

## **CIC City Beautiful Committee Meeting Minutes**

**City of University Heights**

**Tuesday, October 21, 2025**

**Wiley Education Building**

Present        Shawn Belt, Chair  
                  Sheri Sax, Board Member  
                  Win Weizer, Board Member  
                  Michele Weiss, Board Member  
                  Tessa Jackson, Board Member  
                  Brad Bryan, Legal Council  
                  Markell Davis, Board Member  
                  Roberta Rubin, Secretary

Absent         Katie Iaconis  
                  Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan

### **Agenda**

#### **1. HRRC Workshop**

Mr. Belt commented that they had discussed workshop dates that they would be having with the Heights Resource Repair Center in the spring. As of now, Mr. Belt had signed the memorandum of understanding with them for the spring dates for these classes: Power Tools 101, Carpentry, Drywall Electrical Switches & Outlets and Plumbing Repair Basics. Each class would run one and a half to two hours with no more than 20 people per class. The CIC would be managing the marketing and the entire registration process. He discovered that the MOU was different in the meeting so he needed to talk with the HRRC because the center was to handle registration. Regardless, they would oversee marketing, fill the classes and hold the classes at the location in Cleveland Heights. For the funding, they would pay HRRC \$1,200 for the completion of this first set of four classes with 20 people each. They had not yet set their second four classes for the fall and he had to verify whether they were going to wait until spring or had to do it as quickly as possible. He also commented that it now came down to picking out some dates. It was

determined by the Board that due to Spring Break spanning from February until May, no dates were ideal but all Tuesdays in March or all Thursdays in April would work the best.

Ms. Weizer suggested that Tuesdays would be prime because not everybody would want all four classes and they would get different people. She would ask Anne-Marie about registration in addition to asking about the dates and creating a flyer.

Mr. Belt commented that he could put together a flyer and that HRRC would have an example with a logo.

Ms. Weizer suggested running the notice in the Observer and contacting the library.

Mrs. Weiss commented that once they had a final idea of how the registration would work, they could work backwards.

Mr. Belt asked about starting the advertising before the new year.

Ms. Weizer responded that they could start this quarter and create a press release which they could submit to the Observer in November for December and create a flyer in December for January

Ms. Davis asked if this would be a generic posting since they had no definite dates or information?

Ms. Weizer commented that she would call this week to confirm dates, Mr. Belt would create the flyer and she would write something up. Then they could figure out who was registering. She asked Mr. Belt when he would have the flyer ready.

Mr. Belt responded that he could have it done in a week and then insert the dates.

Ms. Weizer mentioned using the University Heights logo and noted that this committee was semi-independent.

Mrs. Sax asked if there was any precedent of anything publicized with the new age logo.

Mrs. Weiss suggested writing CIC in the “U” area.

Mr. Belt commented that he would be fine with doing it but was concerned with incurring wrath for doing it without asking because they were technically the City Beautiful Corporation.

Mrs. Weiss suggested placing CIC underneath “University Heights.” She also noted that they would need a credit card to pay the Observer and would need to contact Ms. Iaconis.

Ms. Weizer stated that submitting something in writing to the Observer was free of charge.

## **2. Resident Mediation Discussion**

Ms. Weizer stated that she received a price from the Mediation Center and had sent it out to everybody. They were willing to do mediation sessions for the CIC for a hundred per session and 15 or 20 sessions to start with. She had spoken with Chief Rogers and he was very enthusiastic about the CIC and already had people who needed assistance.

Mrs. Weiss mentioned that Mr. Bryan also had names.

Ms. Weizer stated that the next step was to determine who had the power to issue where help was needed and then keep track of how many mediation sessions, they were sending people to. The city currently had no formal mediation skills so consequently when there were residents in dispute, the police department would want to contact the Cleveland Mediation Center. When Ms. Pardee and Mrs. Weiss were on council, they had contacted the mediation center but the city had to pay because of the way the grant was written. They charged \$100 a session and they thought they could make a contract and at least provide that for the residents. They could have a contract and send it to Mr. Belt once the CIC told them that they wanted one.

Mr. Bryan stated that they would have the requirements aside from the contract where both sides had to agree and schedule.

Mrs. Weiss suggested that they start with 15 and could always increase the contract if they needed to.

Mr. Bryan's question was whether it could involve multiple mediation sessions per person and would the mediation center charge the CIC to do it?

