



City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53202

Meeting Minutes

BRONZEVILLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

VACANT, CHAIR

Rhonda Manuel, Vice-Chair

**Fidel Verdin, Theresa Garrison, Christopher Perceptions,
Clifton Crump, Lashawndra Vernon, and Eve Hall**

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Wednesday, October 25, 2017

9:00 AM

**Milwaukee Urban League
Main Conference Room**

435 W. North Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53212

1. Call to order.

Meeting called to order at 9:19 a.m.

2. Roll call.

Present 7 - Manuel, Verdin, Crump, Garrison, Perceptions, Hall and Vernon

3. Introduction of new member.

Mr. Hall made a brief introduction and said she was happy to host this meeting at the Milwaukee Urban League.

4. Election of a Chair and Vice-Chair.

This item was held.

5. Review and approval of the previous meeting minutes from September 20, 2017.

Meeting minutes from September 20, 2017 were approved without objection.

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

a. Bronzeville Week Update

Individuals appearing:

Ald. Milele Coggs, 6th Aldermanic District

Arlisia McHenry, City Clerk's Office

Deshea Agee, Historic King Drive BID

Ald. Coggs gave introductory remarks. Bronzeville Week, in its fifth year, was celebrated from August 5 to 12, 2017. This year was the first year the event was an official City event. There were eight days of jammed packed activities in the Bronzeville and greater MLK Drive areas. Ms. McHenry helped execute the event this year in her staff capacity from the City. Costs for the entire event were from \$30,000 to \$40,000. Money was raised from several sponsors including the Historic King Drive BID, Maures Development, VISIT Milwaukee, and others. Bronzeville Week originated from the community's fight against Dollar Tree and for a healthy full-service food grocer instead, which became Pete's Fruit Market. Friends of Bronzeville had formed to organize the event previously. Each year the event has grown and was moved up in August strategically in part to the discontinuance of African World Festival. A goal is to have Bronzeville Week to be a recognized festival in the City and region.

Mr. Agee, Ald. Coggs, and Ms. McHenry gave a PowerPoint presentation and overview of Bronzeville Week.

The event occurs to make Bronzeville a destination. There were new faces, momentum, and support. Advisory committee members had participated in the event in some way. The first event was the kickoff at Jazale's Art Studio. There were new events like an extended Bronzeville Art Walk and an artist award. Many events took place at local businesses.

On Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. there was the culture and arts festival on North Avenue from King Drive to 7th Street. The festival had music, ice cream truck, City officials in attendance, youth drummers, dancing, Milwaukee Bucks mascot Bango in attendance, DJ, kid area, close to 100 vendors, gospel stage, and main stage. There was a joint walk-run concerning infant mortality with Harambee and United Way, which helped to increased attendees for Bronzeville Week.

On Sunday there was Crown Sunday (wearing of hats), an outside church service at King Solomon Missionary Baptist Church, and a community cleanup. Member Garrison had helped organized the church service from her church.

On Monday there was a Bronzeville historical conversation at the Urban League office.

On Tuesday there was a small men's "A Night in Bronzeville" event, led by Andre E. Ellis, at Gee's Clippers with impromptu spoken pieces performed from several men. This event also coincided with men making pledges to be aware of human trafficking and sexual abuse towards women.

On Wednesday there were two sessions of a youth's Cool-Aid and Canvases painting event at the Milwaukee Public Library, and there were trolley tours sponsored by the BID. The painting event was sponsored by City Treasurer Spencer Coggs and consisted of over 80 youths in participation. Trolley tours have been happening every year for Bronzeville Week, occurred three times throughout the day, were extremely popular, drew a mixture of riders including a wedding party, were a hit with kids, went into the neighborhoods sometimes away from the main streets, and were extended to be a part of the art walk. The tours went through and promoted Halyard Park, Harambee, Bronzeville, and various development sites. At night there was a "Move the Crowd" event with artist performances of various kinds

On Thursday there was a "Paint-N-Sip" event, sponsored by JCP Construction, with about 70 participants in two sessions.

On Friday there was a Bronzeville Business Summit, Bronzeville Battles, and Bronzeville Sleepover. The summit was aimed at networking and attracting businesses to the area. Bronzeville Battles was a youth talent show geared towards young adults and teenagers. Supplies were donated during the sleepover event, which was geared towards youth going back to school.

On Saturday there was a Bronzeville Bike Ride, Black Food Truck Fest, and Art Walk. A national artist, Jacob Lattimore, participated in the art walk. Artists were able to display and sell their pieces inside various businesses. Bronzeville Ensemble did a piece from the "Welcome to Bronzeville" play.

