

Whittier Alliance Board of Directors
February 25, 2010 6-8:30pm Whittier Elementary School

Present: Anthony Carchedi, Michael Tupper, Laura Jean, Erin Sjoquist, Elizabeth Grzechowiak, David Bagley, Christina Le, Larry Ludeman, Felino de la Pena, Erica Christ, David Schuster **Absent:** Tom Bissen, Maurice Battle, Jesse Oyervides, Daphna Stromberg, Chris Gottshall, Lisa Vecoli **Staff:** Marian Biehn, Jessica Rosenberg
Guest: Dylan Thomas (Southwest Journal)

Call to Order: Chair Erica Christ called The Board of Director's meeting to order at 6:14pm. The Standard of Conduct was noted. The draft agenda was presented and additions or changes were requested. A **Motion** to approve the agenda as amended **Carried**.

Comments from the Chair: We are in a stage where we don't have many things to respond to, and are instead working strategically to plan for the future.

Secretary' Report: Elizabeth Grzechowiak presented the Jan 18th Board Minutes and asked for changes or additions. Laura Jean made a request to change some wording in the section on the proposed affordable housing motion; a **Motion** to approve the minutes as amended **Carried**. The Board Meeting attendance was reviewed with misses and resignation. Lisa Vecoli, nonprofit rep from the BA, missed her third meeting, and has submitted a written request to be reinstated. A **Motion** to reinstate Lisa was made and **Carried**. (10-0-0). Board Meeting Attendance: 2-0, 8-1, 4-2, 3-3 misses; 2-resign. Open seat -At Large '10 & '11. We have board openings: a CI Chair, an open 2011 seat, and 5 people whose board terms are expiring at the Annual Meeting. A few board candidates who have submitted applications already.

Executive Committee: Erica Christ. **Annual Meeting:** April 8th, 2010. We need 6 board candidates, we need nominations for good biz and good n'bor, and we need 50 eligible voters for it to be an official meeting. When you're thinking of who to nominate for good biz or neighbor, think of people with lots of friends or a following of people in n'hood who will come, with ID, to watch them win. Becky is working on presenters (elected officials, parks and rec, etc). We don't have much official business. We will approve minutes, budgets, vote on Board. There is nothing controversial to bring people in, but we need 50 eligible voters (with ID's, 18+), or we'll have to redo the meeting, according to our bylaws. Property owners who don't live here can vote; they need to bring a property tax, proof of ownership. Tom, Larry, Daphna, Jesse & the vacant seat are up. Larry isn't running, Tom, Jesse and Daphna are. Andrew Cox has submitted an application; Darrell Washington and Jim Roscoe have indicated they will run. There are 6 open, one of them is a one year seat. Can you run for the one year seat? Yes. Last year the top 5 vote getters got the regular open seats, lowest vote getter got one year. Deadline to get application in is March 17th. Sign up sheet of AM volunteer tasks is going around. We'd prefer board members not be the ones to staff the registration table, because of potential conflicts. Becky's been doing all the planning, it would be nice if it wasn't just staff driven. Since we don't have a controversial issue, we could have a speaker, Tom suggested Bob on NPR to NCEC transition. David suggested our state representatives as speakers, Karen Clark usually comes, CM Lilligren will be there, could be speak. Erica will acknowledge faith leaders and elected officials at meeting. We need volunteers to help decide good neighbor and good business nominations. We have one more board meeting before the Annual Meeting. There will be a potential board member meet and greet on 3/15 at the WA office, the chance for potential board members to meet the board, ask questions, get information.

Retreat-Strategic Planning: There will be danish, coffee, soup, salad. Robert Thompson will facilitate. We will be planning to plan, doing a broad overview. It isn't an idea generating meeting, but instead to gather our thoughts: what do we know, what do we need to know. Robert Thompson said we have to think

