



Clintonville Area Commission
Special Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 23, 2016, 7-9 pm
Clinton Heights Lutheran Church Meeting Room

Commissioners in attendance: David Vottero, Matthew Cull, Judy Minister, Nancy Kuhel, Libby Wetherholt, Kris Keller, Randy Ketcham, Jason Meek, D Searcy, Chris Allwein (commissioner-elect)

Commissioner(s) absent and excused:

The meeting was called to order by Kris Keller at 7:10 pm.

Keller: This is a very informal meeting and I guess we just go down the slate and see who is interested in running for each office. I've had information that several people were interested—David and Jason and Libby. When David and Jason heard that Libby was interested in it, they both said she would do a good job and we will wait for our turn later.

Cull: This is a job you would want? What would you do?

Wetherholt: I want to maintain transparency and the communication. I am a good connector. I connect people with things. I am not a big believer in personality tests, but two that I took told me that I have to have the context for everything and that also connecting people seems to be quite a talent of mine. I have several interests in working with Planning and Development. Plus I am going to begin working with Age-Friendly Columbus with MORPC which will be looking into what Franklin County will need as far as our aging population. With my 3 years, I've started getting more and more connections with the City of Columbus and have gotten to know more people at city hall and I think I have a good relation with them. Being a teacher I have spent my career trying to help people be the best that they are and I think as president we can all work to be our best and to help Clintonville be its best also.

Keller: She is very well organized and has helped me look better throughout the year.

Searcy: Would you plan to take yourself off Planning and Development?

Wetherholt: As chair I can be ex officio on any of the committees and I would probably do that.

Cull: What about the other chairs and committees?

Wetherholt: I definitely want to keep Andrew Overbeck because he's done a phenomenal job. We can look at the others and see what other people think.

D: So you don't know your thoughts on what you would do with the others?

Wetherholt: I think Nancy should stay on Historic Preservation. I think Dana has done a great job on Zoning and Variance. I'm willing to listen to other people's thoughts on that.

Cull: I'm generally not a fan and have voiced this since I got on that I think a commissioner should be in charge of the committee except per the by-laws. I am generally in favor of having a commissioner in charge of a committee even if there is talent on the committee. I disagree with having a non-commissioner being in charge of Zoning and Variance. Part of my concern is there doesn't seem to be the same connection when there is no commissioner on the committee. We went very long periods with Planning and Development with no update. There was silence from the committee.

Meek: With P&D there might be periods when they aren't giving an update, but when we look back at what they produced, it warrants the lack of a monthly check-in. They produced the mobility study. In light of the work that they yield and the talent that we have on the committee I think I would have a hard time seeing it improve.

Weth: I think perhaps we could be a little more formal and ask for the written minutes or a written report at each meeting that could be read into the minutes.

Vottero: Andrew does a good job and that's not to say that we can't ask for more updates. Maybe Andrew needs to share that responsibility. I think there are other people on the committee who he would feel comfortable having as surrogates to provide updates if he is unable to. With all these committee chair positions I'm mindful of the fact we are asking for volunteer time from these people. I'm always aware that people's circumstances change and we should always first and foremost ask people are they willing to continue this level of commitment or do they need to step back. People's career changes, their life changes. It's a little presumptive of us to expect that while a person who's chaired this committee for two years, three years is just a work horse that we can just turn around. I have no reason to believe that Andrew would want to pursue that. He has also developed other people on the committee who could take over.

I had similar feelings as Matt at one time about having a commissioner chair the committees, but I have changed pretty dramatically from that to feel that's an opportunity for us to build the size of the group involved by letting committee chairs have a little bit of autonomy and it gives me the flexibility and I've been able to join in when there's an issue they need to have their input on their contact list. The things that they are doing so strongly like the mobility piece, there's no way that I can add to that. I have opinions that I can share, but they are doing such a good job with that that I hate to tamper with it too

much. It could be that we can ask that they maintain progress on that and look at other development issues. If we press ahead at all in the coming year with commercial design piece. That may break out as a task force and ask for membership for design and planning. It's not another committee for Andrew to manage. That task force may be able to talk to Z&V and P&D, but the responsibility for managing meeting schedules, etc. would not be on them.

Wetherholt: I think getting minutes and reports from the groups. Maybe if you feel strongly about commission members being a part of the committee, and I do feel there should be a commission member as part of the committee, maybe they could do the recording part who brings back because sometimes the chair is not always able to come to the meeting and the others are also very busy. If the commission member could be designated the report giver then that might alleviate some of the problem.

