



**CTM Meeting**  
**March 10, 2014**  
**Clifton Cultural Arts Center**

In attendance: Ben Pantoja, Tom Dwyer, Adam Balz, Ashley Fritz, Bruce Bernard, Joyce Rich, Kevin Marsh, Adam Hyland, Morgan Rich, Tony Sizemore, Eric Urbas, Buddy Goose, Michael Moran, Pat Knapp

Absent: Linda Ash

**Police Report**

Neighborhood Officer Lisa Johnson reported there are still a lot of thefts from auto occurring in Clifton, as well as solicitors knocking on front doors and their associates going to the back of homes and stealing property. CPD has made several arrests for aggravated robberies, particularly related to UC students being robbed. CPD also made 6 arrests and closed 7 home burglary cases.

**Fire Department**

Captain Jim Kettler from the Cincinnati Fire Department reported no major structure fires in the neighborhood in the last month. Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are available at the Clifton fire station and fire personnel will even install them. For information, call 352.2334. Capt. Kettler also reported the firehouse will begin spring servicing of fire hydrants soon.

**Recreation Center**

Tom Reese, manager of the Clifton Rec Center reported that the Rec Center renovation is on schedule. Summer camp will be temporarily housed at the McKee Center in Northside. There are a few spots still available for 6-12 year olds. He also reported the center's latest collaborative art project, Women's Workbooks, will be on exhibit March 8 through April 5 at the Kennedy Arts Center.

**Minutes of February 2014 Meeting Were Approved**

**Change in Signage at Good Samaritan**

Jake Matig with TriHealth reported that as an outcome of TriHealth's rebranding initiative in 2012, new signage will be installed at Good Samaritan Hospital. The signage program will include the addition of gateway signs at both ends of the Dixmyth Avenue segment in front of the hospital, new directional signs reinforcing the primary entrance on Dixmyth, and updated garage signage. The plans have been submitted to the City of

Cincinnati and a zoning variance hearing is expected later this month. If all goes as planned, the signs will be installed in June.

An audience member asked if the new signage will eliminate the community garden on Dixmyth and Clifton. Matig said it will not be affected. Another audience member asked if the new branding will eliminate the Good Samaritan graphic now on the main hospital building. Matig said the Good Samaritan Foundation will continue using the Good Samaritan graphic, but all TriHealth facilities will use its cross symbol.

### ***CTM Resolution on Best Use of the Former IGA Property***

CTM President Ben Pantoja reported that CTM has drafted a resolution to the City of Cincinnati stating its support of a full-service grocery store in the property formerly occupied by Keller's IGA.

CTM Trustees felt strongly that the neighborhood's wishes regarding a grocery store should be voiced to the City now, since it appears that the purchase of the former IGA property may be more likely now that its current owner, Steve Goessling, is considering offers less than the \$2.3 million he has been asking for the building. CTM's position is that if developers purchase the property, they and the City should be aware that the Clifton neighborhood wishes it to contain a grocery store component.

Pantoja stated that he and Trustee Michael Moran, a commercial real estate broker who specializes in retail and commercial development around the country, drafted the initial resolution, then refined it based on input from other trustees. It was approved by the Clifton Business and Professional Association (CBPA).

Pantoja also stated that because CTM has a critical role in neighborhood zoning issues and other decisions impacting local businesses, it cannot and will not endorse any particular enterprise, including the Clifton Market Coop, which is in negotiations with Goessling to purchase the property. CTM's role is to strongly advocate for the return of a grocery store to the Ludlow Avenue business district.

Trustee Michael Moran noted that the resolution is a strong tool for Clifton, as any zoning variances required for use of the property other than for its current purpose would come through CTM. He said that according to the Hamilton County Auditor, the current use of the site at 319 Ludlow Ave. is as a supermarket. The Ludlow Avenue business district is an Environment Quality District, which restricts usage and requires the city to ensure that it is being used for its stated purpose. Any other use would be the result of zoning variances through the City, and involving CTM.

Moran added that the possibilities for opening a new grocery store in the space have not been exhausted and that it is clear the neighborhood desires that it be used as a grocery store. If and when the grocery store possibilities have been exhausted, the community may wish to be more flexible.

Trustee Eric Urbas noted that since the resolution is so important to the community, CTM should deliberate another month. Trustee Tony Sizemore said he feels it is important to not eliminate any possibilities for developing the property.

The resolution was passed with two abstentions: Adam Hyland and Buddy Goose. Adam Hyland is on the Clifton Market Coop Board, and Buddy Goose's wife is also on the board.

The resolution is provided below, verbatim. Cincinnati Vice Mayor and Clifton resident David Mann noted that he will introduce the resolution to City Council during session this week.

