

**Community Issues Meeting**  
**Monday, June 10, 2015 — 6-8:30pm**  
**Whittier Park**

**Attendees:** Erica Christ, Felino de la Peña, Mary Gazca, Justin Kader, Jen Kader, Dave LaVoilette, Marie Lilstopad, Shane Morin, Joanne Musumeci, Jeff Nelson, Helga Herberg-from Germany, Chris Popowsky, LaCorsia Ross, Amanda Sullivan, Greg Schmidt, Natascha Shawver, Brad Schaeppi, Mike Wilson-Midtown Greenway Rep, Kenya Weathers John Wilson,

**Staff:** Marian Biehn, Camilla Jamal

**Presenters:** Inspector Todd Loining & Chelsea Adams-CCP Specialist-5<sup>th</sup> Pct., CM Lisa Bender, Caitlin Maxwell-Glenn & Kellie Jones-City of Mpls, David Motzenbecker-Cunningham Group

**Welcome**

**Call to order** at 6:09 by Brett Vandenbussche. Reminder given that agenda and minutes are posted on our website a week in advance of the meeting; different opinions are welcome – reminder to follow code of conduct and respect other’s opinions. A **Motion** to approve agenda as written **Carried**. Attendees were asked to review the May 11, 2015 minutes. A **Motion** to approve May 2015 minutes **Carried**. Attendees introduced themselves.

**Announcements/Community Comments & Discussion**

**10th Ward – Councilmember Lisa Bender**

Open Streets Event -5th Anniversary. Will have 7 more Open Streets in Mpls this year. Did some more info gathering on the use/vision for 29th St between Lyndale & Hennepin. 29<sup>th</sup> St will be adapted to joint pedestrian and transit use. There are funds in the capital budget to do some improvements on 29th St. It will be a shared street: can drive on it, but will be primarily pedestrian (farmers market, event, active use). There will be another open house re how the street might work and be used. The street would be flush with the sidewalk, greenery, art, no curb.

Reopen in Nicollet is still on track per the City's time line. An appraisal has been gotten for the Kmart site and the city has made an offer to the Kmart land owner and it will likely move into negotiations. The grocery site is on hold for the moment. The city might put in an offer on that site as well. Walgreens – which has a purchase agreement for the site, doesn't want to build a mixed use building. The City group working on the reopening of Nicollet is optimistic about progress. Kmart site is the eastern 2/3 of the site and Nicollet goes through the Kmart site. The property line is basically the wall between the 2 buildings. A mixed use building was urged for the Kmart site--not one story.

Spitting and lurking laws were repealed last week. The council felt the laws were not being used particularly well and were obsolete. Flavored tobaccos are a topic in Committee meetings. They target children-possible added regulation. Other things in the pipeline: Parking--working on off street residential parking requirement for new housing projects/larger projects would have requirements reduced from 1 pkg per unit to .5 spaces. Smaller units would not have any pkg requirements and transit areas would be parking neutral. Homeless Shelters--talks are being held about locations of homeless shelters. Mpls is the only city to regulate where they are. CM Bender and others on the committee have talked with shelter providers and will now have 2 public meetings to get input from residents Mon June 22 and July 27. A policy will be crafted regarding homeless shelter locations. Complete Streets—CM Bender is working on a complete streets policy that will address transit, pedestrian and bike enhancements to current street grids. Working Family initiative. Housing Policy—Doing a comprehensive housing survey for housing stock, income levels, condition, etc.

Have weekly office hours in the ward which moves around

### **5th Precinct Report, Chelsea Adams & Todd Loining**

Trend in robberies in Whittier-women seem to be targeted. They are getting money taken from their purse or pockets –attacked from behind. Some were pushed or punched. Businesses are also targeted--aggressive robberies. Be watchful if you are leaving a bar—you are more vulnerable and targeted. Chelsea distributed a flier with a photo of a guy who is chasing women and touching them. He is offending in Stevens Square and Whittier. He appears very nice but then tries to isolate women -- women with children as well. He has chased them around cars and into apt buildings. He hasn't injured anyone but he approached women he doesn't know. He is geographically restricted from Whittier and can be arrested if he is in the n'hood.

