

**Community Issues Meeting  
Monday, September 14, 2015 — 6-8:30pm — Whittier Park**

**Attendees:** Sarah Estey, Greg Schmidt, Christine Popowski, Mitchell Kamif, Laura Jean, Maggie Kozak, Jeff Nelson, Victor Martinez, Kathy DeKrey, Amanda Sullivan, Brett Vandebussche, Jesse Oyervides, Erica Christ, Jeff Helseth, Mary Gazca, Rita Stodolka, Steve Stodolka, Justin Kader, Abdikadir Ali, Sheila Crabbe, Hosu Klessig, Samantha Young, William Cross, Corrine Zwickey, Felino de la Pena, Jade Porter, David Schroth, Kati Wirkkula, Sam Fetting

**Staff:** Marian Biehn, Paul Shanafelt, Camilla Jamal

**Presenters:** Chelsea Adams-CCP Specialist-5<sup>th</sup> Pct., Clara Schmit-Gonzalez – City of Mpls Parking Enforcement, Anita Tabb and Jennifer Ringole – 4<sup>th</sup> District Park Board Commissioners

**Welcome**

**Call to order** at 6:05 by Brett Vandebussche. 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. Attendees were asked to review the August 10, 2015 minutes. A **Motion** to approve August 2015 minutes. **Carried.** A **Motion** to approve Sept. agenda as written **Carried.**

**Announcements/Community Comments & Discussion**

**10th Ward – CM Bender canceled appearance. Document handed out in lieu of absence.**

Brett recapped the Ward update document. Utility work on reconstruction project on Lyndale started last week and slated to conclude in Oct. CM Bender intends to introduce new Earned Sick Time policy to City's proposed Working Family agenda. Outreach will take place prior to City action. CM Bender met with Whittier Business Association on Sept 9 re: draft ordinances and ward business partnerships with city. There will be a discussion of the overnight shelter ordinance on 9/24 and an open house on 9/28, 6-7pm. Complete Streets policy - draft language being reviewed by city staff. Curbside organics - city crews have started to distribute carts and will continue thru 9/18. Phase II will start soon and sign up available at city website. Fall street cleaning will begin 10/19. Enforcement will begin 10/20. This process takes about 4 weeks. A written summary was distributed.

**5th Precinct Report, Chelsea Adams**

There was one rape reported in the n'hood in the last two months. Robberies: demographics of victims "all over the place." Trend 1: 7 out of 17 were Latino victims. Trend 2: July 15 at 1:30am at 1st and 27<sup>th</sup>, and on Aug 20 at 1am at 20th and Lyndale two separate incidents occurred where black females in 20s were walking and noticed a vehicle circulating in the area. Two to three suspects came up from behind and stole their purses. One handed purse right away, second handed cash right away, and third tried to hold purse and was dragged before purse stolen. There were two cases on 8/4 at 1am that were attempted robberies. Six robberies across city with same MO; suspects caught. Chelsea commended Whittier for its many good Samaritans. She mentioned how the n'hood looks after one another like no other n'hood she works in. Other crimes she mentions center around apt buildings. Aug 18 on Grand, two children with two adults - one of the adults noticed people trailing them in a vehicle. Family was robbed in the hallway of the apt complex. Laundry room burglaries have been prevalent recently. Chelsea highly recommends registering bike serial numbers with the City and using window locks on the first floor. Common for burglars to slit screen and lift window up. Chelsea makes a call for Block Leaders.

**Whittier Events, Marian Biehn & Paul Shanafelt**

**Reopen Nicollet:** Marian distributed a flier with the Reopening of Nicollet visioning session at the K-Mart site dates and a message that it is important for all to participate in this process. The site belongs to

K-Mart and SuperValu. Four workshops will take place, first two are 10/3 and 10/10. The idea is to pull together ideas from the n'hood as to what would be best for that site. This will be a series of workshops with the Cuningham Group facilitating. It is important for all to participate in the workshops to develop a n'hood vision with n'hood preferences for the site. The site is in discussion with the City re: potential ownership purchases by the City or private developer. **2016 Calendar** is open for submissions through Tues. Sept. 15. Marian mentions **Whittier Walkers** and their role in the community, and asks attendees to take a look into the program. Marian announces her **retirement** effective 12/31/15. Process for hiring replacement is in place. Paul talks about **Fall Cleanup** and **Enviro Sustainability** Task Force. Signup sheets were circulated.

### **Parking Enforcement/Traffic Control – Clara Schmit-Gonzalez, City of Mpls**

She says she cannot address speed bumps and stop signs, but will be able to talk about parking and non-moving violations and take questions. Clara distributed pamphlet info on parking rules. There is a 72-hour time limit for vehicles left on street-they must move. A map of 311 complaints, land use, & types of vehicular violation occurrences in Whittier was distributed. Another map includes summary of 2015 parking activity by nearby commercial zones.

