

WHITTIER ALLIANCE – Community Issues Committee – DRAFT MINUTES

Monday October 13, 2008 6–8:30pm
Whittier International Elementary School

Present Mary Cable, Anthony Carchedi, Wendy Darst, Garen Gotfredson, Chris Gottshall, Eric Grumdahl, Peter Jochimsen, Christina Le, Jeff Nelson, Destin Nygard, Felino de la Peña, Carol Sorflaten, Lisa Vecoli, John Wilson, Michael Wood, Michelle Wood

Presenters Luis Caire (El Campestre), Karen Clark (MN House), Matt Gladue (SSSC), Lt. David Hayhoe (MPD), Jeff Mandyck (MS&R), David Motzenbecker (Oslund & Assoc), Pam Newsome (MCAD), Isidro Perez (El Campestre), Taryn Runck (RJCA), Dan Vecruysse (MS&R)

Staff Marian Biehn, Josie Shardlow, Karin Knudsen

Call to Order at 6:09pm by Destin Nygard, CI chair, who noted the Conflict of Interest & Standard of Conduct policies. Destin explained that Diane Moe of Mpls Park and Rec had a conflict, so she would be moved to the end of the agenda. Call for additions or corrections to the agenda: there were none offered. **Motion to approve** the agenda was **carried**, followed by introductions of all present. Those present were given time to review the September minutes, and make additions or corrections (there were none offered). **Motion to approve** the September 8, 2008 CI minutes, was made, seconded, and **Carried**.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMENTS FROM WHITTIER RESIDENTS RJCA apology letters: Restorative Justice Community Action works to address non-violent street crimes by bringing together offenders and members of the community. The program tries to address crime by holding offenders accountable to the community. Taryn Runck of RJCA read 2 apology letters from offenders who committed crimes in Whittier. There are upcoming conferences, as well as an informative series on their program, scheduled in the next month. Please contact the Whittier Alliance office or RJCA for more info.

Strong Schools/Strong City ballot referendum: The November ballot measure is a property tax referendum that will raise \$60 million annually for Minneapolis public schools. It replaces a (\$30 million/year) referendum that expires in 2009. Matt Gladue, a volunteer advocating for the referendum, stressed that the funds would help schools to: address classroom needs, focus on meeting academic benchmarks, and help create more manageable class sizes. There will be a commission to provide oversight for the spending. If the measure doesn't pass, the city could lose up to 350 teachers. For more information, go to StrongSchoolsStrongCity.org.

5th Precinct report, Lt. David Hayhoe: The Lt. reported that crime was down 34% last week for the entire precinct. Year-to-date, crime is down 11%. Recent crime trends in the neighborhood include some strong-arm robberies; please try to get a good look at the offender but do not struggle with them. There was also a shooting reported at 27th and First, but the MPD believes the offense occurred in another precinct. In north Whittier, near Franklin, there has been a rise of theft of goods in motor vehicles and of catalytic converters. Please be on the look-out for suspicious activity. The beat officer on Franklin will be doing field training with some new recruits; he will be back on his beat in about 5 weeks.

Whittier Green Fair, October 18, 1-4pm at First Christian Church: Josie has organized the 2nd Green Fair sponsored by the WA. There will be free giveaways for the first 50 attendees, over 20 exhibitors, and workshops. Please go to whittieralliance.org for more information, or contact Josie if you would like to volunteer.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE KAREN CLARK Rep. Clark represents Whittier, Stevens Square and Phillips. The 2008 legislative report handout details the last session. The session started with a billion dollar deficit; one goal was to minimize the damage from the cuts that had to be made. A bipartisan coalition voted to override Gov. Pawlenty's veto of a gas tax increase that will help to fund road and bridge reconstruction. In housing, one success was to re-fund homeless programs that had lost funding over the last 2 years. One local victory was to require the MN Pollution Control Agency to do a "cumulative health impact analysis" for the Phillips community before it could add a wood burning facility in an area overburdened with toxins. One impact in Whittier is the expiration of NRP funding in 2009; it is unclear what exactly will happen. Rep. Clark will continue to work toward fair taxation bills, to redistribute the tax burden to those who can afford to pay a greater share. Given the current economic situation nationwide, she is predicting a 2 billion dollar deficit in Minnesota at the start of the next session.

