

Whittier Alliance Business Association Committee- Draft Minutes
Wednesday, August 11, 2010 4-5:30, The Franklin

Present: Lisa Vecoli (MIA), Tom Bissen, Hank Jenson & Lucy Minn(CVS), Erica Christ (Black Forrest), Paul Jablonsky (Nicollet Car Wash), David Schuster (Lost & Found),
Presenters: Scott Wende (Lunning Wende), Jim Hubal (Edina Realty) **Staff:** Marian Biehn, Jessica Rosenberg

Call to Order at 4:20 by Erica Christ, WA Board Chair, followed by introductions. Erica recognized the Conflict of Interest & Standard of Conduct policies. Agenda was reviewed, and approved. The BA Committee Minutes of July 2010 were reviewed and approved.

Spotlight on Business- The Franklin Lofts Condos – Jim Hubal-Resident & Animal Lovers Real Estate Agent. Jim's business started with a Jack Russell named Sweetie Pie. He and wife volunteered at animal shelter, wanted to know what to do to continue supporting animals. Jim became Animal Lover's Real Estate Agent. There are things to do to support animals in housing. Website has pet laws, housing search, etc: jimhubbel.edinareality.com. Jim also runs americahelpsanimals.com, where you can find animal support resources for all of U.S. Has Jim seen more home ownership in Whittier? More owners, from Condos.

Future Planning – Whittier Energy District - Scott Wende, Lunning Wende.

Lunning Wende worked on the Commercial Design Guidelines. They do community planning, urban design, and architecture. They've been working for 2.5 years in Payne-Phalen, East Side of St. Paul. 20% of St. Paul foreclosures is in this 20 block area. They went through community engagement process w/ non-profit community org. Residents said, "we know we have problems, and no housing market, but how do we make this a great n'hood, how do we improve it?" It was a different way for everyone to think. How do we think of water & energy issues in a n'hood like this? How do you make smaller buildings and houses more energy efficient and perform better? They are concentrating on commercial corridors. P-P started with taking a look at assets. 1 & 2 story single family housing, about 80 years old. Well served by transit. Lots of green land: Lake Phalen, Bruce Vento Nature Preserve, and then wanted to make connections: Create a green street through the neighborhood so that they can get down to Nature Preserve. Lack of investment for 30-40 years, when Maytag, 3M and brewery closed. They are thinking of whole area on a village scale. Applying this to Whittier: Commercial corridors on Nic (reopening hopefully), Lyndale; future connection to 35W. Not a lot of green space, good transit service. Payne Avenue commercial corridor similar to Nicollet: older (1800's), well built. In both places, LW wants to use comprehensive approach, focus on livability, green and sustainable, think about managing storm water and energy issues. LW did building assessment study, concentrated 6 or 7 blocks long. Mechanically, buildings reflect lack of investment. Lighting hadn't changed in 40 years, lack of accessibility (no businesses with accessible bathrooms on 1st floor). Looked at redevelopment potentials, parking, how does traffic flow, impacted city rewriting parking code to aid development. One strategy in P-P is to improve the commercial core of the Payne Ave Corridor. Businesses said there wasn't enough parking, but study showed only 40% of parking being used, just poorly designed and signed. They looked at public realm, sidewalks, bus stops. Looked at rain gardens, at turning mid-block alleys into social spaces. Mpls moving towards everyone treating storm water on own site, moving away from expansive storm water system to something smaller. In St. P, talking to Capital Area Watershed District. Plan to study underground water and engineering at a district scale, which CAWD doesn't get to do often. LW is looking at Green Alley program from Chicago: Redoing alleys with rain gardens and permeable concrete, and looking at ways to capture and treat storm water to refresh ground water. Looking at energy: map of flat roofs in commercial district. They have a clean Energy research grant through Green Institute to look at renewable energies; talking to St. Paul about

how to use solar on roof tops. Metering for solar: if you are producing more than you're using, it goes back into the grid, and utility company pays you for what you put back. Times of energy use different for businesses and housing. Net metering allows you to set up informal district system.

Revitalization is one block at a time: businesses, housing, look at problem properties & redevelopment, public realm. LW picked 4 blocks with best shot of redevelopment, and are putting together existing funding: Business Investment Fund (city), Energy Audits (NEC, energy smart), New Payne Ave (CIB), Housing Assessments (LISC), parking lot improvements (city), water management (CRWD), urban forest (city), solar initiative (CERT, Solar Cities, State), weatherization (Community Action). Thinking how to use existing programs in concentrated block way. Looking at residential properties, thinking about sustainability: if you don't see 40+ years of future life and building use, no sense in putting (especially public) money in.

