

Whittier Alliance Board of Directors
April 22, 2010 6-8:30pm Whittier Elementary School
Draft Minutes

Present: Anthony Carchedi, Laura Jean, Erin Sjoquist, Elizabeth Grzechowiak, David Bagley, Christina Le, Rob Davis, Erica Christ, Tom Bissen, Maurice Battle, Jesse Oyervides, Daphna Stromberg, Lisa Vecoli, Robert Nogler, Felino de la Pena
Absent: Larry Ludeman, Michael Tupper, **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 6:09pm. The Board and staff introduced themselves, and the Standard of Conduct was noted. The draft agenda was presented and additions or changed were requested. Marian updated the agenda with two new business items. A **Motion** to approve the agenda as amended **Carried**.

Comments from the Chair: Erica Christ congratulated and welcomed to our two new board members, Rob and Robert. Erica said that WA is in a time of long range strategic planning, new board members are entering into some conversations in the middle, ask questions. Welcome back to our three reelected board members. It was announced that Derf Bistodeau passed away this week, we have a card sending condolences from the board. She said that as the board meeting progressed, she would explain process for the benefit of the new members and encouraged them to ask questions if they did not understand what was transpiring.

Secretary' Report: Election of Executive Committee. Current Board secretary Elizabeth Grzechowiak called for nominations for WA Board Chair. **Motion to nominate** Erica Christ as Board Chair, moved, seconded and **Carried**. Erica took nominations for board vice chair. Lisa Vecoli nominated Erin Sjoquist for vice chair. **Motion to approve** Erin Sjoquist for Board Vice-Chair moved, seconded, and **Carried**. Erica took nominations for secretary. Lisa nominated Liz. **Motion to approve** Elizabeth Grzechowiak as Board Secretary, moved, seconded and **Carried**. Erica took nominations for treasurer. Tom Bissen was nominated. **Motion to approve** Tom Bissen as Board Treasurer, moved, seconded and **Carried**. All nominations were called three times and the nominated candidate accepted the nomination.

Liz Grzechowiak presented the March 25th Board Minutes and asked for changes or additions. A **Motion** to approve the minutes as written **Carried, 13-0-1**. The Board Meeting attendance was reviewed with misses and resignations (Board Meeting attendance: 0-1, 0-2, 0-3 misses; 0-resign. Open seat -At Large '11, 2 BA.)

Executive Committee: Erica Christ. Annual Meeting Recap. We did reach quorum, at 66 voting members. Thank you to everyone who attended and volunteered. There were over 100 in attendance and ultimately 77 voting members. There seemed to be good energy at the meeting and during the social time.

Rex Hardware. Last year, we had an issue come up about voting on time sensitive issues before the board meeting. The By-Laws empower the Exec. Committee to act on behalf of the board when necessary. The Rex Hardware historic designation came up at CI, and the hearing was yesterday. 8 board members were present at the CI meeting, so we passed supported the motion from CI at Exec Com. The City had done a Historic Designation Study which supported the designation. It passed at HPC, now it goes to Z & P then to the full Council

CI Motion 7: The Community Issues Committee supports the finding of the preservation designations study for the Rex Hardware building at 2601 Lyndale and supports the HPC staff recommendation for historical designation of the building. **Motion carried at board 11-0-3.**

Strategic Planning Process. At the last meeting, we discussed the questions of what do we think we know, what do we need to know, stakeholders, addressed the issue of values, core questions. We're at the brainstorming stage, next meeting we'll flesh out the goals. The group is working on an outline that would help focus the questions that need to be directed to the larger neighborhood for input on neighborhood needs and development. The meeting will be at Ly Bakery on noon on Monday, May 24th. If you can't come to the meeting feel free to email with ideas.

Motions from Standing Committee: Maurice Battle

CI Motion 1: *The CI Committee supports the creation of a neighborhood task force to work with Mpls & Whittier Elementary School and the Mpls and Whittier Park and Recreation Center to develop a facilities agreement for the use of the community center.* **Motion Passes 16-0-0 at committee**

There has been no use agreement between school, park, and n'hood. The WA put a lot of NRP Phase I funds into the building. There has been some tension between the school and the park over use of the rec center space. Community member Darrell Washington has been meeting with CM Lilligren and MPRB Rep a task force of school, neighborhood, and Whittier park people. He is looking for one or two more people to be involved in this through the summer. Erica sees a feeling that the park board is not very engaged in supporting Whittier Park, because it isn't one of the higher utilized parks in the south central area. We're going to have to speak up if we want more attention paid to the park. A facilities agreement would renew the original intent and create a more balance application of the shared use.

