

CapitolRiver Council Meeting Minutes

Dec. 15, 2020, 5:15-6:45 p.m. Board of Directors Meeting

- I. Call to order and introductions. Board members in attendance: Joe Baierl, Chris Beckstrom, Kathleen Conger, Nick Cusick, Tom Erickson, John Ganey, Jess Grams, Bill Huepenbecker, Rich Johnson, Lee Knutson, Mia Laufer, Paul Mandell, Shevek McKee, Crystal Meriwether, Olga Nichols, Jonathan Reisetter, John Smith, Will Travis.

Other attendees: Mary Dierich, Jon Fure, Lee Ann LaBore, and Lissa Jones-Lofgren

- II. Motion to adopt agenda. Motion by Crystal Meriwether, seconded by John Ganey, to adopt the agenda with the request by Chris Beckstrom to add an item to discuss the neighborhood honor roll. Motion passed
- III. Motion by John Ganey, seconded by Joe Baierl, to approve the Nov. 17, 2020 board meeting minutes. Motion passed.

Items for Information and Discussion

- IV. Updates on volunteering at encampments, and collaboration with other local organizations. Staff from Radius Health and People Incorporated were invited but unable to attend the meeting. Chair Shevek McKee talked about volunteering at the encampments and the notice that the encampment is going to be cleared. He and other CRC staff and board members have been going with City staff to the encampments at Lower Landing and Kellogg Mall parks on Wednesdays, asking people if they need any warm clothing (City staff have brought socks, hats, gloves, handwarmers, and other items), and asking them if they are working with anyone to find an indoor shelter option. Due to the planned evacuation of Kellogg Mall Park, the City is seeking volunteers on Thursday and Friday. Paul Mandell provided an update on Bethesda permit process to convert the building to a homeless shelter. If CRC wants to indicate support, that would need to be sent the following morning (Dec. 16 by 9 a.m.). Motion by Joe Baierl, seconded by Olga Nichols, to write and send a letter of support for the Bethesda conditional use permit application. Motion passed.
- V. Neighborhood Honor Roll: Chris Beckstrom said district councils used to have an annual citywide event to recognize volunteers in all 17 districts, and it was a good way to recognize people who are doing great work as volunteers. Many people are still doing that work, but there seems to be very little gratitude, and it's sorely needed. The annual event was attended by City Council members and many City department managers. Mr. Beckstrom suggested that since the district councils are not coordinating this event, CRC could send a letter of appreciation to a list of people saying thank you for their volunteer service in our neighborhood. Attendees suggested including Council Member Noecker in this discussion. Board members who would like to recommend someone for this recognition should send a person's name, email address, and description of their efforts to Chris Beckstrom.
- VI. Summary of Dec. 1 CRC Officers Meeting. The CRC officers met on Tuesday, Dec. 1, and discussed officer roles (clarifying specific duties and priorities), external communication (consider developing guidelines for CRC social media engagement and roles in responding to news media requests), internal communication (keeping website updated, especially meeting minutes), potential bylaws changes (to address videoconference meetings and voting for board members, and other potential changes), fundraising (desperately need to prepare more grant applications and overall fundraising strategy), and committees (format of meetings and recruiting new leaders as people decide to step down from committees and / or the board).

- VII. Definition of Family Study (<https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/planning-economic-development/planning/current-activities/definition-family-study>). Jon Fure said this is a City-led initiative that has been discussed at district council monthly staff meetings. City ordinances have many references to “family.” The City Planning Commission is soliciting feedback and will develop recommendations for the City Council to consider. Motion by John Ganey, seconded by Mia Laufer, to replace the word “family” with “household,” and to follow existing codes related to occupancy. Motion passed.

Draft Privacy Policy

- VIII. Draft Privacy Policy – Aliya Mohamed, CRC Marketing and Technology Specialist, prepared a draft policy that would be posted on the CRC website. This was discussed at the November board meeting and was available for questions and feedback. Some questions were asked by board meeting, and after additional research by Ms. Mohamed, recommended that the draft be approved. Motion by Mia Laufer, seconded by Will Travis, to approve the Privacy Policy. Motion passed. (The policy was posted on the CRC website after the meeting.)

New Business

- IX. Fundraising Update – Board members discussed potential grant applications with the main goal to increase staffing levels (for example, to hire a community engagement specialist or community organizer). Chris Beckstrom said this is a perfect opportunity for the board to do a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis, which is a good way to get everyone on the same page in terms of what we are doing well, and what we would like to do more of and why.
- X. Financial Update and CRC 2021 Budget – due to uncertainty of some anticipated funding, this was tabled until the January 2021 meeting.
- XI. Recommendation to extend employment of Aliya Mohamed through May of 2021 – Jon Fure said the City has offered to reimburse CRC for Ms. Mohamed’s wages through May of 2021. Motion by Crystal Meriwether, seconded by Shevek McKee, to extend Aliya Mohamed’s employment through May of 2021. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

CRC MISSION

CapitolRiver Council, an official advisory group to the City Council, represents and works in partnership with all District 17 stakeholders to act on urban planning and community building efforts as part of a shared vision to support sustainable, safe, healthy, and vibrant neighborhoods.