

Whittier Alliance Business Association Committee- Draft Minutes

Wednesday, September 8, 2010 4-5:30, Rainbow Chinese

Present: Erica Christ (Black Forrest), Rania Samaha (Java Restaurants), Gil Bessard (Tasks Unlimited), Carol Parpas & Mohamed Arneh (Christos), HCMC, Doug Wilson (Armor Security), Sharon Lund & Karra Schuett (Falls Agency), Darcy Knight (Old Arizona), Jim Coury (Los Amigos), Paul Jablonsky (Nicollet Car Wash), Tom Bissen, Daisy Haung (Shuang Hur Supermarket), Steve Wiese (Creation Audio), Rachel Lewis & Kate Hudak (Washburn Center for Children), Tom Bissen **Presenters:** Tammy Wong (Rainbow Restaurant), Amy Carlson & Emily Fuerste (HCMC) **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 August 2010 were reviewed and approved.

Spotlight on Business- Rainbow Chinese – Tammy Wong. Tammy is chef and owner of Rainbow, which has been in business for 23 years. In 1987, Tammy's father bought the restaurant across the street. They bought this building in 1994, what had been a Victorian furniture store, and rebuilt it. Rainbow used to get a bigger Asian customer market, when Nicollet was the only place with Asian markets. They are working on how to bring new people to the neighborhood, make people comfortable. The younger generation comes for the Avenue's reasonably priced food and shopping.

Hennepin County Medical Center - Hennepin Health Foundation – Emily Fuerste & Amy Carlson. HCMC and Whittier have worked well together; HCMC invited the n'hood into the work, seeking input. Whittier Clinic will be a family practice, backed up by the specialists of Henn. County system. HCMC has 5 clinics: Bklyn Center, Bklyn Park, Richfield, East Lake and Whittier. Now is the fun part: Emily and Amy are from the Hennepin Medical Foundation and presenting on behalf of the clinic staff. The old clinic is very crowded, and they are busy getting ready to move. The old building will close mid October, and the new one will open the next day. Soon patients will get "next appointment at Whittier Clinic" cards. Saturday October 30th, there will be welcoming party, with food, family activities. At 2:30, there will be ribbon cutting with city officials. They are still putting this together, so if anyone has ideas of things to bring, contact them. There will be a doctors/nurses band playing and kids in costume. They are marketing the new clinic as a main provider of health care. In Oct/Nov you'll see public paid advertisements for clinic. For family festival clinic opening, publicity will be more grassroots: posters and cards for businesses. Working with Twins, hope to have current or former Twin, promotions. Hoping to close Nicollet, 28-29th; looking at costs. Contractors kicked in money for healthy trick-or-treating. Planning number for festival estimate is 1,000. Daily traffic at Clinic is now 350 visits/day. This clinic will be 25% bigger, so plan on 425-435/day. Also, this is family practice training clinic, so doctors first year in residency will be there. HCMC looking forward to hosting a BA meeting. Are you looking to grow? Yes, we're full to the brim now, and will market to increase visits. **Sharon & Karra, Falls Agency.** Looking for feedback on ad. They are trying to convey a sense of welcoming and accessibility, HCMC as part of diversity of n'hood. Planning newsletter with map of Eat Street. Looking at newspaper and transit ads. As you're leaving today's meeting, give feedback on proposed ad.

2528-48 Nicollet Ave - Dean Duvolis, DJR Architect Peter Remes has bought the south half of th block between 25th & 26th along Nicollet. Initial phase will be demolition and rehab, as one building will be condemned and others need a lot of work. They are interested in keeping it diverse, if anyone has ideas about what would be an asset to the avenue, they are open to hearing suggestions. Dean is representing 1st and 1st Properties, principal is Peter Remes, on the board of Walker, Van Buren place, 14th and Central, renovated. The purchase happened 2 weeks ago, now they are starting process to restore and renovate buildings. Dean was just meeting with the city, and will present more at CI on 13th. The goal is to stabilize the property. When Azia announced they were leaving, 20 restaurants stepped up, wanting that space. Azia kept lease, so they have first rights to the space. They'd like to reopen with same concept at lower price point. If they pass, other people are interested. Above Azia, 1st & 1st will restore the apartments. Icehouse could hold functions, restaurant. There is one story block building that is deteriorating, that will come down. New storefronts will wrap around Azia building. Icehouse will be exposed, develop plaza in front, parking lot. They've met with

