

**Whittier Alliance-Community Issues Committee-
DRAFT MINUTES
Monday, January 9, 2012
Whittier Park Recreation Center**

Attendees: Kathy Anderson, George Bly, Rae Bly, Matt Brillhart, Hosmer Brown, Eric Bruce, Mary Cable, Pierce Canser, Erica Christ, Lara Dant, Madeline Douglass, Fadumo Egal, Daniel Feidt, Jim Flanders, Sue Flanders, Sandra Green, Jim Hart, Paula Horan, Jim Hubal, Cassy Jameson, Laura Jean, Kimberly Johnson, Christina Le, Eric Levy, John Louis, Larry Ludeman, Ryan McGee, Barbara Myers, Kurt Nelson, Kathy Nielson, Robert Paulson, Felino de la Peña, Christine Popowski, Ben Ptacek, Andrea Roeger, Brent Roeger, Tony Ruggiero, Dave Sasse, David Schroth, Josie Shardlow, Katie Skujina, Tod Skallerup, Scott Smith, Daphna Stromberg, Osla Thomason, Michelle Winchester, Slade Winchester, Karrie Zinken **Staff:** Marian Biehn, Lisa Hermanson, Jen Wendland

Presenters: 5th Precinct Reps. Chelsea Adams and Inspector Matt Clark, Councilman Robert Lilligren, Jon Hinchliff, Trent Mayberry, Bob Cunningham Matt Shapiro, Don Gerberding, Call to order at 6:06 by Darrell Washington, CI Chair, who noted the Conflict of Interest & Standard of Conduct policies. A motion to **approve the agenda** with the addition of 2222 Pillsbury and the Midtown Greenway **Carried.** The December CI minutes were presented and a motion to approve **Carried.**

Announcements and Community Comments: Jen Wendlund announced upcoming events and asked for volunteer assistance. A **Dog Day** planning committee meeting will be Thurs. Jan. 12th from 3-4 pm to discuss types of activities, promotion, and a Dog Days of Whittier Feb. date. If interested in being on the planning committee, sign up. Dog Days is free and open to everyone, regardless of pet ownership. The **Annual Meeting** will be in April. There will be a meeting before mid-February to coordinate logistics. **Whittier Walkers** will start up again in March, and Jen is looking for anyone who is interested in more information. Walkers will have scheduled times to walk around the n'hood in groups of 2+ and take note of suspicious activity and establish a positive presence and converse with new or existing friends. The WA is establishing a **Neighborhood Network** of people from different areas of the n'hood to help WA distribute information, link activities and build momentum behind implementing the strategic plan (to be unveiled at Feb. CI meeting). Now, Jen is just looking for people interested in learning more.

Marian Biehn commented that it was nice to see such a robust crowd. **2222 Pillsbury:** This single family home was damaged by a fire last month. The structure is of historic value due to its (pre-fire) intact John S. Bradstreet interior, with a grand entrance, cherrywood, stained glass, and other beautiful assets. The exterior is still in good shape, but the interior was damaged but restorable. Most of the damage was to the historic interior. For example, an MIA photo of the interior shows a carved cypress wood fireplace that is now the char colored, and they are considering blasting it with soda bicarbonate. Three brothers own the home, and it has been in their family for 100+ years. They were not insured and rented space in the home. So they're eager to renovate and reestablish cash flow, which has led them to some hasty actions regarding the historic interior. WA and others have provided them with referrals to people and companies that can help advise them on restoration and resources as well as to low interest loan programs. The owners have been given the deadline by the City of Feb. 16 to have the home habitable, or it will be condemn. It could be extended if, by that time, the brothers have communicated with the city and have a plan in place. This home is one of the n'hood's quiet treasures. If nominated for historic designation or as historic resource, there would be options to get state tax credits to restore it and retain the John S. Bradstreet interior, which the owners are interested in doing. The home would be fully protected as if it were under historical designation until a decision is made. Property owners can submit a nomination, or the n'hood can ask its councilperson to request designation, which is an option. Councilman Lilligren is familiar with the process. It could happen fairly quickly. There are a lot are Victorian or Greek revivals in the n'hood, but this looks like one of the first Craftsman in design with a horizontal emphasis. Perhaps a task force could be formed to assist them in marshaling resources and prioritizing tasks to fulfill the terms of historic restoration. It would be unprecedented to pull an application for historic designation once it has been submitted, but CM Lilligren will look into it. Some were uncomfortable with moving quickly but understood the timeliness of the situation. An amendment was proposed to give the family 2-4 weeks to decide whether or not to move forward with nomination, but it was not accepted. If passed, the brothers will be made aware of the motion before an action is taken.

