

Whittier Housing and Land Use Committee Meeting Minutes
November 16, 2021, 6:30-8:00pm
Zoom Digital Meeting

Attendees: George Rishmawi, Leslie Modrack, Stephanie Brown, Nick Hutchinson, Y Sussman, Stephanie Bradley, Ron and Joanna Johnson, Nate Rastetter, Nate Broadbridge, Morgan Luzier, Justin Horst, Patience

Presenters: Faith Kumon (Project for Pride in Living)

Staff: Kaley Brown, Oscar Nieves Rubio, Robb Larson

Welcome/Introductions

-The committee went through a round of introductions.

-The meeting chair presented the agenda. **Motion to approve the agenda. Seconded. The motion passed.**

-The meeting chair recognized Standard of Conduct; Non-discrimination and Anti-racism; and Conflicts of Interest Policies.

-The committee reviewed the October minutes. **Motion to approve the October 2021 minutes. Seconded. The Motion passed.**

Development

- **Whittier Alliance - [2116 Nicollet Avenue Lot Purchase](#)**
 - Board selected applicants at the September Board meeting on September 23. Currently 11 active members; mix of technical experience and neighborhood experience.
 - We'll be adding more details to the web page this week.
- **Equitable Development Scorecard**
 - We've developed a scorecard to evaluate potential developments for how well they fit our community goals. The developer scores themselves, and then community members have an opportunity to score the development as well. We're hoping to expand this work in the future. Let George, Stephanie Brown or Kaley know if you're interested.
 - Scorecard is currently being tested with developers.
- **Wells Fargo Development** - Faith Kumon, Project for Pride in Living
 - PPL will rebuild new Wells Fargo with drive through, 200 units of affordable housing and ~10,000 sq ft of commercial space
 - PPL provided an overview of the two-phase development of the site between Nicollet and Blaisdell
 - RFP issued for commercial condo spaces (~8,300 sq ft)
 - Total cost: approximately \$47 million (\$378,000/housing unit + \$5.5m commercial)
 - Timeline
 - Fall 2021: Design Development
 - Winter 2022: PDR/Land Use application
 - Spring 2022: Construction documents, bidding, funding secured
 - Summer 2022: Pre-closing due diligence
 - Fall 2022: Construction start
 - Winter 2024: Building open

- **Q:** How will you attract businesses if they have to wait 2 years for the building to open? Do you need to find the tenants right now or can you wait until closer to open?
 - We want to find the tenants now to ensure they can secure financing, which will take about a year, and then they'll have to wait a year. We're looking for people who can be patient with that process.
- **Q:** Construction costs seem unusually high, why is that?
 - **A:** Units are bigger than typical. 6% construction inflation last year, plus another 6% this year. \$250,000 per unit just for construction, plus architect fees and legal fees start to add up quickly.
- **Q:** What are the sustainability goals for this project?
 - **A:** Geothermal heating system will heat/cool the building with 3-4 wells. This will reduce heating and cooling costs. We are looking into a rainwater harvesting system from the roof to help with toilet flushing. We are looking into a shared stormwater tank that would infiltrate water runoff from the parking lot. Rooftop solar as well. We'll pursue LEED certification for the Wells Fargo space.
- **Q:** Was any thought given to outdoor balconies to break up the boxiness of the design and add an amenity for tenants?
 - **A:** We're looking into a rooftop community space and small rain gardens around the overflow drains.
- **Lake & Nicollet Future** - Kaley Brown, Whittier Alliance
 - McKnight Foundation + Cultural Wellness Center got together to discuss how to create a cohesive vision around rebuilding Lake Street after the events of summer 2020.
 - Lake Street Alignment Process convenes stakeholders from across the corridor in 4 different areas to come up with a cohesive vision
 - There will be community-wide meetings December 6-10

Parks Planning

- **Futsal/Multi-use courts at Clinton Field Park**
 - Caleb Crossley of Futsal Society presented to HLU in September on their programming. Futsal is a more accessible version of soccer that can be played indoors or outdoors.
 - Futsal Society serves lots of kids in the neighborhood and they currently play in Whittier Rec Center.
 - They're seeking to build two futsal/multi-use courts at Clinton Field Park using Whittier park dedication fees. WA Board of Directors moved to support this request.
 - This will be included in the capital improvement budget if the Park Board approves.
- **Soo Line Garden ADA Ramp**
 - Last fall, MPB staff and Hennepin County staff approached WA to talk about Midtown Greenway Access and whether we would support a project to build an ADA access ramp at the Soo Line Garden. Park Board owns the Soo Line Garden space so it's a publicly available space. Hennepin County applied for a federal grant to fill the funding gap, and the Park Board used Whittier park dedication fees to fill that gap.
 - This location was selected for its proximity to schools, businesses and bike and transit network, and to fill an access gap along that stretch of the Greenway. Would allow Greenway users to avoid heavy traffic areas like Lake and Lyndale.
 - WA supports the Soo Line Garden as a valuable community asset, and sees access to the Midtown Greenway compliant with ADA as an equity issue. As one of our public areas we would like to see accessibility to the Soo Line Garden as well as the Greenway.

- We are interested in creating a subcommittee to investigate alternatives to the current plan, including the south slope.
- It may be possible to use the south slope as an access point, but there's pushback from the railroad authority, which has reserved this area for future transit, which would be years down the road.

Anti-displacement Strategy - Oscar Nieves Rubio, Whittier Alliance

- Oscar has put together an eviction prevention toolkit that codifies the process to connect residents to resources and prevent evictions. If you are interested in volunteering to help with this work, you can schedule a meeting with Oscar at <https://calendly.com/scheduleoscar/whittierinvolvement>

Other updates, announcements, opportunities

- [Approaches to Parking Management Webinar](#)

Motion to adjourn at 8:04 pm. Seconded. **Motion passes.**

HLU Meetings Every third Tuesday of the month

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, December 21st, 6:30-8:00 pm @ Zoom

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Robb Larson.