Several members commented positively on their participation in and experience of various activities that occurred during Bronzeville Week as mentioned in the overview.

Members questioned markers that would indicate regional success for Bronzeville Week, streetcar effect on Bronzeville Week, downtown gentrification to Bronzeville, and addressing gentrification.

Dr. Hall commented. Oliver Wendell Holmes School and George Washington Carver Academy can be sites for future Cool-Aid and Canvases events. She serves on Milwaukee United. Gentrification has not really been discussed at Milwaukee United, and they should come before the advisory committee to discuss the issue. There are letters circulating around to solicit residents to sell their homes, which can prompt seniors to sell their homes.

Ald. Coggs and Mr. Agee replied.

Over time several indicators of success would include the amount and level of sponsors gained, residence information of attendees from sign-in sheets, research from the Department of City Development, financial investment gained, and property interests. Some of the redevelopment that has occurred in the area can be attributed to Bronzeville Week. Bronzeville Week was recognized by On Milwaukee as one of the top four celebrations of African American culture.

There is a TOD study underway on a potential streetcar line to Bronzeville on King Drive, and several meetings will be conducted that would be inclusive of community input. DCD will be requested to do an economic growth plan around the streetcar. There is no funding yet for a streetcar line to Bronzeville, but the anticipation would be for more increased effort towards the additional streetcar leg once funding can be acquired. Use of the trolley can help give the community a mindset of using the streetcar as an alternative transportation option. Consultants of the streetcar will hold two community input sessions on November 4, 2017 at Mt. Zion Baptist Church, and there is opportunity for the consultants to perhaps come before the advisory committee in the future.

Milwaukee United and the City is looking at the impact of the arena on the greater surrounding downtown areas. Gentrification concerns for Bronzeville and Hillside have been expressed to that study, but no study has been produced yet. The anecdotal response has been for affordable housing; however, the desire is for culture, diversity, and for the current population to not be pushed out. Gentrification should not occur from the public sector for City-owned properties. DCD has been asked to withhold the selling of City-owned residential homes for 1.5 years. Also DCD has been asked to do

a block by block strategic plan to prevent gentrification. The advisory committee has made recommendations on Bronzeville RFPs and non-RFP listings, in which the City has adopted those recommendations. Wisconsin has uniformity tax laws that are problematic for home owners who are seniors and may be paying higher property taxes due to downtown development. Concerns have also been expressed to the Milwaukee Bucks on the arena. There have been efforts and continued discussion with the Bucks to prevent gentrification and include the surround community with job opportunities for the new arena. Entities such as Milwaukee United and the Bucks should be brought before the advisory committee on a regular basis for updates and discussion opportunistically near the time whenever they have to come before a Council committee meeting. As part of the TOD study, there is a firm doing market analysis and housing affordability research to prevent gentrification.

Ald. Coggs gave ending remarks. Throughout the week there were free health care checkups given that positively affected people who did not have health insurance. Many businesses also gained additional customers who were not regular customers. Planning for Bronzeville Week in 2018 will start now. A resolution recently passed to recognize August 4 to 11, 2018 as the next Bronzeville Week.

Member Verdin left the committee at 10:33 a.m.

b. Historic Garfield Campus update

Individual appearing:

Melissa Goins, Maures Development Group LLC

Ms. Goins gave an update on the Historic Garfield school redevelopment building and the new construction Griot building.

The school building renovation is complete. The first residence will be accepted November 3, 2017. Both buildings have \$17.7 million in investment. The school building investment is about \$7.8 million and has 30 apartment units with one, two, and three bedrooms. The school building grand opening and open house is tomorrow from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. There will be paintings and a performance at the grand opening led by a group of artists, including member Perceptions. There will also be a preview of the Black Holocaust Museum. There is a list of about 200 people interested in renting. There are about four to five signed leases. The building will transition from construction to property management on October 31, 2017. She and member Perceptions will be interviewed by CBS television later today on the two buildings. The main entrance for visitors will be at the rear of the annex by the parking lot due to this entry being the only feasible one to be made handicap accessible. The entrance with the grand staircase on 4th Street will be for residents. The hardwood floors inside the building are all original, except the annex. Most units have washers and dryers. Three local artists did artwork throughout the three floors in the common spaces. Another artist will be acquired to do an exterior mural on the annex building.

The Griot is on track and on budget. Construction is anticipated to be complete by April 2018. The building will have 41 rental units, 8,000 sq. ft. of commercial space, the bulk of commercial space leased to the museum, and the museum opening during Juneteenth Day 2018. There is available 1500 to 1600 sq. ft. for a compatible user, such as for a café or additional space for the museum. Currently all the wood frames for the building are up. Insulation and windows are being put in. Part of the first level extra commercial space will have an outdoor accessible deck above it. Six units on

the first level will have direct entry.

