



City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53202

Meeting Minutes

BRONZEVILLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

LASHAWNDRAY VERNON, CHAIR

Raynetta Hill, Vice-Chair

*Theresa Garrison, Anthony Smith, Baboonie Tatum, Rayhainio
Boynes, Terrence Moore, Sr.*

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Monday, May 19, 2025

9:00 AM

Virtual Meeting

This will be a virtual meeting conducted via GoToMeeting. Should you wish to join this meeting from your phone, tablet, or computer you may go to <https://meet.goto.com/670701165>. You can also dial in using your phone United States: +1 (312) 757-3121 and Access Code: 670-701-165.

1. Call to order.

Meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m.

2. Roll call.

Present 5 - Vernon, Boynes, Tatum, Hill and Moore,

Absent 1 - Smith

Excused 1 - Garrison

Also present:

Ald. Milele Coggs, 6th Ald. Dist.

Matt Haessly, DCD Real Estate

Kari Smith, DCD Real Estate

3. Review and approval of the previous meeting minutes from March 17 and April 9, 2025.

Meeting minutes from March 17 and April 9, 2025 were approved without objection.

4. Bronzeville RFPs, listings, projects, programs, initiatives, events, grants, activities, plans, or other aspects for update, discussion, presentation, review, motion, recommendation, and/or approval.

a. Discussion on WHEDA development-related housing tax credit resources,

application review and award process, and WHEDA financed projects within the Bronzeville district.

Appearing:

Elmer Moore, WHEDA CEO and Executive Director

Mr. Moore commented. WHEDA serves as the State's housing financing agency engaging in four main activities. First, they are a mortgage provider doing on average annually about a few thousand mortgages for low to moderate income households. Many in the Bronzeville community have utilized WHEDA mortgages and down payment assistance to cross the homeownership finish line. Secondly, they are the State's exclusive administrator for housing tax credits (federal and state). These are the resources that make the production of affordable multi-family or rental housing a profitable venture for private developers. They are the most successful private-public partnership that the federal government has ever created. They annually average financing a development of somewhere north of 1,500 units of multifamily housing. Third, WHEDA is a financing institution much like a bank and does a couple hundred million dollars of financing for projects across the State, including economic development loans. Lastly, they have a compliance function to make sure that the projects that are financed using WHEDA tax credits or financing have an operation that is safe and secure for the residents. Examples of WHEDA financed projections within Bronzeville include MLKEDC's The Compass Lofts, Bronzeville Creative Arts & Tech Hub on North Ave., and a project being built by KGI. WHEDA helps communities to realize housing, specifically affordable housing.

Members had no questions.

Chair Vernon said that the discussion today served as an opportunity to open the line of communication, especially for when the committee reviews projects that go before City approvals.

Mr. Moore said that members may contact their Community and Economic Development Officer Maria Watts with future inquiries. She is WHEDA's regional point of contact for Bronzeville and Milwaukee.

b. Update on the Bronzeville Center for the Arts, Inc. at the former Wisconsin DNR site at North Ave. and Dr. MLK Jr. Dr.

Appearing:

Mutope Johnson, Bronzeville Center for the Arts Director of Creative Partnerships

Phoenix Brown, Bronzeville Center for the Arts Curator

John Russick, Bronzeville Center for the Arts Managing Director

Deshea Agee, EMEM Group Vice President (owner's rep)

Representatives for Bronzeville Center for the Arts and EMEM Group provided the following update.

BCA was established in 2020 to organize and grow the art community, install an African American art museum in Bronzeville, provide professional art and culture practice, and provide opportunities for emerging artists. There were 4 original founders and 1 donor at the time BCA was created. BCA has provided exhibitions, programs, and other activities for the public, which are ongoing. Their office transitioned from being virtual at the America's Black Holocaust Museum, temporary location at The

Fortress, and now at Gallery 507. They have and continue to expand their board membership, had acquired a new curator, and are seeking a new Executive Director, which there is a vacancy presently.

