



CTM Meeting Minutes
March 4th, 2013, 7:00 p.m.
Clifton Recreation Center

Present: Tom Dwyer, Kevin Marsh, Brian Curwin, Pat Knapp, Bruce Bernard, Ben Pantoja, Ashley Fritz, Adam Balz, Buddy Goose, Anthony Sizemore, Mike Moran, Linda Ash

Absent: Morgan Rich, Joyce Rich, Eric Urbas

Police Report

Officer Lisa Johnson spoke about fires in the neighborhood on Howell and Lowell. The Fire Department is investigating. She reported Clifton is also experiencing a lot of car break-ins and cautioned not to leave laptops or other valuables in cars. To report suspicious activity in the neighborhood, call Ofc. Johnson at 569.8507 or email lisa.johnson@cincinnati-oh.gov. Emails are good because they allow her to easily forward information to appropriate people.

During the Police Report, CTM Trustee Tom Dwyer reported that he will order the three deer cameras requested a few months ago by Officer Johnson.

Fire Report

Captain Mike Washington from Engine Co. 34 and ALS 34 reported that Engine 34 responded to approximately 28 advanced life support runs in the community requiring paramedic interventions, as well as 51 basic life support responses. He reported that fire department personnel are conducting field inspections of fire hydrants on a daily basis. He said the company responded to two extra alarm fires. Engine 34 is in the center of the city so it gets called to fires in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Capt. Washington reminded Clifton neighbors to be careful about putting space heaters close to combustibles. The heaters should be at least three feet away. Asked about the fires on Howell and Terrace, he said the Fire Investigation Bureau is on the case. He noted that firehouse brownouts will continue to impact Clifton as Engine 34 responds for companies that are browned out.

Recreation Center Report

Tom Reese announced that the spring afterschool day camp classes have started, and asked people to be aware of the crosswalks. He advised avoiding this area from 3:45 to 4:15 while parents pick up their children from Fairview School. The CRC's second annual Spring Yard Sale will happen May 4 as a means to raise funds for new A/V equipment, tables and chairs, and other equipment needed when the CRC is renovated later this year. The Yard Sale will be held in the back parking lot. People can rent a space for \$10 or \$15 with a table.

Renovation of the center is still scheduled to begin in August. Before and after school programs will be at Fairview School during the renovation. Reese also reported on an ongoing art project with day camp students creating a mural at Sitwell's coffee house on Ludlow Avenue. It will be complete in April. The project is being directed by DAAP Professor Udo Greinacher and Clifton resident/art consultant Kip Eagen.

Update on New Clifton Branch Library

Kimber Fender, Eva Jane Romaine Coombe Director of the Public Library of Cincinnati & Hamilton County, reported that, after three years of planning and discussion, renovation will soon begin on the new Clifton Branch Library at the George B. Cox House (“Boss Cox House”) at Brookline and Jefferson avenues. In February 2013, the Library board approved the plan that allows the renovation to begin. The Library is now putting out an RFQ (Request for Qualifications) to architects and during its April board meeting, plans to select an architect. The selected architect will complete the design by the end of 2013; the project will be bid a little less than a year from now and construction will begin. The Library received an additional \$250,000 for the project from the Schmidlapp Foundation. In addition, the Clifton Community Fund has pledged to fund the restoration of the stained glass at the top of the stairs in the house.

A public engagement meeting to gather input on the project will be held Wednesday, April 3, at 6:30pm at the current Clifton branch at Ludlow and Ormond avenues.

An audience member asked how many parking spaces are planned for the new branch. Ms. Fender reported there will be 15 to 18. Library staff will park elsewhere.

Another audience member asked how much of the funding is in place for the project. Ms. Fender said all of the funding is in place. She said the Library has no debt and “we don’t start projects until we have the money in hand.” She reported about \$400,000 was raised during a fundraising effort for the project. That will go toward general construction and architect fees. The total project cost is \$3.5 million. The Library already spent \$250,000 for roof work and tuck-pointing.