### **Resolution to Support Grocery Development on Ludlow Avenue, March 10, 2014**

In the three years since Keller's IGA closed its doors on Ludlow Avenue, residents of Clifton have made their wishes clear: they want another grocery store. They've expressed their wishes in hundreds of posts on social media, at almost every meeting of CTM (Clifton Town Meeting), and in letters and emails to CTM. Clifton is a walkable neighborhood, and walking to the grocery store is something residents sorely miss.

Many businesses have also told CTM Trustees that their sales declined after the grocery store closed. They say they are barely hanging on, that they miss having a grocery store as a big anchor to increase foot traffic and patronage throughout the business district.

In February, 2011, CTM affirmed to the Mayor, the City Manager, and City Council that CTM's goal was to "promote a full-service grocery store that serves the neighborhood". It is now time that CTM reaffirms that goal. On March 10<sup>th</sup>, this resolution was reviewed with and accepted by the Clifton Business and Professional Association (CBPA).

As Steve Goessling began to lower his price on the former IGA building, discussions have heated up. Last year, price was well over \$2 million and no serious negotiation. Now it's under \$2 million and things have started to heat up.

It is not CTM's business to support the co-op as a specific entity, or any specific entity. Our best role is to make the community's wishes known about the best use of the property. Moran recommended we make a resolution to the city that we support the use of the building as a grocery store.

The current administration of Clifton Town Meeting would like to reassert that the highest and best use for the property located at 319 Ludlow Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45220 is full service grocery retail. CTM is not endorsing any specific grocery solution and will not take the lead for any specific solution. If the building remains a stand-alone grocery store (or supermarket as the current land use definition would imply), the solution could be a grocery chain, an independent grocer, or a Food Coop. If the current building is replaced, the solution could also be a mixed-use property with a minimum of 15,000 square feet of street level grocery retail in concert with a multi-story co-occupant(s).

--Ben Pantoja, President, Clifton Town Meeting

### *Audience Questions Regarding Resolution*

Rebecca Hearst asked if the resolution would preclude a developer from developing the property surrounding the actual address of the former IGA store. Trustee Moran responded that he believes the city would see any adjacent space as part of the property we're defining.

Steve Slack asked if CTM supports any kind of development there that would go beyond the current zoning code height limit. Moran responded that CTM is not trying to tell developers what they can do or cannot do with the property if they purchase it, only stating that the community wants a grocery store there. If they can find a logical solution with multiple-level resident and office space, the neighborhood might support that.

Tom Osterman asked if Kroger was one of the grocery chains potentially interested in the property, and noted that Kroger recently purchased the Harris Teeter chain, which develops small-footprint grocery stores in urban areas. Moran responded that CTM does not know for sure. Any interest has been reported primarily by Goessling, and some has been hearsay. He said personally and professionally, he would find it difficult to believe that Kroger would be interested in the space, since it has two stores within a mile of the property.

Carolyn Miller asked if the former IGA store is in sound shape for development. Adam Hyland (Clifton Market Coop Board) noted the building is in good shape. The roof repair was completed. There were problems with flooring in parts of the store where heavy refrigerated units were placed, but other than that "the bones are good."

Michael Earl noted that smaller, urban-scale grocery stores are becoming popular elsewhere in the U.S. and that a grocery store could be combined with residential units and a parking garage, which would be attractive to people patronizing other Ludlow Avenue businesses.

Marty Greenwell asked if the 15,000 square feet specified as "full-service" in the resolution means shopping space or overall space including storage. Moran noted that CTM sees 15,000 sq. ft. as minimum for a full-service grocery. The property is 22,000 square feet with 8,000 additional square feet in the basement. Grocers tend to not use extensive storage space because they put their merchandise on the shelves to sell it quickly. The 15,000 sq. ft. number is not magic, but a minimum for the site to occupy.

Vice Mayor David Mann noted the meeting and resolution are very helpful to him as a member of City Council. He believes the resolution has a positive tone and will communicate the neighborhood's wishes to Council. Council is very wary of departing from the express wishes of a community council, especially one as strong as CTM. Through CTM, the neighborhood will have plenty of chances to respond to a developer's proposal. City Council will want the development to be something supported by the

community. He said he is very impressed with what CTM has done to craft the resolution.

### **Clifton Cooperative Market**

Adam Hyland and Shaun McCance, both members of the Clifton Cooperative Market Steering Committee, spoke about the group's efforts in the past year to research the viability of a cooperative grocery in Clifton. The idea first emerged three years ago when Keller's IGA closed. When Steve Goessling purchased the store and it looked like Clifton would get its grocery store back, the conversation abated. Since last summer, with no grocery store in sight, people began to bring the topic up on NextDoor Clifton again. A group of interested neighbors began meeting and out of those meetings, a core group formed that has been doing research and forming a plan to start a coop. The group has been meeting at least weekly since last August, and when they set up a booth at CliftonFest in September 2013, more than 700 people expressed their interest in a grocery coop for Clifton.

