

Whittier Alliance Board Meeting Minutes - For approval at 9.24.20 meeting

Sept 24, 2020 6-8 PM

Zoom Meeting

Present: Daniel Perez, Nate Rastetter, Cyndi Hovey, Brigid Higgins, Erin Sjoquist, Nate Broadbridge, Shinjan Sengupta, Aldona Martinka, Abigail Speller, Stephanie Brown

Non-board Community Members: Nick Hutchinson, George Rishmawi, Harry Mathiassan

Absent: Jen Kader, Katie Heimer

Late: none

Guests: Adam Arvidson and Crystal Myslajek

Staff: Kaley Brown, Julie Strand

Call to Order at 6:05 pm by Cyndi Hovey

Cyndi called for suggested edits to the agenda. Seeing none, **Motion** to approve agenda. **Seconded.** Motion **Carries.** Cyndi asked for conflicts of interests. None were stated.

The group reviewed the community agreements, went through introductions, and pronouns. Each member at the meeting was asked to share two points from the WA strategic plan that they think WA is successfully pursuing and/or achieving.

Points included:

- Reviewing governing documents removing barriers to formerly participating
- Pursuing relationships with other community orgs
- Diversifying events and meeting locations
- Securing grants to better engaged BIPOC, single parents, and other communities
- Being proactive with housing--influencing what gets developed
- Being a warm and welcoming org
- Working with individuals to have a voice in housing issues in our neighborhood
- Organizational sustainability and leadership
- Creatively supporting small businesses through crisis
- Created a supportive board culture
- Building channels to city hall and others civic entities
- Community engagement

Park Dedication Fees Program Discussion: Adam Arvidson and Crystal Myslajek

Arvidson is the director of strategic planning for the Parks Board. He used to live in Whittier and was involved with the Whittier Alliance at that time. He stated that it was a welcoming place to land in the city. His experience has been that WA is one of the most responsive and helpful orgs in town from the Park Board perspective. Arvidson submitted a presentation in advance for board review. With the assumption that it has been reviewed before the meeting he went straight to the ask.

Ask from Arvidson and Myslajek: There is park dedication fees funding availability in Whittier. Funds have already been allocated at Whittier Park, but about \$706,000 is unallocated. Arvidson is looking to consult with WA to get ideas on how this remaining amount should be spent. Whittier has 5 parks. The funds can be used for new parks or park connections. One option is to use the funds to create the ADA access ramp mentioned at the previous board meeting. The ramp would create ADA compliant access to the Greenway in Whittier.

Q: Opportunities to apply funds to the Kmart redevelopment?

A: It is possible, but the funds have to go to new park facilities or park land acquisition, if redevelopment takes place at the Kmart parcel, they would have to satisfy the ordinance and create new green space or park land, so already established funds would not necessarily need to be used because new funds would be created from the redevelopment.

Q: We still need to understand all the uses so we can make a decision on the ADA ramp. Are we implicitly passing on something else needed if we say yes to the ramp?

A: Park dedication fees help to leverage funding from other sources usually. So its funds usually don't cover the whole cost, they more or less work as a match. 2 parks have current funds allocated-Whittier Park and a 28th street lot. Washburn Fair Oaks isn't in the CIP so will wait on improvement until they are brought into that plan.

Q: How would you like the consulting and decision making to go?

A: Different neighborhoods decide in different ways. The neighborhood needs some sort of documented support, but it is a balancing act.

Q: Is this a use it or lose it scenario?

A: No. This funding source does not expire, but construction costs usually go up with time so the money doesn't have as much value over time. The Midtown Greenway ADA Ramp is an example of leveraging funding. The park funds are just filling a gap.

Q: How long did it take for Whittier to build up this money? How long would it take us to rebuild the funds?

A: The bulk of the funding was accrued over the last 6 years, about 2017-now. It is hard to tell though how much we will build up in the coming years as development ebbs and flows and isn't always consistent. These fees are allocated when development permits are awarded.

Q: Can this money be allocated to a feasibility study on our parks? Is there a master plan for park connections in the neighborhood?

A: The parks board is creating a master plan for all the parks in the SW part of the city. Within a month we will have a 30 year master plan for our area. WA was heavily involved in the master plan. We want to keep that plan in mind as a guide. There is info in there about connectivity.

Q: Have either of our neighborhood schools been engaged?

A: Whittier school was involved in the planning of Whittier Park, the park closest to the schools in Whittier. Usually the neighborhood org is the main entity that the parks board consults. It is the neighborhood org's prerogative to engage other entities in their decision making.

Q: How do we put forth a recommendation? What is needed in terms of a timeline?

A: The Parks Board of Commissioners adopts projects in December. At that time, they put a line item in the capital improvement plan. WA has to create a neighborhood engagement process, write an official letter, and then Adam uses that letter as support material for a proposal to the board of commissioners. For the ramp, it would be the same. A process, then a letter to put a line item in the CIP authorizing the parks board to put a line item into the capital plan. Some neighborhood orgs do this all on their own. Some ask Adam to be more involved in the discussion/engagement. Because there are opportunities right now with impending deadlines, we want to set things in motion as quickly as possible. Adam added that minneapolisparcs.org/SW has the current master plans available for viewing. He added that the final public hearing to approve those plans will take place Oct 7.

Ideally Adam can have a recommendation in regards to the ramp from WA in October so the Parks Board can make an amendment before December. A recommendation could happen later, but the project organizers would like to know where their funding is coming from as soon as possible so they can leverage the funds to secure their total budget. In addition, they want to start on design in the fall and they can't start on design without knowing the full funding picture.

