



# City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

## Meeting Minutes

### BRONZEVILLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

VACANT, CHAIR

Rhonda Manuel, Vice-Chair

Theresa Garrison, Christopher Perceptions, Clifton Crump,  
Lashawndra Vernon, Eve Hall, and Rayhainio Boynes

Staff Assistant, Chris Lee, 286-2232, Fax: 286-3456,  
clee@milwaukee.gov

Legislative Liaison, Ted Medhin, 286-8681,  
tmedhi@milwaukee.gov

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Wednesday, March 7, 2018

9:00 AM

Room 301-A, Third Floor, City Hall

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#### 1. Call to order.

*Meeting called to order at 9:08 a.m.*

#### 2. Roll call.

*Member Hall joined the committee at 9:21 a.m. during item 5.*

**Present** 5 - Manuel, Crump, Garrison, Hall and Vernon

**Excused** 2 - Perceptions and Boynes

#### Individuals also present:

*Ald. Milele Coggs, 6th Aldermanic District  
Arlisia McHenry, City Clerk's Office  
Ray Hill, Historic King Drive Business Improvement District*

#### 3. Election of a chair and vice-chair.

*Vice-chair Manuel commented. Elections should be withheld one more time due to the committee not having all members present today. It is the preference from the aldermanic office to hold elections with all members present. Elections have been withheld a couple of times now. With the important to not prolong the elections, the elections will take place at the next meeting irrespective of members' attendance. Members are encouraged to attend the next meeting, and those who do not attend the next meeting risk losing the opportunity to partake in the elections.*

*Member Crump said that both newly elected positions should not be a City employee member and that either the new chair or vice-chair should, at a minimum, not to be a City employee member.*

*Vice-chair Manuel said that it has been the practice for the committee to have one of the two positions be a non-City representative, such as in the case with the previous*

*chair being Ralph Hollmon from the Milwaukee Urban League.*

**4. Review and approval of the previous meeting minutes from February 7, 2018.**

*Member Vernon said to include in the minutes her announcing her birthday.*

*Member Vernon moved approval, seconded by member Garrison, of the meeting minutes from February 7, 2018. There was no objection.*

**5. Bronzeville RFPs, listings, projects, programs, initiatives, events, activities or updates.**

*A. Historic Garfield campus update*

*Individual appearing:*

*Melissa Goins, Maures Development Group*

*Ms. Goins gave a PowerPoint presentation, an update, and showed pictures relative to the progress of the exterior and interior of the Griot building. The whole development took many years to get to the present where its manifestation is almost complete.*

*The Garfield school building is complete and will be fully occupied (30 units) by the end of March. Flyers were done to solicit renters for the Garfield school building. The process to fully rent out the building took longer than expected due to having to resolve some issues, such as improving credit scores of individuals.*

*The Griot building will have tenants moving in on May 1st, applications taken on March 15th, and the goal of being fully leased by the end of August. The fourth floor is more finished than the lower floors. The first floor has 6 entry units. Visitor entry is at the east. The second floor has the club room and outdoor patio deck for residents. Every floor has a different color. Rooms have vinyl wood plank flooring and neutral color wall paint. Inspired Wankanda art from the Black Panther movie will be incorporated inside the building.*

*The Black Holocaust Museum is doing well with fundraising and recently received a gift of \$750,000 to do buildouts. Anticipated for June 19th is a joint grand opening of the museum and the apartments. The grand opening event is being developed still and will be considerate of the events of the Juneteenth Day celebration happening on the same day. Coordination will be done with Northcott to ensure that the events complement and not interfere with one another. There will be a more formal event early in the morning for City officials with food prior to and a more festive event after 6 p.m. in the evening after the Juneteenth Day celebration. Flyers would not be necessary, but can be done, for the Griot building due to an already long waiting list of interested renters.*

*Ms. Hall commented. The Milwaukee Urban League is leasing some of its space to the museum foundation for a few months and can be a place of assistance to the neighboring new development. The museum can be the launch for a historic block with the history of the Milwaukee Urban League playing a role. Milwaukee's Bronzeville is the only really one that has lasted out of the others across the country.*