Another audience member said they heard that some people don’t want the library moved. Ms. Fender replied that she has only heard from one person who does not want it moved. At this point, it’s too late to consider not moving. The Library owns the property and has invested \$350,000 in preparing it for construction. She also said the branch will include meeting rooms available to the public and may include small study rooms.

Update from Committee to Renovate Probasco Fountain

Dick Druffel, chair of the ad hoc Probasco Fountain Committee, reported on the committee’s February 19 community input session. The purpose of the meeting was three-fold: 1) gauge support to restore the fountain, 2) gauge support for possible relocation to improve public interaction with the fountain; and 3) gather input on possible locations. 40 people attended, including the committee members. The meeting began with a slide show providing background on the project, then discussion and input from attendees. The meeting was not intended to result in a vote for a specific location, but to create a list of possible locations so the committee could research them further.

Attendees were asked to write their ideas on 3x5 index cards. The committee compiled the comments and added in comments from emails gathered over the past few weeks. 13 said don’t move (about 25%). 75% were open to a relocation and suggested a range of sites: 14 said move the fountain 10 ft. west of current location; 7 said move to CCAC front lawn; 7 said move to front of Fairview-Clifton School; other suggestions included the new Clifton Branch library, Mt. Storm, and Dunore Park. The Clifton Cultural Arts Center has plans to install a geothermal system, potentially limiting possible locations on its front lawn. The fountain should also not impede programming on the lawn, including the popular summer concerts.

Fountain Committee member Mark McKilip, also on the CCAC board, said the CCAC’s lease with Cincinnati Public Schools gives CCAC exclusive use of the lawn. CCAC would have to get permission from CPS to alter the lawn.

The Fountain will focus its next efforts on researching the three most popular sites identified during the public input meeting (CCAC lawn 10 ft. west of current location, CCAC front lawn, or Fairview-Clifton School).

An additional public engagement meeting was scheduled for March 19. Druffel noted the committee has a “short window” to get this fountain project into the city’s operating budget. It is already in the city’s capital budget for 2013. The committee also plans to have discussions with the city to better understand the limitations of water mains, electric utilities, current arrangements with Cincinnati Water Works, and CCAC.

An audience member who attended the initial public engagement meeting commented that it was not her impression that 75% were okay with moving the fountain. “As I count the numbers [provided by the Fountain Committee], 75% of the people want to keep the fountain where it is.” A discussion ensued about how numbers can be interpreted in many ways. A couple of audience members suggested doing an email survey to gather more input.

Druffel noted there is strong support for keeping the fountain in its general location. There also seems to be an open-mindedness to explore different locations, especially in proximity to the current location.

Audience member Carolyn Miller thanked the committee for all of its work. She also attended the Feb. 19 meeting. She is concerned that moving the fountain will add substantially to project costs, and asked if the city will cover those expenses? Jamie D’Accurso from the City responded that the fountain cannot be renovated in situ. It will have to be dismantled and taken offsite for restoration. It’s not a huge increase to move it because that upkeep has to happen regardless.

Another audience member noted that its current location reminds us of its original intent. Moving it somewhere else would take that away.

Druffel said the committee is approaching this project with the idea that we’re here to execute the community’s wishes. The fountain is underutilized because of its current location. If the community says history is the most important thing here, that’s okay.

Audience member Mary McKnight commented that while some people have said the fountain is a safety hazard in its current location, she has lived in the neighborhood for 40 years and never heard of anyone hitting the fountain.

Druffel said he received comments that during the Wednesday concerts on the green, parents are concerned about children playing near the fountain, very close to Clifton Avenue.

He noted the public meeting revealed unanimous support for restoring the fountain. If it is restored, it will be physically picked up and carted away to be renovated. What Joel Koopman (City of Cincinnati) was trying to say was that he can put it back anywhere, but there will be site development costs associated with making it more accessible to the public. This could include landscaping, benches, etc. The City says if that is wish of the community, we will put that in our budget process and try to work it through.

The committee will gather input from both public engagement meetings and make a preliminary site recommendation to CTM at its April or May meeting, so we can get it into the city’s budget process. If we can agree on a site, the committee will ask CTM to make a resolution and to request city funding for the project.

