

Whittier Alliance Community Issues Committee Meetings- DRAFT MINUTES
Monday, August 8th, First Christian Church

Attendees: Nimco Ahmed, Maurice Battle, David Bagley, Mary Cable, Giancarlo Casale, Erica Christ, Liza Davis, Rob Davis, Verne Greenlee, Farheen Hakeem, Jeff Hayden, Jim Hruby, Laura Jean, Justin Kader, Lee Klement, Jack Kelly, Darcy Knight, Christina Le, Eric Levy, Robert Lilligren, Bruce Lundeen, Harriet McCleary, Jesse Oyervides, Chris Popowski, David W. Schroth, Fernando W. Silvo, Osla Thomason, Dick Velner, Darrell Washington, Paulette Will, Corinne Zwickley

Presenters: Sam Bonin, Laura Boyd, Jen Hager, Tom Nguyen, Joe Wagner, Wendy Wiegman, Jim Grube

Staff: Marian Biehn, Jen Wendland

Call to order at 6:10 by Marian Biehn, Executive Director, who noted the Conflict of Interest & Standard of Conduct policies. A motion to **approve the agenda** was made, and carried. The July CI minutes were **approved**.

Announcements and Community Comments

Election of Chair for the Community Issues Committee: Maurice was nominated. Nomination seconded. Maurice accepted the nomination, and apologized for his absences over the summer, which were mainly work related. **Maurice elected CI Chair.**

Comments and Topics from Whittier Residents

Dick Velner, Russian School for Mathematics. The Mpls School Board sent out a request for people to propose ideas for ways to change or improve the school system. The IB school in Whittier does not have somewhere to send their 8th graders. This school would serve as an IB High School with Russian as the language taught. Dick is going around speaking with parents and community members and gaining their support.

Linda Berglin's Open Minnesota Senate Seat:

Bruce Lundeen, Whittier resident running as the sole Republican candidate. While Republicans get a bad rap, the truth is that the current set-up hasn't benefited the area much either. Paulette Will, Whittier resident running as a DFL candidate. Paulette is going to seek a minimum wage of \$10 and subsidies for under-privileged workers. Jeff Hayden—DFL candidate, has served in the MN House of Representatives and sat on many committees. www.jeffreyhayden.org Farheen Hakeem—Green Party candidate for the Senate seat. During the shutdown, two parties locked horns and it ruined many lives. There needs to be a third party in the discussion. She is co-chair of the US Green Party. www.farheenhakeem.org Primary Sept 13th, general election on Oct 18. This is a 1yr positions.

5th Precinct report—Insp. Matt Clark

Jack Kelly—introduced Officer Jesse Lopez, Lake Street Beat (bike cop).

Comment: Thank you for the work being done around Sullivan's. It makes my job easier and has improved the area a lot.

Insp Matt Clark: Thanks to Jen and Marian for their announcements in the community regarding auto thefts and thefts from motor vehicles. Those are on the rise. One individual was just arrested and is responsible for at least 50 burglaries in the area. Another was arrested for 4. 3 burglars were arrested off fingerprints two weeks ago. If anything, remember to keep those windows secured. Keep your valuables away from the windows, too. Comment: Franklin & 3rd has gotten better, but now 22nd & 3rd is getting to be a problem. Response: There are a lot of new faces offending in the neighborhood, and that might be a part of this. Repetitive criminals: Judges will put them away only for a certain amount of time, and only 2/3 of that will actually be served.

Unfortunately, since burglaries are not deemed violent crime, the amount of time people are sentenced is not long. Increase in squads around 24th & Clinton/22nd & Clinton: There are police working more closely with social services to try to address community concerns regarding problem individuals, especially around Loaves and Fishes.

Lots of activity at 28th & Stevens—is it getting any better: The police will follow where the crimes are. The increase in squads coincides with increase in arrests. Hopefully that will calm down soon.

NNO: 14 events registered, 11 actually took place. This was a lot of fun! Thanks to everyone who organized and attended.

