

WHITTIER ALLIANCE – Community Issues Committee – DRAFT MINUTES

Monday July 14, 2008 6:00pm – 8:30pm

First Christian Church Fellowship Hall 2201 First Avenue South

Present Nimco Ahmed, Jim Baker, Alex Bauman, Henry Bromelkamp, Mary Cable, Felino de la Pena, Amy Douma (HGA Architects), Jessica Frehse, Chris Gottshall, Lynda Gradert, Verne Greenlee, Tom Hanson, Paula Horan, Kate Kallal (Tiger Sushi), Al Keith, Melo Lawson, Bob Lunning, Scott Mann, Jolie Moline (HCMC), Jeff Nelson, Jerry Olson, Walter Olson, Adam Pierce, Nancy Stenson, John Wilson, Peter Jochimsen
Presenters Kris Arneson (MPD), Chelsea Adams (MPD), Lisa Edevold (Tiger Sushi), James Farstad (City of Mpls), Robert Giancola (Alno Society), Mike Harristhal (HCMC), Chris Katayama (Tiger Sushi), Gary Nyberg (HGA Architects)

Staff Marian Biehn, Josie Shardlow, Karin Knudsen

Call to Order at 6:10 pm by chair Destin Nygard. The Conflict of Interest & Standard of Conduct policies were noted. There were no changes to the agenda offered. **Motion** to approve agenda **carried**, followed by attendee introductions. The June **minutes were reviewed** for approval or correction. Jim Baker said that the June minutes failed to record the exact nature of what was voted on the CI meeting concerning the motion for Salem English Church. The discussion only concerned writing a letter of support for Brighton to submit with for their requests for funding. Marian noted that the language in the motion is what went to the Board and was voted on. Jim's concern is that the vote at the Board might be misconstrued and that the Board voted on something different than what was requested, and would like the entire motion to be rewritten. Destin noted that at the Board, it was clear that the letter of support was for funding. Destin suggested we add to the minutes a notation that the support was for their funding application, without actually changing the language of the motion. It was noted there was a typographical error on page three, that the oldest part of the Church dates back to 1094; it should read 1904. Jim Baker explained that during the discussion of the Salem English development, there was no mention in the minutes of why the neighborhood wants owner-occupied minutes. He would like the minutes to reflect that "a concern was raised that additional rental units would hold down rents in Whittier at a time when building expenses are increasing, with the potential that the rental units could deteriorate due to lack of funds to maintain them." **Motion** to approve the June, 2008 minutes **as amended, carried**.

Announcements/Community Comments & Discussion**5th Precinct Inspector Kris Arneson and Chelsea Adams, CCP Safe**

Kris noted that **robberies** are a continual concern. However, year-to-date, robberies are down 22%, with 62 in '08 and 79 at this point in '07. This year, there is activity between Lake and Grand. The precinct is doing "hot spotting" to track how crime is moving from week to week, enabling the officers to see how the crime is moving over time. The precinct has been creating focus zones where more officers work. The extra officers seem to push the crime activity out of those areas. The hot spot maps note that there have not been a large number of narcotics calls. Narcotic activity is often found where people are loitering, and are getting in and out of vehicles after brief conversations. The Fifth Precinct has been struggling with the "Bogus Boyz" gang near Lake Street, but has been successful in getting them to leave the area. There are also Somali gangs who have been doing burglaries and robberies between midnight and 5am. The events typically involve young black males between 17 and 22 who organize in groups of 2/3 and take purses/bags/objects that are easy to grab. A resident noted that a young male (using a towel to cover his hand) tried to pick his pocket at McDonald's last week. Kris noted that overall, crime is down 8.4% compared to last year, and that last year finished with a lower percentage of crime to the year before. The RNC is coming up, but residents should feel ok about calling for help because there will be adequate staffing to cover all the calls for the area. If you notice any **graffiti**, please call to get rid of it/report it immediately. If the graffiti is in progress, call 911; otherwise call 311. Public Works is responsible for cleaning up graffiti within 10 days of a report. If the graffiti is on your residence, please take digital pictures to file along with your 311 report.