Minister: I'd like to participate in Z&V. You know I have my real estate background and knowledge. I've gone to most of the Z&V meetings. If that works out maybe I could be the person who reports back. I don't want to chair it, I just want to be a member.

Cull: Dave, do you want to chair Z&V?

Vottero: No. The coming year I can imagine I'd like to direct a good deal of energy trying to move forwarding with commercial architectural review. I feel as if the Z&V if I were a chair of it it would be a major distraction to that endeavor and I don't know if I would add that much to that role. It would be a lot of time and I don't think I would necessarily do anything differently. I did ask Dana this year and last year, if there was anything that you would change or do differently and I think the committee runs fairly successfully particularly compared with years past. It's firing on all cylinders. I sometimes worry are we going back to the same people and are we asking too much from them in terms of their ongoing commitment. This is a group of people [Kuhel enters]. Dana's response was that she had informally checked with most of the committee members, with a couple of exceptions, she felt there were a couple of people who might have to step back because they had had a change in life—kids getting older, etc. By and large I don't think I could do anything as chair that others couldn't do. Particularly on that committee I would strongly believe that if there were to be a new chair and I am open to that if there were a new chair it probably should be someone who's already on the committee and experienced with it and who can step in the role. There may be a few people who are experienced enough to do that. I think the committee is working well. I don't see anything from our perspective that I wish they would do differently and I think from Dana's perspective there's nothing that she wishes she could change in how they operate. My point in asking her that question was if there's something we could do. She thought there wasn't a commission impediment. I'm sure there are issues in dealing with the city that are maybe out of our control.

Searcy: My caveat would be for any officer of the CAC or any chair of the commission, I don't think they should be perceived in any way as negative, a lightning rod or to be tainted in any way. Coming from past experience, the people should be perceived as

neutral and fair and I'm not sure that that is true. Our first thing should be we should not alienate anybody by our selections. I know you can't please everybody. She was doing better but then a few months ago she sent out that zinger that I felt was totally inappropriate. I know it went around a lot. I just don't think that we, as a commission, should be condoning that which I basically think that we do when we put people into positions.

Ketcham: Matt I remember last year you expressed a little interest in Z&V. Would you be interested in that?

Cull: I would, but as we said about family situations. Mine has recently changed. I'm trying to curb my habit of biting off more than I can chew. Had it been two months ago I would have said absolutely. But now if I take on any more responsibility you may see my bags packed out on the lawn. I need to do well what I have currently committed to. As to Z&V I think it's time for a change there. In addition to my strong opposition to what happened last year, for a variety of reasons I feel it's time for a change. I would have trouble supporting a chair of a commission that was just going to re-appoint the same people again. That would be a concern of mine. I think Dana is talented. But we also haven't had a contentious meeting in the next how many mnths. In the next 3 or 4 years, we are going to receive projects which are going to be cotentious. I have concerns about how that would play out in the current structure.

Meek: Your comments reminded me about the correspondence. Did anybody speak to Dana about that?

Keller: I'll spend just a couple of minutes. She sent a letter to everybody and cc'd the mayor and city council. We had this same conversation a year ago about whether Dana was right for the commission. I went to every member of that committee and asked them who should be chair of the committee and every one of them said it should be Dana. My impression was that the people who know her best who work with her the most and know what this committee needs and that was their response. It solidified for me my decision. She does do things that sometimes I wouldn't do the same way. As you say, she's talented. I think she's a diamond in the rough. I think at some point in the future she may be on City Council or even be in the Statehouse. She has that level of ability. My approach to her has been to let her do what she does, rein her in a little bit. I talked with her, we had discussions and emails. She has gotten better than she was two years ago and but I can see how some people would be upset by her and still hold a grudge. That's my point of view, but it's not my decision to make.

Meek: Stepping back, this is out of sequence in how we normally fill the positions. This is not an environment for someone to be on a hot seat. Right now there isn't a rule for a chair to be a member of the commission. However, if a commission member did express a desire to be a chair of a committee, then there would have to be a pretty strong reason to say no to that commission member. That would make sense. In the absence of no one being willing to step in specifically to Z&V and in P&D, we can get a little lax in how much trust we put into those individuals who are speaking on our behalf. We have some

great people. Dana is very good at what she does. I echo Kris's comments, she does things differently that I would do them. She does a different tact and I've learned that if there is a Z&V matter in my district then I need to go to the Zoning meeting, the BZA meeting and any other meeting to see that thing through because that is my responsibility. I think maybe there is a tether we can apply to both committees. We can say we'd like a little more precise information and maybe we have a commissioner who is appointed as liaison or a point person to create a stronger link for times when there isn't the healthy transparency. We could easily regress back to 6 years ago and I don't see this happening with this group of people. So having procedures in places would be beneficial.

