

City of Cincinnati



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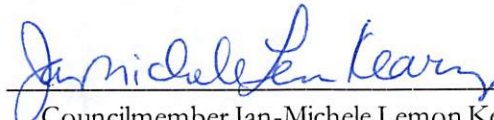
Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney
Councilmember

202101633

April 30, 2021

MOTION

WE MOVE for City Council to allocate \$100,000 from American Rescue Plan Act funding to Professional Artistic Research (PAR) to help finalize the acquisition of 15,000 square feet of industrial mixed-use property in the Northside neighborhood, in order to help their black-led, community arts & education organization foster new relationships and build racial equity — the latter being a city goal and a named goal of the American Rescue Plan.



Councilmember Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney

STATEMENT

See attached Statement from PARS founder, Jonathan Sears.



Professional Artistic Research Projects

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April 28, 2021

Office of Council Member
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To Whom It May Concern:

Professional Artistic Research (PAR-) Projects is requesting \$100,000 of support from The City of Cincinnati to help finalize the acquisition of 15,000 square feet of industrial mixed-use property in the Northside neighborhood, in order to help their black-led, community arts & education organization foster new relationships and build racial equity — the latter being a city goal and a named goal of the American Rescue Plan.

History of Cincinnati Supporting Capital Projects

Since creating its first public event, PAR-Projects has enjoyed seeing and/or learning about the many times The City of Cincinnati has invested in projects led by fellow community centers and community-based initiatives. Those that have specifically touched partners of PAR- have included \$50,000 to Kennedy Heights Arts Center (2006); \$250,000 to Clifton Cultural Arts Center (2009); and more recently \$500,000 to NEST in 2018 to acquire Northside property for the redevelopment of the old Save-A-Lot building on Apple Street. And while each of these projects are amazing and fully supported by PAR-Projects, they all lack a single thing — diverse and/or minority leadership.

History of PAR-Projects Building Equity For Others

Since the “official” beginning of the organization (2010), PAR-Projects has activated vacant buildings, abandoned parcels of property, and empty storefronts with a goal of allowing creativity to shed light onto places that could use a little more love and attention. This has provided new and exciting opportunities for our community to make ongoing connections and expand their personal revenue streams. But it has also lead to building-owners finding new tenants, and property owners attracting the eyes of local developers.

Most notably, in 2011, via a (then) 20 year land lease, the PAR-Projects team activated the former Myron Johnson Lumber Yard at the corner of Hamilton Ave. & Blue Rock — a City of Cincinnati-owned parcel that had sat vacant for over 20 years — to create The Factory Square Fine Arts Festival. This was supposed to be the start of a 20 year journey for PAR-Projects, but instead led to the attraction of 20+ new developers, a land lease cancellation, and the \$15,000,000 development of The Gantry Apartments, which opened in our wake back in 2015. And while this created another resilience test for PAR-, it also further demonstrates the economic value creativity can provide for a community.

How support will help others growth & educate

While funding from The City of Cincinnati will help PAR-Projects finalize the purchase of property — helping to build racial equity in our rapidly-developing community — it will also provide below-market rental spaces for local non-profits, including Revolution Dance Theatre and Cincinnati Music Accelerator — both also black led organizations.

Essentially, instead of finding ways to occupy all of this new space, PAR- has decided to dedicate two thirds of it to others, to support the growth of a collaborative community & education hub. Each of the non-profits joining the movement specialize in their own practice. So on the same campus, children (and adults) of all ages will be able to learn classical dance, music production, animation, wood working, and graphic design, with more to come — creating overlapping opportunities for community growth.

By supporting this effort, The City of Cincinnati has a unique opportunity to help lift the burden of a 10 year mortgage, support the growth & education of a community, build racial equity, and show appreciation for a black-led organization helping others succeed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Jonathan Sears, MFA
Executive Director
Professional Artistic
Research Projects