If you are signed up for the crime alerts, you might have gotten an alert about solicitation. People are dropped off in n'hood and they go door to door selling magazines or something as a charitable sale. It is a scam. Don't respond to door to door or peddling. They should have an official ID and be registered with the City.

Inspector Loining: The 5<sup>th</sup> has an outstanding team--fair, communicative, networking, etc. The key is crime preventing. The police will take care of crime, but residents need to be proactive and be a block leader, do what you can to prevent crime, watch out for neighbor, and call 911 if you see something suspicious. If you want to talk to an officer, call dispatch and let them know, otherwise you can be anonymous. Prevention: Don't walk around with you smart phone , safety in numbers, stay in lit area, lock windows, doors and garages, trim bushes, install lighting. If going on vacation, contact the precinct and they will do extra patrol in area. Don't leave stuff in your car. Comment: seems to be a pattern in time of robberies. Not necessarily the same guy. Lots of different patterns but the do review crimes for similar MOs.

Mpls is one of 6 pilot cities that is a federal program for police and community relations. There is a public meeting with a presentation titled The National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice Community Convening Tues June 16 6-7:30.

### **City of Mpls Inspections Dept- Caitlin Maxwell & B Kellie Jones**

Dept Dir of Community Engagement in Regulatory Services. The dept does environmental inspections. Generally, they show up, write orders and disappear. The dept has a new director who has change the method of operating. Kellie recommends we invite her to a future meeting. They are now coming to communities 1st to announce initiatives and explain what the initiative is before the sweep happens. They also reach out to local businesses to arrange for 10-15% discounts for residents who need to purchase supplies for cleanup. A list of participating businesses was distributed as well as the description of the "All Together Now" program for cleaning up Mpls. By making advance announcement of the initiative, they have reduced the number of violations written by 90%. People have time to do repairs in advance. The City's goal is to gain compliance with property owners for getting environmental nuisances cleaned up. The fliers are in multiple languages.

Interns will be doing the canvassing of neighborhoods and writing up the violations. Violations: tall grass and weeds, shrubs encroaching over sidewalks or hanging too low, vehicles with flat tires, abandon, non-working, or expired tabs, rubbish /cut refuse in yards, etc. If you get a letter identifying a problem, you get time to remediate. Question about native plants: some are taller than 8"-will they be tagged as a problem? Put a sign up. The interns are getting trained on how to identify native plants, property owner should identify a native landscape and it has to be maintained as a native landscape. How are the "values" set re what a plant is vs a weed. Willing to work with people but generally go with "community standard." Comment: It is hard to get in touch with the contacts listed in the letter. Recommended that the recipient call 311 and ask to be connected with the supervisor. They are working on emailing the letter as well. Inspections are going on continuously but the interns who are focusing on "All Together Now" will be sent out as of June 15. Focusing on vacant properties, repetitive and more

problematic properties. Comment: City owned utility boxes and street signs are always covered with graffiti and the City is very slow about removing it. Can the interns also do graffiti inventory so the City can act more quickly to remove it? Yes, graffiti will be identified on public signs and sent to Public Works to be removed more quickly. Where do you put construction materials during work? Will look at extending remediation dates when there is a reason for the issue. Will partner with n'hood assn. to help spread word about the initiative--can come to a future meeting if wanted. A housing inspector would also be willing to come to a n'hood meeting.

### **Cunningham Group-David Motzenbecker**

David is a licensed landscape architect with Cunningham group. He was chair of the Planning Commission for 8 years. While being part of the city process, he saw a lot of input being asked for but not a lot of listening being done. He believes that more gauging of n'hood positions, interests and knowledge prior to having the city make a decision would benefit the final outcome for everyone. Cunningham has an educational component to its business and process and works with n'hoods in that way. They ask the n'hood what they want to see, now, next year, 10 years etc.--what does it look like, what could it look like. All ideas are gathered, categorized, what is important to n'hood to get a vision statement as a "we see..." statement to help drive design and planning for the site. The partnership is engaging and interactive. The outreach has multi formats: meetings, electronic, multi-language, live interactive community process, blogs/tweeting during meeting in an internal network--for those who don't want to speak up in a meeting, etc.

Cunningham started to explore the Kmart site on their own. They sent out their idea to the n'hoods and asked for partners. He has seen amazing work in Whittier over the past 20 years and wants to take on the Kmart site as a next frontier. The process would include working with the current city comp plan and principles.