Cliftonfest 2013 Scope Change

Jan Checco Brown presented a report on CliftonFest 2013, scheduled for September 27-29. Clifton resident and art curator Kip Eagen, who created the Streetscapes concept 10 years and has led it for 10 years, has chosen not to participate this year. The CliftonFest Committee plans to still have some element of chalk art as part of the festival.

Janelle Lee of Uptown Consortium reported that a March 12 meeting at Olives will help the CliftonFest committee find sponsors and volunteers. Olives is hosting dinner and drinks for free.

Olive's owner Scott Crawford said that in addition to traditional sponsorships, the committee is also soliciting in-kind donations. For example, Cincinnati State has agreed to offer its parking lot and a shuttle service to CliftonFest.

CliftonFest will extend from Ludlow at Middleton to Diggs Plaza at Ludlow/Clifton avenues. Cincinnati Parks is a partner in the festival. Plans also include a 5K run in Burnett Woods, a Friday evening Wine Walk, programming on Telford Street ("Artworks Alley") including large-scale chalk art, booth sales and special displays by artists and artisans, and a music program. Lee is working through the Uptown Consortium to get the word out to the area's five largest employers, who employ about 50,000 people.

CTM Response to City Manager's Proposed Parking Privatization

Based on consensus among the CTM trustees, CTM President Ben Pantoja drafted a response to the city's proposed parking privatization plan, strongly urging the Mayor, the City Manager, and City Council to reconsider the plan. His letter follows:

February 28, 2013

To: Mayor Mark Mallory, City Manager Milton Dohoney, and Members of Council:

The Clifton neighborhood community council, Clifton Town Meeting (CTM), has reviewed the recently released details about the parking privatization proposal. The consensus of our Trustees is that this proposal is bad for Clifton and bad for the city of Cincinnati. We sense that most Clifton residents agree based on comments we've heard through e-mails, social media, and in person. I just spoke with Jack Brand, President of CBPA (Clifton Business and Professional Organization), which represents the Business District. Jack says that CBPA is also opposed to parking privatization.

I've carbon copied Trustees from CTM and key members of CBPA on this e-mail. We will soon forward our position to Clifton Residents. We will encourage them to give you their feedback directly. Finally, we will let the media know about our position.

OUR POSITION:

The only good thing about the parking privatization proposal, other than short-term budget gains, is that it would modernize parking meters so that they accept credit cards. In every other way, the proposal would hurt Clifton and other neighborhoods for these reasons:

- Higher parking rates that create an incentive for consumers to go to shopping malls instead of neighborhood business districts
- Enforcement ending at 9pm Mon-Sat versus 6pm now, further driving away consumers
- Enforcement starting earlier, 7am versus 9am, so that a resident who finds late-night parking at a meter has much less time to drive away in the morning before they get a ticket
- Higher fees for parking tickets

We urge you to immediately withdraw this parking privatization proposal and will ask our citizens to join us in opposition. We do not believe that, if the City fails to privatize parking, the only alternative is the frightening "Plan B" that Mr. Dohoney has described to the media. We applaud those Council members who are working on ideas for a "Plan C." Like them, we believe there must be a better way.

Sincerely,

Ben Pantoja, President, Clifton Town Meeting

Approval of CTM Minutes from Last Meeting

The February 2013 CTM meeting minutes were approved as presented. Passed with abstention by Pat Knapp (who prepared the minutes).

Treasurer's Report

CTM Treasurer Tom Dwyer said it was a low-activity month. CTM received \$5,000 in Cincinnati NSP (Neighborhood Support Program) funds for 2012. During the April 2013 meeting, there will be a vote on how the NSP funds should be spent.

Dwyer reported revenues of approximately \$7,600 and expenses of \$1,500 for the spring issue of the Clifton Chronicle. Deer cameras will be purchased next month.

Current cash flow is \$43,407 in the checking account, \$4,416 in savings, \$29,600 in CDs, and \$6,300 in the Streetscapes cash account. We may want to consolidate all of these in one account. There is \$94,700 in available cash.