mayor, CM Lilligren, MB. Now they'll start open process at CI, for site plan. Work will start in 2 weeks. Have enough tenants to fill the building immediately. Remes wants to do creative things with and within the building. Come to the CI meeting on the 13th: first public unveiling of plans. This could really change a significant part of the street, could be a catalyst for change on the street. The old concept of having a hotel, under previous owner, is out. Plaza will have some parking; space for civic events. Would you consider breaking up storefronts of Azia? Yes, but restaurateurs are talking about taking all of it. Sushi bar could become something else. Icehouse has 70 ft internal ceilings, will be exposed, leasable. How can we make parking area a plaza, match design guidelines? Dean wants to keep pedestrian continuity. Erica says the MCAD sculpture garden/parking lot could be a reference. That would be possible with Peter. Timeline? Depends on how fast city project goes. Phase I with Azia building will be immediately. Phase II, Planning Commission, City Council, process will go fall-winter, latest possible start is spring.

Old & New Business: BA-CPED 2009-10 grant recap: We get modest money from the city every year, for the BA to do things with. We've used it for Whittier Business website, the Eat Street brochures (partnership with MIA), and, this past year, the Whittier 2010 calendar, featuring local restaurants; some on BA admin (minutes, postcards). We've been working over the past few years with marketing consultants to implement things to promote the n'hood. Splashiest (yet cheapest) project: Storefront Project (partnership with MCAD). Last Eat Street Excursion had money from BA-CPED. We are thinking about November 3rd Thursday, which is MIA late night and MCAD art sale. Paul suggests reusable banners. We will be reapplying for this grant, so if people have ideas for how to spend it, talk to MB. **N'hood Community Relations Dept:** NCR is a new city dept, created a year ago, assuming the duties of NRP. This will lead to significant changes. NRP was independent, and let n'hoods plan own destiny. NCR will be a city department. NRP was funded with a TIF district funding, which is going away. Mid 2005, we got about 2.4 million. Previous round NRP, 7 million. New program, will be apx \$40,000 a year. The NCR has put out a notice for public comments. In reality, it is a new era; will be a new reality for n'hood organizing. The city won't have the kind of money that NRP had. It will be a new paradigm for what we can do. We are used to a highly functioning office. We are working on our strategic plan so we have our clear idea of what we think is good for the n'hood, so that we don't have the city telling us what to do. Our main concerns are autonomy, and the level of funding. We are at \$160,000/year, with 2.5 staff and an office. We don't know what we will do with \$40,000/year. We are lucky at WA that we have program income that we can live off of for 4-5 years. It is time to do strategic plan, and figure out what we want to do. They are giving money to n'hoods whose funds have run out. There will also be competitive funds: we want to see this happening in the city; n'hoods compete for funds to do that. We are trying to hold on to the high level n'hood organization that we have: active in n'hood, active downtown, and active towards the future. There is a 45 day comment period, read plan: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/ncr/.

BA-For Profit and Non-Profit Board Reps & BA Chair. Board meets at 4th Thursday. We have open seats on the board, and this is an exciting time, doing strategic planning. It does require a time commitment: board members come to one of the 2 community meetings (CI & BA) and one board meeting a month. Usually board members take up something else: task force, fundraising. It is a good group, interested in n'hood and what is possible. We have several open seats on business association: for profit & non profit. We also have 1 at large seat on the board. All positions are until March.

2008 Pillsbury Ave open house tomorrow, 5-7. The buyer will restore the home. Come hear about history of house, and plan for restoration. They are looking for n'hood craftspeople for restoration. If you know of people who do wood work, tile work, tell them about it.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30. Minutes submitted by Jessica Rosenberg

Next meeting: October 13th, 4pm. Eat Street Flats Retail Space, 1st & Franklin.