

Whittier Alliance Community Issues Meeting

Monday, Feb. 9, 2015

Whittier Park

Attendees: Joan Vorderbruggen, Elizabeth Fairfield, Sarah Estey, Erica Christ, David W. Schroth, Laura Jean, Diane Moe, Ted Irgens, Michael Malone, Christina Le, Dave Ryan, Austin Blanc, Julia Lawler, Eric Roper, Mark Mahoney, Felino de la Peña, Marcella Kendall, Lacey Carlson, R. Delroy Calhoun, Dave La Violette, Christine Popowski, Natascha Shawver, Jeff Nelson, Brian Goldberg, Nadia De La Rosa

Presenters: Ben Somogyi, 10th Ward; Chelsea Adams, 5th Precinct; Sgt. Mike Frye, 5th Precinct; Brock Rasmussen, MCAD; Jeffrey Mandyck, Cunningham Group; Tony Nidetz, Prairie Dogs; Laura Boyd, City of Mpls; Craig Johnson, Prairie Dogs; Matthew Harmon, CERT

Call to order at 6:10 p.m. by Brett Vandebussche. The standard of conduct was reviewed. The meeting start time was corrected on the agenda. A **Motion** to approve the Feb. 9, 2015 agenda **Carried**. A **Motion** to approve the Dec. 8, 2014 minutes **carried**. A **Motion** to approve the Jan. 2015 minutes **carried**. Introductions were made by attendees and presenters.

Announcements/community comments:

10th ward, Ben Somogyi. Curbside organics is launching for some as early as spring 2015 and city wide by 2016. In addition to items already okay for backyard composting (fruit and vegie scraps, etc.) residents will be able to dispose of meat, bones, paper, compostable plastic and more in the green organics collection bin. Bins will be distributed only to customers who opt in for buildings with 1-4 units. Many residents will find their solid waste going down, so could save money by getting a smaller garbage bin. To get a green organics collection bin, Minneapolis recycling customers can request one via email to swrcustomer@minneapolismn.gov or by calling 612-673-2917. There isn't a city-wide plan to implement program for larger buildings. However, renters have grouped together in the past to get recycling at their building so could try the same with organics.

City **Parking** requirements are being reviewed and exploring ways to lower minimum required parking. This would give more options to build less parking when that makes sense and it's desired. The changes would not create a maximum parking requirement. The **NuWay** appeal will be heard by the Zoning Admin on Thursday, Feb. 19 in council chambers @ 4:30 p.m. There will be a committee meeting prior to the zoning meeting so if you can't make the Feb. 19 meeting you can submit written comments to Lisa's office.

The Wedge Table is now open. The Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA) is celebrating their 100th anniversary all year long. The City Council is recognizing the MIA on February 13, declaring it "MIA Day."

5th precinct, CPS Chelsea Adams & Sgt Mike Frye

Crime stats were distributed. Currently there is an increase in thefts of purses/wallets at restaurants/bars. Purses are slung on the back of the chair or down by feet and owner not paying attention. It's a metro-wide problem. Burglaries of storage units and coin-operated laundry machines are still an issue. If you have a storage unit, especially underground, check it and keep really valuable items in your apartment. If you own an apartment with a laundry room, consider putting up convex mirrors; They are cheap and allow you to see around the corner, if a resident goes into the laundry they can see if someone is there that might not belong.

The Whittier stats for theft and violent crime are the same year over year (28% and 18%, respectively). Most of the home burglaries can be prevented – many do not involve breaking anything open because the door or window is already open (entry is not forced). Handouts were made available that illustrate home security tips. Contact Chelsea for a copy. A longer, 22+ page detailed home security handout is also available.

Another trend is a panhandle scam involving a guy targeting women; very friendly, has a sob story about losing his stuff and needing money to stay at St. Stephens. In Whittier, the suspect is a black male; downtown, a white male. Homeless shelters do not require payment nor will they pick up anyone to bring them there. Do not give them a ride – they have taken purses and other belongings from cars.. Call 911 if approached by someone asking for money.