of this as 2-3 years of planning work. If it is looked as as 6 months of work, it will likely die halfway through, or taper out, or be a failure. Especially given the amount of time we've said we can commit (WA Board members said they could commit to one meeting per month, or one every other month), we have to plan for 2-3 years to complete a strategic plan. The big question is: what do we know about the n'hood, and how do we know that? This gets us to the question: what do we need to know? Bob Thompson is on staff at NRP, is resident policy, by-laws guy. He has sent materials MB will forward for people to read. He will want people to focus in on what their area of interest is, to the tune of 1 meeting every 4 to 6 weeks. He's of the point of view that more information is better. We may need to make an effort to go get information and input from people who won't come to us. He gave an example from his n'hood of doing outreach and gathering information from a constituency that was rarely heard from. David stated that he thought that 3 years was a long time and that we know what the n'hood needs. The top 3 things needed in the n'hood should be indentified,--he gave his top n'hood priorities. Is the purpose of strategic planning to have a democratic bubbling up? Or is it for us, as a board, to say, this is what we want to do? Erica doesn't think those things are mutually exclusive. We do need to data gather, and then we need to come to a consensus: these are our priorities, these are the changes we want to see, and these are the benchmarks. A lot of boards get lost in the info gathering and consensus building, and then don't take a stand. Our job is to take that info, distill it, and make a plan. David disagrees with this approach. 2-3 years fills him with horror. If we put our heads together, we could leave Old Arizona with draft one of the strategic plan and agenda, and then we could start doing something, and we could refine it. But who has enthusiasm for gathering data for 2-3 years w/o doing anything? Seems like a waste of time. Erica says we'll still move forward on some things (Kmart, transit, etc). If you look at our existing NRP plan, it is incredibly comprehensive, from broad down to details. David thinks one main agenda should be to strengthen Eat Street: could include trolley, connection to MIA, non-eating attraction, KMART. But we don't need a ton of debate about whether that is a good idea or not. Another goal could be a more balanced n'hood in owning/renting demographics; less affordable housing, more single family homes. The Board has incredible knowledge here around this table, data will supplement it. We need an action plan soon. The suggestion isn't that we spend 2 years just doing research-some of the priorities will be part of the current and on going work. Some things will come to the surface quickly. But she does think we have to be careful what we're assuming there is agreement on. Things we bring to n'hood, it is amazing how many people will disagree with you, on things you think are obvious. Our position is stronger if we've done data gathering first to back it up. All of that happens slower than you think it will. Getting from an area like strengthen eat street to agreed upon strategies: everyone has ideas, it requires time to talk to people. Not proposing 3 years of just research, we're just give ourselves time to let info be digested. What are other's comments and expectations on the retreat and strategic planning process. David's suggesting that board creates action plan or work plan, and bring it to n'hood to get approval--it's a way of making things more productive. Though people have different decision making processes, this is a faster way. Erica says the whole group won't deal with everything: few people go get info on each thing, digest, bring back. Erica agrees whole group dealing with that isn't efficient. What we've tried in the past is to quickly come to agreement on what actions to take, and it languishes because we don't have neighborhood support. We have list of ideas, and nothing to back it up, no resources, no 'where do we go from here', no realistic timeline, and no ownership by n'hood. This discussion and pro & cons can be worked out at the retreat on March 13.

Motions from Standing Committee: Maurice Battle

CI Motion 1: The CI Committee asks that the staff of WA to assist Darrell getting research needed and working with the school board or city staff to address the issue of reserving spaces for Whittier residents in the Whittier Community School. **Motion Passes 13-0-0.**