Community comments and questions included: the disparity between increases in property taxes without commensurate increases in income tax; how to frame the need to tax (how best to package the message); foreclosures and tear-downs (is there a possibility for renovation loans rather than spending on demolition? or money toward affordable mortgages/rentals?); the uncertain future of undocumented business owners and workers (Rep. Clark noted Mpls is a sanctuary city and she will work to ensure law enforcement is following those guidelines); and the improbability of NRP funding that would match past allotments. Rep. Clark stressed the uncertainty of the upcoming election: a lot depends on the political climate after the election. She would like to hear from anyone with concerns.

MCAD MASTER PLAN: JEFF MANDYCK AND DAN VERCRUYSE (MS&R), DAVID MOTZENBECKER (OSLUND & ASSOC), AND PAM NEWSOME (MCAD) MCAD and MS&R began working on the MCAD Master Plan—to guide future development and the direction of campus growth—in March. One overall goal is the creation of a main campus entry/gateway on 26th. Within 5 years, they would like to move the roughly 45 MFA students back to campus and start expansion of the academic buildings. The initial phase of the plan addresses their immediate parking needs through the creation of a parking structure and a supplementary surface parking lot. MCAD underwent a parking study to determine the parking load on campus. Based on those numbers, the City is requiring 275 parking slots. They are adding bike parking for almost 75 bikes, and working with MetroTransit to set up a monthly pass with a partially defrayed cost to encourage mass transit use. One of their concerns is balancing the need for on-campus parking, the cost of building park facilities, and working to ensure that the students don't burden the community by parking in the neighborhood.

The parking structure will include one on-grade level and 2 underground parking levels and ramp. The structure will provide 200 stalls for parking. The ramp will be designed to carry a green roof if it is desired later. The surface lot will be on 26th, and the intent is to redevelop the lot during the academic expansion onto the 26th Street frontage, in 10 to 15 years. Proposed materials for use in the surface lot include pervious concrete for the drive aisles and gravel pave for the parking stalls. The mix of materials should increase the aesthetic appeal while providing pervious materials to handle the storm water runoff. Canopy trees and storm water gardens will frame the lot, further absorbing storm water runoff. The lot should hold 47 vehicles. The target date for starting the ramp and lot construction is November 2009. MCAD and MS&R should be back as early as next month with more specific details of the materials and characteristics of the ramp, and to ask for support of their parking proposals.

Community comments and questions included: should MCAD plan that the City parking requirement will be lower in the future?; will being part of the Washburn Fair Oaks Historic District affect development? [they are working with the Heritage Preservation Commission to address the long-term impacts of the master plan on existing on-site structures]; and, if MCAD could request a 30% reduction in parking [similar to what HCMC requested last summer when they were proposing new development]. **Additional comments included:** zoning issues? [part of the ramp crosses over into a section of the site that is zoned differently]; if the surface lot could be moved north and placed away from the corner and more internal to campus [MCAD feels the academic expansion will happen too quickly and they will still need the parking lot at the time that area will be redeveloped, though they noted there might be some flexibility in just how close the lot will be to 26th]; if MCAD would consider allowing other businesses to use/lease the parking ramp for use at night; if the expansion could be anchored by first expanding the academic buildings to 26th and Stevens and then working in to the center of campus [Pam noted the students were adamantly against that option, in line with their collaborative curriculum]; if the parking studies took into account that students/faculty often drive when they are bringing art and project materials to campus.

