

**CIC City Beautiful Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**December 2, 2025**  
**City of University Heights**  
**Wiley Education Building**

Present	Shawn Belt, President Michele Weiss, Board Member Winifred Weizer, Vice President Sheri Sax, Board Member Brad Bryan, Law Director Tessa Jackson, Economic Development Director Roberta Rubin, Secretary Cici Caver, Resident/Graphic Designer
Absent	Markell Davis, Housing Director Katie Iaconis, Treasurer Michael Dylan Brennan, Board Member

Mr. Belt called this meeting of the City of University Heights CIC to order at 6:00 p.m. He asked Ms. Weizer to introduce their guest.

Ms. Weizer introduced Cici Caver; a University Heights resident and graphic designer who had expressed interest in becoming involved with the city. She was invited to discover the CIC and hoped that they could enlist some of her services.

Mr. Belt commented that Ms. Rubin would have the minutes from the previous two meetings available the next day and could be approved at the next meeting. Ms. Iaconis would not be present but messaged that the CIC bank account balance was \$74,922.11 and he would be speaking with her about upcoming financial duties which needed to be addressed. They would continue to discuss about the Home Resource Repair Center and Ms. Weizer had been communicating with them about registration. The March Tuesday evening dates had been verified and they would hold the sessions on the 10th, 17th, 24th, and 31st. He had already prepared a flier and was ready to find interested people to obtain their contact information for the program even before they were familiar with the registration process. He suggested using a JOT or Google form.

Ms. Weizer suggested that they begin in January. According to HRCC, they could open registration a month before. They could run through the city website without any problem and verified with Mrs. Weiss that she could confirm this. All the information would be collected from the city She asked Mr. Bryan if this would be more efficient.

Mr. Bryan responded that it would likely work but they needed to figure out how they would publicize it.

Mrs. Weiss commented that they could use a JOT form, they could use it on the website registration. They needed to figure out who would create the JOT form and it would likely be her assistant.

Ms. Weizer commented that they were going to need a story for the Observer to publish in writing or on their website. One of the board members could possibly help with that. That would be helpful. Also, they had to decide whether to advertise it because of the cost. There could also be a weekly newsletter.

Mr. Bryan mentioned that they could announce it at a council meeting.

Mrs. Sax suggested that they could do both.

Ms. Weizer commented that once first-time homebuyers knew about the workshop, they would want classes like this and there were only 20 slots per workshop. If they received the information on a jot form, they could send out a reminder to them to sign up at the HRCC website. actually go to the HRCC website to sign up for it.

Mr. Belt commented that if the city was going to intake the initial registration, they could just ask for basic information. It would be more of an interest form. They needed to ensure that the person registered was a University Heights resident.

Ms. Weizer would confirm the opening registration date with Ms. Goodfriend.

Mr. Belt commented that he registered a Facebook page but was not yet live. They needed a logo and a name for the page to make it appear inviting.

Mrs. Sax commented that these were good ideas but would not heavily depend on Facebook because many people chose to not be on Facebook. It was good as an addition to the other communication tools.

Ms. Weizer mentioned that they could also publish on Nextdoor another place where they could post and possibly have Ms. Caver help with the logo.

Ms. Caver responded that she would love to and would look at the flyer.

Mr. Belt suggested that this would be their final meeting of the year and would like to meet in the middle of January to ensure that they were on track. He wanted to ensure that they were making the best of the meetings and fill up the workshops.

Mrs. Sax commented that the point was to meet a minimum of quarterly to coincide with financial reporting but they could meet as it made sense.

Ms. Weizer commented that there were four other HRRC workshops that they planned and needed to decide when they would be going to be there, who would be running them and what

classes they were holding. Doing the first eight made sense and if they continued annually, the residents could pick their classes.

Mr. Belt commented that they did not know when HRRC needed to have a go ahead for the fall classes or when the cutoff date was for them to put it in the request.

Mrs. Weiss asked Mr. Belt if he could summarize what the to-do items were.

