

Family Center PTO Meeting February 26, 2025

Attendees

- Deanna Palagallo (co-president)
- Shelby Brett (co-president)
- McKenzie Walter (Secretary)
- Amy Perry (Director)
- Stefanie Mott
- Stephanie Goette
- Michelle Snyder
- Sarah Stromsdorfer

Welcome (Deanna Palagallo and Shelby Brett)

- Thank you for coming
- Both Clayton Mayoral candidates are joining our meeting to introduce themselves and answer questions

Mayoral Candidates

- Bridget McAndrew - learn more at <https://www.bridgetmcandrewformayor.com>
- Rick Hummell - learn more at <https://www.rickhummell4mayor.com/>
- Both candidates provided written responses to several questions. Responses are included at the end of these meeting minutes

Budget Update (Brock Reichart via Deanna Palagallo)

- Doing well, up \$6,398.84
- Stefanie asked from a fundraising standpoint - should we have this amount?
 - Deanna said we should aim to lower the surplus in ways to support the school
 - Discussed different ways to use it
 - Asked if funds could go to teachers directly
 - Gift cards / teacher appreciation
 - If we want to give gift to teachers a vote would be needed to change the budget

Outreach (Lauren Hamburg)

- Oatmeal drive this week, donation bins outside both doors to collect for the week
- Collect oatmeal packets for meals for kids
- Dollar donation link sent
- Collection bin at Totspot this weekend, will send email

Teacher Appreciation (Stephanie Goette & Ellie O'Brien)

- Snacks on Valentines provided from Pretzel Boys
- Conference dinner will be from Sauce on the Side

Fundraising (Stefanie Mott)

- Playdate at Totspot Social on Saturday Mar 1
- Few spots left, tickets available online (30 spots)
- Individual pictures with Felise Photography - all spots full (24 spots)
- Goal of the playdate is to build community and support local business

Directors Report (Amy Perry)

- Enrollment is good, 3-5 classes nearly full
- Birth - 3 classes still have openings
- Tours still open
- The slide (3rd one ordered) will work, waiting on weather conditions to put in

Closing (Deanna and Shelby)

- Long Range Facilities Plan - can watch the meeting where they presented to the board
 - Encourages everyone to watch it
 - Nothing would happen next spring - breaking ground wouldn't happen for a couple of years
- Summer playdates - last year we sent out survey and grouped families together
 - Want to see if people want to do it again
- Next meeting is April 2

SEE NEXT PAGE FOR RESPONSES FROM THE MAYORAL CANDIDATES

Questions to Mayoral Candidates

1. **What is your plan for collaboration, if any, between the City of Clayton and the School District of Clayton, and what would your support, or lack thereof, of the district's Long Range Facilities Master Plan look like as the mayor of Clayton.**

BRIDGET: I believe that the school district is our most important partner. I was very happy and honored to serve and participate on the steering committee for the district's long range facilities master plan. In that process, it was eye-opening to learn about the need for updates to our schools and how the educational process continues to evolve for our children. As you can see from my endorsements, I have strong relationships across the school board, and I know that I am the best candidate to ensure that we work together to support our mutual goals. I absolutely look forward to hearing about the school district's decision on its next steps and learning how the city can best support the plan moving forward.

RICK: Collaboration with our institutional constituents is a hallmark of my campaign for Mayor. Working together we will best serve the needs of our community. I have made my position clear that the City needs to immediately analyze the assets controlled by the City or under our control that might be relevant to the District's capital plans. Specifically, we need to come to the table with the analysis that creates the environment necessary to consider the broadest set of solutions that benefit our community.

2. **What are your plans for downtown Clayton, both in general and specifically with the many empty commercial spots. We are seeing areas like Webster and Kirkwood thrive — especially for families — whereas it feels like Clayton is sitting empty. I've heard businesses are incentivized to keep spaces empty for the write offs. Is that really the case, and how do we combat that?**

BRIDGET: In our master planning process (Clayton Tomorrow 2040), we heard over and over again that our residents want to see a more vibrant downtown. It is imperative that we strive to do this both for our quality of life and to strengthen our revenue base. This should include new development in key downtown sites that is consistent with Clayton Tomorrow 2040 as well as filling vacancies in existing buildings. I agree with our residents who said that they wanted a more energetic downtown with a wider variety of commercial and entertainment options.

a. In Clayton, we struggle to attract commercial tenants like Webster and Kirkwood do because our rental rates are significantly higher than those municipalities. As a result, the new build out and rent often make it cost prohibitive for a new local retail owner. Furthermore, landlords/property owners often contribute to that build out but don't want to fund it one hundred percent. This often leads to spaces staying vacant for long periods and in older buildings, this can lead to lower appraised values and then less owed taxes. For the first time since I have been on the board, we recently adopted a new economic development plan that aims to attract desired development and retail. It also considers different types of incentives in order to do that. I look forward to continuing to explore that with our community and work with our city staff to get into the details!

RICK: The economic health of Downtown Clayton is important in bringing commercial

vitality and vibrancy to Clayton and for generating a significant portion of the revenue necessary to provide the excellent city services we value in our community. I will engage with property owners, existing businesses, commercial leasing agents and downtown residents to identify strategies that can be readily implemented to address vacant spaces. We will continue to address any impediments that the City poses, if any, from restrictive or unflexible ordinances. I am not aware of any incentive from Clayton to allow empty spaces persist. In fact, I think we need to consider what incentives the City may employ to activate occupancy in vacant spaces.

3. What is something the current administration has done/is doing that you would do differently, and why?

BRIDGET: As mentioned above, I believe that the school district is our most important partner. It is why the overwhelming majority of people move to Clayton. As such, there must be a more cooperative and collaborative relationship between city and school district leadership. We are both embarking on the implementation of our master planning processes and there is a need for support, communication, and goal sharing that is crucial to the success of both of these plans.

RICK: We have engaged the public extensively about land and recreational planning issues; however, we haven't engaged them in important financial and economic issues. We have many residents with excellent experience and expertise that can provide valuable insight to address issues in our long-term operating and capital improvement budgets. I have found great value in broadening public engagement as significant learning takes place, communication is expanded, and community trust grows.

4. As both candidates have served on the Board of Aldermen leading up to this election, how does each envision the role of mayor to affect the commitment level of their service, and how does each plan to align their various responsibilities and priorities to fulfill the demands of the position?

BRIDGET: I understand that being the mayor is much like being captain of a team and that good working relationships and communication is key to ensuring the team's success. While being a Ward 3 alderperson has kept me busy for the last 7 years, I know that the mayoral job is an even bigger one and I am ready and excited for the challenge. Aside from leading meetings and being present throughout the city, I look forward to participating in the municipal league, hearing from other mayors, and working with our local businesses.

RICK: I intend to broaden my focus on issues that affect the entire Clayton community as well as the region. I expect my involvement and engagement with residents and regional leaders to be more extensive. I will work collaboratively with the Board of Aldermen in addressing needs throughout the City. Given that I am retired I don't envision any conflicts to dedicating myself to the responsibilities of the position.