

Whittier Housing Issues Committee Meeting Minutes
September 17, 2019, 6:30-8:00pm
Black Forest Inn, 1 E 26th St.

Attendees: Nate Rastetter, Stormy Peterson, Christine Popowski, Emma Sherman, Laryssa Stolarskyj, Benjamin Carrier, Brigid Higgins, Ben Cowper, Matt Barthelemy, Nate Broadbridge, Hannah Wilson, Cat Hammond, Nicole Weiler, Jeff Cowmeadow, Shannon Dotson

Staff: Kaley Brown

Speakers: Lucia Yess-Melling

Meeting called to order at 6:33pm by Stephanie Brown, Housing Issues Committee Chair
Agenda & Code of Conduct are reviewed. August meeting minutes reviewed.

Motion to approve August meeting minutes. **Second. Motion carries.**

Motion to approve agenda. **Seconded. Approved.**

Mobilization Planning for Neighborhood-wide Housing Survey

- Updates on supporting partnerships
 - Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA)
 - CURA hired a research graduate assistant for this summer to develop an interactive neighborhood mapping tool that could help our committee better understand the current housing landscape from a data perspective in an effort to preserve existing naturally-occurring affordable housing (NOAH) in Whittier -- the quantitative elements of the project
 - U of M Urban Studies course
 - Stephanie pitched two projects to students in the U's Master's of Urban and Regional Planning graduate program -- a class on Neighborhood Revitalization; our projects were so popular that they gave Whittier Alliance 8 graduate students to split in half and work on both projects as their main course project this fall semester. These students will help us
 - 1.) administer the neighborhood survey, process results, and analyze the data provided to us in the mapping tool to connect the quantitative with the qualitative results and
 - 2.) help us formalize our new development engagement process and create a toolkit to assist other neighborhoods in utilizing our process in their organizing work
- Outline a plan for the fall
 - Group members discuss edits to the survey draft provided by CURA graduate assistant to ensure the questions we need to ask are there, that they are framed correctly, and questions we do not need answers to are cut from the survey to streamline it
 - Stephanie, Kaley, Erin West (NADC), and Vanessa (CURA) will work to incorporate edits next week
 - Set large group door-knocking days
 - It is decided we need at least one weekend day and one weeknight in early October before it gets too cold
 - Group members will also work on creating door-knocking "kits" so that people who wish to tackle an assigned area on their own free time are able to do so
 - Idea to leave survey/resources behind in multiple languages

- Identify steps needed to prepare & assign point people
 - Matt B. and Erin W. agree to work together on planning a mid-late afternoon door-knock for Sunday, October 6th
 - Brigid H. and any others interested in supporting will work together to identify a weeknight to offer that same week.

Engagement Planning on Current Neighborhood Development Projects

- Lupe Projects on Lake Street (Phases II and III)
 - This project consists of 2 more buildings proposed to accompany the Phase I building now under construction at Lake St. & Harriet Ave; the first two Phases include designated affordable units proposed as a mirror of each other on opposite sides of Harriet, 6 stories each, while the 3rd building is proposed at 7 stories and no affordability measures included.
 - We have started engagement around this development with folks at the Eat Street Festival completing paper surveys, and the next step is to get the survey in google forms and begin distributing more widely
 - We will be needing to also focus some door-knocking energy next week on the surrounding blocks of these projects, as there is a lot of new construction approved or proposed; they need to be informed and involved as much as possible in the process
 - There will also be need for data entry toward the end of next week to help us process the results; request for folks to indicate ways they'd like to support on the passed sign-up sheet

New Development Presentation - Lucia Yess, 101 E 26th St.

- Questionnaire Responses attached
- Lucia owns Yess Yoga just a half block away from this proposed development's location on the corner of 26th St and 1st (currently a vacant lot)
- The lot is a superfund site that requires a lot of environmental clean-up before construction can begin
- Lucia and her husband are front the cost of the project, and this is the first time they have done anything of this nature; they are learning the process as they go
- The space will be fully ADA accessible; one yoga studio on the main floor, a second studio and 3 treatment rooms on the 2nd floor
- They plan to utilize the 2nd floor as a flexible use event space that community groups or yoga studio members can access for affordable rates or possibly even no cost depending on the situation
- They would like to include solar energy on the roof but are working within budget constraints to see if they can afford to do so
- Because the timing of their public hearing does not allow for it, we will not take a formal vote but if individuals would like to submit letters of support or other positions on the project, they may do so in advance of the hearing on Monday, October 7th.

Updates & Upcoming Opportunities

- Seward ReDesign Community Wealth-Building Summit
 - Friday, September 20th - free to attend

**Meeting adjourned at 8:26 pm.
Minutes submitted by Kaley Brown.**