Ms. Weizer commented that what they were doing was at least creating the ability to have this available to the residents that were referred.

Mrs. Weiss suggested that they can offer them two sessions or hours and that was the city's due diligence.

Ms. Weizer commented that her sense from the mediation center was that it did not extend, they were skilled in crisis management and were professionals who did this for a living

Mrs. Sax commented that she liked the idea of getting people to talk to each other.

Mrs. Weiss noted that she had seen more resident conflicts lately than in the past.

Ms. Weizer mentioned that they once had someone named Walter who was trained to speak to neighbors and resolve conflicts but they had nobody like that for a very long time and that currently, they had committed themselves to four of those for a total of \$1,200. They could do

twenty sessions to start and some issues could be resolved in one or two sessions. They could tell people who were referred that they had up to two sessions and see how it worked. If there was a large demand, they would then have to figure out something.

Mrs. Sax asked if it was appropriate to have a satisfaction survey afterwards?

Mr. Bryan stated that he guessed that they would give out a report.

Mrs. Weiss stated that they were using the Mediation Center because they had collaborated with them in the past.

Mr. Belt asked for information about what the Center offered and could look it up. They had already brought up the police, housing and people were approaching him with resident issues who needed help.

Ms. Jackson commented that this could be useful as a tool to utilize police resources for actual policing and not neighbors yelling. They could obtain a grant as a part of conflict resolution program.

Ms. Weizer stated that one of the things they had discussed was the need to get a professional grant writer period either hired by the city or the CIC who could target some grants and start bringing money in from other sources outside of the city. The CIC had been held back for over a year by some conflicts but had done a great deal in a few months. This was the start of their organization reaching out to the community and creating awareness of its presence in the city.

Mr. Bryan commented that as an example of this service, he was on the phone with another community. He spent 20 minutes with a resident who was complaining that the neighbors were yelling at her. They were going through all the complaints which stated that the police were not doing anything. He commented that the police could only resolve and handle crimes but not poor behavior by a neighbor. This was a service where neighbors complaining about this resident would be ideal to just try to get a person in one of these programs and to discuss the issue at hand.

Mrs. Sax commented that the workshops and the mediation felt very holistic, where the CIC was trying to address things in their neighborhoods to fix the properties and concerns of the residents.

Ms. Weizer asked Mr. Belt if he wanted her to back to them since she had already been talking to them? Mr. Belt answered yes.

Mrs. Weiss asked if they could create a contract and Mr. Bryan could review it.

### **3. New Business**

Mrs. Weiss mentioned the installation of benches in strategic locations because older people would like a bench on their walk so, they could rest for a few minutes while walking in the neighborhood.

Mrs. Sax mentioned that school bus shelters would also benefit from benches.

Ms. Jackson commented that she lived near the intersection of Silsby and Milton and had to wait to walk her dogs because she walked past four stopping points.

Mrs. Sax commented that there was an attempt starting with the bike racks but this only addressed one segment. The benches addressed another. She suggested that they continue this path in small sections and assess criteria such as how it would work, street directions and specific spots on which properties they would go on to avoid neighbor disputes.

Mrs. Weiss commented that she had walked a good portion of the city this past summer and questioned whether they really had all the infill housing done because there were several empty lots and she did not know if someone owned them.

Mrs. Sax mentioned that some places had a second.

Mrs. Weiss stated that people loved pocket parks and rain gardens. They had one rain garden in the city on Asher and at least two pocket parks. They had discussed utility box wraps. They could submit a theme and then run a contest for residents to submit designs.

Mr. Belt commented that almost every city around them had done that, it was an easy win and it would engage people. He then asked who in the city knew most about infill and vacant lots?

Mrs. Weiss commented that Silas drove on every street and suggested that he break down the add-ons. They had done infill housing to so many homes that they did not know how many were vacant. It was almost ten years ago and she believed there were four of them.

Ms. Weizer commented that they had a land bank and some of those vacant lots such as the one on Washington was owned by someone who paid the taxes and could have been something they had inherited.

Mr. Belt commented that if they knew where the empty lots were, they could go to the county.

Mrs. Sax suggested looking at a map and using an intern.

Mrs. Weiss asked Ms. Davis if she had a housing intern yet.

Ms. Davis responded that they did.

Ms. Weizer stated that the Google Maps overhead views were current and could pick up the address on either side. It was a matter of going into the home.