As Whittier Elementary has gotten more successful, it has become 3rd most requested elementary school in district, and as a result, the school board moved this year to make it a magnet school. N'hood residents do not get 1st on the list for Whittier School--no more access than any other student city wide. Parent/resident Darrell Washington wants to reserve some percentage of kindergarten class spots for Whittier children. Erica says the unanswered question is what % of school currently is Whittier residents. Thinks it is about 20%. The school was built with lots of NRP \$ from n'hood, which strengthens our case to reserve spots for n'hood students. Darrell is suggesting a hybrid community school & magnet school. School board's argument is there aren't a lot of kids in the n'hood. There are more than we realize and a growing number of Latino and Somali children. DW's thought is, ask for 20% first, if we don't get enough, fill with kids from other n'hood after. David asks if when we gave NRP money, were there any terms or conditions attached? MB: supposedly there is an agreement about use of school and park. Barb Lickness says there was supposed to be collaboration btw park, school, n'hood for usage. But making the school IB or magnet is a School Board decision, nothing to guarantee n'hood kids' spots. Anita Tabb has copy of usage agreement and she is going to get a copy to us. We don't need to vote on this motion. MB met with Darrell and CM Lilligren today. Lilligren is going to try to get the school attendance data, if not it can be gotten through an official data release request. MB says if school is doing well, can be a pull to shore up our housing market, so asking for only 20% is low, we should ask for a higher % reserved for Whittier youth, and grow into it. Lisa points out that this is an election year for half the school board, as it changes to a district system. School board will start to mirror park board: 6 districts, 3 at large. This year 2 at large seats are being elected. Could invite to annual meeting, be one way to draw people. We've done school board forum, has been well attended. Barb Lickness reminds us in '91 they were trying to attract people to Nicollet, and now 15 years later we have a parking problem. Similar for school: dealing with success. And cautionary tale: if we're going to throw money into something, we need terms of its relationship with n'hood. What does Darrell need from us right now? Data from school board. He can get that more easily with pressure from CM Lilligren than pressure from our office, but he knows we are behind him. He's collecting data for several years, to see how many Whittier kids have attended the school from start. How much did WA spend on school and park? Between grants, loans, acquisitions of homes, there was over 2 million leveraged from Whittier NRP.

Finance Committee: Erica Christ-Whittier Year End Financial Report: We're in the black to tune of \$19,000 for 2009. We did a great job on fundraising, good job keeping expenses down, didn't spend as much NRP. We have nothing of value to depreciate. Our high(er) yield checking account is in very good shape. Is what will be printed in annual report, for n'hood. Anything doesn't add up, ask.

FC 2 Motion: The Finance Committee moves to accept the end of year 2009 financial report. **Motion carried.**

January Financial Statements: We've gone into six figures on our cash balance. We are owed reimbursement from NRP. You can see on 2nd sheet, low on 1st checking account. Hope NRP comes through in time to not draw from high yield account. Eat Street Event: we had businesses pay in for advertising, didn't use all of it, will potentially have another event in April. CPED money has to be spent by 8/31, and we have budget breakdown for that, discussed at BA. Unemployment tax makes it look like we've overshot. Printing budget is over b/c MB got some Office Max coupons and went nutty on toner.

FC 1 Motion: The Finance Committee moves to accept the Jan 2010 financial report for the Whittier Alliance. **Passed.**

NRP – Contract of all funds/5 Year Budget Peg Mountin, our NRP specialist, has been saying she wants to contract our NRP program income funds. We thought we had about 3 years, plus another year of our unrestricted reserve funds. She thinks we can get 5 years, plus year another year from our unrestricted

reserve fund, then after 6 years, can work from profit from loans we currently have out. See Schedule A, there is room for raises, b/c we declared our priorities lay in staffing, so she's allocating a majority of funds there. Couple of things in play: NRP is fully funded, they are going to pay out n'hoods to 90%, to err on being conservative, so were' getting more than we thought. The budget reflect use of 100% of the NRP program income on staff funding, and 90% of the NRP Phase 2 remaining funds on implementation. With our current funds available starting with the balance of NRP phase II contracted funds, and with NRP I rollover, the WA can keep office staff for 5 years. We will have some choices to make, especially in 2013, on how to cover the non-personnel expenses and short fall in the presented budget—could be NCEC funds by then. But we have our unrestricted funds, we will have phase II income, we have a little bit of phase I income in the form of loans not yet paid back (about 10,000). PM is advocating we contract out 5 years (new phase II and old phase I) and that we do not move any more funds for 2 more years. Set ourselves up airtight until 2012. If it is contracted, there is less likelihood of the city capturing the funds. With NRP phasing out and the City's Neighborhood Community Engagement Commission taking over (NCEC) the, fewer things in flux the better. IF we are set up with a budget plan, we can get to business of strategic planning, of working with city on NCEC and having a n'hood plan of our own rather than just being funded by the City and expected to act on their plans and direction. The 5 year program income budget is flexible. Funds can be rolled into the next year or taken in advance if a big ticket item happens.. If we needed additional 10,000 from 2013 – funds can roll forward or back. So we have 800,000 cash in nrp that we can draw from? Yes, program income we reallocated last annual meeting, plus phase II salary and implementation funds. This is not phase II income or phase II program money (salary and operational funds). This pays for work office does, youth program comes out of phase II program funds. DB: is there a definition of what there is to draw from for that? Yes, 2.2 million dollars. Some of it is contracted: we have a contract with Center for Energy and Environment for loans. It is our money. Youth programs: swim program contracted. Is there something we need to do tonight? No, this budget is interest of disclosure. And Executive board is implementing this? Peg is implementing it. She recommended that we contract the plan modded funds all at once. Marian put together a 3 year budget and Peg added the remaining Phase 2 personnel and non personnel funds and stretched it into 5 years except for the short fall in the out years in the non-personnel area. And once this is done, no one will be able to take it away? Supposedly. Peg admires the success of WA, she knows the insider way of saving this, she's retiring, she's saying she can set us up for success and security. MB: she is going to be semi-retired, there won't be anyone in NRP office who knows our contracts and NRP funding, if we get this contract, then there is a paper trail. This is our program income, this is money we don't have to explain to the City, won't have to ask them for money. Devil's advocate: when city goes to fund n'hood, they could see this and say you have money, not give us as much. with city shortfall... yes, some n'hood won't get money, and don't' have nrp program income back-up. We are fortunate..