The Clifton Cooperative Market Steering Committee includes

Adam Hyland  
Emma Hartkemeier  
Gary Goldman  
Jo Taylor  
Marilyn Hyland  
Mary Rita Dominic  
Robert Krikorian  
Shaun McCance

The group is now in negotiations with Steve Goessling to purchase the former IGA building. They are developing a pro forma business plan for the coop, have incorporated as a coop with the State of Ohio, and have bylaws drafted. The group has been consulting with already-established grocery coops, especially Blooming Foods in Bloomington, Indiana (which has just opened its fifth store). They are working with nationally recognized coop consultants and attorneys. A detailed financial plan/business model cannot yet be shared because the pro forma is still being developed. However, Hyland and McCance said that the co-op will be member-owned but run by professional grocery store management. Shoppers will not need to be members to shop there. The group plans to raise money for the building and necessary building repairs and upgrades by selling \$200 memberships, soliciting loans from neighbors and, once they have 50% of the capital needed, will approach banks for commercial loans. More details will be provided in a public meeting scheduled for Saturday, March 15, at the Esquire Theater.

The group says it is 100% committed to opening a grocery store on Ludlow as soon as possible. They believe it is the best route to get a grocery store open as soon as possible on Ludlow. Businesses on Ludlow have been suffering for three years since the loss of the anchor grocery store, and many are hanging on by a thread. A locally owned coop will be able to work with other Ludlow businesses, not against them.

Trustee Kevin Marsh asked "How much money in total do you need to raise to buy the property, build it out, stock it, and have some working capital to make payroll, etc.?" The Coop group said they could not answer specifically at this time.

Members of the audience had several questions.

Mary Rose Venter asked about the timeline negotiating with Goessling. Hyland said the purchase agreement has been in Goessling's hands for weeks and the sooner he signs it, the better. The more that Goessling hears from the community that this is what we want from him, the better.

Gillian Sella (sp?) asked how many shares the Coop will need to share to make this work? McCance said the funding won't come just from shares. The initial fundraising drive will be to sell membership, which will give us running capital and show crucial community support. Beyond that, we'll be soliciting owner loans and once we reach 50% of our needed capital, we are more likely to obtain commercial loans. He said Blooming Foods just opened its fifth stores and raised \$1.4 million in owner loans in just two months.

?? Buckley noted that most coops start in smaller spaces. Is the IGA store too big? Adam Hyland said that during a coop conference recently attended by the Steering Committee, they learned that most coops start in spaces that are too small, restricting their growth. All of the studies we've seen so far tell us that this site is more than doable for what we're proposing.

Rama ?? asked how we can get Mr. Goessling to come and talk with us? Hyland noted that the highly attended CTM meeting is a message to Goessling. He also suggested writing letters to the editor and posting on NextDoor Clifton. He said Goessling knows the community supports opening a new grocery store as soon as possible.

Marilyn Hyland, also a Steering Committee member, reminded the audience that Clifton is also the neighborhood that saved the Esquire Theater and made it a popular destination for Clifton and the entire city. She cited the Clifton Cultural Arts Center as another example of Clifton's "can-do" attitude. The food coop is so much in the Clifton tradition of taking the matter into our own hands, rolling up our sleeves, and getting the job done. Our audience is a 15-minute drive radius. What's even more important than movies is the food we eat and the social space we inhabit. This is an important role for the grocery store.

### **Treasurers Report – Michael Moran**

Trustee Michael Moran reported total expenses of \$5,124 in February. CTM's cash position is currently \$83,591.94

### **Trustee One-Minute Reports**

Adam Balz, chair of the CTM Beautification Committee, reported that CTM and CBPA both put in \$2,000 for 20 flowerpots on Ludlow. Through a Cincinnati Parks program, the pots will be maintained by the Parks Department. CTM will prepare the pots, but the Parks Department will water them regular, replace flowers as needed, and do spring, summer, and fall plantings. This is a big bonus to the community, as it has been difficult to assign responsibility for watering and maintaining the pots in the past. In the next two weeks, Balz's committee will be preparing the pots.

Trustee Kevin Marsh reported he reviewed the CTM mailing list to eliminate duplications and 50 names were removed, eliminating 50 mailings of the Chronicle that weren't necessary.

Trustee Tony Sizemore, chair of the CTM Events Committee, says the committee is gearing up for events later this year, including the Memorial Day Parade and a possible road rally through the neighborhood.

Trustee Pat Knapp reported that CTM's new Fundraising Committee has met several times. Currently the committee is focused on a Halloween-focused, adult event in partnership with the Clifton Cultural Arts Center.

### **Public Q&A**

Daniel Ames noted that minutes from the January and February CTM meetings were not accessible from the CTM website, and reminded trustees that it is their responsibility and legal obligation to make the minutes available to the public. Trustee Pat Knapp responded that the problem was due to a technical issue with the new website, and she will make sure the minutes are posted as soon as possible.