An attendee commented on the documented n'hood problems with poor sight lines and cars parking too close to intersections. Clara suggests becoming familiar with what City can enforce. If vehicle is obstructing intersection it's of high-priority. Example: 3rd Ward is removing parking spaces to ensure extra visibility at intersections. They posted no-parking signs and removed meters. 311 calls are ranked by priority - safety calls get top priority. Blocked traffic visibility due to a parked car is a priority vs an abandoned vehicle.

The Park Square Condo driveway/parking entrances are posted no parking but a problem persists with idling cars that block the drive ways and garage entrances & lack of enforcement from city. Clara defined the difference: if there is someone in the car it is not considered "parking" and drop-offs/pick-ups are normally ok and won't be issued. However, if driveway is blocked with unattended vehicle, that will be responded to although frequently, by the time squad car gets there, the car is gone. She suggested calling 311 or use 311 app to get issue resolved. Clara said they are working with 5th precinct to ticket w/out warning during two-week period in order to change behavior. She identified Karmel Mall area as a particularly difficult area. They've had discussions with Karmel Mall operators on issues. Also says there may be a need for a No Stopping sign vs a No Parking sign in that area. She also says this issue is becoming more prevalent throughout the city and that there are no enforcement laws that deal directly with this issue. Mentions denser populated areas need stricter regulations, perhaps, and that violators need to feel more repercussions.

**Q and A:** Q: what can you do for greater visibility at intersections? A: talk to councilmember regarding that issue. Gather evidence of accidents. Q: how close can your car be to a crosswalk? Even if it's not marked? A: it's 30 ft. from a stop sign, 20 ft. from crosswalk. 5 ft from alleys and driveways. Q: crosswalks aren't painted so it's hard to determine what the correct parking distance is from the corner. Can they be painted? A: possibly, would have to contact Public Works. They do not paint curbs, driveways and alleys because you can't see them in winter & too expensive. Q: if curbs were painted privately and No Parking signs funded privately and installed, would Public Works remove them? A: would take other legal action. PW does not allow private curb painting. Q: what happens if residents install No Parking signs? A: they have to be official city issued signs, otherwise not legal for enforcement. Technically you could be charged with putting up unauthorized signs. These concerns should be addressed with Public Works.

Q: PW indicates no resources & dollars for painting curbs or visible indicators of parking guidelines, but private funding still doesn't persuade PW to act.

A: Similar conversations and frustrations are being heard in the area around the University. Conversation

needs to be had with PW. Specific, hired contractors need to handle it. Q: Karmel Mall/Square – there is only one central machine to pay for parking. If you park and go to the machine to get your parking slip, there is a long line for the machine and police are there to issue ticket before people have a chance to pay and get back to their car. A: City is doing a pilot program that you can pay by phone, but it's only in one area of city. If successful, they will roll out program to other locations. Q: at Karmel Mall, it states "2 hour parking" but people skirt around the law by having people stand in spot while car drives around the block and re-parks. A: they have to move car 2 blocks to be considered moved. But it's a process to have these issues enforced. Hoping to have license plate/GPS system to enforce this issue. Q: Question for WA. Is it possible to do street design at Karmel Mall? Perhaps there is language barrier or cultural differences. A: There is a parking ramp now that hopes to alleviate some of the issues. But street perhaps needs to be one-way and security officers need to keep moving people along. Maybe cut-out is needed for drop-off/pick-up. Unfortunately city cannot push that issue. Q: 28<sup>th</sup> & Stevens is an unsafe intersection. The resident has only lived there 3 months and seen 2 bad accidents already. When checking with neighbors, the consensus is that bad accidents happen there all the time. Why is this not being addressed? A: PW can help with discussion on less parking/street design. Whatever solution would be, you need to get a coalition together and address it with PW. They will change with the right group of people to propose solutions to issues. A lot of times PW doesn't have the numbers. Police can provide them to help with your argument. Try to get your councilmember behind the push as well. You can go directly to PW director and have them come to a CI meeting. Get the discussion started with them and provide examples of other places where enforcement works.

#### **Mpls Parks & Rec – Anita Tabb & Jennifer Ringole, 4<sup>th</sup> District Park Board Commissioners**

Anita: Mpls Park and Recs have a couple of really big, important projects going on. These are city-wide and specifically affect our n'hood parks. Rec'quest - a program to make suggestions for rec centers, needs community input to see what the Pk Bd and budget can do going forward.

