

**Community Issues Meeting DRAFT Minutes**  
**Monday, February 8, 2016 — 6:00-8:00pm — Whittier Park**

**Attendees:** Brian Foster, Ahmed Hawawi, Karlee Weinmann, Grant Rockwood, Laura Jean, Greg Schmidt, Bob Walser Bashir, Chris Popowski, Dave LaViolette, Mary Scavotto, Jeff Helseth, Billy Werb, Sarah Klein, Ben Somogyi, Erica Christ, Brett Vandebussche, Nancy Hicks, Jonathan Herrera, Evan Jacobsen, Martin Scholenberg, Jose Ramirez, Kelly Minard, Mark Trehus, Justin Kader, Brett Arntson, Cynthia M. Wong, Mohamed H. Uri, Fiqoixi Elmi, Ismail Abdulle, Michelle Winchester, Rae Bly, David Bagley, Omar Skenif, Kristine Martinson, Mohamed Isse, Abdulkadir Ahmed, Mohamed Abdille, Jay Webb, Slade Winchester, Jeff Nelson, David W. Schroth, Shane Morin, Brooke Erickson, Collin Ehret, Elizabeth Werner, Larry Ludeman, Marie E. Listopad, Jen Kader, Matt Brillhart **Staff:** Ricardo McCurley, Paul Shanafelt, Lucy Lawson **Presenters:** Ben Somogyi, Aide to Council Member Lisa Bender; Curt Gunsbury, Solhem Companies; Don Gerberdering, Master Properties; Bob Speeter & Basim Sabri, Sabri Properties

**Welcome**

**Call to order** at 6:10 by Brett Vandebussche, Community Issues Committee Chair. Agenda was introduced. Attendees were asked to identify themselves as a journalist if they were planning to live tweet the meeting. A **Motion** to approve February agenda as written **Carried**. Attendees were asked to review the January 11 minutes. A **Motion** to approve January minutes **Carried**.

**Announcements/Community Comments & Discussion**

**Neighborhood parks referendum** Tony Sterle

Tony Sterle briefed attendees on upcoming neighborhood parks referendum. Smaller parks such as Whittier receive funding exclusively from property tax dollars, and current budget shortfall is around \$50 mn per year. He is part of group pushing for a 2016 referendum on neighborhood parks. Precinct caucuses are on March 1.

**5th Ward update** Ben Somogyi

Ben Somogyi (Councilmember Lisa Bender's policy aide) briefed attendees on City Council activities. **Ward update:** It was great to see local business Treehus Records on a SuperBowl ad. The office has received many thoughtful emails about the 25th & Lyndale intersection where recently a car hit a pedestrian. Lyndale Ave is a county road, and office is trying to work with County Commissioner on reconfiguring Lyndale entirely. Last week announced notice of intent to look at pedestrian overlay districts again. Eat Street pedestrian overlay is one of the strongest in the City. Will be looking at making Lyndale more pedestrian friendly as well. **Citywide update:** Paid sick time meetings are wrapping up – there are two left. The task force will come back with recommendations at the end of the month. City is also making changes with solid waste collection – Eureka Recycling will be the new contractor.

- Attendee asked about roundabouts. They are one of the tools for traffic calming, and as get further feedback from the Livable Streets Taskforce may look at it.
- Attendee asked about stormwater collection wrt pedestrian overlay district.

**Caucusing** Bob Walser

Bob Walser – running for Minneapolis District 4 school board – briefed attendees on precinct caucusing process.

**2905 Harriet Avenue Apartments** Curt Gunsbury, Solhem Companies

Curt Gunsbury briefed meeting attendees on proposed new development south of Greenway between Grand and Harriet Ave. The building design is 6 stories, stepped back, with 1/3 of footprint as greenspace and a walkway.

