to be saved. K. Imbus stated that the issue was not being hidden and that CTM would help provide

avenues for communication for support if needed. Ms. Wasnak asked if CTM would pass a resolution. Mr. Brand reiterated that the Center had been running a \$100,000 deficit each year with decreasing funding. Fundraising would only delay the closure. K. Imbus reiterated supporting in any way possible. Mr. Brand said that most centers in town are facing the same issue. Audience member Bob Cuoco said that his notes were very similar to Ms. Wasnak and that he endorses her and her position. Audience member Marilyn Hyland said she spoke to a number of residents and not many knew about the Center's dire situation. Ms. Lee said that \$100,000 would help the Center tremendously. Ms. Hyland said there may be several avenues to bring the Center back. She urged CTM to support a resolution in support of community fundraising efforts. B. Fant stated that he encouraged people to seek out other experts for advice, and mentioned contacting the Scripps Center at Miami University about public policy and funding. He said the Center's current operating model was unsustainable. CCRCs and other centers were historically funded by stock market returns and interest. Those returns are no longer there. He said services to these seniors definitely need to be provided but that an additional \$100,000 would only provide one more year of services or less. The Center needs to be reinvented. Ms. Lee stated that she has been trying to recruit additional Board members, but people have realized the operating model is not sustainable. She stated that other units would pick up the services. A fundraiser will only buy a few months, and then the Center will be back to the same problem. Ms. Lee said she and Ms. Wander have recruited experts from U.C., and they are stating the same advice as B. Fant. Ms. Wander said that she appreciates all that Ms. Wasnak had to say and appreciates M. Hyland's offer to help. Ms. Wasnak said she would be willing to pay more for the services. Mr. Brand said that the deficit has grown every year. J. Segers asked about the Center's cumulative deficit. Mr. Brand said earnings on funds have declined and all reserve monies have been spent. L. Goldenhar asked about what the community is being asked to do. Mr. Brand said nothing was being asked, they were just alerting the community to the issue. K. Imbus stated need to move onto other issues due to time constraints. Ms. Hyland reiterated request for resolution. Ms. Lee said they're not leaving anyone behind and will be finding alternatives for services.

Motion: K. Imbus moved to support the Center reaching out to other experts for advice on how to provide services in the future and how to secure public funding. She also offered CTM's communication vehicles to the Center if any fundraising campaign got underway. B. Curwin seconded.

Vote Results: The resolution passed with 1 opposed and 2 abstentions.

K. Imbus thanked all those who presented and asked for brevity going forward in order to address the remainder of the agenda.

**StreetScapes:** Kip Eagen, Pete Schneider, and Jim Segers worked this year to organize the event. J. Segers said they are actively looking for volunteers, and they have a sign-up sheet to pass around. They need help setting up the event on September 23<sup>rd</sup> from 3-5pm, help running the main tent on Saturday and Sunday, and help cleaning up on Sunday evening. An artists' workshop was held to make the chalk that will be used during the festival. This year, there will be nine groups of artists doing chalk drawings. It's a very unique event for Clifton and Cincinnati. The budget was previously passed by the executive committee. The budget called for a total loss of \$72. The event organizers believe this could be made up with additional t-shirt sales and donations. They ratcheted down t-shirt sales this year to be more in-line with prior years' actual results. They'll also be selling

vintage t-shirts at reduced prices. Some of the supporting events have also been trimmed back this year, and one of the art cars will be auctioned off this year. Car owners are also being charged \$500 each for priming and sealing their cars. The event will be partnering with Uptown Consortium, CityBeat, Gaslight Properties, and Good Samaritan.

**Goessling's Clifton Market:** A groundbreaking will be held on September 24<sup>th</sup>, in conjunction with StreetScapes, at 1pm.

**Volunteer Survey:** Ben Pantoja reported. He spoke about the survey that had previously been circulated via the list-serv to find volunteers for beautification, citizens on patrol, events, etc. and presented a chart of the results. He thanked those who responded and asked the committee heads to review the responses to find volunteers for their committees. He mentioned sending out another note in order to get an additional round of results. Audience member Tom Lohre asked if the survey would be kept live. B. Pantoja said that it would be. Mr. Lohre asked if the survey could be published in the Chronicle. M. Montgomery asked if there was a way to set up notifications for when new responses were received. B. Pantoja said that the software was free and limited. K. Imbus said that she has a full handwritten version of the volunteers if anyone wanted it.

**Make a Difference Day:** C. Huelsman presented. October 22<sup>nd</sup> will be the project date. The deadline for submission of projects is September 30<sup>th</sup>. He wants to get a group together at Aquarius Star to discuss and will be sending a note via the list-serv. It could involve the Beautification Committee for bulb plantings, BearCAT for volunteers, etc. K. Imbus asked for Christian's contact info: [Christian.huelsman@cliftoncommunity.org](mailto:Christian.huelsman@cliftoncommunity.org). Audience member Tom Lohre asked if this event would be held the same time every year. C. Huelsman said yes. An audience member asked about private property getting notices to clean up yards. He asked why volunteers would clean up private property. C. Huelsman said that certain areas may not be seen as private property.