911 is for everything. Report as much information as you can, it's helpful to note the clothing, height, weight, etc. to help officers find the person in question. Officers will be on the scene as soon as they can. Sometimes they are really busy. An attendee questioned the sergeant about an incident: he called 911 because he heard screaming from outside.

When officers arrived, they handcuffed him. Is there some way to prevent the caller from being taken as the suspect? The sergeant responded that officers will react to the scene as they arrive. If there are multiple people around or the situation is unclear, they might handcuff the wrong person until things can get sorted out. If you think there was a breakdown between the 911 operator and officers, you can always call 911 dispatch to speak with a supervisor to discuss the issue.

N'hood CERT, Matthew Harmon:

The Community Emergency Response Team is a group of volunteers specially trained to respond to disasters. For example, the summer storm of 2012 that knocked trees down and took out electric service for days. As a CERT member, you would have an emergency backpack containing a flashlight, first aid kit, hard hat, tools and more that you can use to help neighbors.

CERT operates on a very local level. If there is limited ability to use vehicles and roads, or if a central infrastructure is down, there are trained people within blocks to help. During the last big storm, CERT volunteers went door-to-door to damaged homes to assure there weren't injuries, etc. Just about every block had a tree across it, making access for all vehicles nearly impossible. Another volunteer checked all the cars on which trees had fallen. They found one person that had narrowly missed being hit by a tree and was in somewhat of a state of shock.

There will be several opportunities to attend CERT training – typically led by firefighters (CERT is now under the fire department). A longer, intensive overall training will be held at the end of August. Until then, there will be shorter, more specific training. The February training is full, but will cover explosive devices. Topics haven't been settled yet, but perhaps tornado response will be one. Another suggestion was to establish central point for each neighborhood to gather lost items or people so if someone is looking for something or someone they will know where to go. CERT training and equipment includes a device using shims for safely removing someone from under heavy debris without doing further harm.

This is being made available again through a new funding structure that pools resources from the 13 county metro area. CER T was re-introduced/prioritized not long after the storm. Chelsea attended CERT training and vouched that it is awesome, fun and fantastic. To participate in CERT, send an email to Matthew at mjh@itys.net More information on the city of Minneapolis website: http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/fire/cert/CONVERT_239892

Annual Meeting/Good Neighbor & Good Business awards, Marian Biehn

The Whittier Alliance Annual Meeting is Thursday, March 26, 2015. The meeting will be a review of what we did in 2014 – work, activities finances, etc. There will be community resource tables and registration starting at 5:30 p.m. Five at-large board members are elected each year for a 3-year term. If you are interested in being a board member, you can find our By-Laws, a Board Job Description and Application, and our Strategic Plan on our website or at the office. Review these materials to understand the requirements. The board is looking for members that know about the neighborhood and have an understanding of where the neighborhood is going.

Good Neighbor and Good Business awards will be given. Nominations are due March 6.. If you know someone that's gone out of their way, please nominate them. The annual meeting committee goes over the nominations and makes selections. Typically there are two winners for each. The list of former recipients is posted on the website. It was suggested that nominees that don't win are made aware of their nomination. The committee does take prior nominations into account when determining winners.

Voter eligibility will be determined at the Annual Meeting according to our By-Laws. Residents need a photo ID with their Whittier address or a photo ID with a current other item, such as a utility bill, with their Whittier address.

Prairie Dogs – 612 lake street: Craig Johnson, Tobie Nidetz, Laura Boyd

Prairie Dogs will be opening soon behind It's Greek to Me. The space is small, perfect for this concept: already had a kitchen and a bar. Once the food license is in place they will open. The main feature will be handmade sausages by Craig "The Sausage King" Johnson. Craig has been in the food industry for twenty years, most notably working for D'amico and opening Café Lurcat. Tobie Nidetz is a restaurant consultant/restaurant opening specialist who happens to live in Whittier. This is his first restaurant in Whittier. He opened Ike's and Tobie's Tavern downtown, and other around town the Country. Prairie Dogs was inspired by a restaurant in Chicago, Hot Dogs. Delivery will be available through Rocket Delivery bicycle delivery. Catering will be available, a food truck perhaps in the future. Find them on Facebook, and social media.