CI Motion 1: The Community Issues Committee requests that Councilman Lilligren nominate the house at 2222 Pillsbury Ave for interior and exterior historic designation. **Motion Carried 19-5-0.**

Whittier Alliance Fall Fundraiser: Thank you to everyone who contributed to the 2011 fundraiser. WA raised over \$5000. Community contributions are important to WA operation. If you know anyone who is still interested in contributing, please remind them that donations are still being accepted via PayPal available on the WA website.

Hiawatha Project: There will be meetings regarding the proposed Xcel power lines east of 35W Jan. 10 and 12 at 9:30 am at 121 7th Plc E Ste 350 in St. Paul. The powerlines are to aid Lake St businesses and would run along the Greenway.

5th Precinct report: If you provided your email address to WA but do not want to receive quarterly e-newsletters from the 5th Precinct, please let WA know. The Clean List of the top livability offenders in the n'hood as of Jan. 9 was presented by City Attorney Chris Dickson. They are looking at 3 strategies to handling recurrent offenders: to incarcerate, rehab—but to make this list they have likely been to rehab 4+ times--, and if they don't live in n'hood, geo-restrict them from the n'hood, meaning they are no longer allowed in that area and if found they can be charge with contempt of court and incarcerated. Eight of the people on the n'hood's clean list have active geo-restrictions. Some are currently incarcerated, and others have active bench warrants for their arrest. The Clean List is available on the 5th Precinct website. If you see someone on the Clean List that is geo-restricted from the area they are in, call the police. On 22nd and Clinton there has been a huge effort by police and organizations since last summer, and the area has improved incredibly with alley traffic, loitering and traffic in vacant buildings. WA Community Organizer Jen Wendlund keeps track of all offenses in WA. In 2011 55 people were arrested or cited 3+ times and account for 20% of the crime in WA.

Comments from CM Robert Lilligren: Councilman commented on the large crowd and the pleasure of seeing new faces. He encouraged people to keep coming back and that these meetings are a great way to keep up on current events. His office hours in Whittier are 1st Monday of each month from 9:30 –noon, or by appt. The city's newly created the N'hood Community Relations Department City will be holding its first citywide community connections conference on Sat., Feb 11 on 26th and Park. It will consist of 16 workshops on different topics and is great for nonprofits, cultural communities, etc. to come together. Xcel has had high voltage wire proposal in the works for 2 yrs. It proposes high voltage power lines across the Greenway. The city and community position is that it needs assessment, and if things move forward, the lines need to be buried under 28th St. for aesthetic reasons. The Administrative Law Judge and Public Works agree. The Public Utilities Commission will rule on it this Thurs., and it will likely be buried. No one is sure who will pay for it, but it may be split among all customers. Studies examining whether high or low is better for health is inconclusive. Any risk will be mitigated by a concrete bunker placed around it. The Chinese Friendship Garden (CFG) proposal will appear on the agenda for the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) due to historic issues associated with the plan, but no meeting is scheduled to decide whether or not there will be a CFG. There will be more discussion about the issue in the future. There is more attention and traction around reopening Nicollet Ave. The city needs to be part of correcting that. Councilman Lilligren authored a motion in the 2012 city budget, and the subject is integral part of the streetcar project. The community will be engaged in this from the beginning. Staff groups have started in city hall and should be reporting back in April. The streetcar project just got another federal grant. Mpls is working on the streetcar design process, but now it is only an exercise in theory. They want to be ready when grant does come. Last year, the city got \$900,000 and identified the primary network coming from the south on Nicollet and extending up Central. It will very soon be launched, and the community engagement portion is huge part of that. Stay tuned for a call for opinions. Met Council will likely operate the streetcar and was awarded \$300,000 to work on a streetcar in the Greenway. 35W will move forward, and this whole area will become the transportation center of Minneapolis.

