



MOUNT WASHINGTON
Mt. Washington Community Council

11/15/2023 Meeting Minutes

Jaime Castle called the meeting to order at 7:01pm.

Margeaux Selig led us in the pledge of allegiance.

A quorum of board members was present. Board members present included Jaime Castle, Kristina Kew, Priscilla Elgersma, Rick Meador, Sophie Roberto, Karen Luken and Julie Rimer. Absent: Michael Gray.

Karen Luken made a motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting, Gary Noll seconded the motion, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Julie Rimer made a motion to approve tonight's agenda, seconded by Nikki Marksberry, then approved by all.

Community Reports

Jeff Niehaus of Fire Company 7 on Sutton reported there were 113 runs last month with 98 of them being EMS runs. He told all to make sure we have a working carbon dioxide alarm and a working smoke detector. Make sure your heating units have been serviced. The fire department gets a lot of runs for burning belts and other heating unit issues at this time of the year. Also be careful with space heaters. Make sure there is open air around them. Please don't put blankets or other items near them.

Officer Jason Rice provided the most recent Neighborhood Crime Report. You can find the Mt. Washington Neighborhood Crime Report at this link: <https://cpdmobile.cincinnati-oh.gov/Neighborhoods/Reports/D2/MountWashington.pdf>
With it being the holidays, Jason put a recipe on the back of the crime report.

Rick Meador of the Mt. Washington Cares Coalition recognized Officer Jason Rice as being a critical component of having one of the most successful DEA Drug Take Back events. Jason communicated with the DEA, handled all the medication, boxed everything up, and took the drugs to be incinerated.

Nikki Marksberry, Resource Coordinator of Mt. Washington School, thanked all for supporting the school foundation fundraiser at Big Ash Brewing. The school had hoped to sell 50 tickets, but they sold 80. Nikki said they were very pleased with the turnout for the first post-Covid school foundation fundraiser. Nikki

is working together with churches and Sands Montessori to get things ready for a Thanksgiving distribution to families in need this Saturday, November 18. Nikki said to let her know if you know of any family with children in need; Nikki will make sure they are taken care of, no matter what school they go to. Nikki said if we know someone in need who does not have children, we could refer them to the SEM Pantry. There will be a daytime toy sale at Mt. Washington School on December 15. If you are interested in helping a child shop for their adult, Nikki could use some volunteers. To volunteer, please call Nikky Marksberry at 513-363-3835.

Priscilla Elgersma relayed that Sands is having a holiday gift sale to help families in need and they are looking for volunteers to help with this event on December 14 from 4:15pm to 6:15pm.

Jason Richards, director of the Mt. Washington Recreation Center, stated the "Trunk or Treat" event went well and that they had great weather for it. The rec center will be holding a breakfast with Santa event on December 9 from 9am to 11am. The cost is \$10 per person. Registration is available online at the Cincinnati Recreation website at this link: <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/recreation/>

The rec center has preschool open gym on Fridays for 3- to 5-year-olds from 1pm to 2pm at a cost of \$2 per child. There will be both pre-school (3- to 5-year-old) and school-aged (5- to 12- year olds) mini-camps at the rec center the week of December 18. Registration is available online at the above link.

The CRC is doing a toy drive again for children aged 3 to 12 and there will be a red barrel in the rec center lobby beginning the week of November 20 for toy donations. If anyone has any new, unopened toys they would like to donate, please put them in the barrel. You can nominate families in need by calling the CRC or stopping by to nominate a family. The actual toy giveaway will be on December 16. The parents of the nominated families will shop the toy donations on December 16 to choose toys for their children.

The MWCURC (Mt. Washington Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation) has cancelled the next spaghetti dinner that was supposed to be on Saturday, November 18, due to kitchen problems at the American Legion. The next big MWCURC event is the Holiday Walk on Saturday, November 26, which goes from 4pm to 7pm. There will be free food and carriage rides, as well as the arrival of Santa. The tower will be lit up at 6:45pm. There will be musicians and singers in Water Tower Fine Wines, in store windows, and in the London Bridge, as well as walking carolers. The CDC (Community Development Corporation) will have a pop-up biergarten with Big Ash Beer in the new parking lot behind the former Tome Bookstore. Volunteers are always needed to help with the holiday walk. If you can help, please contact Bob Wetterer by email at bwetterer@comey.com or call or text him at 513-884-8326.