They would like to add a Class E liquor license to serve beer and wine. Eventually they would like to add a patio and a

serve-through window for later service during the summer. To meet the liquor license requirements, they had a site security plan with Inspector Loining from the 5th precinct and had alcohol compliance training, which all staff will have before they serve. The license they are requesting is for 2 a.m. close on weekends. Their lease does not allow them to serve hard liquor.

CI Motion 1: The Whittier Alliance Community Issues Committee moves to support the application for a Class E Liquor License by Prairie Dogs located at 612 Lake Street. **Carried: 16-0-1**

Nicollet Street Car, Charlene Zimmer – Zan Associates

Handouts were passed out that had timelines and other data regarding the rollout of a street car line on Nicollet Ave. The City of Minneapolis is trying hard to get this going, starting with completing an [environmental assessment](#) by mid-summer 2015. Once the assessment is approved, it will be released for public comment. There will be public meetings.

They will be undergoing a 106 Process. This is a federally required process that evaluates all properties along the corridor for historical analysis.

Funding is a big factor in how this project proceeds. The City needs to be actively working on the project to be in the running for federal funding. The City has some money, but they are working with partner agencies and others to find funding to allow the project to go forward. They will continue to move ahead so that when funding falls into place construction can begin immediately.

There has been some talk about the City self-funding the streetcar. However, most believe it should be under the regional system, owned/operated by MetroTransit. Street cars are an expensive option, but allow for much more capacity than just adding buses. Research shows that more people ride rail transit when available over buses. Downtown is already at gridlock with bus traffic. Buses will still run on Nicollet to complete the route. But, will have fewer stops – express buses. Streetcar will replace short local trips, which make up ½ the trips. Fares will be the same and transfers back and forth to bus and rail. The proposed schedule is to run every 7.5 minutes peak and every 10 minutes off peak. Shut down around 11 or 1am.

The city is anticipating construction concerns and impacts. Construction will be less than for light rail. The main construction is for the tracks and the bump outs for stops. It is anticipated that a V trench will be cut in the pavement for the rail. It isn't know whether larger street projects might be need to be completed at the same time—infrastructure or sewer lines. There is battery technology that doesn't require the installation of overhead electrical wires. However, the city is not considering this. It might be an option at some point, but it's more expensive and you have to use the same technology, one or the other, for the whole system. There are 7 lines anticipated at this time. Phase one will run from Lake Street to 8th Street NE. Additional phases would add on to the North or South. Traffic analysis has been done and indicates that Nicollet can carry the rail, buses and cars at the same time. Although bikes will be allowed, they are not planning to put specific bike lanes on Nicollet. The tracks make biking less safe. Improvements are being considered for the 1st Ave and Blaisdell Ave bike lanes. Traffic signal timing will need to be reworked. Parking on Nicollet would remain. There has been discussion about including public art into the project, however this isn't currently part of the budget. Construction impacts will take into consideration access to businesses, deliveries, etc. Full completion is expected in 2021.

Illustrations/renderings of potential stops include a railing. The railing is there for safety reasons – the stop is a few inches higher than the sidewalk. However, some think the railing makes the area less walkable. Charleen will take the feedback to the team.

Since funding is a big factor in this project, concerns were raised that the Small Starts funding will go away with a Republican controlled house. It's uncertain if that would happen. The biggest concern is the number of transit projects competing for the same federal dollars. Definite need to find additional state/regional dollars since the cap for federal funds is 75mill.

The historic bridge over the greenway is not part of the street car plan since the bridge will have to be rebuilt as part of the Nicollet reopening. If Nicollet doesn't open, the streetcar will reroute like buses do today. The Greenway line is not currently funded and would likely happen after this project. The city is looking at improved buses for Lake Street first.

The group discussed being part of the 106 process. There is a formal role Whittier can have – consulting partner. Whittier has historic preservation as part of their strategic plan, so it makes sense to be involved.

