

WHITTIER ALLIANCE – Community Issues Committee – DRAFT MINUTES

Monday January 12, 2009 6–8:30pm
Whittier International Elementary School

Attendees Chelsea Adams (Crime Prevention Spec.), Michaela Ahern, Nimco Ahmed, David Bagley, Tom Bissen, Anthony Carchedi, Erica Christ, Lori Chu, Mary Doffing, Michael Garr, Lt. David Hayhoe, Laura Jean, Peter Jochimsen, Aaron Kocher, Christina Le, Bruce Lundeen, JoAnn Musumeci, Kurt Nelson, Destin Nygard, Mike O'Keefe, Nancy Railsback, David Schroth, Erin Sjoquist, Scott Smith, Carrie Thompson, Lisa Vecoli, John Wilson, Gina Frances Wood

Staff Marian Biehn, Karin Knudsen

Call to Order at 6:09 pm by Destin Nygard, CI chair who noted the Conflict of Interest & Standard of Conduct policies. **Motion** to approve agenda was **carried**, followed by introductions of all present. Those present were given time to review the December minutes, and Destin asked for additions or corrections (a misspelling of David Schroth's name was noted). Motion to approve the December 8, 2008 CI minutes as revised, was carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & COMMUNITY COMMENTS **Light Rail Transit Update:** the 3A and 3C alignments are still under consideration. Another alignment—put forth by the Cedar-Aisles-Dean neighborhood—has been proposed as well. Mayor Rybak has been supportive of mass transit serving Uptown, Lyn-Lake etc, but it isn't clear what that will mean for support of the proposed alignments.

Recognition of "Picture Whittier" photographers: last fall, the Whittier Alliance sponsored a photo contest, encouraging residents to send in photos that captured the uniqueness of the Whittier neighborhood in digital photos to be used in the 2009 neighborhood calendar. NRP visual identity funds helped pay for the printing and distribution of the calendars, which will be mailed to every residence/business in Whittier. **Many thanks to those who submitted:** Don Biehn, Luana Campbell, Anthony Carchedi, Lori Chu, Gina Frances, Mel Gray, Verne Greenlee, Jon Gutmanis, Gary Holcomb, Peter Jochimsen, Lee Klement, Pam Koller, Jackie Koury, Dana McDill, Michele Spaise, Carrie Thompson, Leo Whitebird, and Corrine Zwickey. The calendar was designed by WA fall intern April Conlee.

The **WA Annual Meeting** will be April 2 from 6-8:15pm at Whittier School. Five three-year seats to the Board of Directors will be open at that time. Serving on the Board is a chance for greater involvement in WA activities and decision-making. There is an election form available from the office. Please talk to any of the current Board members, or to Marian, for more information. The **Good Neighbor/Good Business nominees** will also be recognized at the annual meeting, noting Whittier citizens who go above and beyond. There are nomination forms available from the WA office. The next WA-sponsored event is the **Dog Days of Whittier**, February 14 from 1 to 3pm in Washburn Fair Oaks Park. The annual event is a chance for neighbors to spend an afternoon enjoying conversation and treats in a family (and pet) friendly environment. Please contact the office if you are available to help with the event in any way. If you would prefer to receive meeting notices and event announcements via email rather than postal mail, please contact the office.

5th Precinct report: In 2008, there were increases in 2 areas of crime from 2007: there were 2 more aggravated assaults reported, and 17 more thefts. However, the number of all reported crimes is down 11%, with a 34% reduction in robberies. (Aggravated assaults take into account harm/injury of the use of a weapon during the crime). If you have any follow-up information to a reported crime, please feel free to add to the report by calling the MPD. The **neighborhood policing plan for 2009** is being compiled. The plan for 2008 included 4 performance measures, which included a decrease in reported robberies and residential burglaries, a decrease in the number of thefts of motor vehicles, and an increase in the feelings of safety by residents and business owners. In response, a resident noted that she does feel safer along Nicollet and in Washburn Fair Oaks Park; however theft from parked cars along Nicollet still is an issue. Another problem area is 22nd and Clinton, with continual loitering, littering, increased foot traffic in the alley, and suspicious activity in the alleyway. Lt. Hayhoe will try to get the Nicollet beat officers more engaged to work to decrease the thefts from motor vehicles. On the Franklin/Nicollet beat there is a 2 person day and night patrol, and Lyn-Lake has a 2 officer night patrol.

The precinct is aware of **safety concerns along the Greenway**, and is working with the Greenway Coalition to brainstorm ways to make the Greenway safer for its users (like better signage, more effective lighting, adding mile markers, the possibility of a volunteer citizen patrol to ride the greenway). Please call 311 to report any suspicious activity along the Greenway or in the neighborhood in general. A resident mentioned problems with the parking at Park Square; Lt. Hayhoe will note the need for increased patrol there.

NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION ACTION PLAN: NRP PHASE II INTRA-STRATEGY PLAN MODIFICATION FOR FUNDING (ERICA CHRIST, BOARD CHAIR) The Whittier Alliance has received funds from the Neighborhood Revitalization Program on a yearly basis since the program's inception. The NRP plan for the Whittier neighborhood includes various area of focus, with funding amounts budgeted to implement strategies within those areas. The WA is

short on funding for administrative purposes for 2009, and the NRP Steering Committee, as well as the Finance Committee, have recommended moving some funding within the strategies to cover the budget shortfalls. The intra-strategy plan modification was also supported by the Board at the December meeting. The total amount of the plan modification is \$45,400. The total budget for 2009 is roughly \$170k. Moving the funds within the strategies will ensure that the WA will have a full year of operating funds for 2009. The recommendations include 4 parts: 1. Plan Mod *from* A. Housing 1.1.1 *to* A. Housing 2.1.1 Housing Development Manager (contract #22203), for \$24,000; 2. Plan Mod *from* B. 1.2.1 Police Patrols *to* B. Safety 1.1.1 Safety Coordinator, for \$12,000; 3. Plan Mod *from* B. 1.2.1 Police Patrols *to* B. Safety 1.2.1 Citizen Walking Patrols (contract #22203), for \$1,400; 4. Plan Mod *from* D.1.1.1 Nicollet Ave Parking Plan Implementation *to* D. 2.1.1 Commercial Development Manager, for \$8000. Tom Bissen **moved** the intra-strategy plan modification, and it was **seconded**.

CI Motion 1: The Community Issues Committee support a plan modification moving \$45,400, as outlined, between Phase 2 strategies to fund the 2009 Whittier Alliance budget. **Motion Carried:** 20-0-0.

The WA annual budget will be reviewed at the annual meeting, and the NRP phase II plan for Whittier is available online at nrp.org. The NRP program is set to expire in 2010 and the new program “Framework for the Future” should be in place by 2012. Any funds the WA has contracted out will continue to work beyond the end of NRP, for example, the revolving loan programs will continue. The WA NRP Steering Committee meets monthly to oversee and make recommendations on NRP spending; please contact the WA office if you are interested in attending the meetings.

PRESENTATION OF PROPOSED HISTORIC CONTEXT STUDY AND PRESERVATION GUIDE FOR WHITTIER NEIGHBORHOOD (MARJORIE PEARSON OF HESS ROISE)

The WA has contracted with Hess Roise, a historical consulting firm, to undertake a **historic context study for Whittier**. The study will identify the historic development of the neighborhood as reflected in the existing buildings/property types. 1850 to 1980 are the years of focus. To look at the historic and social context, Hess Roise will research the history and background of neighborhood development through city and county documents (at the library, historical society, etc.). They will also go out into the neighborhood to create a listing of property types and assess what specific properties represent each historic theme (and photograph the examples). The historic context study report will discuss the history of the neighborhood and historic development trends as told through existing properties that represent those trends.

The second phase of Hess Roise’s work is to develop a set of Design Guidelines/a Preservation Guide for the Whittier neighborhood. Using the analysis and information collected in the historic context study, Hess Roise will prepare a document that notes the common property types in the neighborhood and details appropriate renovation and repair treatments. The illustrated guide will act like a series of do’s and don’t’s for approaching work on a building of a particular era and type. The recommendations will be limited to exterior work.

Depending on timing and budget, Hess Roise will also work to analyze the existing Washburn Fair Oaks Historic District guidelines. The district, one of the earliest established in Minneapolis, was designated in 1976. Hess Roise will analyze the guidelines and propose changes that reflect the current conditions of the district and the up-to-date standards for the treatment of historic properties. The WA is asking they review the guidelines to see if the district should be expanded, if there are other properties that should be added within the district, and if there are other neighborhood properties that the WA should work to have designated as historic. Hess Roise will make recommendations of proposed revisions to the WFO Historic District guidelines.

Marian noted that Hess Roise is being contracted partially through funds the WA received as a grant from the Sweatt Foundation, and through NRP funds for Phase II Action Plan Housing strategy (1.5.2. “Historic preservation guide”). The ultimate goal for the WA is to establish a revolving preservation loan, to be contracted out to community members to use for historic rehab and property renovation (exterior work only). Having a sense of the historic context of neighborhood development—along with a set of design guidelines for the renovation of different eras of development—will inform homeowners of historic properties. The WA NRP Steering Committee will put together the loan guidelines.

Attendee comments and questions: on the confusion of living within the historic district—what guidelines apply to each development? will the historic context study be helpful to homeowners living in non-contributing homes in the historic district who want to update their properties?; if the renovation guidelines would include recommendations geared toward energy conservation; how to research the history of your home/property (Marjorie suggested the Mpls Building Department, the collection of building permits accessible at the downtown library, the city directories, and historic maps and atlases); if/how the current WFO historic district will be expanded (it can be done by individual buildings, although it’s often easier to make a case for the inclusion of a group/area); and, the preference for the guidelines for WFO district to be more specific. Marian noted the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Committee is currently reviewing most of the city’s historic districts; the WA hopes to have recommendations from Hess Roise in time for their inclusion and review.