Priscilla Elgersma said the November SPAC meeting was postponed due to illness. Now the meeting will be held on Thursday, November 30 at the library at 5pm. We will be discussing all the things SPAC plans to do next year.

Rick Meador of the Mt. Washington Cares Coalition said the DEA Drug Take Back event October 28 netted 121 pounds of drugs in 11 boxes. All drugs go directly to an incinerator. The Hamilton County Health Department had a great day at the event. They distributed 32 Narcan kits, 120 Fentanyl test strip packages, and 50 Xylazine test strip packages. Xylazine is an animal tranquilizer that is increasingly being found in street drugs.

Glen Johnson, drill sergeant for the American Legion Post 484, said they had a wonderful dinner for veterans and their families. Glen was the keynote speaker at the event. The firing squad performance was exceptional. The turkey raffle is coming up on November 17 at 7pm. They have turkey, ham, and pork loin. There is a \$5 entry fee that gives you one free drink.

Deb Lopez of Forcht Bank said they are celebrating five years in Cincinnati with a CD special. Forcht is offering a five thousand dollar scholarship for which high school seniors can apply on the Forcht Bank website: <https://www.forchtbank.com/Discover/Community-Impact-Scholarship>

On Monday, November 13, Forcht Bank began collecting non-perishable foods that will go to the SEM Pantry. There is a box inside the bank for food donations. Karen Luken thanked Deb and Forcht Bank for donating the reusable beer cups that were used at the Pumpkin Chuck.

General Business

Priscilla Elgersma of SPAC gave a Pumpkin Chuck update. She said the event was truly a team effort. Nearly everyone from MWCC and SPAC worked the event. Priscilla thanked Jim Tucker for designing the beautiful targets. In seventeen years, it was one of the best years ever. Sophie Roberto and her sorority sisters face-painted all day. Priscilla will give a tally of the Pumpkin Chuck when it is available. There are many significant costs that people may not realize go into the Pumpkin Chuck such as \$900 in insurance, the cost of permits, fees, and police presence, etc. The Pumpkin Chuck is not as much a fundraiser as it is an event that draws the community together in Stanbery Park.

The job of the MWCC during the holiday walk will be to staff the coffee and hot chocolate booth that will be at 2245 Beechmont (the former custom car shop). If you can volunteer, please let Julie Rimer know at the end of the meeting.

Upcoming Board Director Elections: If you are interested in filling one of the open board director positions, we will be voting on that in January at our membership meeting. If you have any questions about the responsibilities, time commitment, or anything else, please send an email to info@mwcc.org or talk with Jaime Castle after the meeting.

Budget Presentation: Kristina Kew, MWCC treasurer, and board member Michael Gray worked to put together a proposed 2024 budget. We were reminded to renew our memberships in January. You need to have a paid membership to vote. We would very much appreciate members paying the \$7 annual fee in January, but if you have financial hardship, an exception can be made.

The proposed 2024 budget is quite similar to the 2023 budget, but the city has not yet finalized the amount of NSP funds we will receive. 2024 NSP funds may be \$7375, but it might be more if City Council approves requests that are coming from the community to increase NSP dollars to 2023 levels (\$9700). Kristina reviewed anticipated income and expenses. Kristina explained the proposed budget is a bit of a spend down in that we will have about \$1500 less in the bank at the end of 2024 versus 2023. Kristina explained that should be fine as the goal has been to keep at least \$10,000 in the bank and we will have more than that. Matt Musselman made a motion to approve the 2024 proposed budget, Nikki Marksberry seconded the motion, and the budget was unanimously approved.

Kristina Kew also gave the current treasurer's report. Priscilla Elgersma made a motion to approve it, seconded by Sophie Roberto, and unanimously approved by the membership.