A resident commented that the public awareness campaign to encourage the use of bike helmets has been very successful; she would like to see a similar campaign to encourage bikers to follow road laws. Chelsea has some biker info cards that detail **bike laws and regulations** and the main ordinances every biker should know. They were produced as part of the "Share the Road" campaign and partially financed by MNDOT. Kris noted the police do have the right to stop and cite bikers for violations, though they more commonly stop and advise them. **National Night Out is August 5**: it is a chance for your block to host an event to encourage solidarity, safety, and community. For more information, please call 311 or contact Josie in the Whittier Alliance office. Chelsea can train you to become a block leader (in about an hour). Felino thanked Kris for taking the time to come to the meeting and personally report on the precinct.

Wi-Fi: Jim Farstad: Update on installation and Whittier process

Jim is with the program management for the City wireless program. The process of putting in Wi-Fi throughout the City is 95% complete, but 12 sections of the city remain incomplete. He anticipates the process will be finished by the end of September. The issue in Whittier is the large number of decorative plastic poles used for lamps. The poles cannot hold the weight of the radios needed for the wireless equipment. The City has ordered metal light pole replacements, and the plastic poles will be recycled for use within the City as needed. On a temporary basis, they will be using some wooden poles to ensure coverage.

The City is putting the wireless network in to help streamline City services by allowing mobile City workers access to information on the go. Other efforts to make the City more efficient—like establishing 311 as a main direct line into the City—have been successful. Non-emergency workers are just beginning to use the wireless system, then about 50 buildings will transfer to its use, then public safety will use the system. One reception difficulty is in homes that are stuccoed with wire mesh under-framing. Another issue is the abundance of energy efficient windows that have a thin metal layer inside the pane of glass. In both instances, the metal makes it difficult to get a signal out of the home. One solution is a mounted external antenna that seems to work in about 98% of the cases. The network continues to be refined and upgraded; the hope is to someday use it for the transmission of television signals.

Neighborhood Announcements

Marian noted that the NRP is sponsoring a float for the **Aquatennial Parade** on July 23. Neighborhood representatives will walk in the parade to promote the improvements that NRP has facilitated. All parade participants need to be at the parade stadium by 7pm and stay until 10 pm. If you are interested in representing Whittier, contact the WA office. There are two more performances of **theater in Washburn-Fair Oaks Park** on July 17 and 31 at 7pm. This Thursday will be a marionette show called “The Adventures of Juan Bobo” and will be performed in a combination of Spanish and English. The performances are free and family-friendly. The **Guide to Dining in Whittier** is now available. The brochure lists some of the dining hot spots along Nicollet, and along Lyndale and Lake. The guide will be given to the “Meet Minneapolis” campaign, and will be available at the RNC. Copies are available to put in your business or apartment/condo building.

Tiger Sushi 2 (in The Murals of Lyn-Lake 2833 Lyndale): Lisa Edevold & Chris Katayama

Request for Class E Liquor License

Tiger Sushi 2 is a proposed restaurant development in The Murals of Lyn-Lake. Tiger 2 has negotiated a **lease with Intermedia Arts** for a lot to be used for **valet parking**. It is a three year lease, renewable yearly. The City of Minneapolis licensing department is requesting that the restaurant provide at least 28 parking spots; that requirement is easily met by the space in the lot. Jim Farstad, the Board Chair of non-profit Intermedia Arts, noted that they are trying to create revenue. They have a parking lot on Aldridge that they will landscape and make available for valet parking. The space isn't used, and it often draws unwelcome activity; with regular use, he believes the other activity will diminish.

Community members **raised concerns with:** the **traffic flow on Lyndale** (how will the traffic flow work with the valet cars), the **lack of a crosswalk** at that intersection (and safety concerns with having valet drivers crossing the street to retrieve vehicles), the **non-valet use of the lot** (if other patrons of Tiger 2 will be allowed to park in the lot without using the valet service), and the three year lease. Jim noted the intent if for a three year lease that is annually renewed. Conceivably, the property could be redeveloped in the future, but the push is to use the lot now as thoughts of redevelopment are not a pressing concern. The contract is for valet parking, but that Intermedia Arts will consider the leased lot to be Tiger 2's, for their parking uses. Lisa noted that they will manage the parking lot, so that if patrons want to park there without using the valet they will allow it. There will not be parking in The Murals, so Tiger 2 will encourage people to bike or use the Greenway, or use the valet service, or find parking on the street.