A Bublr bike station will be installed on the northwest corner of 4th Street and Garfield Avenue. The concrete along the streets surround the buildings will have landscape sidewalk and grass. There is a group of artist advisers that meet about every other month to advise her on her projects. There will be a more ceremonial event done for the whole project once the Griot building is done.

Members inquired about the Reader's Choice building, rent for both buildings, and prospective commercial tenants for the Griot building.

Ms. Goins replied. The Reader's Choice building, which housed the last African American book store in Wisconsin for the last 20 years, will be redeveloped for tenants Jazale's Art Studio and Grateful Girls, both nonprofits. The building will be named "Kindred". Rent at the school building ranges from \$600 to \$1000 per month, which is at the highest for affordable housing (60% County median income). There are no market rates for the school building. Rent for the new building has market rates, will be down to 30% County median income, and range from \$400 to \$1000. She can be contacted via email about interested commercial tenants for the Griot building.

c. Environmental Collaboration Office (ECO) update on Bronzeville lots.

Individuals appearing:

Timothy McCollow, Environmental Collaboration Office

Amy Turim, Department of City Development

Arlisia McHenry, City Clerk's Office

Deshea Agee, Historic King Drive BID

Mr. McCollow gave a PowerPoint presentation and an update.

Through the Home Grown Program of the ECO office, three vacant lots in Bronzeville had some greenscaping done this year. The locations were 5th Street and North Avenue, 6th Street and North Avenue, and 7th Street and Garfield Avenue. Greenscaping previously occurred in Lindsay Heights in 2016.

On 5th Street and North Avenue, planters were installed along the edges of the grass lot. There is potential contamination at this site, so landscaping was limited as digging into the ground was not allowed. Plants were obtained from Fondy Farmers Market and installed for Bronzeville Week. Plants included perennials.

At 6th Street and North Avenue, a proposed pocket park was not installed at the advice of the advisory committee previously. Instead the existing concrete rubble at the site was covered up with topsoil and grass.

At 7th Street and Garfield Avenue, the large asphalt has been replaced with grass and grassy edge matching other greenscaping sites. Bushes and trees at this lot were trimmed. This lot was the largest project undertaken by ECO thus far, is 29,000 square feet, and is a significant gateway to Bronzeville. Perennial grasses were planted along the edges, which have been a template used west of the I-43 freeway.

Ms. McHenry commented. She and volunteers from West Care personally planted the plants on the planters at the 5th Street and North Avenue site. She will be working with others towards sprucing up vacant lots in Bronzeville.

Ms. McHenry inquired about the maintenance of the 5th Street and North Avenue lot going forward.

Members inquired about the contamination of vacant lots in Bronzeville.

Mr. McCollow replied that other personnel could certainly be acquired to maintain the planters going forward. There should not be a planting issue going forward since the perennials should bloom back after the winter season. The perennials will just require watering by nature. The 5th Street and North Avenue site can be added to the list of sites that require weeding through the ECO office.

Ms. Turim commented. The environmental team from DCD and the Redevelopment Authority for the City of Milwaukee (RACM) can come before the committee, and they would best respond as to the specifics of contamination information. Otherwise some written information could be sent to the committee via email. Generally most of contaminated sites in the City were formerly dry cleaners, gas stations, or other businesses that spilled chemicals into the ground. Any redevelopment of contaminated sites would require remediation of the contamination. DCD environmental specialists and RACM do investigate the historical land use for all redevelopment sites.

Member Vernon commented. From her experience dealing with development, almost every City lot in the urban neighborhoods very likely has contaminated soil at different levels. Any planting in the urban neighborhoods should be done with raised beds. Developers are usually responsible to get contamination reports done.

Mr. Agee added that there are some monitoring wells at some sites to monitor for contamination, contamination does not mean that a site cannot be built on, and contamination will mean that there would be additional fees for developers to test and remediate the contamination.

d. Other

There was no discussion.

7. Announcements.

Dr. Hall said that there will be a 58th Annual Equal Opportunity Day. Ald. Coggs will award an economic impact award for her efforts with Pete's Fruit Market and other redevelopment. There will be two visionary awards given, one for Rodney Bourrage for founding Operation Dream and another for Jeanette Mitchell for founding African American Leadership.

8. Agenda items for the next meeting.

To be determined.

9. Set next meeting date and time.

To be determined.

10. Adjournment.

Meeting adjourned at 11:16 a.m.

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