**Movie Night:** L. Goldenhar said movie night would be held on October 23<sup>rd</sup> this year from 6:30-9pm. The organizing committee began meeting in March of this year to plan the event and began meeting on a weekly basis in mid-August. This is the fourth year for the event and is the only other fundraiser for CTM outside of Clifton House Tour. Last year, only three or four CTM Board members attended. This year, she hopes that all members will buy three to four tickets. Prices are \$5 for kids and \$10 for adults. The movie is Hocus Pocus is with Bette Midler and Sarah Jessica Parker.

**Membership Committee Report:** B. Curwin said that this year's membership was 377 vs. 455 last year. The receipts are at about 75% of the 2011 budget, however, a recent mailing was just sent out as a reminder.

**2012 Clifton House Tour:** K. Imbus stated that B. Blum and E. Clark will be the co-chairs for the 2012 House Tour and thanked them for volunteering. E. Clark said that both he and B. Blum were very thankful for those willing to volunteer. They now have chairs for many of the subcommittees, but they still need a volunteer chair. The event will be held on Mother's Day 2012. They are still looking for houses on the tour. Eric said that anyone interested in volunteering can email him at [eric.clark@cliftoncommunity.org](mailto:eric.clark@cliftoncommunity.org) or talk to him after the meeting. B. Blum has posted a Doodle meeting invite. They are planning to have at least one meeting per month until the event.

**Vine/Woolper Gateway:** M. Vesper provided an update on the southeast corner being redone near the Cincinnati Zoo. She had previously circulated a resolution to the Board. CTM and Uptown applied for a grant from Safe and Clean and received \$5,000. The project is focused on creating a gateway to Clifton and Avondale. CTM is working with Avondale's community council. M. Vesper has been securing bids from contractors. CTM will need to get a revocable easement signed by the property owners to allow the property to be used. The resolution was read by M. Vesper.

Motion: M. Vesper motioned to approve the resolution. L. Goldenhar seconded. M. Montgomery asked about liability issues. K. Imbus stated that CTM would need to ensure that the contractor has liability insurance and workers' compensation insurance. L. Goldenhar asked if CTM would own the property. M. Vesper said that the business owners would retain ownership of the land.

Vote Results: Passed unanimously.

**Noise and Nuisance Ordinance:** M. Montgomery had previously circulated a nuisance ordinance to the Board. He explained that a nuisance can be anything from gambling to drug usage to partying to barking dogs. A chronic nuisance is usually taken to landlords and may involve installing more lighting outside a building, evicting tenants who are the source of the complaints, etc. This process is currently seen as inefficient by many residents. M. Montgomery has reviewed the issue with the help of others, has looked at patterns with a police officer, has represented CTM at a public meeting, etc. All of the involved parties' agree that "Proposal A" would help to lower issues; while "Proposal B" may actually make the issues worse. M. Montgomery read the resolution.

Motion: M. Montgomery moved to pass the resolution. K. Imbus thanked M. Montgomery for his service on the issue and seconded it.

Vote Results: The resolution passed unanimously.

**Clifton Chronicle Update:** Clifton Chronicle Editor Tom Lohre said that an increase in Chronicle downloads was seen after the list-serv mailing but not after the actual Chronicle mailing. Facebook archived all Groups pages so the Clifton Chronicle group was lost. A new group has been started. The Chronicle is now being published in a condensed version with extended stories available online. L. Goldenhar said that she liked the new format.

**Clifton Community Fund:** This year's Clifton Community Fund fundraising dinner will be held on September 25<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm. Cost is \$100 per plate with \$50 of the payment deductible. The Fund has provided a number of improvements for the community. Those interested in the dinner can call Doreen Quinn at 221-3348 to RSVP.

**New Trustee Nominations:** K. Imbus said that the first task of a Board is to replace itself. She asked if any of the audience members were interested in joining. B. Curwin asked how many new trustees were needed. K. Imbus said at least three but probably more. Tom asked that the new Chronicle editor be a Board member.

**Announcement:** K. Imbus stated that Uptown is promoting a shop local campaign. An organizational meeting would be held on Thursday morning. CTM will support.

**Treasurer's Report:** B. Fant reviewed the August income statement.

Motion: B. Fant moved to approve the Treasurer's report. B. Curwin seconded.

Vote Results: The Treasurer's report was unanimously approved with one abstention.

Announcements: Next meeting is October 3, 2011 at 7:00 PM at the Clifton Recreation Center.

Meeting Adjourned 9:12 PM

Respectfully submitted: Jeff Rose, Secretary