*Member Vernon commented. The grand opening should be incorporated into Juneteenth Day celebration and parade. The Bronzeville communities from Chicago and other cities nationwide struggle with being authentic due to gentrification coming*

*from the developments surrounding those communities. Milwaukee's Bronzeville is really the only one that is representative of African American history and development, such as with the return of the museum.*

*Ald. Coggs remarked. A portion of North Avenue should be closed to accommodate the grand opening event. There will be a high crowd turnout due to the significance of the museum, those at Juneteenth Day, those from the community, and those from the City. She can be of assistance in acquiring the permits for the grand opening events.*

*Vice-Chair Manuel said that efforts to develop Bronzeville were intentional despite taking some time to come along.*

*B. Art and Resource Community (ARCH) program and artist housing*

*Ms. Manuel gave an update. There are four projects that are in the ARCH program and will exhaust the program funds. Additional program funding will be sought going forward.*

*The first project is at 2406-2408 North 4th Street for Vedale Hill to house his Jazale's Art Studio and residence there. The project is the first in the program, was approved last August, is 60 percent complete, overcame a few issues, and is anticipated to be completed sometime in the spring.*

*The second project is the old funeral home at 3514 North Port Washington Avenue for Fatima Laster to convert the funeral home into a 2-story 9,660 square feet mixed use building supporting an artist studio, warm kitchen for culinary artists, shared gallery, and 1900 square feet 3-bedroom residential unit. Common Council approval was acquired for Ms. Laster to purchase the property for \$1 in the area that she had grown up in. There are efforts to get the financing in place, and the project is anticipated to start in late spring. The project will be brought to the committee for their information with updates on its progress. The projected cost for the conversion is \$370,000. Ms. Laster was able to secure the Arts grant.*

*The third project is at 322-340 East Meinecke Avenue for MKE<->LAX and Sara Daleiden, who is in negotiations to acquire the property. Tenants for the building would include Ms. Daleiden's business and a barbershop. Common Council approval for the purchase of the building is anticipated for June.*

*The fourth project is for Ray Nitti and his art resource project on Lisbon Avenue. The project has just been proposed, and the process has just begun to acquire the real estate.*

*Ald. Coggs commented. Ald. Stamper and she, who were the original sponsors to the ARCH initiative, are seeking additional support from the foundation community going forward. The idea for the program was to get a few projects on the ground and test the concept first. The intention is not to depend on City funds for the growth of the program. She can keep members updated to allow member to offer assistance, relationships, and avenues to pursue. The ARCH program was started to allow some of the city-owned foreclosed properties to be creatively reused and utilized for either artist or resource uses with a space open for community functions for a period of time. Loans can be obtained up to \$25,000 with some matching funds. News of the first project had sparked much interest from others, such as Ms. Laster, and the development of an application, which is available online. Ms. Laster's project will have*

2 apartments, workspace, and a gallery available for community use. The first two projects are within her district, but the program is open to citywide. Art has played an integral role in rebuilding communities across the country. Also creating a resource hub can be huge to strengthen neighborhoods.

Member Crump commented. Perhaps artist and resource housing can be more intentionally clustered together within a certain boundary or strip and for there to be possibly an overlay district. A potential cluster area may be the former Ja'Stacey restaurant building along with the potential to acquire the adjacent properties. There are existing barriers that should be reduced or removed. Perhaps better quality real estate with less renovation costs should be offered to reduce financing costs, and zoning uses can be curtailed on the frontend rather than the backend.

Ald. Coggs further remarked. Artist housing has been discussed for many years with the consideration of many different approaches that resulted in a cluster on 4th Street and Meinecke Avenue. Many houses, however, have not been bought due to the reality of costs. Financing has been the main obstacle preventing projects to come to light. The concept of a cluster is good, but it may not be the solution alone. Clustering has to be coupled with resources and amenities. The former Ja'Stacey restaurant area may not be ideal for there to be a cluster there. There can be more conversations and exploration to improve the program offline. The acquisition of the first two properties in the ARCH program had very different approaches relating to financing and selection of the real estate. Many artists do not have the financial history required for direct bank financing and would require partnerships. Mr. Hill's project was made possible through a lease-to-own partnership with Strong Blocks. Ms. Laster's property selection was based on her personal preference and suiting her needs. Ms. Laster's unique background in construction, the ACRE program, and banking helped her ability to take on her project. Additional efforts to eliminate hurdles are warranted. Conversations are happening to address zoning and overlay issues.