Mr. Belt commented that beginning in January, the city, the mayor's office would create a jot form or a Google form, and they could then advertise an interest list and contact form for people and they could notify people when registration was open. They should have a date by then and people would know when to sign up. They would need to know that this was not a guarantee that they would be admitted into the class but they would be the first to know availability.

Mrs. Sax mentioned that it had to be centralized, to avoid any misunderstandings.

Mr. Bryan mentioned that someone needed to ensure that they were still interested. Saying they were interested did not mean that they were not.

Ms. Weizer commented that if they were going to do that, they needed to give Ms. Goodfriend a list of names for the workshops to start out. Once the slots were filled, people could contact them directly to finish out. They would receive a list back of who attended and the actual turnout.

Mrs. Sax asked if they were going to have a short questionnaire or survey to show that they attended and how they liked the workshop?

Mr. Belt commented that the HRC may already have one and if they wanted to add anything else.

Ms. Weizer commented on going with the one that they already had and the CIC could check the flyer in advance.

Mr. Belt commented that he would contact Ms. Caver about improving the flyer and would work on the Facebook page. He mentioned that Ms. Weizer would ask when they needed to put in a request for fall classes and ask about a follow-up evaluation. Also, he asked who wanted to handle talking to the observer?

Mrs. Weiss mentioned that she could ask Pat Jones who was on the board and that it would be good to have the flyer there or even the contact information. It was a good way to advertise it.

Ms. Weizer suggested looking at the rates because they were expensive. They would have to look at their ad rates because Observer ads were not cheap.

Mrs. Weiss believed that it was between \$500 and \$700 for a moderate ad.

Ms. Caver asked if there was a way for the city to pull a list of all the residents who might have exterior violations?

Ms. Weizer commented that it was a good idea but could not do it for this set of workshops because it was an initial launch.

Mr. Belt commented that Ms. Caver's idea was good. With the second set of classes, they were geared towards people being cited for external violations. What were the most common issues and knew that the council was already working on sidewalks. What were other central issues that they could offer classes on? Ms. Davis is part of the CIC board and would have the best idea of what people were being cited most for.

Mrs. Weiss commented that a quarter page in the Observer was \$270.

Mr. Belt remarked that the cost of advertising was justified if they had to find 200 people but they needed to find only 20 for four classes.

Ms. Weizer commented that they could do a write-up and get it in the Observer for January. In February, and if they were not filling the classes, they could post an ad.

Mrs. Sax mentioned that something to consider was a comment section in the survey area with some direct quotes. It was helpful for future grant writing.

Ms. Jackson commented that if it was only 20 seats, they would not have a problem. They would become oversubscribed because in this economy where people were struggling financially, they were going to turn into do-it-yourselfers.

Mrs. Sax commented that they wanted to cast a wide net, stir up enthusiasm and get people on a waiting list. They did not want to feel discriminatory.

Ms. Jackson commented that a pilot would give them a chance to change the program without everybody knowing. Their next version would be better than their first version because they had a chance to change it.

Ms. Weizer asked if they decided to not put in an ad this time?

Mrs. Weiss mentioned that she would ask Pat if they could do a write-up explaining that the city was moving forward with the CIC.

Mrs. Sax commented that a picture at the Heights Resource Center was helpful, too.

## RESIDENT MEDIATION CONTRACT

Mr. Belt commented that the contract was sent to Mr. Bryan and himself from the Cleveland Mediation Center. Mr. Bryan offered some revisions and those changes were made to the contract. He asked for everyone to read the contract and send any comments or issue to him or Mr. Bryan. If there were no issues from anyone, he would go ahead and sign.

Mr. Bryan commented that they could not be discussed over email. He suggested that they vote to approve the agreement but permit Mr. Belt to make changes but not non-material changes such as changing the prices.

Mr. Belt suggested quickly going over the main points in the contract.

Mr. Belt commented that the changes that were made were from the original contract. He believed it was November 1st, so I did not change it to the 2026 calendar year. There was an indemnification clause which they could not agree to for legal reasons. They agreed to the revised language to state they were not responsible for claims arising from the negligence of University Heights.