Q: Are there folks interested in taking this on in terms of approval process, community engagement, creation of a letter of support?

A: Stephanie, Brigid, and George volunteered. They will follow up with Amber Klein and Adam Arvidson.

Secretary's Report

- Board meeting attendance: 8-0, 3-1, 0-2, 1-3, 0-4, 0-5, Reinstated-0, Resigned-3, Terminated-0, Vacancies-11, Total Seats-23
- In process bylaws changes should help fill some of the vacancies.
- Review and Approve Sept 2 minutes: Cyndi shared some edits to the Sept 2 intro and suggested an adjustment to the language for financials from approving to accepting.

Motion to approve the minutes with the stated edits. Seconded. All in favor. Motion to approve minutes passes.

Treasurer's Report

- Review & Accept August 2020 financials **Treasurer asked for questions on the August financials. Seeing none, motion to accept the financials. Seconded. Motion passes.**
- Nate and Kaley met with Stacy about WA's fiscal policies. With that info, they will work next month on researching and developing new and improved fiscal policies for WA.
- Nate reminded the board to please participate in the doodle poll for an accounting 101 training.
- No changes to emergency funds. Distribution of funds for sanitation will show up in next month's financials.

Anti-Racism & Equity

- Mission and vision revisions and professional development needs: WA wants to do this work thoughtfully and not in a hurry. Based on what was shared in the board packet, Cyndi asked if are there any questions or concerns. The special meeting was the board's deadline for bylaw review. WA wanted this review to include a clear anti-racism lens. However, we know now from talks with consultants that we should not base the work on such a deadline. WA wants to make sure we are doing this work with a focus on longevity. Questions that remain are: How do we make the work not based on the board members whom can come and go? Can we build this work into WA's board and/or community engagement calendar for every year for years to come?
- The board chair and Kaley answered that systems of oppression are the waters we swim in every day it makes sense for WA, as an anti-racist org, to have this as a continual budget line item. We will continue researching, getting more quotes, talking to other consultants. We invite any and all people to be a part of this work. WA's task force for this work will to reconvene to look forward and make a plan. Whomever is taking the lead should reach out to Stephanie who knows who is doing this training for the longfellow neighborhood. More to come.

Special Meeting, Bylaws

- The exec committee talked about how many issues are not ready for a special meeting in November. We haven't figured out how to make a virtual meeting fully accessible in many ways. We want to be intentional and accessible with this meeting. We need to get a quorum to pass the new bylaws and accessibility will maximize our chance to get people together.
- Other neighborhood orgs haven't been having closed captioning or other languages. Kaley will talk with the City to see if other neighborhood orgs are using creative ways to be accessible.
- One member mentioned that google meets now has closed captioning and potentially other language translations. Other meeting suggestions included getting the mapping prejudice folks to do a presentation and having a spoken word artist open the event.
- Q: is there anything we feel we fundamentally lose by just waiting until the next annual meeting? Any pending bylaws changes fundamentally holding us back?
- A: The vote to change to bylaws will make board positions and voting more accessible. Having a special meeting will make the next annual meeting open to more people who want to run for the board.
- We can hold a short and sweet meeting with the only goal being to approve the bylaws. We are going to risk not getting enough people there, but it is a risk we have to take. We will have a task force meeting and out of that meeting will come a date.

Food/Supplies Distribution site fiscal sponsorship

- Kaley provided an update on the board meeting cover memo. As of this week the collective is 95% sure they will be doing food distribution out of CTC. They won't need a lease or additional insurance to do so. The research on fiscal sponsorship that came out of this discussion is included in the board packet so we can know what that might mean for WA in case that idea comes up again.

Acting Committees Asks or Discussions

- Housing Issues: No action items as of right now. There are two small updates: 1. A new development is in the works in place of a burned building on lake 2. The Unhoused Neighbors Support group has moved forward with securing the port-a-potty.
- Ask: The chair has a new job working with an org with developer relationships. The chair wants to train others on the committee to testify at the planning commission and take more of a leadership role.

Q: What is the time commitment you are asking for?

A: Chair will connect with interested community members offline.

- The Community Issues chair seat is still open at this time

Neighborhood 2020 Campaign Letter to the City

- The rest of the meeting time was dedicated to work time for board members and meeting attendees to submit personal letters in support of the Advocate for Our Neighborhoods Campaign. Meeting members were directed to the campaign info and asked to choose how they wanted to support the effort.
<http://www.whittieralliance.org/advocate-for-our-neighborhoods.htm> and
<https://www.elliottpark.org/equity>

- Kaley added that we need residents to echo WA's position stated in the letter approved at the last meeting. Neighborhood orgs need the city to invest in community solutions outlined in the provided templates.
- A meeting member mentioned that many council people do respond quickly to such outreach especially if the email title is a bit unique.
- Meeting members started to draft up their own emails

Announcements, next steps

- Staff needs volunteer support at the census and voter registration drive on the 29th and flyering in the area beforehand. This event is one last big push to get people in the neighborhood to fill out the census. We will have pizza!
- Support is also needed from 6-7 on the 29th. There is a call that NCR is leading. WA needs someone to go, listen, and report back so we know what is said about the Neighborhoods 2020 plan.
- The Great Streets grant application period is open & Kaley wants additional board input on the narrative ideas. If anyone wants to talk through that with staff please stay on the call after the meeting is adjourned.
- The Board tracker was reviewed.
- The 2 doodles were mentioned again: bylaws and special meeting planning.
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Motion to adjourn. Seconded. Motion carries.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52pm. | **Minutes respectfully submitted by Julie Strand.**