Vice-chair Manuel added comments. The selection of projects has varied based on meetings with alderpersons, selected organizations, and the community. All approaches are being utilized, and much interest is received daily.

Member Vernon inquired about providing more support for the program.

Ald. Coggs replied. There should be the identification and leveraging of existing, accessible partners and resources, like Strong Blocks and credit repair services, rather than forming new programs or resources. There could be better properties made available. A list of all available properties is made available. For a variety of reasons, the City has much difficulty in maintaining city-owned properties overall and not only in certain areas or for the ARCH program. There can be more exploration with NIDC and banks to produce more creative lending tools and opportunities.

#### C. Bronzeville Week

Ald. Coggs gave an update. Ms. McHenry is the Community Outreach Liaison for the Common Council who handles events, and she has been coordinating Bronzeville Week activities including last year's event. Bronzeville Week has been declared by the City to be from August 4th to the 11th (Saturday to Saturday) for 2018. There is a committee of volunteers who are working on the activities. Activities that are confirmed are the ones that have been strong staples to the event: first day cultural

arts festival from King Drive to 7th Street on North Avenue and last day art park walk. There is intention to produce a tentative schedule by the first week in April followed by strategic promotion leading up to the event. Members can assist with acquiring more partnerships with residents, communities, organizations, and businesses through members' personal connections.

Ms. McHenry added comments. She is present to listen to input from members who had indicated an interest to discuss activities leading up to Bronzeville Week. She is in collaboration with Ald. Coggs to plan the event. There will be some strategies to start after the City's Girl's Day event, which has been her primary focus presently. There will be collaboration with Bublr Bikes and Clear Channel for advertising. The process for vendors will start next week, and a goal is to obtain more appropriate and unique vendors relative to arts, culture, and entertainment for the event.

*D. Other*

*There was no discussion.*

**6. Discussion regarding Common Council File Number 100626, Resolution creating a Bronzeville Advisory Committee.**

*Ald. Coggs provided an update.*

*There had been disconnect in the community relative to input, involvement, and opportunities prior to the advisory committee existing. In her early years as alderwoman, she was involved in holding or participating in many Bronzeville meetings and mixers that had much community turnout. The advisory committee was originally created to better inform and provide equal opportunity for the community and more suitable buyers to acquire or a City-owned property for redevelopment via an RFP process. The committee was uniquely formed to add a communal process to the City by providing community perspective and review, which the City lacks, in issuing city-owned RFP properties and choosing the best submittals. Also, the committee was formed to allow decisions to be made from community representatives and not just from herself or the City. Without communal input, the City may make decisions that produce totally different, less desirable, or less impactful projects for the community. The advisory committee was able to help produce the great Garfield school redevelopment project from Maures Development. Absent the advisory committee, the City would have chosen the less impactful, less desirable, and more traditional project from Gorman and Company. The City has mostly adopted the advisory committee's recommendations.*

*Although the committee was created via resolution to narrowly review RFPs, the reality has been that the committee has evolved in reviewing or being informed of other aspects affecting Bronzeville. The intention is to amend the original resolution to increase the responsibilities of the advisory committee. She is aware of committee recommendations to expand the committee. She is supportive to have any development (including private deals and non-RFP matters), City work, and anything related to Bronzeville come before the committee, at a minimum for informational purposes. Some examples include street projects and vacant lot projects.*

*Member Crump inquired about expanding the boundaries of the Bronzeville district.*

*Ald. Coggs responded. She did initiate a file to expand the boundaries to include a proposed Malcolm X school artist hub redevelopment project, not within the Bronzeville*