CI Motion 2: The Whittier Alliance Community Issues Committee moves to submit a letter to the City of Mpls to request Section 106 Consulting Party regarding the Nicollet Street Car starter line. **Carried: 12-0-2**

MCAD Student Housing at 2540 3rd Av S, Jeff Mandyck – Cunningham Group

The building at 2540 3rd Av S was built in the 1970s and is currently owned by MCAD and used to house up to 61 students. The exterior envelope has a lot of water and mold damage, mostly due to age and poor initial construction. The siding shingles are asbestos, heavy and posed a hazard due to falling.

MCAD wants to correct these structural problems and replace the exterior envelope with new materials. Because the building is in the Washburn Fair Oaks Historic District, they need a Certificate of Appropriateness to move forward with their renovations. The building itself is not designated historic and the guidelines state that exteriors of non-historic structures should not try to mimic historic structures. The interior will not be renovated. The interior has been maintained and has had standard updates over the years (carpeting, paint, etc.).

Jeff presented renderings of the proposed design. The design borrowed from some historic elements in terms of positioning the door and windows. The original building had balconies, which were removed for safety prior and the new design will not have balconies. The design was developed in partnership with MCAD – they own it and need to maintain it. Artistic elements, like allowing a space for a sculpture garden, were included in the renderings. They want to reflect the fact that MCAD is a nationally recognized college. The emphasis is on the street facing façade. It was given a base, middle and top.

There was some discussion from the group about the extent of renovations and wouldn't a teardown be more cost effective. They did a cost analysis and the renovations came out a better option since it's mostly the envelope that needs repair, not the inner structure. One attendee expressed that it seems a waste of money, not a great design and with no interior improvements a bad investment. They plan to make improvements such as insulation, water drainage, use recycled materials if possible to make it also an ecological asset. Insulation would help improve heat costs, reduce energy loss. It's being designed with more commercial elements to make it more durable and long-lasting. MCAD also needs the 61 units for student housing. The rent is part of the student housing fees. MCAD feels it is important to offer on-campus housing especially as a benefit for parents and freshmen.

The design was developed working closely with MCAD, trying to look like it goes with the aesthetic of MCAD. Hope to have a hearing in late March with the historic preservation committee. Construction to be completed in 2016. The problems the building are having won't increase exponentially by putting this off. This is the final design. It has gone through several reviews and revisions.

CI Motion 3: The Community Issues Committee Moves to support MCADs application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for renovations to 2540 3rd Ave. **Carried: 7-4-2**

Old/New Business:

The **Whittier Walkers** walk around the neighborhood as an extra set of eyes for safety. Commitment is 1-2 hours/month. The program is being coordinated by a volunteer as we look to replace our community organizer. Contact Marian if you are interested.

NRP reallocation of funds. NRP monies are identified for use on specific things. We have approx. \$650,000 (later corrected to approx. \$400k) available to allocate differently – but along the NRP guidelines -- to make better use of the funds. A task force was formed to look at this. NCR is helping and will let us know when we can go to the community for a vote. The goal is to vote at the Annual Meeting – we need to give a 21-day notice.

NuWay is has two treatment facilities in the n'hood as well as their admin offices. They are trying to open a third facility at 2118 Blaisdell – a historic property that they purchased last year. The Whittier Alliance passed a motion against opening of this facility. The City denied their request and NuWay is now seeking "reasonable accommodation" from the City in order to open the facility. A petition was started by residents that restates our position and outlines several reasons why the neighborhood does not want this facility here, including the ¼ mile restriction and the sheer number of total transitional housing in the area of 30 + buildings. It is a concentration and equity issue.

You can stop by the office to sign the petition or go

online <https://www.change.org/p/minneapolis-board-of-adjustment-deny-nuway-s-housing-facility-at-2118-blaisdell>

May Day Soirée will be Thursday, May 7th at Old Arizona. There will be heavy apps, beverages, silent auction – a really fun evening. Donations being collected through Friday, April 17. Contact Marian to donate.

Adjourn: 8:34

Minutes respectfully submitted by Rita Stodolka, Admin Assistant