Level 3 Sex Offender Public Notification-John Hinchliff: The police department has a sex offender registration and compliance section. There were 1800 double-backed flyer factsheets sent out to the community before the meeting. There are currently two Level 3 sex offenders living in the n'hood. One is on GPS that is monitored 24/7 by a private company and is nearly impossible to break without being caught within 2 hrs. He has a job as well as regular AA meetings and Sex Offender Treatment. He is on Intense Supervised Release and is subject to random visits from his agent as well as testing for substance abuse and polygraphs with no prior notice. He is known for drugging and assaulting adult women, particularly in bars. There are a total of 2354 sex offenders in the city that are required to register and 18,000 in MN. Over 100 were arrested in 2011 for non-sex crimes and much over 100 for registration violations, which are all felonies. The police are doing everything they can to put these guys on notice and have personal contact with them. The offenders are treated with a degree of respect to encourage cooperation. The 2nd sex offender is living on the 2700 block of Grand and has completed his supervision responsibilities. Because they are completed, he can live anywhere he wants, even if he has assaulted minors and lives next to a school. People nearby have kept a very close eye on him The registry does not provide access to Level 1 and 2 offenders or those who were arrested before 1997. Level 3 is considered highest risk level and the most likely to reoffend, but Hinchliff says he has fewer violations from Level 3s than the lower risk levels. They often tend to have problems with domestic assault. Sex offenders are highly patterned and tend to do things in the same manner each time. When looking for suspects, you look for patterns in words, locations and types of people.

2700 Lyndale Ave S Trent Mayberry: Bob Cunningham and Trent Mayberry from Told Development gave an informational presentation about a prospective Trader Joe's on Lyndale Ave., in the Lowry East n'hood. It will be on about 1 acre (330x119 sq. ft.) on the SW quadrant of 27th and Lyndale. Now in the location is the Art Materials building whose owners are interested in moving further down the street. Nathan Gurtz owns Sunny Side Up Café (now vacant).