Resource Development May Day Soiree: This is our 1st annual fundraiser of the year, invite people for food, drink, auction, fun. We have a date question: the 1st is a Sat, and we're not exciting or sexy enough to be a Saturday night kind of a gal. We're Thursday night gals. And Blaisdell Manor won't have us over on a Saturday. We're looking at Thursday the 6th, to get space for free. Staggering amount of work to plan. We need help, creativity, and energy. We've got what we do every time, which is works, but could use zip and zing. There is a letter in your packet inviting you to donate, we are looking for things to auction: items, experiences, services, eligible bachelors, art classes, gas cards, house cleaning, garden center gift card. New things would be good. If you go places and people know you, ask them for auction donations. If you know of anyone who would be a good special guest, tell us. And think of people you know to invite: neighbors, coworkers. Erin says that people bid on things you can't usually buy: coffee with mayor, date with Tom Pham, sausage making with the Black Forrest. We need more creative things, they don't need to be big. Is

there an opportunity to reach out to the Somali community? To donate goods, and attend. If you have ideas, bring them. We haven't set ticket price yet: debate every year about price that brings people in but they still spend when they are there. Last year: \$25 in advance, \$30 at door, 140 attend. Food included, cash bar. Could add buy it now price to auction. Could do more than one raffle item, that went well last year.

Staff Report: Executive Director & Community Organizer. Report on Dog Days: about 50 people, 7 kids, lots of dogs. Fun was reported, and got away with another firepit in park.