What other projects have been done by Cunningham? The urban eco district in Prospect Park for the industrial eco park near the stadium. Who are the stake holders you are reaching out to: Midtown Greenway, business owner, property owners.

The city told us not to do any planning, they would come to us when they were ready. If we however, bring them more partners in a plan that looks exciting, the city might be more interested in getting behind the plan. How do we bring in the people who have the money to invest in the site and get the city behind it? Get everyone to the table early in the discussion. We would seek out developers to put in their comments. It is up to us (the n'hood) to get the input from multiple voices, maybe look at developers from other cities, look at that as a very important site that is highly valued. Then go to the city with a vision that is dynamic.

Is the planning area focused on the identified development site or going further north on Nicolle? Looked at the 4 corners of the Kmart area and the Midtown Plan that is now dated. The scope of the work could be answered by the group and the context of the site and area needs to be looked at. Keep it centered on the Kmart site but also be sensitive to the rest of the area. If the city buys the 2 sites this summer, they will not be able to hang on to them for long based on the investment. They will need to move the property fast and the public input will be condensed. We should have started 6 months ago.

***CI Motion 1: The Whittier Alliance Community Issues Committee accept the Cunningham Group as a consultant to prepare a neighborhood vision for the Kmart site.***

David Motzenbecker left the meeting to allow for more open discussion. Some attendees thought that this proposal and process was premature. Others liked the collaborative approach and process offered by Cunningham group. The scope of the work and deliverables was questioned: Scope we would be a partner, assist with getting input from stakeholders. The benchmarks could be set at the 1st meeting, time line, deliverables. Examples of the Cunningham Group's work will be shared with the community.

They have presented a proposal with a fee of \$20k. The Whittier Alliance has \$25k earmarked for the planning for the reopening of Nicollet. Midtown Greenway is a possible partner.

The question was called and Passed 14-3-0

**CI Motion 1:** The Whittier Alliance Community Issues Committee accept the Cuningham Group as the consultant to prepare a neighborhood vision for the Kmart site. **Motion Carried: 14-1-1**

### **Summer in Whittier: Marian Biehn**

**Youth Programs:** Marian announced the many programs and activities for kids in the neighborhood. Whittier Park has a brochure on all their programs. Please let kids and families know. If a family cannot afford the fee, there are scholarships and fee waivers available. A more compressive list will be posted on the Whittier Alliance website with all the youth serving organization events and programs listed.

**Events:** The Whittier Alliance is sponsoring or participating in several n'hood events this summer. On Sat. June 13 the WA will be sharing table with the Lyndale N'hood at the Somali Independence Day. The WA is a co-sponsor. If you have an hour, we would appreciate some volunteers to help promote the event, talk with attendees and promote the Whittier neighborhood and Alliance. The Whittier Alliance will have a table at the Fallout Art fest on June 20; in July there will be an Ice Cream Social in Clinton Field Park; National Night Out on Tues. Aug 4 and then Whittier's youth Field Day on Sat. Aug. 8. The field day is important for Whittier youth—it athletic competition for kids 5-14 and the WA gives out backpacks with school supplies to participating Whittier youth. Last year 150 youth participated.

**Fallout Art Fest:** Mandy Sullivan talked about the 2 day event—June 20 & 21. 1<sup>st</sup> day is the art fest with arts, crafts, interactive tables, bouncy castle and family fun. The evening will be music. The 2<sup>nd</sup> day is an art crawl; through Whittier art studios. Stevens Ave will be closed for the event on Sat.

**Old/New Business:** The single family and rental rehab loans are available. Loans are at 2% and up to \$25k but possibly more if a large project is being done. The Whittier Alliance does not do any of the loan processing. Tell you neighbors and landlords. Several single family loans have been applied for already but there are plenty of funds. 2016 Calendar: The annual Whittier calendar is very well liked. People look forward to it. The previous themes were mentioned: arts, gardens, preservation, etc. It has been done for about the past 10 years and Marian said she is running low on ideas for the theme and asked for recommendations: throw back photos (ala Throw back Thursday), musicians, night life, a photo competition.

**Adjourn: 8:15**

**Minutes respectfully submitted by: Marian Biehn**