Ms. Weizer mentioned to Mr. Bryan that at the last board meeting the committee thought it was a hundred dollars per contract but it turned out to be 150 dollars. They took it down to thirteen mediations from 20 and for the first contract, they could revise it as they went along if they used those 13.

Mr. Bryan confirmed that the \$2,000 expense was the same and if they had ample demand the following year, they could appropriate more funds.

Mrs. Weiss added that it was per diem so they were not obligated to the two thousand although they would likely use the 13.

Mr. Belt asked how they would share this information with the community and how they would set the protocol?

Mrs. Sax commented that they could announce a proposal in a public manner and that they did not have to reinvent this wheel every time.

Mrs. Weiss suggested social media, the Heights Observer, the Weekly and the Mosaic and that the mediation could become a recurring service.

Ms. Weizer mentioned to Mr. Bryan Brad that in discussion with him, they needed to determine who referred people to the mediation center. Mr. Bryan responded that it would run through him or to contact the city to approve the mediation. The police and building and housing departments knew residents who they would want to encourage into mediation. This particularly applied to disputes between neighbors.

Mr. Bryan commented that he could communicate with the departments and then determine who would communicate with the residents. He could then send the contact information to the mediation center.

Ms. Weizer mentioned that she initially believed that the request would come directly from the departments.

Mr. Bryan commented that there was nothing wrong with self-referral but also did not want people directly reaching out to the mediation center.

Mrs. Sax stated that they needed to process an application.

Mr. Belt suggested a simple application form available on the city website. That form would be sent to Mr. Bryan and then move forward with it.

Mr. Bryan commented that all they needed was contact information, address, a simple description, and the nature of the dispute.

Mr. Belt commented that he did not like emails because they became lost too easily and preferred the simplicity of a form. They were given exact information for both neighbors with detailed descriptions. With the forum being in one place, they could link onto it from anywhere.

Mrs. Sax asked if there was any liability to the city since they removed the indemnification clause. out the indemnification clause.

Mr. Bryan responded that he did not see any liability. Someone could file a suit but he did not see how and could not control that.

Mrs. Sax remarked that it would be on the mediation center.

Mr. Bryan commented that both people had to volunteer to participate in the mediation and both sides had to agree to the resolution at the mediation.

Mrs. Sax asked if they would need a disclaimer which stated there was no guarantee of a resolution and adding on the form what they had tried up until this point? It may prompt them to realize that they had not tried anything and there could be a correspondence sent to encourage them to try to work it out themselves. Sometimes, people were afraid to approach each other. At a recent planning commission meeting, the neighbors spoke with each other and that seemed to have a positive resolution. They needed a descriptor of what this was, where the mediation would be held and the duration of time it would take. This body should make up the form since the city was taking responsibility for the contract.

Mr. Bryan commented that he believed they tried to set aside one hour, or an hour and a half. If it was to run longer. They could possibly hold a second session. In most cases, all it took was one session but if appropriate, they would have a follow-up.

Mrs. Weiss commented that CIC would be designing the form to go on the website and should be interdepartmental. She had worked with Mr. Bryan and Mr. McConville on other mediations. They normally went to city council, police or housing or the law director.

Ms. Weizer commented that police and housing knew the issues and if the police were involved, the problem was going south or the people were about to sue each other. It was the same thing with housing and neighborhood disputes. The benefit was instead of going to court, they could resolve whatever was between them and it was likely that 90% of those were going to be fence disputes. Mediation could work where the city was unable to resolve the issue using the city codes. If mediation could help resolve it that was a positive for the city and the neighborhood because neighbor problems affected the surrounding community.

Mrs. Sax mentioned that it would be good to record metrics or outcomes measurements. How many people took advantage of this, was the dispute resolved, or if there was a wait list, and the general effectiveness of the program.

Mr. Bryan commented that they could maintain a record of how many people were initially referred, and how many people followed through to completion.

Mrs. Sax suggested that if they began in mid-year in December, they could do it in January the following year and it was better than guessing or hearing anecdotes.

