

Community Engagement Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 12, 2022, 6:30-8:00 pm
Zoom Digital Meeting

Attendees: Nick Hutchinson, Laryssa Stolarskyj, Shannon Dotson, Jesse Oyervides, Danny Villars, Lisa Karlgaard, Paul Miller, Petru Vizoli, Rachel Peterson, Sebastion Renfield, John

Staff: Kaley Brown, Meggie Garcia

Presenters: Paul Miller, City of Minneapolis Public Works Dept.; Kaley Brown, Whittier Alliance; Caleb Crossley, Futsal Society

Introductions & Meeting Overview

- Welcome at 6:34 pm by Nick Hutchinson.
- A round of introductions is done.
- The Standard of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policies are reviewed.
- The agenda is reviewed.
- The minutes from August are reviewed.
 - Motion to approve the minutes from the August meeting is made, seconded, and approved unanimously.

Pillsbury Ave Bridge Reconstruction Project - Paul Miller and team

- Purpose of project is to improve the condition of this high traffic bridge; there is cracking in the concrete and lots of deterioration, falling debris
- Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCCRA) is the managing authority of the Midtown Greenway trench and they are pursuing these projects with future transit in mind for the south side
- Historic value of the bridge means they must follow specific regulations
 - Bridge was constructed from 1912 to 1916 as apart of a series of them in this area
 - 23 out of original 37 still remain today; rehabilitation is preferred to replacement
 - All of the remaining bridges are needing rehabilitation eventually; they are starting the process with the Pillsbury Ave bridge
 - Currently they are in studying stage, reviewing all impacts that replacement and rehabilitation could have
- **Questions:**
 - How long will the construction period take? April (spring) to November (fall); the bridge will be closed to traffic during this time
 - Hennepin County is responsible for rebuilding bridges; HCCRA owns some of the bridges -- if a bridge is fully replaced then it goes to the City for future control; if it is a rehab, it will stay with HCCRA
 - How do you notify the community surrounding the area for these projects? Have you done other outreach yet? They've had some informal conversations with nearby stakeholders and have been in direct contact with Soren Jensen from the Midtown Greenway Coalition; they will be ramping up awareness with notices eventually being mailed out.
 - Will this project require the Greenway be closed? They are hoping to not have Greenway closed for more than a day or so and only in a small section, if needed; traffic will be redirected if needed (trails will shift back and forth across Greenway lanes east and west bound).

Former Kmart & New Nicollet Ave Community Engagement Updates & Opportunities - Kaley Brown

- Working with City of Minneapolis as a part of a coalition of organizations leading the community engagement process
- We are currently in Phase 1, and Phase 2 will begin in early 2023 running through the end of the year.
- A certainty of the project will be to reconnect Nicollet Ave to run all the way through north-south again, but the design and functionality of the street with regard to different modes of transportation will be influenced by community input in addition to many other aspects of the project
- There are a number of ways to engage on this project right now and in the near future:
 - There is currently a survey open now through Nov 30th, and community members are strongly encouraged to weigh in on that
 - The first public open house coming up on October 25th at Abyssinia Cultural Center on the corner of Lake St & Grand Ave on the 3rd Floor
 - Upcoming community meeting in Nov 3rd with the Phillips West Neighborhood Organization that all are welcome to attend
- Demolition starting maybe this month for the SuperValu building on the west side of the site, which has been condemned for a number of years now
- The Kmart side will get demolished sometime in the fall of 2023, as the USPS lease is active until then
- Questions:
 - What can we really expect from this project? Can we shoot for the moon?
 - The City has created a Project Expectations Document to clearly outline what is a certainty based on things like established City policies and goals and what things are still to be decided based on factors like community input regarding each of the different interest areas, such as Housing, Transportation, Public Space, etc.
 - Does Whittier Alliance have a stance in the project? Our goal at this stage is to do everything we can to make sure our neighbors and stakeholders within the designated project area (about a half mile around the site) know about this project, are able to engage in a way that is supportive for them, and to hold the City accountable for following through on implementing aspects of the project that will benefit those currently living and working here first and foremost.

Eat Street Cup 3v3 Futsal Tournament - Caleb

- Futsal Society is a nonprofit organization that provides an alternative for soccer clubs - trying to provide inexpensive options for kids to participate in the Twin Cities and in Whittier specifically
- They serve 880 kids mostly in high school
- Started in Whittier at the Rec Center about 6 years ago with a few adults playing; soon many kids from the neighborhood started showing up, prompting them to form into an organized operation
- They offered pick up futsal at Whittier Park, and they are also opening a coffee shop in the spring; the idea is to employ kids from the futsal programs and operate as a non-profit to support the futsal society and more

McDonald's Renovation & Drive-Through Issues at 24th and Nicollet

- Under full renovation, and the assumption was that they would take care of the traffic safety issues caused by the location/position of the drive through lane, but we've received confirmation that they do not plan to make changes
- Owner has not responded to community requests to discuss the issue

- We have reached out to the City asking how they could be held accountable for addressing the issues they are causing for the neighborhood; we were told there is no enforcement mechanism within CPED to withhold permits for such an issue unrelated to the actual building construction plans.

Community Social Time

- Grand Ave and Lake St bike path -- a group of neighbors who have been meeting and brainstorming on urban design have been working on a proposal for a bikeway project that would run north-south through the middle of the neighborhood, routing through Whittier Park; reach out to Nick if you are interested in being involved in those conversations

Upcoming Meetings, Events, & Opportunities

- **WA Housing and Land Use Committee:** Tuesday, October 18th, 6:30 - 8:00 pm (Hybrid Meeting - Provision Community Restaurant - 2940 Harriet Ave + Zoom)
- **WA Board Meeting:** Thursday, October 27th, 6:00-8:00pm (Hybrid meeting - 10 E 25th St + Zoom)

Meeting adjourned at 8:12 pm.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Kaley Brown.