EL CAMPESTRE RECEPTION HALL, 2728-50 NICOLLET AVE: ISIDRO PEREZ AND LUIS CAIRE Luis and Isidro are back in front of the community to revisit the parking variance [August CI meeting] and make a request for extended hours. The banquet hall will serve parties of around 100 guests. Their parking calculations for the site call for 132 total required parking slots, minus the 62 real parking spaces provided and the 12 grandfathered spaces, for a total of 58 needed parking spaces. Isidro and Luis have contracted with Pho Tau Bay for 50 parking slots. They **would like the neighborhood to reaffirm the parking variance (for 30 spots) granted at the August CI meeting** and carried at the Board meeting later that month. Their plans are still in flux and they are unsure as to what will be granted at the planning commission. They are also considering other parking options, and will request that the neighborhood variance be cancelled if they find other parking that puts them over the required number of spots. Luis and Isidro would like the neighborhood to reaffirm their support of the parking variance so they can pursue the matter at the planning commission meeting, which is scheduled for October 20th.

Isidro and Luis also **request extended hours for El Campestre**. The space is zoned C2, with hours of operation until 11pm on Fridays and Saturdays. They request the neighborhood approve extended hours on those 2 nights until 1 am. Luis noted there will be on-site security provided at the restaurant in the parking lot, as well as at the other parking lot if the contract with Pho Tau Bay goes through. There will also be security at the reception hall to look after the guests and patrons, and the caterers will have to sign an agreement that says they will follow the security guidelines of El Campestre. Marian noted when the issue came before the Board in September [the request for extended hours came too late to be discussed at the community or business meetings of that month], the Board wanted to ensure the reception hall would be well-run and that there would be safety considerations. Board Motion 2 from September 25 details the security considerations that Board felt was appropriate if El Campestre was granted a CUP for extended hours. They requested that El Campestre provide at least 2 security personnel for the duration of all events where alcohol was served, and all events that last past 11pm. Luis noted the provisions of Board Motion 2 were basically what they had in their policy anyway, so

they wouldn't be unreasonable expectations on the part of the community. Felino **moved** that the CI committee affirm CI motion 1 [from August 13], **seconded** by Eric.

CI Motion 1: The Community Issues Committee reaffirms its action of August 11, and moves to grant a parking variance for 2728-50 Nicollet Avenue South, for 30 parking slots. **Motion Carried:** 8-0-0.

Felino **moved** Board Motion 2 [from September 25], **seconded** by Chris.

CI Motion 2: The Community Issues Committee supports **Board Motion 2:** The Whittier Alliance Board of Directors requests that if the City of Minneapolis grants the request for a CUP for extended hours from 11pm to 1am on Friday and Saturday nights for El Campestre Reception Hall, at 2728 Nicollet Ave South, the following condition be applied:

1. that El Campestre Reception Hall/Isidro Perez provide a minimum of 2 security personnel at all events at which liquor is served, and/or all events that last past 11pm, and
2. that security be in place for the duration of the event.

Motion Carried: 9-0-0.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS Diane Moe of Mpls Park and Recreation: Diane is the Cultural Arts Administrator for Park and Rec. She worked with the WA during the Theatre in Washburn-Fair Oaks Park presentations, and with MIA on the Art in the Park programming. She is our contact for Washburn Fair Oaks Park and for Clinton Field Park. Diane can help with event organization (like scheduling extra park patrol, or requesting recycling bins). She can also work with park staff to bring programming to Fair Oaks. She has an office in Loring Park, and can be reached at dmoe@minneapolisparcs.org.

Neighborhood notes: jP's American Bistro has announced it will close. Cinema Revolution is moving October 15 to the storefront above Sweeney Todd's on Lyndale. A lot of good photos were submitted for the Picture Whittier Photo contest. The NRP steering committee will vote to choose photos for the calendar. There should be recognition of those who submitted their photos at a future CI meeting (probably January).

Meeting adjourned at 8:21 pm. Minutes submitted by Karin Knudsen.

Attachments: none.