- The building will need a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for height. The recommended zoning is 4 stories. The design steps back from 4 to 5 to 6 stories going south.
- Consulted on design with the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA), State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and Midtown Greenway Coalition.
- Developers requesting some variances for setbacks and other small components

- **Sara Klein**, who works at Solhem, talked about children throwing rocks on the Greenway near the project area. She feels the pedestrian ‘philosophers walk’ and the walk up units, which are usually rented to people with dogs, will increase safety and visibility to Greenway area
- **Evan Jacobsen**, the project architect, talked about the site plan. The terraced buildings will allow sun to hit the Greenway, and the east-west pedestrian connection will add/provide public amenity. The 1 story glass cube exercise room will be a lighthouse on the Greenway, providing extra eyes.
- Design progression has been from a 4 story building that would create 156 shadow days on the Greenway to the current 6 story terraced design, creating 119 shadow days. Other City-approved buildings have similar shadow footprints.

**Questions/comments from attendees:**

- Attendee asked why the n’hood was not contacted earlier. Solhem said they worked with direct neighbors on site, and the area is quite cut off from rest of n’hood. Two residents in nearby properties said they hadn’t heard about it.
- Attendee asked about solar panels. Solhem said there will be a green roof on E side of building, and active roofs with patios. Don’t have solar panels planned, but units are very efficient.
- There will be 96 parking stalls and 2 levels of below ground parking. Solhem anticipates a lot of tenants using biking and transit. In their other buildings they are finding they have extra parking in garages, as fewer residents have cars. The building will have 4 visitor parking stalls.
- Attendee asked whether they considered larger units – two other large developments with 1brs and studios are going up this year. The unit mix will be around 63 1BRs, 5 1BR+den, 28 studios, 13 2brs and 1 3BR unit. The [City website](#) has more information. Price point has not been figured out yet.
- Exterior materials will be predominantly metal panel, intended to blend with existing vernacular of n’hood in its transition from industrial to high density residential.
- Can contact the developer at [hello@solhelm.com](mailto:hello@solhelm.com) for further questions.
- Attendee asked about rents and commented many developments along the Greenway are unaffordable. Development will be all rentals, no condos, and a build-and-own development
- Southside of building will be made of all the same materials, and will have a party room & entertainment space on the top corner.
- Attendee commented that given the City’s desire to add density, he liked the proposal.
- Attendee commented that the site is currently scary to walk past at night and asked about access to the pedestrian path. Solhem said it will be fobbed access from dusk to dawn but open during the day. They want to ensure residents safety as well.
- Attendee asked about entrances. Grand & Harriet will both have exit/entrances.
- The square footage of the 1brs ranges from 500 to 640 square feet.
- Attendee asked if they had looked at the Whittier design guidelines and strategic plan. Solhelm has not.
- Solhem is asking for a CUP for height, for the property to be rezoned from current R2B (standard duplex zoning) and industrial zoning and for variances for setbacks. R5 is the more dense residential zoning and will stay with the property, regardless of what’s built there. CUPs and variances stay with the building, not the property.
- Attendees commented they would like more time to consider the project. Solhem commented that the project is already under consideration by the City. In terms of timelines, they hope to break ground this summer and open the following summer.
- Solhem commented they did not go to n’hood earlier because needed to negotiate with SHPO, HCRRA, and Midtown Greenway, and any project design they brought forward could

still have been negated by any of the other bodies.

- Attendees raised concerns that this could lead to more buildings of this height in the n'hood. Attendee commented Solhem were very accommodating about shadowing. Curt commented that they gave up a third of property footprint to accommodate the shadowing, and City variances are very property specific.

**CI Motion 1:** The CI Committee supports the rezoning from light industrial (I1) and two-family residential (R2B) to multi-family residential (R5). **Motion Carried: 23-6-3**

**CI Motion 2:** The CI Committee supports the Conditional Use Permit to increase maximum height from required 4 stories (56 feet) to 6 stories (74 feet). **Motion Carried: 18-8-6**

#### **Update on 2601 Lyndale Ave Project**

Don Gerberding, Master Properties

Don Gerberding, who presented at the previous CI meeting, gave the neighborhood an update on his development project.