BCA programming thus far have been impactful and successful. Activities or BCA involvement include a youth advisory council, Stitching Stories, Blue Printer BCA, Juneteenth Day, Sipping Collage, Community Design Organizers, hip hop architecture camp, Cabinet of Treasures, opening of a new gift shop, and a successful quilting show. BCA had received a State grant and was one of 24 recipients of the City's design award.

Ms. Brown joined BCA recently in February as a new curator, is a Milwaukee-based curator and artist, is originally from Ohio, and had various curator experience. They have a partnership with Sculpture Milwaukee to install a public work at BCA, which would come before the committee and community for feedback. Their first exhibition, Quilting and Contemporary Arts Stories, features three Milwaukee-based artists that practice quilting. The exhibition closes June 27th. They are working on a partnership with The Chipstone Foundation to exhibit some historic objects to the gallery along with some contemporary emerging artists work to coincide with those objects. The exhibition will open and close August 7th (around Bronzeville Week) and January 9th, respectively.

The former DNR building and 3.4 acre site at 2312 N. Dr. MLK Jr. Dr. was purchased in 2022. The plan is to demolish the building and construct the new museum. The abatement process is underway. Demolition will begin in June and conclude in September. Once demolished, the site will be activated for interim use by the community. The northern parking surface will remain hardscape. They have partnered with several notable architects, including landscape, to determine the hardscape portion and future design of the museum.

BCA has a strong team and other staff members. The former Executive Director was recruited to lead Americans for the Arts, which is the foremost arts advocacy group in the country. They will recruit for someone equally as dominant in the art and culture sector. BCA has been active, planning for the future, and welcomes assistance and collaboration. They acquired the laundry site to the west to help with overflow parking and be part of their communication operations. Community engagement will continue along the way, including the advisory committee.

Members said they were familiar with BCA project details, commended BCA, and were interested about programming information.

Vice-chair Hill inquired about further BCA property acquisition and a response to a recent article concerning the board chair departure.

BCA representatives replied. They will not seek any new property or expansion. They are focused only on their current property portfolio. The 2312 site is a heavy lift for them. The laundry site helps with their parking. They will partner with neighbors on parking as well. The article had implications and perceived errors. The comments section and response from the departed board member spoke in support of BCA to that article.

Mr. Johnson added comments. The hip hop architecture camp occurred last summer with middle and high school students, who wrote a song and produced a video.

Cabinets of Treasure event was at Gallery 507. Gallery 507 has installed much artwork and has movable walls, which have made it very flexible in holding activities there.

Mr. Agee added that Bronzeville was now realizing arts and culture, which were missing previously. BCA will add onto that.

Chair Vernon said that the new museum will be a catalytic project for Bronzeville, the committee was in support, and for there to be ongoing updates to the committee.

c. DCD Commercial Corridor update.

Member Moore, Sr. gave an update. The application portal had closed and funds have depleted due to a reduced budget for the year. They would try to acquire additional funding would need help from stakeholders and partners. Many commercial property owners and businesses have leveraged the grants to upgrade their properties.

Locations that were able to receive grants included 1944 N. MLK Jr. Dr. (\$2070 for signage) and 1950 N. MLK Jr. Dr. (\$5,000 for facade and \$24,670 for storefront activation). Approved for funding included 610 W. North Ave. (\$2,500 for signage, \$5,000 for facade, and \$25,000 for storefront activation) and 501 W. North Ave. (\$5,000 for facade). One accepted application for 1942 N. MLK Jr. Dr. (signage) remains deferred for further funding.

d. DCD Real Estate update.

Kari Smith was introduced as the new Real Estate and Development Manager replacing Amy Turim. She would be working the committee going forward. There were no new updates.

5. Public comments and/or announcements.

No public comments and no announcements.

6. Next steps.

a. Agenda items for the next meeting.

To be determined.

b. Next meeting date and time (Monday, July 21, 2025 at 9 am).

7. Adjournment.

Meeting adjourned at 10:01 a.m.

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