CI Motion 1: The Whittier Alliance Board supports the creation of a neighborhood task force to work with Mpls & Whittier Elementary School and the Mpls and Whittier Park and Recreation Center to develop a facilities agreement for the use of the community center. **Motion Carried at Board 14-0-1.**

CI Motion 2: *The CI Committee moves to deny any further development on the Karmel plaza at 2910 Pillsbury Ave and to remove the 3rd floor that already exists.* **Motion Passes 17-2-0at committee**

The architect and lawyer came to present, stated that they were presenting out of courtesy not necessity or interested in community comment. The motion happened after they left. Is this motion worded as strongly as it could be? Should it be two motions? Erica presented background information on Basim Sabri and his developments in the neighborhood. When he started developing, the city was glad to partner with a minority owned business catering to the immigrant community, and took a while to catch on that he operates on a cash basis, does shady things and puts his tenants into a vulnerable position. City has caught on, they fine him, and he doesn't care. He'll pay it, or not pay, and sue them or appeal. Jesse reported to the board on Sabri's coming to the Park Square Board, where Sabri said bad things about WA, the city, etc. Tom shared about the parking issues, and Sabri's hiring of off duty police officers to move traffic along during the traffic study. Despite all this, the motion has to address what will be in front of the planning commission, which will be the Inn at Karmel. They know we won't support it, but if we can articulate the issues in a motion, that would be helpful.

Substitute BD Motion 1: The WA Board denies support for the development of the Inn at Karmel citing the following:

- Existing and unresolved parking and traffic issues at Karmel Plaza and Square and the inability of the site to accommodate the existing traffic
- The increased parking and traffic associated with a hotel, meeting and banquet space adding to the current intolerable parking and traffic conditions
- The integrity of the Travel Demand Study that was conducted for purposes of the hotel
- The growing safety issues in the area
- The lack of a respected development partner for the hotel.
- And the questionable quality of the construction and utility service installation of the development as it relates to the safety the occupants and the surrounding area.

Motion Carried 11-0-3.

Should we include something about the plans always changing? That could go into the vote of no confidence.

CI Motion 8: *The CI Committee moves a vote of no confidence in the developer of Karmel plaza.* **Motion carried.**

Substitute BD Motion 2: The Whittier Board moves a vote of no confidence in the developer of Karmel Plaza-Inn at Karmel for the following reasons:

- A history of unpermitted work and additions to approved plans without advance review and approval. In reference to that, we request the removal of the 3rd floor on Karmel Plaza at 2910 Pillsbury.
- A history of presenting plans for approval that are incomplete. The developer's record shows that their plans change with each showing, and between showing and execution of building.
- And, the lack of regard for the best interests of the community in planning and implementing developments.

Motion Carried 10-0-4.

Could we make a motion about the parking? It is a dollar an hour. Could we suggest the KP parking be free? Rob suggests that we recommend the street become metered. If the street was metered, residents could get a permit for the year. Marian says there is a parking task force, they've looked at numerous plans. We could bring that task force back up, let them make a recommendation.

CI Motion 3: *The CI Committee moves to support the Heritage Preservation Commission certificate of appropriateness for 2509 Clinton Ave.* **Motion Passes 12-0-2**

The property is a trashed four-plex which the owner bought at a very low price and way under the market value. It is in the WFO historic district. The exterior should be redone according to Washburn Fair Oaks district guidelines. He was unaware that he had purchased in the historic district. With the context study and the effort to inform and encourages people to do historically sensitive rehab, this is an opportunity to set the standard for appropriate back porch and windows. So much has to be done that it makes it easy to comply – no obstacles to work around. Could easily comply to district standards, not sure that the builder has done that. He was responsive to the n’hood, but didn’t bring a lot to it. How do we beef up this motion? Is this for specific repairs, or general? It is specific to exterior, and he is sighting the window replacement and back porch. This could be a nice building and he should be made aware that is what we expect.

Substitute BD Motion 3: The Whittier Alliance Board moves to support the Heritage Preservation Commission certificate of appropriateness for 2509 Clinton Ave, on the condition that:

- the owner installs exterior wood windows,
- and assures that the back exit and porches are appropriate to the period of the structure and consistent with historic rehab.

Motion Passes 10-2-3.

Erica suggests that the board should learn more about heritage preservation, so that we can use the correct language and be more effective.

*CI Motion 4: The CI Committee denies the request by the Murals at 2833 Lyndale for a signage variance on the Greenway (Sign #2) south facing retaining wall. **Motion Passes 9-5-0 at committee***

*CI Motion 5: The CI Committee denies the request by the Murals at 2833 Lyndale for a signage variance for a permanent banner sign (#3) on south facing wall of the Garfield Ave units. **Motion Passes 9-4-0***

*CI Motion 6: The CI Committee supports the request by the Murals at 2833 Lyndale for a signage variance for placement of an illuminated sign on the north facing wall. **Motion Passes 14-1-0***

The Murals currently has big signs sticking out from the building, visible from the greenway. They say it is for walking. CI 6 sign seems like a compromise, for logo sign, but if they get approval, it could say anything. Most of the traffic is coming from Lyndale. They said that the reason was that people can’t find rental office, and name recognition of the space, branding. We could specify what the sign has to say.