Youth Improv Class: Whittier Park is hosting a workshop Saturday, 8/13 at 4pm for youth 15-19 interested in learning about improv. These skills are good for aspiring actors and comedians, as well as those looking to

improve their public speaking skills. **Bridging Minneapolis:** Events will be taking place on the Whittier and Phillips sides of 24th Street, culminating in a water ceremony on the 24th Street Bridge. Anthony Carchedi will be representing Whittier in the ceremony. **Peace Games:** 1-5pm on Sunday, August 14 in Washburn Fair Oaks Park. This is a fun, multicultural celebration that highlights the diversity and cultures of Minneapolis.

Field Day: Field Day is coming up at the end of the month on August 27th (1-4pm in Whittier Park). Field Day is an afternoon of fun and games for youth in the neighborhood ages 5-14. We invite you and your kids to come, but we also need volunteers for preparation before the event and at the event itself. Additionally, we are looking for school supplies and backpacks to be donated so that we may hand these out to the participants. If you are interested in participating, volunteering, or making a donation, please contact Jen.

New Whittier Park Director: After 15 years, Bob Ramphal is moving on to a new location and Diane Moe will be filling in his place. Her first day was today. She will be introducing herself in full next month.

35W Transit Access Project—Jim Grube-Hennepin Cty, Jenny Hager-City of Mpls

Jim Grube has been involved in the project since it began years ago (late 90s). Currently, the project is looking at putting in a bus rapid transit tower somewhere in the vicinity of Lake Street. One possibility is constructing a transit tower in 35W, similar to the tower at 46th. The transit tower would serve the high east-west transit traffic, as well as pedestrians along the greenway. The Greenway it may incorporate light rail in the future. Lake Street is one of the strongest transit corridors in the city. The north-south movement along 35W and the east-west in the Lake Street and Greenway corridor is an excellent opportunity to strengthen the transit system. There has been heavy investment in transit along the 35W and downtown area and this access project would be a significant furthering of that. As these discussions continue, one of the things that has to be taken into account is the opportunity for development of Lake Street and changes that can happen there. Also looking at a southbound exit to Lake Street and a northbound on ramp from Lake Street. A project advisory committee has been established to help form and guide this process. The hope is to give the policymaker options if and when funding becomes available. David Bagley, the Whittier neighborhood representative, has done a great job representing the neighborhoods desires and interests. MNDot has two bridges they need to replace—a bridge on northbound 35W (needs to be replaced by 2018) and the southbound “braid bridge”. These would be incorporated in the design of the 35W Lake Street Access so that everything makes the most sense for the section of the 94/35 interchange. Also, bringing the downtown traffic down the middle of the highway, which would help the busses connect to the transit station at Lake in the middle of 35 (as at 46th). The transit tower size and location will need to be decided before the rest of the pieces can fall into place.

The handouts depict four different options that the PAC has identified. At the bottom of each sheet, there are advantages and disadvantages listed. Things taken into consideration for each include pedestrian approaches, protection from the elements, the different in height between the Greenway Floor and 35W, sharing the distance between the users on the Greenway and the Lake Street users etc. All of these options will be presented at the open house on Wednesday, August 17 from 5-7pm.

Q: What is the single most important item being taken into consideration? A: The location of the transit tower.

Q: The flyover—new element? A: It is not inherent in the conversation, but our design informs the design of the flyover.

Q: This is not about transit. This is about Allina having quick on and off access at 35W. Is this no off the table? A: No. Our charge is to work with all the players and present a concise project for the policymakers.

Q: There will be ramps added at Lake, but the rest are staying at 31st? A: the ramps would be coming in to finish the access. One southbound from 35 to Lake St and one going northbound from Lake.

Q: How much money are we talking? A: About \$225 million. This does not include the two MNDot bridges.

Q: What about the homes along Clinton between 26th & 27th? A: Homes on Clinton should not be affected.