2024 NSP Funding: We are asking City Council for more money for community councils in 2024 to bring NSP funding to the 2023 level. Jaime Castle sent everyone an email asking each of us to send a letter to City Council members asking for increased NSP funding. That relatively small amount of money goes a long way toward making our communities better. It is also an excellent return on investment for City Council due to all the volunteer hours that go into the NSP projects and the fact that community councils take on many public service tasks. Please email that letter tonight or tomorrow morning since that is the deadline for feedback. We are sorry for the short notice, but all community councils just found out about this deadline.

Jaime also suggested we could send an official letter on behalf of MWCC requesting an increase in NSP funding. Matt Musselman made a motion to send the letter, seconded by Karen Luken, then approved by all. Karen Luken gave an example of how NSP dollars spent on the postcard contributed to the largest DEA Drug Take Back event we have ever had. NSP dollars fund all the weeding, litter clean up and shoveling of our business district sidewalks. It is important for us to make City Council members aware of how often community councils take on the role of public services with NSP dollars. Jaime and Julie will meet after this meeting to draft the email which will be sent to all city council members tonight.

2024 NSP Funding: Please begin thinking about the kinds of projects you would like to see executed with NSP dollars next year. Jaime emailed everyone a rubric that we will use in scoring NSP project proposals next year:

Rate this project: 1- unsatisfactory, 2 – below average, 3 – average, 4 – above average, 5 – excellent

Benefits many people	1	2	3	4	5
Lasting benefits	1	2	3	4	5
Improves quality of life	1	2	3	4	5
Improves the neighborhood physically	1	2	3	4	5
Inclusive	1	2	3	4	5
Uplifts children	1	2	3	4	5
Connects people	1	2	3	4	5
Other revenue sources will be added to the project	1	2	3	4	5

Jim Tucker gave an update on the 2023 NSP funding he was granted. Jim is an artist who runs his art studio out of the former Konkrete City Skateboards shop at 2109 Beechmont Avenue. The first half of the NSP funds granted to Jim was used for the Pumpkin Chuck. Hopefully, everyone got to see the incredible pumpkin targets Jim painted. The second half of the funds will be used for an art workshop that will be held at Jim’s studio on December 12. Jim will be running this workshop with his studio mate, Michael Thompson. The workshop will be free and will be open to up to 24 people. Jim will be advertising the workshop at the holiday walk. The workshop will be open to attendees on a first-come first-served basis.

Jim also shared that he has done a lot of work with ArtWorks over the past couple of years. ArtWorks has a gallery program called the V2 program in which artists mentor youth who are 16 to 24 years old.

Starting in January, Jim will be the mentor artist and will be the first artist who is able to mentor at his own studio. Jim will have a number of students who will work with him at his studio for two months, after which they will have an installation/exhibition in Walnut Hills. If you know of any young artists who may be interested in this, please direct them to Jim. Please think about areas of our community in which you would like to see beautification projects and let Jim know.

Announcements/Upcoming Events: There will be no general membership meeting in December, but there will be a virtual board meeting.

Good of the Order: There were many people to recognize for going above and beyond for our community. We thanked Priscilla Elgersma for shepherding the entire Pumpkin Chuck. We thanked Karen Luken for everything she did to make this our first “green” Pumpkin Chuck. We thanked Kristina Kew and Michael Gray for all their work in preparing the 2024 budget.

Lastly, Sophie Roberto, our youngest board member and an urban planning major in the DAAP program at the University of Cincinnati, was called up in recognition of all she has done as a board member for the past three years. Priscilla Elgersma gave Sophie MWCC gift bags for her sorority sisters and a gift card for Insomnia Cookies. Sophie gives us hope for the world!

Sophie graciously said her decision to serve on the board was one of the best decisions she has ever made. Sophie began her work with the MWCC when she was just a junior in high school. She said the experience made her feel more confident in school and in seeking a co-op position. She was the first person in her class to get a co-op position and she attributes that partially to her experience as a MWCC board member.

Adjournment: Sophie Roberto made a motion, Gary Noll seconded it, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:58pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Rimer

MWCC Secretary