In Whittier, LW's initial ideas include: open Nicollet and install trolley; expand the mid-town urbanism; improve the mixed-use block character; improve building performance: our buildings are so inefficient, so much to be done to save energy and \$; improve storm water management; explore solar potential; replant the urban forest. Question is how to take what is already vibrant here, and expand it. Concentrating on livability: what are elements of this n'hood that make people want to live here. They have a map of flat roofs on Nicollet and Lyndale, haven't yet looked to flat roof apartments. These are the new energy corridors, with the ability and potential to share energy. Thinking about ways to green the Avenue, to improve area and for storm water management. Discussion of trolley is going to force rethinking the street. Example block: map of Nicollet btw 25th and 26th. Inefficient, no synergy; want things to be more connected, lively. Next steps could include: conduct building condition survey, understand building performance/energy audits, include adjacent residential properties in planning, implement energy-saving initiatives, redevelop parking lots, install water management projects, explore block interior connections, explore Nicollet solar potential. Think about developing alley's for pedestrian use, plant up, semi public spaces. Thinking not just about businesses on edge, but whole area as connected

Discussion Erica says the idea of using what we have in the n'hood to generate energy is really exciting. Would need partner to subsidize solar. Scott says solar programs are changing. Excel will pay for 60% of installation, and you can get 30% federal tax credit and no sales tax. On East Side, there is a 40% gap, before tax credit. East Side N'hood Development Company acting as organizer for group of businesses to go to a foundation, ask them to front revolving loan of 30% tax credit money. ESNDNC business improvement fund, building owners repay ESNDNC when they get tax credit back, to pay foundation back. And all of this is hooked up to net metering. Setting up district energy system: Is the grid smart enough now to have this kind of solar district? Probably not totally off the grid, but if you get even 30% off, it is free, and adds up. ESNDNC is doing energy audits on 4 blocks. Out of 24 businesses, 12 have signed up, 5 say they will. Solar panel today generates 8 watts. New company in MN says they can do 12 watts/sq foot. What about water? Possibilities for grey water exist. Looked at in school, other places are doing it. Challenge to find place to put tank. In substantial renovation or new construction, it is worth looking at. Programs? Look to watershed district, perhaps. St. Paul requiring rain gardens next to parking lots, etc, as water becomes more scarce, policies are changing. If economics of solar are so good, why aren't new buildings on it? HCMC? Last couple of years desire for and economy of n'hoods is radically changing. Mpls and St. Paul are part of Solar Cities program, looking at what is getting in the way of expanding use of solar in 2 dozen regions. Cost, regulatory. The interest and cost offsets weren't there a few years ago. Excel is just starting to understand market shift. As a n'hood or area, you can become much more independent, and Excel is still operating off of business model of mining coal in Montana and bringing it here, and this is going change

things. When you factor in subsidies to coal industry, coal is much more expensive. They run off of subsidies for coal. In Denver, one program will pay for installation of system, and put you on 20 year lease, fix rate, and they profit off of lease-rate. School district of Denver making 20 schools solar, Morgan Chase Bank paying for all of it. Lease back for profit. On East Side, St. Paul, creating solar so that building owner owns the system. In meter share system, who pays excess energy person, who does person buying energy pay? Excel. Used to be, extra energy, your meter would run backwards. Now, there's a hook up, recording extra energy differently. They'll pay you a rate on what you send back. St. Paul... gas powered, driven by cost, cap & trade. If you had to pay subsidy for coal and pollution, it would wipe out earnings and more in one year. Paul loves solar idea, and has lots of roof area, but roof not in great shape. Anything for roof repair? LW says there are some funds that take into account accessibility and energy related issues. New guidelines, often times need modification to roofs. Funding 30% tax credit money, pitching this as demonstration project, would ask for roof money. New systems less hard on roofs. What's the next step for Whittier to pursue something like this? Strategic plan is on the way. Certain things rise to the top: urgent issue, more people interested. This might be one thing where it is the time to move ahead. It is exciting to be on the leading edge of what is possible in n'hood developments. Just talking to all the property owners would be a big undertaking. 1/2 the avenue is for sale: which is an opportunity. Lots of buildings will need new roofs. Still question of who owns it, n'hood, building, Excel. Next for Payne-Phalen? Research grant up at end of the year, want to establish what's next. Will talk about approaching a funder. Many people interested because it is district scale, which they don't get to work at often. They've taken this year to plan: funding sources, projects, strategic plan.

Old & New Business: Solar Hot Water- deep discounts through bulk purchasing + state rebate and federal tax credit Marian got info on this bulk buying opportunity. Residential focused, and will do business. **BA-CPED 2009-10 grant recap:** September agenda.

Franklin Bridge streetscape: Meeting yesterday Phillips, Phillips west, Steven's Square, Aeon, to create energy btw n'hood for streetscape for bridge. Make it more visually attractive. Erica is for it.

BA-For Profit and Non-Profit Board Reps & BA Chair. Board meets at 4th Thursday, need BA reps. Contact Marian if interested.

Be Neighborly—pick up litter

CVS is opening minute clinic: shots, etc, 10-8 M-F.

Meeting adjourned at 5:40. Minutes submitted by Jessica Rosenberg

Next meeting: September 8, 2010 11:30-1 at Armor Security, 111 E. Franklin Ave.