*district being at 1st Street and Center Street, but she did not fill the file due to that project not commencing forward. The official district boundaries created back in 2005 for Bronzeville is very small; however, the real boundaries are perceived much larger. Ideally, the boundaries should be from Walnut Street to Burleigh Street and from 2nd Street and the highway in careful consideration of the different community groups, such as the Halyard Park and Brewers Hill groups, within the area. She anticipates amending the boundaries by this June. She is exploring creating an overlay district or new creative ideas, like new zoning categories, to separately discourage projects that do not fit the district. Creating an overlay district is not easy, requires a legislative record, and is difficult to restrict uses. Perhaps something unique, similar to or beyond an architectural review board, would have to be created that has never been done before to discourage undesirable uses.*

*Vice-Chair Manuel commented. 2nd Street was not included in the original boundaries due to the large number of residential properties and potential disapproval from residents. There has been better sentiment from residents, who have been involved in projects over the years, since then.*

*Member Vernon commented. An additional unique board needs to be created to prevent undesirable developments, gentrification, and discriminatory targeting of the African American population. Developers need to incorporate and encourage African American developers for Bronzeville redevelopment projects.*

*Members inquired about the bicycle lane proposal for King Drive and about various properties.*

*Ald. Coggs further remarked. Some things cannot be legally mandated; however existing powers should be utilized as much as possible. Much work that has been done in Bronzeville has discouraged unwanted projects to not move forward, such as in the case of a proposed planned parenthood clinic across the street from the Black Holocaust Museum. Detroit is doing "pink" zoning, which encourages certain types of zoning in targeted areas, is worth exploring. The bike lane proposal on King Drive is dead at her request but may resurface. The streetcar extension conversation to King Drive will continue to be discussed, and the advisory committee should be a part of that conversation along with the TOD study report. There is an anti-displacement plan, that should be completed soon, and the plan should be on the advisory committee's next meeting. Several properties in the area, including the yellow building next to Ja'Stacey's, 507 W. North Avenue, and the grants building on King Drive, are owned by Paul Witkowski, and he is being pressured to put his properties up for sale. The laundromat in the area will be closed, will be developed into something else, and should be brought before the advisory committee. More apartments in the area have lessened the need, despite being a necessity for some people still, and profitability for laundromats. She will bring her legislative changes on the responsibilities of the advisory committee to the committee for comment prior to submitting them to the Common Council.*

## **7. Announcements.**

*Vice-chair Manuel announced the Reclaiming Vacant Lots Conference from May 15 - 17, 2018. Bronzeville will be highlighted on May 16th, and there will be a tour from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The ARCH program properties, the Black Holocaust Museum, and the Garfield campus will be featured. Details are being finalized and will be shared to members.*

**8. Review and approval of meeting schedule.**

*Mr. Lee said that a set schedule for the remainder of meetings for the year has been done based on members' preference to have a set meeting schedule. Members' preferences for Wednesdays, Ald. Cogg's schedule, and Common Council meetings were considered in developing the schedule and to avoid conflicts as much as possible.*

*Remaining meeting schedule is as follows:*

*Wednesday, April 18, 2018 at 9 a.m.  
Wednesday, May 16, 2018 at 9 a.m.  
Wednesday, June 27, 2018 at 9 a.m.  
Wednesday, July 18, 2018 at 9 a.m.  
No meeting in August  
Wednesday, September 12, 2018 at 9 a.m.  
Wednesday, October 24, 2018 at 9 a.m.  
Wednesday, November 28, 2018 at 9 a.m.  
Wednesday, December 19, 2018 at 9 a.m.*

*Member Hall moved approval, seconded by member Garrison, of the meeting schedule for the remainder of the year. There was no objection.*

**9. Next meeting date and time.**

*Wednesday, April 18, 2018 at 9 a.m.*

**10. Agenda items for the next meeting.**

*Agenda items to be developed offline.*

**11. Adjournment.**

*Meeting adjourned at 10:59 a.m.*

*Chris Lee, Staff Assistant  
Council Records Section  
City Clerk's Office*