Ms. Weizer commented that there was nothing in the contract about follow-up to see if the matter was resolved. There was confidentiality and the city did not want to be involved with it. However, they should be able to state that yes, they completed it and it was resolved and done. If not resolved, they needed to know it because it could potentially be an ongoing problem.

Mr. Bryan remarked that in article 4, it mentioned the parties signing a written agreement that they would share that document with the city. Whether resolved or not resolved was not confidential.

Mrs. Sax asked whether the administration or the CIC (this body) was responsible for circling back to the mediation center to understand the outcome.

Mr. Bryan responded that he believed it would be this body. They could put it on the agenda for whichever meeting they wanted in the future.

Ms. Weizer mentioned that it did not have to be difficult for the CIC to produce the form.

Mr. Bryan suggested reading out to the mediation center because the CIC would mirror their form and see how their form presented.

Mrs. Sax commented that they likely had their own metrics and if there was too much or not enough on their form, it could be amended.

Mrs. Weiss recommended approving the contract before developing the form.

Mr. Belt commented that they could do that this evening and was looking for a motion to approve this contract.

Mrs. Sax remarked that she would like to make that motion.

**MOTION BY MRS. SAX, SECONDED BY MS. WEIZER to approve the 2026 Mediation Contract. All in favor said, "Aye."**

It was agreed that the contract would be signed that evening.

### **COMMUNITY BENEFITS WISH LIST**

Ms. Jackson mentioned that in the past month, some non-commercial property developers approached her and asked about variances and benefits. This was an ideal opportunity to discuss the possibility of receiving community benefit in exchange for giving the developers private benefit from the city. They mentioned benches and other types of beautification projects. This would be an easy request when certain property owners were seeking to resolve variance or signage issues. It was a community benefits proposal so when the developer approached the planning commission to ask for these variances, it may assist the process for the city. It was common practice and she noted that University Heights did not practice this or discuss community benefits. She wanted to comment about what that might look like and could put together a policy around it which could be reviewed by the city. She wanted to get feedback from the CIC as a body, because they had discussed city beautification projects such as benches, flowers, pocket parks and other projects. She would use it as a tool to get beautification projects done or sponsored.

Mrs. Weiss wanted to clarify that Ms. Jackson was saying. For example, someone approached BZA for approval on a sign. They were not eligible for the sign because it did not adhere to the code. BZA would not approve the sign but would suggest other ideas to benefit their business?

Ms. Jackson stated that she was not saying that; it was not a quid pro quo. It was a community benefits proposal and the City of Cleveland had an entire process and procedure for it. It was just an idea.

Ms. Weizer stated that she understood what Ms. Jackson was saying. Cruze used to be great at this in Solon. If someone wanted to develop, they would warn the city that the water runoff would be problematic and find a way to add retaining ponds even if it meant losing another house. It was a built-in tradeoff. The CIC did not do that and had nothing to do with it.

Ms. Jackson stated that she was contemplating scenarios where people were looking for ideas about what they wanted to do and which might interest the CIC? It was not about a quid pro quo, but if someone brought up the topic, what were some things she could present?

Mrs. Weiss asked Ms. Jackson if she could give a tangible example of what she was thinking about?

Ms. Jackson responded that this was different type of community. As a case in point, if she were doing a development in another city, she might have a project which would have an impact and the solution was to create a park and more affordability. In University Heights, there was a great deal of small commercial and people trying to alter existing buildings, do small projects and make small changes. Her entire point was that no one was going to request twenty-five affordable units for a project.

Mrs. Weiss requested an example of what the CIC could offer such as with benches and how it would appear in a conversation.

Ms. Jackson commented that the CIC was not offering it but there could be something that would be of interest to the CIC which would not cost the CIC anything. The CIC could assemble a wish list of items that they would like to have done throughout the city.

Mrs. Sax asked Ms. Jackson if she was talking about strategic planning?

Mr. Bryan mentioned that these were smaller projects.

Mr. Belt commented that beyond this idea, it would be at an administrative level and they were not yet at a level for the CIC to say that these were projects they could help with in the city.

Mrs. Weiss suggested listing what they were discussing in terms of beautification because Ms. Jackson was not at that meeting.