- Master is looking at an opportunity to relocate the one good condition single family home that is on their six lots – if they can move it, they will.
- Planning an open terrace for residents on top of the ground level retail portion. Building has a U-shape design with a rooftop terrace 40 feet deep. Have spun the 'U' around to Lyndale Avenue to bring life and activity to the street, and eyes and ears on the avenue.
- Regarding concerns about traffic raised at the last meeting, previously the design had traffic entering and exiting off Lyndale. Have now redesigned the parking so enter from Lyndale and exit to 26th St because 26th St is one-way and has a traffic light.
- Rooftop terrace will have grills, chairs and potplants for resident community activity
- The loading dock will be enclosed in the building, and there will be 165 stalls of parking.
- Will now be a 5 story building, with 4 stories of housing on top of one level of retail. Updated plan is for 102 units.
- Building will not need variances for setbacks. Code for setbacks requires only 8 feet setback, and will have 13 feet of setback with the exception of the corners.
- Unit mix will be 12 studios, 50 1brs, 25 large 1brs, and 22 2brs of 1000 to 1100 square feet.
- Will need a CUP for height: requesting 5 stories, around 68 feet.
- Will also request rezoning from the n'hood. Currently the site has split zoning of R1B and commercial on the corner. Can't do C1 because restrictions are 35 ft in height. Could possibly be requesting OR2 (High Density Office Residence District) or C3A (Community Activity Center District) but not sure what zoning will request and thus what variances will need to request.
- Retail component is proposed as a grocery store, and now in talks with three different parties.
- Attendee asked now that Master has added another story whether they would compromise by creating some larger units. Gerberding said unit mix is combination of economics and making the floor plan work. The back terrace will be a resident garden.
- Attendees raised concerns that traffic entering off Lyndale could be a problem – people turning left across Lyndale could exacerbate Lyndale's existing traffic issues.
- Gerberding will come back in the future to re-present the project.

Sabri and Speeder briefed the meeting on their proposed development, saying it addresses a lot of concerns raised wrt other developments, and they are not requesting many variances. The clientele will be Somalis, and Sabri is proud to have them among the many minorities in n'hood.

- Site is directly across the street from the first development, between Grand and Pleasant and south of the Greenway. It will be approximately 100 units. Sabri owns 100s of units in the n'hood already. The two existing buildings on the site are old. They don't want to tear them down but recycle some of the materials to give the new development character.
- Currently the two buildings have space between them that can't be used. The rooftop will be a flat green roof. The northern facade will have many windows facing the Greenway, and the building will create zero shadowing on Greenway. The Grand Avenue facade will have a more 'residential' look. There will be a skyway over Pleasant Avenue connecting Karmel Mall and the new building.
- Unit mix: 170 units, with 30 4br, 39 3br, 10 2br and 1br units on the third floor with the goal of senior living. The purpose of the skyway is so seniors will have easy access to the businesses and mosque. Karmel Plaza is somewhere where there is already a lot of street activity. 51% of Karmel Village residents work in the Plaza, and many have an elderly relative who lives somewhere else. The third floor will bring many elderly relatives into the community. Will spend \$1 mn on skyway, which is non-rentable space. Many elderly people come to mall in wheelchairs or with an impairment.
- They are not requesting variances from the CI, just feedback.
- Materials will be brick/stucco, and might put on a little metal just to fit in with Uptown.
- Project is 5 stories. City does not like the skyway because it's out of the norm outside of Downtown. It's 56 feet height.
- Zoning will be changed from I1 to R5.
- Price points: will offer much lower rent than anyone else, similar to Karmel Village.
- Attendee said they liked the idea of including units for elderly relatives.
- Attendee commented that parking around Grand and Pleasant is already very congested. Parking entrance will be on Pleasant and exit on Grand. Sabri Properties is not asking for variances on parking spaces – will be creating 21 parking spaces more than required, with a total of 115 total parking spaces, more than the 75 required for apartments.
- Attendee raised a concern that tenants may try to avoid parking fees by parking on the street, increasing congestion. Sabri will be doing a traffic demand management study.
- Attendee asked about bike parking. Sabri commented that biking is not popular with Somalis, although may change with the younger generation.
- Sabri Properties asked for support on the skyway. It will be on the third story, with a 26 ft clearance, and its justification is senior access.

**Motion to Adjourn: 8:07pm. Motion Carried.**

**Minutes respectfully submitted by Lucy Lawson.**