Kuhel: Maybe a document procedure of how things go so that if there's something in your district, you're not finding out about it on Facebook. So you are informed before it goes out on social media. Maybe if we had a precise procedure, you receive this you contact so and so. And maybe there should be a procedure about posting things publicly.

Keller: We have had some pretty clear conversation about that. That is the procedure now. Nothing is to be posted on the discussion forum until it appears on the CAC website.

Meek: I think that is the best way to do something. To have conversations between the chair and anybody who has any role—maybe not a file cabinet full of procedures we will all forget. Specifically with Dana, because of her personality and her availability and her charisma. She's out there. Dana herself she embodies a representative of Clintonville. She is too a part of so much that goes on. That might be overly restrictive and she might just say, you know what, that's ridiculous. I'm a person. People can separate my official role from my personal opinion. I would be fine having that conversation with her. Even city people see her as this influential person, but she doesn't have a vote at this table. We need to make sure people understand that.

Wetherholt: To be fair, with the website in the condition that it was there weren't too many choices on how to get info out to the public.

Searcy: But with the discussion forum, you have to be invited and that to me is totally inappropriate.

Keller: our own Facebook page is available to everybody. That's why we did that.

Searcy: My feeling is that we've had conversations. How many passes do you give a person?

Cull: Would anyone agree that regardless of whether-- it sounds like no one else agrees with me--that a commissioner should be chair of a committee. Would everyone agree tentatively that if there is a commissioner that takes precedence over anyone who is not a commissioner. Whether we would have to put that in the by-laws.

Vottero: I agree in principle. I would not put it in the by-laws. One of the things we do is we elect a chair person. It's good that we have a conversation about this to discuss our feelings. Ultimately there is a level of trust on our part, with the person that we are going to select as chair is going to make that decision. Hopefully that person will take into account our feelings. Maybe someone would be happy, maybe some will be unhappy. We have to trust that that chair is going to do the right thing for the coming year. It's good for us to have this conversation so that whoever fills that role is going to say I think this will play out the way I thought, or maybe I need to kind of check course here because I don't want to get off on my first month on kind of a contentious issue. You have to decide what tone you are going to set for the coming year. We have to have confidence in you and trust that you are making the right decision. Our role is to choose the chair, but part of our selection process is to turn over that authority to that person.

Kuhel: We don't have a sitting commission member who wants to have that position.

Vottero: There might be someone to step forward.

Cull: Is Libby the only one running?

Vottero: In the coming year I would like to try to work with Architectural Review issue, put some time and effort into that. I did talk with Kris about the chairmanship. There is a considerable amount of time just in being chairman. Visiting garages all over Clintonville. I've had three of those in my district in the past two years.

Wetherholt: The only one I didn't visit was the one that the bank said they wouldn't give them the money if that garage is standing there.

Vottero: There are other tasks I would like to concentrate on this year.

Kris: So I'm hearing sort of a consensus that people are leaning toward Libby being chair for the coming year. I assume that would be the vote. That naturally leads to the secretary position. This is a very important position and also time consuming and that really needs to be considered. Is anyone interested in or has a thought of taking that on?

[All demure and comment on WPM.]

Wetherholt: Should we have a recording secretary that person does not need to be a member of the commission.

Cull: I could take that. What all responsibilities are there if someone else is recording?

Wetherholt: Sending out any of the official forms to the various agencies of the city.

Vottero: In the case of BZA we get a form from them.

Wetherholt: Yes there is a form that everyone does.

Kris: How many hours a week would you say that you spend—you probably go above and beyond the call of duty.

Wetherholt: According to Robert's Rules of Order all you really have to do is record a vote and who voted how.

Minister: You go into great detail.

Wetherholt: That is by tradition. I prefer minutes that tell more than just the votes itself. The amount of detail is because of past distrust. I'm not even doing them verbatim and Michaela did them verbatim, so for a two hour meeting, it's a minimum of 3-4 hours to fill in everything. And then just the forms don't take a lot of time.

Keller: So five hours a month?

Wetherholt: Yes

Keller: And that's you doing everything, so a recording secretary that would take three hours for them.

Vottero: The idea of a recording secretary makes great sense.

Cull: If we can get a recording secretary I'll take it as long as it's not recorded in the paper anywhere. If it goes in the paper that I was drafted against my will, I seriously will consider it.