Also there are the Coin Laundry, T-Shirt Shop and Planet Soccer. They are not sure what will happen to the other businesses, but there are vacant properties nearby. Mr. Gurtz would remain owner of the entire property. Told Development is the agent of the property and has worked with Trader Joe's in St. Louis Park and Highland Park. The preliminary site plan was presented with the building at the corner of the property covering 14,000 sq. ft. and 70 parking stalls. This plan is a rendering of the SE corner of the property and has since been altered. Due city and n'hood disdain for surface parking, there will be an up-down ramp with stalls underneath the building to hold over 50% of the parking with potential one-way traffic due to the limitations of its dimensions. The building will have two access points of ingress and egress and full circulation throughout the site and is very similar to the St. Paul store. The plan displayed a buffer along the perimeter of the parking lot, and the drive isle may be landscaped and/or fenced continuing south and east to prevent alley access from the site. That barrier would be 70 ft. long and 3-6 ft. high and will be 95% opaque as per city requirements. It could include cedar fencing and ivy, or something of the sort. Trucks would enter from 27th St. and exit on Lyndale Ave. Extra space in front has been set aside for a plaza. They anticipate bike and pedestrian traffic to be a large part of the project, and an idea was proposed to have bike storage either in the plaza or along Lyndale. This site plan has taken the best comments from CPED, CM Lilligren, CM Tuthill, LHENA and Trader Joe's. The building will include attractive materials such as glass, brick, painted metal and lots of glazing. The corner of 27th and Lyndale is not yet designed but will likely be composed of brick and glass. Several people included in their comments that they would welcome a Trader Joe's in the n'hood. Concern was mentioned regarding the density of the development, which attracts higher quality transit and walkability, and the design is merely a one story building while most others in the area are 2+ and mixed use. Many felt the design is much more suburban than the rest of n'hood and is therefore inappropriate. Trader Joe's in a mixed use building creates a traffic nightmare and the building would be higher than most one story buildings, which is in compliance with the Lyndale Area Plan which requests varying degrees of elevation. Concern was voiced regarding the existing frequency of traffic accidents at that intersection, which will be investigated by public works. The winery will be about where the Laundromat is now. Parking along Lyndale and most other parking will remain as it is, but there is concern for it along 27th. There have been renderings of 53ft. trucks turning the radius on the site plan, and there appears to be enough space. Some thought the plan looked like it was turning its back on the WA n'hood, but they hope to have windows along Lyndale. They have put 53 ft truck turning the radius on the site plan to see if it would work. The existing plan exposes much of the surface for graffiti, but it could be covered with vegetation. Other comments included that the top looked like a Super America, more underground parking would be nice, questions regarding whether trucks coming in and out would cause unnecessary noise and/or congestion. Trader Joe's can be flexible with timing of the trucks, and the same ideas apply to trash removal. Trader Joe's supplies are delivered from a distribution center and carry a variety of goods to reduce the number of trucks, and upon exit they remove all recycled goods from the store. The n'hood would like to see a design that is more attractive to bikers and pedestrians than outsiders. One of the 7 HPC criteria may apply to one of the buildings to be demolished, but the top two historic preservation architects disagree. Told Development has hired one of them to conduct further research. They were referred to the WA design guidelines available on its website. The timeframe is contingent upon city approval. If they get city approval in the next 3 months, they anticipate construction period of 9-12 months. Trader Joe's has signed a lease to this site, so they are committed and working with all parties. It is already zoned as commercial, but they need zoning from C1-C2 to sell wine and beer. The liquor license can't be applied for until the full application is submitted. No variance is needed. Parking needs to be for a full spectrum of vehicles, and it needs to open up to Lyndale. Public works will require a traffic study and be aware of n'hoods to west.

2701-23 Lyndale Ave Master Property, Don Gerberding: The proposal is for the land across the street from the potential Trader Joe's. The owner is Urban Land 27, but Master Properties will be applicant entity that receives approvals and contractor. They are discussing 6 existing lots, and the concept is to provide n'hood shops. They want to create complimentary businesses that really are a destination, easy to walk to and part of the growing urban fabric. A variety of food-related services not currently available in WA came to mind. Currently there is residential 3 unit building, Flanders Bicycles, two single family residences and used car lot. Not included is the Buffalo Exchange, Brighton Developments and the new apartment complex on 28th. Flanders has been in the n'hood for 39 yrs. Master will build him a brand new building just to the south of his current store. The architectural design will emphasize the local feel of the n'hood and be welcoming and comfortable, will be served by transit and is in line with the WA Design Guide. It covers 0.7 acres currently zoned C1, with Flanders being 4000 sq. ft. and an 11,000 sq. ft. multitenant building and rezoned C2. The 3 unit apartment building would likely be moved, not torn down. There is no historical significance to any of the buildings according to WA and HPC, except in one of the single family homes which can be moved to one of the 2 vacant lots in the n'hood. The building will stress the street's economic viability in small buildings that cause residents and visitors to congregate. There will be a wine shop on the corner. Cellars Wine is interested and has 5 locations outside the city. It will bring high-end wine and an educational component that is not currently available. Cellars is also considering a wine tasting bar. There are currently discussions with a 2nd tenant who would be a friendly, old-fashioned