Q: Not listed under the advantages/disadvantages is the width of Lake Street. Some maps show 4 lanes or 8 lanes. 8 lanes will have a HUGE impact on this neighborhood. At this point, I am more interested in the width of 35W and Lake Street. What are the impacts on the neighborhood? A: This project anticipates the reopening of Nicollet. This is a cornerstone of the project, something the store owner of Kmart is aware of and understands. As for widths, this is known to be a serious concern for the residents. The models will be redesigned to reflect this concern. Once the approval and understanding is there, then Jim is going to try to get Lake Street re-done as well. Please come to the open house and discuss this with Jim. There will be further opportunity to discuss and debate this there. Q for Robert: Is there a conflict of interest that is keeping you from voting on this project? A: Robert lives close to the area that will be impacted, but he is not barred from voting.

Q: What properties will be removed? A: Depending on where it is located, the properties impacted will change. McDonalds, small business on the north side of Lake Street. 5 homes on 2nd are also impacted near Lake Street. The impact is being scaled down as much as possible. Q: Do you have new traffic numbers for the region? A: The previous numbers are no longer taken into account. New numbers will be acquired through a new study that will be done. Comment: If you cannot make it, get your comments and questions to Marian and they will be funneled to the Whittier Alliance PAC representative.

14 W 26th St, Eat Street Social Club, Joe Wagner, Laura Boyd

They anticipate opening at the end of Sept The menu at Eat Street Social will be similar to Northeast Social—American grill bistro using organic and local vendors. There will be weekday and weekend specials, and the menu will change as the seasons change. The Eat Street Social is requesting a C-1 Liquor and entertainment license. The entertainment would not be amplified and only 3-4 individuals (string jazz quartets).

Q: What do you see your role being regarding patrons who have been drinking your bar? How will you encourage good behavior as they leave and wander through our neighborhood? Would you be willing to call the police on patrons—inside or out? A: We want to be a restaurant first. We will offer cocktails, but there is no desire to be a party spot with DJs and drinking until 2am. There will be no bomb drinks that contribute to people acting out of control. We have a security plan in place as well—we are definitely willing to call the police if need be. All our staff will be heavily trained in responding to overly intoxicated or rowdy individuals. Even in Northeast, our business is very community oriented. Bar will stop serving at 1am.

C: 26th and Nicollet has a significant opportunity to really contribute to the neighborhood. I am really delighted and pleased that this location was chosen. Response: Both owners lived in Whittier at one point and are excited to bring something back, too. Q: Prices? A: Everything is under \$20. Q: Hours? A: Day and evening. No wkday breakfast, but brunch on the weekend. 11am-1am. Open until 2 by the license, but the kitchen and bar will stop serving at 1 with the expectation that people will be out by 2. Q: Live music inside or outside? A: Inside, but there will be soft background music on the patio. Q: Can you describe your outdoor area? How is fenced off, is it going up to the alley, etc.? Do you expect a lot of patrons due to the music? A: Wooden fences, gardens. Patio will be raised to give patrons a little more privacy. The music is something that isn't really offered on Eat Street. There are piano players and guitarists at Northeast Social and that goes over really well. There would be a benefit from the music for sure. Q: Access to the patio? A: Only from the restaurant. There are emergency exits on the patio, though. C: If you ever decide to extend hours until 2am, please return to the Community Issues Meeting and make the request. Response: The 2am close serves the private events and for clean-up ease. We would definitely come back and explain our intentions if we decide to serve until 2am.

CI Motion 1: The Community Issues committee moves to support the application for the Eat Street Social at 14 E. 26th St for a C-1 Liquor License with a food and liquor service stopping at 1am. Further, if food and liquor service is extended until 2am, the applicants will return to the Community Issues meeting with the request and rationale. **Motion carried 16-0-0**

19 E 24th Street, Passages Housing—Wendy Wiegman, Simpson Housing

Simpson Housing has made an application to the City of Mpls for an emergency shelter grant (ESG). The application process requires that the applicant present and ask for community response. \$339 thousand is being requested for foundation repair, water sealing, brick repair, add a trash enclosure, roof repairs, and other exterior work. This spring and summer, there have been some water issues and some repairs are already underway. Simpson has operated this building since 2007. 17 families live in transitional housing with 2 people on site—on of whom works with the kids and the other with the adults. The property manager maintains regular maintenance and there is a 5 year capital improvement plan. There are mortgages running on the property through 2021. If this grant is received, there would be a 3-5 year covenant on the project to continue running as a transitional housing program. This will run concurrently with the current mortgage, so regardless, Simpson would have to continue operating the property as transitional housing through 2021. If this is denied, we would be looking for funding elsewhere. The first area addressed would be foundation repairs.