Ms. Jackson commented that with the county GIS system, if there was an improvement on a parcel, it would present as blank parcels.

Mrs. Weiss commented that different cities had low-lying flowers around stop signs and other signs. They could be annuals or perennials.

Ms. Weizer mentioned that the old City Beautiful used to water flowers where they had signs at the entrances to the city and John Carroll University.

Mrs. Weiss mentioned that there could be easy plantings done throughout the city such as flower baskets on the poles but was told that they did not have the watering truck.

Mrs. Sax suggested doing a survey and asking people four questions. They could generate some interesting responses.

Mr. Belt commented on which property a bench would go. It could be either on a tree lawn or on someone's yard. He wondered if they could get residents to sponsor a bench? (38:30) They might not. (38:34) People volunteer. (38:35) If they want to sponsor a bench location.

Mrs. Weiss mentioned that they can also have a plaque on it in memory of someone.

Ms. Weizer mentioned that a resident placed a bench in his yard on the corner so people could take a break while they were walking.

Weiss (39:11) Meadowbrook is a great street.

Mrs. Weiss suggested that Meadowbrook would be an ideal place to put a bench but there was the question of indemnification. They would have to be certain that the city was the one that purchased the bench so it was durable, uniform and sturdy.

Mr. Bryan commented that they wanted to avoid placing something on somebody's property.

Ms. Weizer suggested placing the bench on a tree lawn. They would still want to get the homeowner's permission because they were going to have to cut the grass around it.

Mrs. Weiss commented that if they were doing tree lawns, they had to make sure the tree lawn was wide enough because some tree lawns were very narrow.

Mrs. Sax commented that homeowners changed and suggested that they look at a map. They were going to look for infill opportunities but they were also going to look and see if there were a couple of places where they could put benches.

Mrs. Weiss commented that if they were on the tree lawn, they could still get sponsorships for them if someone wanted a plaque.

Mr. Belt commented that they could place a bench on the last lot on Fenwick.

Ms. Weizer commented that what she would like to do with the Fenwick lot was fence it with seats, stationary tables and stationary chairs and add a checkerboard or chessboard. Putting a fence up would protect the two neighbors that the lot abutted. The bench on and the tables would be facing outside. They could leave the trees and create a path.

Ms. Weizer volunteered to look up information on utility box wraps.

Mrs. Sax mentioned that there was a grant for a wrap on a van which the usability group used. She could find out about the companies involved. She believed that one was The Ohio Arts Council and one other private organization.

Ms. Weizer suggested that they could touch base with UCI and that they had received a grant for allergies. Other neighborhoods had also done electrical boxes.

Mrs. Sax mentioned that Shaker Heights had made electrical boxes and that it was fun.

Ms. Weizer commented that she would call Kyle about grant opportunities.

Mrs. Weiss commented that they also needed to look at buildings with a brick wall where they could create some artwork such as a mural. They would need permission from the owner of the building and they could sponsor it with a contest. She suggested driving around the city to see what was available.

Ms. Weizer commented that they were getting graffiti on Taylor where the upholsterer was located. Some of the land where the walkway was located had one bench. It was a narrow strip.

Mr. Belt remarked that it was a perfect spot right next to the falafel place.

Ms. Weizer responded that it reached all the way to Wynn Road on both sides of the walkway. In 2007, the city sold a small piece of land.

Mrs. Weiss remarked that there should be a bench and a sign because it was one of their gateways.

Ms. Weizer commented that Mayor Infeld had a plan for that but never followed through.

Ms. Weizer mentioned that people had asked for trash cans but that was difficult.

Mrs. Weiss mentioned that they asked Mr. Pennington and he commented that the service department would not pick up the garbage.

Mr. Belt stated that there was nothing worse than having a continuously overfilled garbage can. The goal was to keep the trash out.

Ms. Weizer commented that it had always been a good place because kids came out of the dollar store and were eating while they walked back. If there was a trash can there, they would use it and keep trash off the front lawn. There were complaints about loose garbage on the ground.

Mr. Belt commented that it may not be a permanent solution but they could potentially sponsor a couple of city-wide garbage picking days.

Ms. Jackson asked if this was trash particular to a specific business or location?

Mr. Bryan responded that they were talking about people dumping trash on the sidewalk or throwing it out of cars.

Ms. Weizer stated that it had improved now that the Sun Press was no longer being delivered.