Mr. Belt stated that at the last meeting they discussed city-wide benches, utility box wraps, plantings, parks and murals. It would be good to have a list that CIC could refer to set goals. Whoever wished to assist with that was more than welcome.

Ms. Jackson stated that before a major development project, all these public conversations would ideally be held beforehand. She viewed the CIC as a public voice and would know as a body what the public would be interested in and they would have a ready wish list.

Mr. Belt commented that he believed it was smart and would help them “get their ducks in a row.” It would include not only what they had discussed but would also be on record. It was a good list to work on and he could compile a list based off of meeting notes which could be formalized at the next meeting.

Mr. Belt asked if there was any, any new business?

Mrs. Weiss mentioned that some council members and a resident had approached her and wanted to know if this was appropriate for the CIC or if this was a city matter? The resident wanted to focus on youth programming and believed there was a need, particularly for middle schoolers who were not being served by the school system and wanted to know whether it was appropriate for CIC or for the city. There was a Y on Lee Road with a previous evening program but now, there was no place for the kids to go. He mentioned piloting a program through sports and

leadership training. They could talk about getting one of the gyms, either in the Cleveland Heights Community Center or at the Wiley Education Building, and then possibly using the library to do some leadership training. The initial pilot would be small and low cost and was of community interest. They could also talk about having the city look at that.

Ms. Weizer was verifying that Mrs. Weiss was asking if the CIC would fund that pilot program?

Mrs. Weiss asked if the CIC would be interested in hearing more of a presentation about it and then possibly acting on it or would they rather have the city take the lead on it?

Mrs. Sax commented that youth programming was important for so many reasons there were gaps because the schools could only do so much. However, it required staffing and was uncertain if they were asking for staffing and whether it was appropriate.

Mrs. Weiss commented that this person was qualified and had resources for grant funding. They might have to contribute a small amount and she invited him to put together a proposal.

Ms. Weizer commented that he was looking for a sponsor more than a funder.

Mrs. Weiss stated that it felt like the city/slash CIC. They had the ability to advertise and publicize it. They city had the resources to house it. She mentioned that hopefully, the city would collaborate with Cleveland Heights and the school district where there were two gyms and a library available. They had already established those relationships .

Mrs. Sax commented that the other part of this was nutrition. She was a dietitian and had worked with government food programs for kids before, during and after school, plus summer times. They could start in the summer. They had parks as well as other city resources in University Heights. They could partner with the Children's Hunger Alliance to get food and activities that were not in a vacuum. They could use the library on rainy days. Rather than biting off an entire programming for youth, they needed to define what they were talking about.

Ms. Weizer asked about who would sponsor the person and what the city's liability would be?

Mr. Belt stated that he was intrigued to hear more but they needed more information.

Mr. Bryan commented that they needed to determine if it was the CIC or the city program and if they were providing publicity, space, and a small amount of funding for only University Heights children?

Mrs. Weiss commented that they should have him prepare the proposal and that the space was potentially at Wiley or the library which the city did not own.

Mrs. Sax stated that they needed more information but when taking all the pieces, including fixing your house, fixing your relationships, and working with kids, these were all significant and easily fell through cracks.

Ms. Weizer commented that The CIC was at a point whereby taking baby steps, they could finally achieve something and allow it to grow into an organization that could do more.

Mr. Belt mentioned to Mrs. Weiss that she had talked about grant funders in the past, and going forward, she wished to work with somebody on the city side of things. Would this involve the CIC and if so, could they have a presentation early in the next year?

Mrs. Weiss responded that it was clear that the grant writer would be available for CIC or the city.

Mr. Belt asked if they could set this on the agenda for the next meeting and would like to hear about the grant since they had been discussing it for a long time.

Mrs. Weiss commented that they could present their ideas to her and she could then talk about funding. They would invite her for the next meeting.

The committee agreed that January 27th at 6 p.m. was ideal.

**MOTION BY MRS. WEIZER, SECONDED BY MRS. SAX to adjourn the meeting. All in favor said, Aye.”**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

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Roberta Rubin, Assistant Clerk of Council