Lisa **outlined the details of Tiger Sushi 2:** Tiger Sushi is in its fifth year of business at the Mall of America. They have had double-digit growth for the last four years, and are a solid stable business. Tiger Sushi 2 will be a full sit-down restaurant, which will include a small bar. The target opening date is the end of September. They will seat approximately 70 in the dining room, and the bar will seat up to 14, with a small seating area for a sushi bar, and an outside patio. They plan to be open for lunch and dinner, and have operating hours from 11 am to midnight. There will be no live entertainment, and the restaurant will serve wine, beer and cocktails. At the MOA, they **have held a wine and beer license** for 5 years with no blemishes on their record. They have achieved the highest rating from the Bloomington health department. Tiger 2 believe they will attract new people into the Whittier. Lisa and Chris are hands-on managers, with years of experience in the restaurant industry. Head chef JR has been with them 6 years. His menu for Tiger 2 includes all of the sushi dishes that they offer at Tiger, but will also include Asian-fusion dishes. Tiger 2 will bring about 40 new jobs into the neighborhood.

Discussion

Lisa and Chris will keep their mall location. There will be bike racks out front. The Murals just added racks for about 30 bikes along Lyndale. Tiger Sushi is interviewing companies for the valet service contract. Tiger 2 plans to be open until midnight, but will also have to look at their competition in the area to see what will be competitive. In response to questions about the **consumption of alcohol by patrons** of the MOA location, Lisa noted that less than 10% of their revenue was from beer and wine. They have had few problems with patrons who over-consume and then leave the restaurant. They don't have a bar area at the MOA location.

Chris G. **moved in support** of the application for a Class E Liquor License for Tiger Sushi 2, and it was **seconded**.

Further Discussion

All of their staff goes through **alcohol-related training**. The formal training includes how to handle drunk and belligerent guests, and how to properly card and identify if patrons are of-age to consume. They are very sensitive to the issues created by underage drinking. At the MOA, the Bloomington police department runs a sting operation with undercover underage people twice a year to test if restaurants will serve underage patrons. Tiger 2 has failed the test twice in the last 5 years, and in each instance the server was fired and they paid a fine. If granted, the liquor license would allow for a full liquor license, with no live entertainment or DJ's.

CI Motion 1: The Community Issues Committee moves to approve a Class E liquor license for Tiger Sushi 2 (28³³ Lyndale, in The Murals of Lyn-Lake). **Motion Carried:** 12-2-2.

Hennepin County Medical Center Family Medical Center-GFI site: Request for variances; Mike Harristhal of HCMC & Gary Nyberg of HGA Architects

Mike introduced the project briefly--they presented on this project at a meeting in March. They have taken community input (from the HCMC-GFI Site Task Force) and the design concepts for the building have evolved. Gary noted the focus was to have a presence along Nicollet Avenue while leaving some open space along that street; the building footprint has been partially defined by that. The City is going through the preliminary development reviews, and some of their recommendations are reflected in the design decisions presented here.

In order to develop the Family Medical Center as designed, HCMC will need **City variances for certain zoning requirements as outlined in the pedestrian overlay**. The variance for the **building placement**: The pedestrian overlay wants buildings pushed close to the street. HGA is suggesting the building be set back from the street along Nicollet to augment the entry into the building and create a plaza in front of the entrance. Because the building is placed on a lot the size of the entire block, the building cannot meet the requirements to front the street on all four sides. The **corner cut/setback/plaza entrance** is greater than the 8' maximum allowed in the ped-overlay document. Because of restrictions on the site, the **parking criteria** cannot be met in full. However, they have placed the parking in what they would consider the rear of the building. They will have bicycle parking and a transit stop along Nicollet, reducing the number of required parking stalls to 172. The **minimum floor area ratio** as outlined in the pedestrian overlay document is 1.0; with a building size of 60,000 square feet and a site of 135,000 the ratio is not possible. The ped-overlay document calls for no more than **120 feet of linear frontage for a single use** along the street. The proposed design has 240 feet along the streetfront, but does have an entry point on Nicollet spaced so that it divides the footage almost in half to meet the intent of the requirement [*note: verification of linear footage of building along the streetfront is being sought from HGA*].