meat butcher store and deli with specialty cheeses. The 3rd user would be a Neapolitan Pizza restaurant. The real benefit will be taking a 39 yr. old business from an old building to brand new building. Flanders Bicycles has sponsored national racing teams, and its owner trained and competed in pre-Olympic cycling. The building would be about and gears and chrome and cool colors, and they want to help project that image. Drawings are in progress. The WA n'hood is eclectic, so it needs a contextual response with a modern interpretation of materials and some details. This will be contextual in scale with engaging streets and engaging sidewalks inside the property line. Surface parking would be in back and wrap around the internal corner. The modern interpretation may be looking at separating out contextual brick, with highlights of grazed brick within it, providing great pedestrian detail. The well-defined entrance will incorporate windows along whole façade. On the corner, which is very visible, would be great opportunity to put a marquee not necessarily applying to the tenant. They could clip the corner and continue a steel channel with a canopy, and over the door would be solid. Behind would be lights that would shine down on the ground. It may include uniquely a series of translucent panels with project logos and a series of backlights, such as LED lights that would be soft and subtle but make the corner a lighted beacon. It could have an iconic texture or pattern that could be located strategically around the property that would bring the art aspect to the building. This could be made out of cut metal in front of the translucent panel and some art that will be incorporated such as the corner of the building at Lyndale. A totem at that entrance would be a vertical identifier of the project without lighting or signage on it. The Flanders building is still in design phase, but basic design criteria is part of the overall family while having its unique use and unique entrance. The Cellar entrance would be in the first 1/3 of the building. On the Lyndale side, they could bring the entrance out and pop it up, making it tallest element with glass on the front. Turning the corner, one would really get the personality of Flanders. They are trying to incorporate places for outdoor activity. The Neapolitan pizza place is proposed on end with outdoor seating along the front of the building to engage pedestrians. They need to secure area, so they could have a fenced area with some material. There may also be different sizes of brick. They currently have agreements from owners to move toward purchase agreements. They have started the city review process. The wine store will need an off sale license. Cellar may want the entire multitenant building. There have been many other multitenant building propositions that now sit empty. They are now in discussions with tenants, but no leases have been signed. Two landowners have agreed to sell. It's kind of a race with Trader Joe's for the liquor license, and they are not sure yet if they could move forward without it. Some were concerned the Buffalo Exchange may be orphaned, but Buffalo Exchange is not interested. They are trying to move forward and be as prudent and judicious as possible while respecting the needs of all parties. They have signed documents for their current site. Neighboring residents are excited to see used car lot disappear, the block cleaned up, and are happy it's a business vs. a rental unit and like the pedestrian-favoring businesses. Cellars may become an owner or a tenant. An investor has taken on financial responsibility; he may or may not sell to Cellars. To avoid traffic to and from the alley on 27th, they are proposing a fence that would have horizontal rails between stone piers with plants growing up them to block headlights, essentially the same landscaping as Greenleaf. They are proposing 30 parking slots (min. allowed=21, max=5 per 30 proposed parking slots) They were asked to make sure the lot is well-lit yet doesn't disturb neighbors. They have discussed a proposal for lighting that will direct lighting back into the project because it will be safer for pedestrians. Technology exists to keep light poles low and get the light heads to throw that light in one direction. Bob's Java Hut motorcycle traffic shouldn't bother or hinder pedestrians. Currently, it's very hard to get into 27th, and there is an issue at the Wedge when people try to turn left from Lyndale onto entrance, which slows Lyndale traffic. The previous site plan has been routed through the city, and traffic and engineering departments have not objected. The conundrum is everyone wants a thriving business district, but doesn't want added vehicles. The development may trigger a stoplight, and the cost would be the responsibility of the development that triggered it. Many would like to see at least parts of the building have more than one story, and Master Properties was referred to WA's upcoming strategic plan and its environmental components. Master will be meeting tomorrow morning with the city planner and are on schedule to be to the Committee of the Whole during the 3rd week in Feb. There was much concern about the lack of commitment from other parties and whether it would be safe to move forward. Residents did not want to vote on the subject on this time, but may be open to voting at the next CI meeting, given more planning has been done. This is a collaborative effort. They would like to request letter of support from the Community Issues Committee.

Old/New Business: none

Meeting adjourned: 8:39

Minutes submitted by: Lisa Hermanson, Whittier Alliance Administrative Assistant

Next meeting: Monday, February 13, 2012