

Whittier Housing and Land Use Committee Meeting Minutes
June 21, 2022, 6:30-8:00pm
Zoom Digital Meeting

Attendees: George Rishmawi, John Boehler, Jimmy Hoke, Nick Hutchinson, JoAnn Musumeci, Anna Wienke, Laryssa Stolaryski, John Champe, Byron Millea
Presenters: Jim Kumon (Eilat Group, Heirloom Properties)
Staff: Kaley Brown, Krystin Eldridge

Welcome/Introductions

- The meeting is called to order at 6:33pm.
- The committee went through a round of introductions.
- The meeting chair presented the agenda. **Agenda is approved.**
- The meeting chair recognized Standard of Conduct; Non-discrimination and Anti-racism; and Conflicts of Interest Policies.
- The April and May meeting minutes are reviewed. **Motion to approve the April and May meeting minutes passes unanimously.**

Attendees introduced themselves and shared something fun they've done so far this summer.

Updates from Provision Community Restaurant (Meeting Host), Anna Wienke

- Anna welcomed everyone there in person into the space and shared an overview of their organization's pay-what-you-can model and what they are currently offering
 - They continue to provide lunches for Simpson Housing shelter guests each day
 - Instead of dinners, they are now reopening their dining space for coffee and pastries at 10am daily and serving lunches from 12-2pm
 - They are always recruiting volunteers and encourage folks to reach out if they are interested in supporting the mission and operations

2022-2023 WA Housing & Land Use Committee Chair Election - Committee Vote

- The Acting Committee structure and responsibilities of the Chair position are overviewed
- A call for nominations is made three times in total for the 202
- George Rishmawi nominates himself to serve as the Committee Chair for another year, stating that he has learned a lot in his first year as Chair and has found it very rewarding
- Hearing no other nominations, a **motion** is made to elect George Rishmawi to the position of Chair of the Housing & Land Use Committee for the 2022-2023 term by acclamation.
 - **The motion is seconded. Motion passes unanimously.**

Developments at 2542 Blaisdell Ave & 110 W 26th St, Eilat Group - Committee Vote

Jim Kumon - principal at Heirloom properties

- Variances, guidelines, standards of the project
 - 110 26th St. W - contracted, same owner as 2542 Blaisdell Ave (considered one site)
 - Zoned as interior 3, not combinable and will be going in as separate properties to City Council
 - Still on month to month lease for the tenant in the commercial space, but it is largely vacant
 - 3 floors walk up building, common area, ADA unit on the North Side

- At 30 ft can't have any parking spaces within the first 40 feet, did not get approved for 2 spaces only 1 on the building exterior off-street.
 - 2nd and 3rd Floor will have 15 units total and 1 bedroom
 - Increase in interest rates has significantly impacted their financial analysis, and they've had to change out the brick exterior on the 26th street facade to a Nichiha panel
 - Garage door, downsized the mechanical screening because of city requirements
 - If you put a parking space in front of the building it triggers more requirements
 - Covered parking includes with 7 car spaces and bike space
 - No variances needed on this side/building in the project
- 2542 Blaisdell
 - Variance detail
 - Only one small variance needed on this side, which is for the size of the building setback from the sidewalk
 - 27 units 3 stories, had to scoot the building back a few feet
 - Building to the north is set back very significantly already and does not comply with the comprehensive plan, making it challenging for this project to comply without needing a variance for a 20 ft. setback instead of the roughly 27 ft. needed to be in full compliance
 - Alley side
 - No parking on Blaisdell Ave, but they created some space in back for folks to pull in if needed, 1 loading zone space
 - Parking spaces and balconies added for an outdoor room for the middle units
 - 2 studios on the ground floor every other floor has 1 bedrooms
 - Adjusted the windows, made them larger, 98 sq ft of windows
 - Brick on the front of this building facing Blaisdell, wants to have landscaping and upward growth to use sun exposure
 - Attendees express appreciation for the nod to the art deco detailing and the fact that no residents or businesses will be displaced
 - **A motion** is made to support the projects overall, including the request for a front yard setback variance to 20 feet.
 - **Motion is seconded. Motion carries unanimously.**
- **NOAH Properties - Anti Displacement**
 - Mapping tool created to understand properties in the neighborhood - which ones are vulnerable to being flipped by speculators buying up properties
 - We plan to use the tool to help find properties that are upzoned (4-6 stories); Somebody may want to buy a building that is only 1 level but has potential to be more floors
 - Commercial aspect as well to stop displacement
 - Will have different outcomes because not every landowner will want the same thing
 - City Ordinance on ToPA would give us additional ability to support tenants if it passed and coaching can be provided to tenants to get financing and understand how to organize themselves to get the financing needed to put in a collective offer on their building if the opportunity arises.
 - A call for volunteers interested in learning more and potentially helping with this work: jamesnhoke@protonmail.com
- 1st Avenue Reconstruction Survey

- Feedback to the city:
 - <https://zan.mysocialpinpoint.com/first-avenue-reconstruction/map#/sidebar/tab/survey>
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- Traffic Calming
 - Whittier Solidarity Network
 - Neighbors Ryan Kronzer and Nick Hutchinson are working on proposal to submit to the City's new neighborhood traffic calming program, wherein residents can submit their ideas and rationale to be selected for new City infrastructure to help calm traffic and make neighborhood streets safer
 - Application deadline is September
 - They are focusing on the streets around Whittier Park and School
 - Lyndale improvements, Safe Routes to School - add supplementary improvements
 - They are meeting next on Sunday 6/26 at Bob Java Hut - 11am - 12pm for anyone who wants to join them and help develop the application
- Updates and Opportunities
 - Idea for committee project work
 - Developer Scorecard - interactive survey for Developers to take online
- Group Discussion
 - Resident is concerned that an apartment building at 26th and Pleasant has had multiple recent incidents and more recently they've included gunshots and late night issues
 - She spoke to Jennifer Waisenan - crime prevention specialist at 5th precinct and other adjacent neighbors and business owner
 - Has started to try to learn more about the ownership and management of the building
 - Kaley will meet with her this week to contact the property management company together and find out what additional information they can learn about the incidents and connecting with other neighbors in the building
- An announcement is made that public art proposals for the new Lake Street transit station will be reviewed in July by the community selection committee
- Whittier Alliance's next board meeting is happening on Thursday evening at Whittier Park or over Zoom (hybrid)
- Somali Independence Day Festival on Lake Street is also coming up on Saturday, July 2nd
- Next meeting for HLU is happening on July 19th

Meeting adjourned at 8:04 pm.

HLU Meetings Every third Tuesday of the month

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, July 19th, 6:30-8:00 pm - Hybrid in-person/zoom meeting

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Kaley Brown.