Mr. Belt that they had money to spend but did not need to blow through it but it was sitting there right now apart from some set aside for a grant. City Council annually could put money in and he was thinking how much money he could take for sidewalks? He wished to have a meeting sometime soon about a grant writer to have one specific meeting about grant writing. They needed to schedule their next meeting because they had one more meeting for the year that they should have in the books.

Mrs. Weiss asked Mr. Belt if he wanted any other action items?

Mr. Belt commented that they all needed to be looking at where they thought benches could go. Places where they were not looking at private property, but only public property.

Mrs. Weiss suggested also looking at artwork on the buildings.

Mr. Belt commented that he would investigate that but see if anyone else had any experience with mural art. Graffiti Heart was a company in Cleveland who did these murals. He wanted to see how they did them and what the process was like. They had several of them across the city and were the experts. He would ask them to see what was involved with that and knew there was a cost.

Mrs. Weiss commented that she knew some companies who would work on benches When they were ready for that, she could investigate it.

Mrs. Sax commented that they had to start small with which signs they would want flowers around. They could look at all these different things at the same time while driving around looking at bench sites.

Ms. Weizer commented that the city by administrative ordinance was supposed to be posting in certain public places. One was in the center and one was supposed to be at the east end.

Mrs. Weiss commented that she believed it changed because of going digital and then it was only posted at city hall.

Ms. Weizer noted that it was why people did not know what they were doing.

Mrs. Weiss commented that all three city inspectors would write down locations because it was divided amongst the three of them.

Mr. Belt asked Ms. Davis if all exterior inspections were complete and if all letters had been sent?

Ms. Weizer noted that Canterbury had not been inspected this year.

Ms. Davis responded that all inspections were completed and letters had been sent out. She did not know offhand about Canterbury.

Ms. Weizer commented that she thought everyone was supposed to be done this year.

Ms. Davis commented that she would investigate it. She then asked who had the power to send someone to mediation if the complaint came through housing? For example two neighbors had a dispute about a fence and for some reason, they were receiving more than usual fence disputes on their properties. A survey would solve that but they were expensive. If she made the recommendation for both parties to attend two sessions of mediation and remained unresolved, did it circle back to her?

Mr. Bryan commented that for the mediation program, both sides had to be willing to do it. If one side did not want to do it, it was not legal.

Mr. Belt commented that in his mind when Ms. Davis and the police received a complaint, and mediation was recommended, the parties' information should load into a portal. It would go through the CIC to Cleveland Mediation so that it removed responsibility from Ms. Davis and the police and there was no discrimination involved.

Mr. Bryan commented that he was certain that the mediation service had a procedure for how they were contacted.

Ms. Davis commented for instance, if she filed a complaint against someone, would it stop the complaint until it was resolved or would it still be issued?

Mr. Bryan responded that if somebody was cited, they still could be cited. If somebody was in mediation, he would hold off on sending it to court. Giving that a chance, it could be an alternative to the court. Some of these may be property disputes that were private matters they were not going to determine. If it was a fence permit, they were going to see if it was a valid permit and whether the fence was put up without a permit.

Mr. Belt commented that these were smart questions and did not want to make anything messy.

Ms. Weizer asked Mr. Bryan if these would be appropriate where they would go to him and he would decide whether or not they were appropriate for mediation?

Mr. Bryan commented that he would want to see what the contract stated, what their rules were and how they operated.

After discussion within the CIC board, they decided that the next CIC City Beautiful meeting would be held on Tuesday, December 2nd, 2025.

Ms. Weizer commented that via email, they should have the information out solidifying the dates for the Spring Resource Center. They should have had the flyer prepared, and the Observer article. The agenda item would be the contract from Cleveland Mediation Center. Depending upon how the contract came in and if Mr. Bryan had questions, which gave them a month where they could change it so that the contract was ready for them to vote on.

Mr. Belt commented that he would ask Ms. Iaconis about financials.

Mrs. Weiss commented that Ms. Iaconis would have to file the end of the year statements and should have a draft.

Mr. Bryan commented that by February 15, the financial statement for the state was the 990s and that was first quarter.

Mr. Belt commented that he would have to look back through past meetings because they had to close the books at the end of the year to be able to file.

Mrs. Weiss stated that they should have the end of the year report and 990s due by February.

MOTION BY MS. WEIZER, SECONDED BY MRS. SAX to adjourn the meeting. All in favor said, "aye."

Meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

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Roberta Rubin, Secretary