CI Motion 4: The Whittier Alliance Board denies the request by the Murals at 2833 Lyndale for a signage variance on the south facing retaining wall facing the Greenway (Sign #2). **Motion carried 13-0-1.**

CI Motion 5: The Whittier Alliance Board denies the request by the Murals at 2833 Lyndale for a signage variance for a permanent banner sign (#3) on south facing wall of the Garfield Ave units.

Motion carried 13-0-1.

Substitute BD Motion 4: The Whittier Alliance Board supports the request by the Murals at 2833 Lyndale for a signage variance for placement of an illuminated Murals logo sign, on the north facing wall on the condition that

- it is no larger than 8’ x 10’
- placed no higher than 2nd floor.
- and, that it is a “logo” sign for the Murals

Motion Passes 13-1-1

From March Board Meeting:

BD Motion 4: The Whittier Alliance Board of Directors moves to table the approval and adoption of the Whittier Neighborhood Design Guidelines until the April Board Meeting. **Motion Passes 11-0-1.**

A Motion put it onto the table for discussion Carried

CI Motion 2: The CI Committee recommends approval and adoption of the Whittier Neighborhood Design Guidelines.

Motion Passes. 11-0-0.

Page 28 has pictures of things we don’t want, could we label that better? Laura J and Anthony have typos. We can adopt tonight and change later. David suggests we give thought to who can change it and what is a substantive enough change to require board approval.

BD Motion 5: The Whittier Alliance Board approves and adopts the Whittier Neighborhood Design Guidelines and states that all changes, except grammatical changes, will be recommended by the Design Guidelines Task Force and are subject to board approval. **Motion Passed 14-0-1.**

Finance Committee: Tom Bissen explained how to read the finance reports, and what some of the funding sources are. We fundraise for unrestricted general funds, which we are trying not to spend until the NRP project specific funds are used. The second page is our balance sheet. Checks have to be signed by 2 finance committee members. Current assets \$157,000. Liabilities are NRP funds. Total expenses \$11,000, projected \$19,000. Payroll was down. We lost \$119 for the month, b/c of the way NRP was used and expenses. Our YTD income is \$1600.

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

Tom is NRP alternate, reported from meeting that they will come up with 90% funding for NRP Phase II. At one point we were only counting on 80%. We got 2.466 million, highest of any n'hood. Another 10% is another ¼ million for Whittier. Has money in the bank for NRP office for next 5 years. MB will get a document from NRP about NCEP consolidation, and will have 45 days to review it.

Resource Development May Day Soiree: Our 2nd fundraiser of the year, the fun one! It is May 6th 5:30, going to be awesome. Liz handed out invites. We're doing cash, check, or pay pal the night of the event. There will be two raffle items: a tandem bike donated by Christina Le, and an ipad. Volunteer sheet coming around. Get auction items in as soon as possible. We're still looking for a fancy downtown hotel stay, Lady Gaga or DMB tickets. If anyone is free tomorrow morning, come in and stick labels.

Staff Report: Executive Director. Community Organizer. A list of what MB and BN have been doing all month. The Board is Marian's boss, so we get to see, and then we can ask questions.

Old/New Business: Eat Street Excursion. We are trying this again, it was successful in the fall even with little planning. This time we are joining forces with the MIA's 3rd Thursday. They'll be distributing our flyers and send people our way, we'll be starting at 8, and we have about 20 businesses involved. We could talk about including more art on the street, think about fall possibilities expanding. There are a lot of ideas of what it could build into, and the MIA is excited to partner, and build this bigger. Please invite people. **MCAD - Nicollet Vacant Storefront Project.** Lots of vacant storefronts on Nicollet, and lots of art students in the n'hood. A class has done n'hood interviews, and made art installations that are up now. Opening will be Sat. **Capital Long Range Improvement Committee (CLIC).** Laura Jean is on the committee. Infrastructure improvements make recommendations to the city council and mayor. Very little of Whittier is in projects. Nicollet opening is on there, but ranked at 35 (lowest possible). Complications: there has to be a development plan, something happening, for CLIC to move on it, which there isn't for Kmart: the land owner lives in another state and isn't interested in selling, and lease is for another 30 yr. LJ heard 'This is the pet project of 2 councilmen.' Nicollet Bridge is on the list, lower than other greenway bridges, which aren't looking good. If we want this, we have to make a more concrete plan, find investors, start a petition, generate buzz. It stays on the CLIC pipeline. David suggests we think strategically, push for Nicollet Trolley, grow business, then Kmart. **Lyn-Lake Street Fair,** May 16th. It will be so fun, was great last year. **2500 Pillsbury** has been vacant for 2 years, has been purchased by Jason Morrow. A n'hood resident spoke with him, he said he was getting it ready to be a home for recently released former inmates from Redwing. MB is presuming that its group home conditional use permit has expired, but he's moving forward with it. Block meeting will be next Wed.

Motion to Adjourn 8:24 Next Meeting: Thursday, May 24, Whittier Elementary School

Minutes Respectfully Submitted: Jessica Rosenberg, Administrative Assistant

Minutes approved May 27, 2010

Erica Christ, Chair

Elizabeth Grzechowiak, Secretary