Jennifer distributed a power point print out of what the Prk Board is evaluating. It is a funding vs rec center need reality check called "Closing the Gap" and "Rec'quest." Latter has to do with exterior of rec centers. What is the Park Board doing about funding of n'hood parks? N'hood parks differ from regional parks which are the chain of lakes, river parks, & more natural resource parks. They get considerable funding from state and fed govt. N'hood parks are funded by individual tax dollars almost exclusively. Regional parks can get grants but it is hard for n'hood parks to get grants. N'hood parks are very asset-rich. They have lots of playground equipment, pools, and other infrastructure. The Park Board has been collecting feedback all over the city recently regarding parks. Since 2000 the Parks Board has been looking at funding issue differently. In the last 3-5 years they've tried to look at doing more with less. Today the Park Board has \$10 mil less coming into the Parks system than 10 years ago. The last 3-4 years have focused on improving efficiency, provide safer environments for staff. Looking at operations and maintenance - w/in n'hood system there is 2,750 acres of lawn to mow. It takes about two weeks to cut it. To do things at a better rate, the Park Board needs about \$3 million more a year for maintenance, pruning, etc. Capital investments - IT system, lighting, the "guts" of the dept - \$140 million behind those capital investments. 80% of that is just n'hood capital. If the Park Board keeps doing things the same rate, the next 30-40 years will add \$304 million to this gap. Looking at 2016, based on the current levels the Park Board would need \$14.3 million. On avg the board gets \$4-5 mill in capital levy and bonds which means that the parks will be about \$9 million behind just for next year. Playground and pools, however, are being invested in by the Board the most. If not fixed, they will sit empty; there is also many safety codes to be enforced. Significant funding needs to be put into Whittier Park over the next 5 years. A playground is on the horizon; there is a \$5.7 mill gap just for this park. A question was posed about the capital funding: By the time projects are hit, costs have gone up. How do you address these issues?

A: There's always an unspent balance. We advance through the playgrounds systematically to quell

funding issues. Anita Tabb, 4<sup>th</sup> Dist Rep added that one change at the Park Board that has slowed things down is the added cmtty outreach. Because of this, projects take longer. Com outreach has required more staff time than anticipated. More staff is needed. It's important to note that capital funding for the past 16 years has been zero for Whittier. Attendees were directed to the website where information is posted and the patterns across the city are evident. Some of it has to do with age of assets: playgrounds lasting 25 years; wading pools 40 years. A political trajectory also changes funding.

The Pk Board has conducted a city-wide phone survey to get a better understanding how people are using parks and rec systems. The survey results are on the park board website. In October the park board will take the info from all the public meetings and conversations to the Park Board.

Rec'Quest - asking if rec centers are the right models/are facilities the right facilities. Knowing this will help impact the funding gap. Rec'Quest helps point planning toward the future. It's a city-wide program slated to finish in 2016. We expect to have all service-area master plans done by 2018.

Comment: people do want to support parks, but it's hard to be sympathetic to the Park Board after enduring Master Plan process for the Washburn Fair Oaks Park. People's concerns weren't addressed. It felt autocratic and dismissive.

Reply-Anita: there were politics involved in the Washburn Fair Oaks master plan and the community was strong-armed in a way. Anita was vocal about her disagreement with how things were handled. Attendee: When it's dark, why are the lights not on by the playground or the soccer field in Whittier Park? The basketball court says "for Whittier residents until 10pm." How are they supposed to play without lights? Reply-Anita: we need to hear about these issues. It would be helpful to know. She will check into it and find out if the lights are inoperable or if the infrastructure is missing. (The attendee said light pole were there but the lights are out). Attendee: at soccer the field, my kids come home with scratches after playing on it. There is not much grass. The school also goes elsewhere to play soccer, even though there is a field here to play on but not useable.

Reply-Anita: This is a budget issues. The Pk Board has to keep up with wading pools and playgrounds so there is no extra money for field maintenance. It's a problem all over the city...it's a big issue. Attendee: how does Mpls park system compare to first-ring suburb park system in budgeting and management? Reply-Jennifer: They don't have their own Park Boards. One of the biggest thing comparing Mpls with B. Park, Richfield...is the level of access. We have 50 rec centers in our system. Almost one per n'hood. In some cases, their assets are a bit newer. The best comparison is St. Paul. They have the most comparable level of assets and similar communities around their parks. They've gone through a lot of changes recently.

Rec Centers there are being handed over to other organizations. They have larger facilities so they are moving more towards the suburban model. Attendee: Chicago has lots of square blocks with greenery. Reply--Jennifer: Chicago has a \$450 million budget where Mpls has \$80-90 million. We have .5 miles between parks. 95% of city is located .5 miles from a park. Attendee: Whittier has a diverse demographic that is into soccer. We don't have an official soccer field. As the Park Bd makes recommendations for changes, will parks change to adapt to the population and the n'hood use of the park? Reply-Jennifer: the Master Plans are addressing that question. Soccer is played at Whittier a lot, and if there isn't a strong baseball/softball interest the outfield can be replaced with soccer field. Changes are happening incrementally. Attendee: How is St. Paul paying for parks and rec centers? Reply-Jennifer: the buildings are being leased out to other organizations. Attendee: Are the Whittier basketball courts (gym) maintained by the park or school? Reply-Jennifer: we have a shared use agreement. I don't technically know who owns it. We share time in the gym.

### **Old and New Business:**

Marian: mentions Volunteer Appreciation Event on 9/28.

**Motion to Adjourn: 8:22pm. Motion Carried.**

**Minutes respectfully submitted by Paul Shanafelt**