Searcy: So you're saying it's up to us to find a recording secretary,

Cull: I would help try to find one.

Kuhel: Can it just be a recording?

Cull: Someone would have to transcribe it.

Wetherholt: That's what Michaela did and that's what I do too.

Vottero: To literally make a transcript seems...

Wetherholt: If you're not at the meeting, that would make voice recognition tough.

Ketcham: My predecessor, Jennifer Kangas, she farmed being secretary out to someone.

Wetherholt: Michaela Stratton.

Ketcham: Would that person still be interested?

Wetherholt: No. She died.

Cull: I'll give it a go.

Vottero: Are there incoming members who would want to jump in?

Allwein: I can't read my own writing.

Cull: I'll take it.

Vottero: with duress and our insistence

Keller: I'm assuming Jason will stay on as treasurer.

Vottero: To get back to chairmanships, Peter Niswander saw me after the last meeting. He would be interested in running for my seat if I don't run, but in any event he said he would like to have the flexibility to make the decision at a later date, so it would be better if he didn't retain chair.

Keller: Nancy, do you have any thoughts of anyone who would want to be chair of the election committee?

Nancy Stewart: He did quite well in the past election.

Ketcham: That committee quite frankly is so good they could run themselves. They've been doing it for years.

Keller: Are there any thoughts?

Wetherholt: There is vice chair.

Ketcham: The thing that appealed to me about vice-chair is that it is supposed to be a liaison to the community which I have worked at and gotten other groups to be more involved.

Vottero: I would love to have groups come in on a regular basis for updates.

Keller: The reason we didn't have those groups in more often was because we just didn't have room on the agenda.

Cull: Because the agenda is so full what is the possibility of having information brought in by a member of the commission rather than have a representative come in each month.

Vottero: Maybe that is the vice-chair's role: bringing updates from the various groups.

Keller: The downside of that is that we then are not bringing people into our group to up their involvement.

Vottero: Having groups come in quarterly for updates would be helpful with the vice-chair bringing in information on off months.

Wetherholt: I would say that at the end of the July meeting if you could come prepared with how you want to be involved that would be good. Chris, if there's anything you want to be involved in or you just want to listen for a while.

Chris: I was hoping to hear a little more about how things are set up.

Wetherholt: The chair names the chairs of the committee after the July meeting. Then the chairs come to the August meeting with their committee list [reads from by-laws]. We vote on the list in August.

Vottero: The first year I was on the commission we voted on names without any information. I would like committee chairs to give us the very barest of facts to give us an idea of who is serving on the committee.

Wetherholt: I would like to have more visuals at the meetings with the agenda on the overhead but then the commissioners couldn't see it.

Vottero: I think we could re-arrange it. If I did a little diagram about how to re-arrange it. I think it could be re-arranged.

Cull: What's your take on Robert's Rules.? Strict adherence?

Wether: I don't think anyone who is not a parliamentarian can say they strictly adhere to Robert's Rules. The one thing at the last council meeting I attended, they were allowing people who wanted to talk—instead of having a question period and a comment period—they were giving people who wanted to come up 3 minutes in which they could ask questions or talk or both within that three minutes, then that was it for that person.

Cull: They had to put their name in a box. Are we there yet for our smaller meetings. Probably not. But maybe for the bigger meetings.

Vottero: There are different ways to have comments—putting comments in baskets.

Cull: Civility is partly structure.

Keller: Having structure is helpful.

Searcy: I suggest we would want to let people know ahead of time.

Meek: Our regular monthly meeting is our meeting—it's not a show. On public comment you speak to council, you don't speak to another person in the room. Then it's up to council to decide whether that question gets answered. We are the people nominated by the community. It's our judgement whether or not that question gets answered. I have been embarrassed at times by how our guests are treated by members of the public. Not every comment needs to fall on everyone's ears. It's up to us whether the comment gets clarification. At times we may have allowed too much interaction. That may be worth thinking about.

Keller: We have come to a lull.

Vottero: This has been a good discussion.

Wetherholt: If you come prepared in writing with how you want to be involved.

Keller: My expectation was that this would be my last meeting. My paper says the end of my term is June 30.

Vottero: Randy will have to start the meeting.

Kuhel: Does that mean you're not coming?

Keller: I will probably be knocking on doors.

Ketcham: Can you do the agenda before you leave us and is the election the first order of business? Maybe approval of minutes would be first.

Keller: I've been telling everyone who wanted to be on the agenda to call Libby.

Adjournment: 8:03 pm.