Old/New Business: Rezoning Proposal Update: Midtown Greenway rezoning that was postponed for time to study things along corridor (28th-31st) that n'hoods don't like. Committee has been carefully working on this, meeting is coming up on March 25th. Whittier has apx 300 parcels. Planning suggests upgrades from R1, R2b, and I1 to R5 across the board: set the stage for future development of mix use and apt buildings. We've had several meetings and input from residents who live there. Some up-zoning okay in commercial, but other up-zoning not okay. MB went through each parcel, and has recommendations to keep existing zoning, or accept city's proposal. MB says about 25% of city's suggestion is acceptable, rest should be kept as is or downgraded. CM Lilligren is having meeting with MB and city, to go through piece by piece. City is planning for mass transit and high density, but MB's argument is that high density already exists in Whittier. For I1, want to keep that or move to C2 or C3, to keep jobs. People who live and businesses are doing well together, don't want to upset that. One strategy is to look at Karmel Plaza. Currently zoned I1. Proposal to put 2 story hotel on top. That is allowed in I1, but has been postponed until after rezoning. KP is proposed to go to R5, which would make apts okay. Part of talks with city will be strategy on how to not intensify usage in that area. Larry says this move in zoning sets us up for block busting: someone buys a few parcels, and then squeezes people out through intimidation and fear. And we have at least one developer in the n'hood who is not beyond that. It is a real concern, and it is worth repeating to city, by Lilligren or someone. Erica says that this area is strange, block lengths aren't the same, things would work better diff places, but city is going block by block, not gradual. In this area, greenway side is diff than interior n'hood side. MB says some other n'hoods have been successful at city standing back by arguing n'hood character. And that's true here. We've worked hard to establish family, owner occupied, and this sets up possibility of more rental, would bring owner occupancy down, rental up. Board action needed? MB says the Board already has action to postpone and reconsider. It would be good to have board recommendation once it is complete, once it is gone through with city. Next month we meet on the 25th. In or regular schedule we wouldn't be able to get a motion in. We could do it at exec, or set a special meeting. We've had a lot of impact from people who live there. David asks if we know the politics behind this? Taxes. City says they are supporting Midtown Land Use Plan and Lyn Lake Land Use Plan. That seems too simplistic for MB. They do want to push transit, which makes sense. They're also, in the interim, chance for block busting and demo by deterioration. Doesn't think planning and zoning took time to look at n'hoods. Larry thinks motive is \$, taxes. Cook construction site was profitable; city's eyes were opened as to what they could do if that was extended down the Greenway. Whether it was malicious conspiracy, or let's see how far we can push this, who knows. Lisa says there are other thing to balance: Hiawatha corridor shows you put in transit, development will follow. You have to invest in transit, and have density to support it. City is not evenly learning lessons: what do we have to have in place in order to support an investment in trolley system in greenway? What density do we need there to support it? Like building the school and pricing ourselves out of it; we've advocated for fixed rail transit through Greenway, we don't get that w/o a ripple of density. Larry says could be, but we could tackle it on site by site basis, not blanket rezoning, that refutes and undermines efforts of people working to build n'hood. Lisa says as a community, what happens if we're successful? We've been arguing to put transit in the greenway, and success means development. We should think about what this looks like for people who are planning, not assume they are trying to do something evil. Did the Greenway Coalition take transit into account? Yes. Erica says this is

already a dense corridor, already a transit using area, we could already support transit along Greenway without further development. Does everyone feel comfortable letting committee move forward, meeting with planning staff? Yes, thanks to Laura, Larry, Jesse for participating.

Vacant Lot Purchase-Preemptive Move-Search for partner. Hasn't gone anywhere, we haven't found anyone. The business on 29th is for sale for \$350,000 and the vacant lot is valued at \$75,000. Could we keep in mind capital campaign to do some strategic land purchasing?

Affordable Housing Motion Laura Jean has done research. Can't find definition of 'impacted n'hood.' Strongest factor to support: we have high poverty concentration in n'hood, adding more affordable housing does have negative impact, if you are at 20% poverty. Some city n'hoods have lower than 5% poverty, and that's where adding affordable housing doesn't have a negative impact. This matches Erica's perception of the n'hood, greater than average poverty. Laura Jean says we have one of highest poverty rates in the city. There are pockets in North, but not a lot. We know the environment a child grows up in impacts them. David says we are gently reminding city that they had wisdom to build this into guidelines, and we're not asking them to change, but to remember and stick to impacted n'hood guidelines. Erica says the biggest challenge to dispersal is challenge from other n'hood,s and land costs. Laura Jean says infrastructure is an issue; support has to be part of the plan. Erica has heard anecdotal evidence that money is out there, n'hood resistance is hardest part. One idea is to get message out that one affordable housing development in otherwise affluent n'hood will have no impact, where as one *more* does in already impacted area will have tipping affect. Urban Homeworks does rebuilding, boarded up home, sells, helps finance loans for low-income first time home buyers: Habitat for Humanity for existing homes. Could encourage their work in n'hood. Next step is to get people in on conversation. Lilligren, Wes Butler, reaching out to other impacted n'hood orgs (Ventura Village, Steven's Square) to see if they would join us in asking for this. If we initiate a process, get everyone around table. Other thing on horizon is ordinance text change.

Motion to Adjourn 8:26

Next Meeting: Thursday, March. 25

Minutes Respectfully Submitted: Jessica Rosenberg, Administrative Assistant

Erica Christ, Chair

Elizabeth Grzechowiak, Secretary