Gary noted the intent for the design was to go with something more vibrant and more human-scaled. On top of the building is a light monitor to introduce more natural light. The frontage along Nicollet is very glassy, and includes some conferences rooms available for community functions and meetings. They have included colored glass and playful and patterned uses of brick to add some vibrancy and interest on the outside of the building.

Discussion

A community member raised **community concern about the parking plan**: the lack of parking along Nicollet where it is actually needed, the fact that the parking lot dominates the site of proposed clinic, and the potential for future development on the site if the clinic needs such a huge space for parking. He also commented that the Ped-Overlay was written to discourage the type of development HCMC is proposing. Gary noted that they have reduced the number of parking stalls required by the City by providing a transit stop. Since the clinic will be open to 8pm, the parking should be available for use by nearby businesses after hours. Mike suggested that locating the building in the northeast corner of the lot allows for future opportunities on the southeast corner. If the clinic were to expand, they could go west and also look at structured parking needs. HCMC is working with the Whittier Alliance office to develop a group to look at the future development of the site and the adjacent lots. The rain gardens in the southeast corner would not hinder future development, as the site also includes storm water facilities in another section of the lot. The entrance along Nicollet will use glass along the corridor, and will have an outdoor trellis that will help to accentuate the entry. A resident asked about the **width of the curb cut** on Blaisdell. Gary noted that although the ped-overlay document calls for a driveway of no more than 20 feet wide, the City is requiring that the two-way entrance on Blaisdell be slightly wider. They will comply with the City requirement for width but will go no wider. In response to questions about the parking lot lighting, Gary noted the plan calls for pedestrian scale and photometric lighting.

It was questioned if being so close to a fire station will be problematic; Gary explained that the corridor space along the exterior of the building will help to act as a buffer for sound coming into the patient care areas. A resident expressed **concern that the building didn't "fit"** the location aesthetically, and that the proposed building didn't seem tied to the history of the neighborhood. Gary responded that he felt the building fit in with the eclectic mix of styles in that area. Another resident said she liked the modernness of the design. Her concern was that the materials that were presented

here would be replaced by cheaper materials once the development actually occurs. Amy Douma of HGA noted that making the brickwork interesting (patterned) doesn't add much cost to the project; however, they can't guarantee every aspect of the future development based on today's estimates of cost. A resident also questioned if HGA had considered building up three floors instead of taking up so much horizontal space. Gary and Mike responded that part of the reason was that three-story developments cost more. Other resident concerns included: the long frontage along Nicollet (did HCMC look at renting out commercial space there?); granting a variance for the floor area ratio (which was meant to increase density); and granting variances for the ped-overlay district document (wasn't the document created to prevent development like this?).

Felino **moved in favor** of granting a variance to HCMC for the "building placement", and it was seconded. Destin noted the zoning requirement was designed to make sure that buildings had a continuous street presence, and would not be located more than 8 feet from the lot line. Amy noted the wall placement is similar to what is at the site currently.

CI Motion 2: The Community Issues Committee moves to grant a variance to HCMC to allow the proposed building to be more than 8 feet from the lot line. **Motion Carried:** 11-0-0.

Felino **moved in favor** of granting a variance to HCMC for the "accessory parking", and it was seconded. Gary noted that the parking requirement says that parking lots can only have 60 feet of frontage on any one street. In order to meet the required number of spaces, the proposal calls for parking along Blaisdell and 29th in excess of that footage. The ped-overlay document also calls for driveways of no more than 20 feet, however the City wanted the two-way entrance to be 24 feet wide for safety. The **motion was amended** to say that the committee asks that the width of the driveway shall not exceed 24 feet.