The Treasurer's Report was approved with one abstention from Dwyer.

A trustee asked if CTM has money budgeted for Streetscapes. Dwyer said yes, \$7,800. CTM will need to discuss how that will be spent.

Goessling's Market

Pantoja noted there is no new information about the status of the grocery store opening. Each month he emails and phones Steve Goessling, owner of the building formerly occupied by Keller's IGA, asking for new information, and invites him to CTM meetings. He has heard back nothing recently.

Business District Report

Beth Whalen of Clifton 20/20 briefly introduced the group, which consists of interested Clifton residents focused on the vitality of the Clifton business district. This group is partnering with CTM, the Clifton Business and Professional Association (CBPA), and Uptown Consortium to hire a leasing consultant to work with landlords and help craft an optimal leasing plan for the Ludlow Avenue business district. Clifton 20/20 has raised \$2,000 toward the consultant fees. Clifton 20/20 requested more time on the CTM agenda to update the community on its efforts to support the business district.

Audience member Daniel Ames asked much the leasing consultant will charge. Pantoja replied that the proposal currently is \$25,000 (reduced from an initial proposal of \$27,500), of which \$10,000 will be paid by Uptown Consortium, and \$7,500 each by CTM and CBPA. Clifton 20/20 has agreed to contribute \$5,000.

CTM Trustee Tony Sizemore noted that CTM's Business District Committee has done benchmarking with other neighborhood councils about their efforts to improve their business districts. The committee is still trying to identify the appropriate people from various councils and ask them targeted questions, such as how entertainment district designation might be helpful. Several CTM Trustees recently attended the Invest in Neighborhoods-sponsored Neighborhood Summit recently and made valuable contacts among other neighborhood councils. The committee hopes to have a leasing consultant contract to present for approval to CTM during its April meeting.

Trustee Updates

Kevin Marsh is working with the city to get \$5,000 approved for Clifton to do something with utility boxes to make them less graffiti prone. He spoke with former CTM President Pete Schneider, who submitted the initial request. He said Clifton can get the \$5,000, but the city will not provide supplies and labor. The idea that has been proposed is to cover the boxes with paintings of literary classics, protected by graffiti-proof coating.

Clifton resident and art curator Kip Eagen noted he has been working with the Clifton Community, Keep Cincinnati Beautiful Fund, and Uptown Consortium on planning the project. He said he will be the liaison among the groups. This will be a pilot project that will start with three or four boxes. There are about 10 boxes in Clifton that get “tagged” constantly. If the literary classics idea cannot be implemented due to copyright issues, local Clifton authors have volunteered to have their book covers depicted. The cost is about \$1,000 per utility box.

Brian Curwin noted CTM’s Communications and Membership Committee is meeting to make plans for improvements to the CTM website as well as a membership drive.

Pat Knapp reported that she and Joyce Rich will meet with the Haile Foundation and the American Sign Museum on March 11 to discuss the possibility of Clifton being a part of the CoSign project, a 2012 pilot project that paired Northside businesses with artists and fabricators to create effective signage and thereby stimulate economic activity in the neighborhood business district.

Adam Balz reported the CTM Beautification Committee is looking for volunteers to help clean up the Clifton Plaza garden in four or five weeks. He worked on the gateway gardens at Vine and Woolper on his own. He also noted the grill-out for the Memorial Day Parade will need volunteers.

Mike Moran said he is meeting with the city regarding the ongoing discussion on form-based codes. ...this Thursday 6 p.m at city hall in chambers.

Linda Ash, chair of the Events Committee, reported has been attending CliftonFest planning meetings and some smaller strategy meetings with Ben Pantoja and Morgan Rich.

Community Q&A

Tom Lohre gave a brief Chronicle update. He reported that the Chronicle incurred commercial postage fees due to an advertising error. He encouraged CTM committee members to write committee reports for the Chronicle.

Announcements

The next CTM meeting is Monday, April 1, 2013, at the Clifton Recreation Center (not April 2 as previously reported).