Q: What are current rents? What is the cash flow? A: This is section 8 and the rents are set at fair market. Renters pay 30% of their income and the balance comes from HUD. The organization is in good financial standing at the moment.

Q: How does the transition work? A: On average, families stay about 19months, but no one is allowed to stay longer than 2yrs. Also, family sizes (3-5, including kids) are restricted and age of children is also restricted (no

older than 12yrs). Our off duty police officer has a great relationship with Passages. He contacts Passages if he picks someone up overnight and if there is an increase in issues, he pulls extra shifts. Q: Double parking is an issue. Is there something that can be done to try to negotiate an increase in parking? A: There are only two parking spots in the back. Most of the residents don't have cars, so it might be guests visiting. There is parking available on 1st, but a lot are looking to just do a quick drop off. The property manager will be included in this conversation. Comment: Litter? Response: We try to keep it clean and having a trash enclosure will hopefully assist with this. Q: how much of the funds being requested could be covered by your cash flow? A: Our cash flow is about \$12,000 a year. \$70,000 was spent already on repairs, meaning the reserves have been tapped. The grant is federally restricted to capital improvements for shelters and transitional housing programs so if it doesn't get used, it just goes back to the federal government.

CI Motion 2: The Community Issues Committee supports Simpson Housings application for an Emergency Shelter Grant for exterior capital improvements at Passages Housing 19E 24th St. **Motion Carried. 13-0-1**

2612 1st Ave S—Thom Nguyen

The building is zoned R2 but is more like a commercial building. It was formerly a roofing company. The request is for a change in non-conforming use to allow for an adult day care center. There will be an office, exercise room, meeting room. There is a need for this type of service. It is unclear what is currently in the space. The applicant could not identify who was leasing and occupying the space currently. However, the lease expires at the end of Sept. An attendee stated that he lives right across the street and stated that the business has been operating already for some time. There is a lot of traffic in and out of the building, in and out of the parking lot, and it is overwhelming. When permission was originally given to build a parking lot, all the trees were cut down and landscaping was to be planted. Nothing has been done and it has been over two years. The building and parking lot need maintenance. Anything new going in should be on the condition that there is less traffic, landscaping and better management. A: It would be a different operation from what is there currently. While there would be more people, there would be less vehicular traffic.

Q: how man clients are you anticipating to serving? A: 40-50 people.

Q: Will you plant trees? A: Yes, we will. Q: Is this a house or commercial building? A: It is a commercial building, zoned R2B, considered by the city to be warehouse/storage. Q: Don't you need a license to operate a day care? A: Yes, but this is the first step. We are not open. The space is currently leased to a woman who runs an office space for home care. Comment: But there is a sign for Sunshine Adult Day Care and that is what you are requesting to put in there. Are you already operating the day care?

Q: If the community grants non-conforming use but the license is not granted, what happens with the NCU permit? A: The NCU permit can be "activated" within a year for the specifically stated purpose otherwise it expires. Q: the building does not look big enough for 40-50 people. A: The building is less than 5,000 ft. C: the city would not allow the license if the sq. footage is not appropriate.

An attendee thought that if sprinklers, the NCU permit and put in landscaping was done that it should be supported. However, there does not seem to be significant enough information for us to support this at the time. The community needs to know who will be running the day care, the hours of operation, the business plan, the landscaping, whether the building is appropriate for a day care, who and what is in there now, etc. back next month with your partner and the person who will be running the adult day care facility?

CI Motion 3: The Community Issues Committee moves to delay a decision on the request for a Change in Non-Conforming Use for 2612 1st Ave and requests that the presenter return to the September meeting with more complete and appropriate information. **Motion Carried.**

Meeting adjourned: 8:24pm

Minutes submitted by: Jen Wendland, Whittier Alliance Community Organizer

Next meeting: Monday, September 12th, Whittier Park Rec Center