CI Motion 3: The Community Issues Committee moves to grant a variance to HCMC for the accessory parking zoning requirement, but asks that the driveways do not exceed 24 feet in width. **Motion Carried:** 10-2-0.

Felino **moved in favor** of granting a variance to HCMC for the "minimum floor area" ratio for the Nicollet-Franklin area, and it was seconded.

Gary noted that they won't be able to meet the requirement of a minimum floor area ratio of 1.0. A resident encouraged HCMC to use the lot for other developments, although it may be too late to make suggestions. Marian noted that the lot is zoned I-1 and may need to be rezoned in the future for future development to occur. Gary explained that although the City was interested in rezoning the site, the current property owner wasn't interested. The clinic is a permitted use in I1.

CI Motion 4: The Community Issues Committee moves to grant a variance to HCMC for a new development that does not meet the minimum floor area ratio requirement. **Motion Carried:** 8-4-0.

Alex **moved in favor** of granting a variance to HCMC for the "Corner Cuts", and it was seconded. Destin noted that the proposed setback on the corner exceeds the ped-overlay document requirement of a set back that is no greater than 8 feet from the corner. The plan goes farther than the ped-overlay committee had anticipated in making the corner pedestrian friendly.

CI Motion 5: The Community Issues Committee moves to grant a variance to HCMC for a corner cut in excess of 8 feet. **Motion Carried:** 13-0-0.

Felino **moved in favor** of granting a variance to HCMC for the "linear frontage of one use" in excess of 120 feet.

CI Motion 6: The Community Issues Committee moves to grant a variance to HCMC to allow a single commercial use in one building extending more than 120 feet along the fronting of the street. **Motion Carried:** 9-3-1.

Site Plan Review

Destin noted the site plan review and approval encompasses all the details concerning the whole site development. He explained that for past developments, a site plan has been approved with and without recommendations.

Chris G. **moves** to support the HCMC Family Medical Center site plan as proposed, **seconded** by Felino.

A resident noted his appreciation that HCMC and HGA paid attention to the recommendations of the task force. Residents commented favorably on the windows, the materials proposed, and the use of the colored glass. A resident who lives close to the site mentioned that it will be nice to see the site developed and taken care of. It was again noted that budgets cuts should not compromise or eliminate the recommended materials or design or lessen the development.

CI Motion 7: The Community Issues Committee supports the site plan for the HCMC Family Medical Center between Blaisdell and Nicollet and 28th and 29th St, as proposed. **Motion Carried:** 11-2-0.

Alno Society 2218 1st Avenue: Bob Giancola Informational pres. on installation of 20 by 24 foot outdoor pavilion
Bob is on the Board of Directors for the Alno Society. The Society would like to build an outdoor pavilion on the property next to the main building. The proposed pavilion would be an unenclosed space, and would be used for outdoor meetings and for general smoking needs. They don't have any professionals involved with the project yet, but will be using donations to pay for the project.

In response to questions, Bob noted that the proposed pavilion will be 17 feet from their property line, and the nearest building is an apartment complex that is 7 feet from that line. The pavilion should include poles with a gabled roof, on a slab of cement (likely with footings). They will ask professionals to volunteer to actually do the work. Although the building doesn't qualify as a historic, community members noted that it is an important house in the neighborhood and questioned if there were going to be problems getting approval for building on that site. A community member noted that in the historic district, an outside building will probably need to resemble the actual house because of the historic requirements. Bob noted the house serves Hennepin County, and is a non-profit, making it difficult for them to pay for anything that would be too involved.

Destin suggested that before moving forward with the project, the community would like them to talk to their neighbors and get their input. They could also look into other similar buildings to come up with a more-historic styled design. Bob explained that if the City required them to pay more permits, or required a more-involved and expensive project, that the project likely wouldn't continue due to lack of funding. Community members suggested that they talk to some local architects and see if someone would work pro bono to design a pavilion with a historic feel.

Old/New Business: (there was none offered)

Meeting adjourned at 8:44 pm. Minutes submitted by Karin Knudsen

Attachments: none.