Hess Roise will be reporting back to the neighborhood as they develop the guidelines, and will be looking for community feedback on the proposal and their analysis of the existing preservation district. The goal is to have the project completed by the end of summer 2009. Please email Marian with comments or suggestions.

MPLS COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN: PRESENTATION OF FLAT LOT PARKING PLAN, REMOVAL OF THE BLUE HOUSE FROM THE CORNER OF 26TH AND 3RD, AND THE VACATION OF 2ND AVENUE; (MIKE O'KEEFE OF MCAD, JEFFREY MANDYCK AND DAN VERCRUYSSSE OF MS&R ARCHITECTS, SANDRA ROLPH OF OSLUND & ASSOCIATES) FOR COMMUNITY COMMENT AND MOTIONS STATING NEIGHBORHOOD POSITION MCAD has presented a number of times to the community over the last 6 months, regarding their Master Plan build-out and parking strategy. [See CI minutes from August, October, December 2008.] MCAD would like to take the current proposal to the City committees in February.

The current MCAD parking proposal calls for the construction of a flat lot along the Stevens/26th edge, intending for the lot to be in place 5-7 years (until a parking structure/ramp with 205 spaces can be built at a higher cost and at another location on-campus). The Master Plan calls for better definition of the entry to campus along 26th using 2nd Avenue as a main entry point to campus. The flat lot sets the stage for the later academic building expansion to the south of the current buildings. The flat lot will provide roughly 131 spaces, be surrounded by rain gardens to control for rainwater runoff, and use a lighting plan that attempts to follow the "dark skies" criteria for lighting recommendations (like types of lights and poles used and the focus on pedestrian-scale lighting). The lot will cost approximately \$2 million. The push for the lot construction is driven by the end of the parking agreement with MIA, from which MCAD has been leasing about 140 spaces annually. MCAD and MIA signed a one-year renewal that expires December 2009.

MCAD anticipates charging a low fee for the use of the lot. They have looked at some other parking options—like the Dispatch laundry site—but found it didn't meet their needs because it didn't offer enough parking stalls. The city is requiring even more than the 131 the lot will provide. MCAD is looking at other ways to meet the need, such as adding over 100 new bike racks and working with mass transit. Starting in the fall of 2009, MCAD students who live on-campus will be restricted from bringing vehicles to campus.

Attendee comments and questions: is there a way to continue the agreement with MIA?; could MCAD continue to look at other parking options, rather than construct another flat lot in the neighborhood?; lighting [there are residences on 3 sides of the campus, and MCAD will try to provide enough lighting for safety without light pollution to the homes]; the short-shelf life of a \$2 million project and the suggestion the money could be spent laying the groundwork for the other lot; the capital campaign to raise funds for the ramp [Mike noted they have done some preliminary work but are not really publicizing the campaign as yet]; the concern a 5-7 year lot could become permanent; use of 2nd Avenue [currently dead-ends onto campus, will be used as the parking lot entry and eventually the main entrance to campus]; the need to move the blue house [it aligns with the Master Plan build-out and expansion onto the corner of 26th and 3rd Avenue]; options for moving the parking lot within the campus [moving the lot to the east of 2nd Avenue would destroy the hill and green space internal to the campus]; why didn't MCAD work toward a parking solution sooner?; the 25 spots that will be incorporated into the flat lot; if use of bike transportation by students and faculty will be encouraged, the need for a bike lane along 26th;

Lisa Vecoli, of the MIA, noted MIA's support of MCAD's efforts to provide a parking solution. MIA needs the use of the 3rd Avenue ramp for the parking needs of visitors to MIA and CTC (roughly 750k visitors annually). Although MIA has other parking spaces in the neighborhood (like at First Christian Church, the bus lot), those spaces are already committed. MIA does not have the extra parking to solve MCAD's parking need.

Bruce Lundeen **moved in support** of the flat lot and the site plan (as presented) by MCAD, with the condition that the use of the flat lot not extend more than 5 to 7 years, and it was **seconded**.

CI Motion 2: The Community Issues Committee moves in support of the construction of the flat lot on 26th and Stevens, and the site plan for MCAD's proposal (as presented), with the condition that the use of the flat lot not extend more than 5 to 7 years. **Motion Carried:** 16-6-0.

Tom Bissen **moved in support** of granting a certificate of appropriateness for the removal—but not demolition—of the blue house on 26th and 3rd Avenue, and it was seconded.

Attendees commented and questioned: that the blue house was not a historic building [it is a non-contributing building in the Washburn Fair Oaks Historic District] and might not be worth saving; if the house was being used [some MCAD students currently live there]; the cost of moving vs. demolition; and, plans if the house can't be moved [MS&R will pursue selected demo salvaging so the materials can potentially be reused].

CI Motion 3: The Community Issues Committee moves in support of the removal of the blue house (on the MCAD Campus in the Historic Preservation District), but not the demolition of the house. **Motion Carried:** 9-8-4.

Michaela Ahern **moved** in support of the vacation of 2nd Avenue, and it was **seconded**. (There was no discussion).

CI Motion 4: The Community Issues Committee moves in support of the vacation of 2nd Avenue for its use by MCAD. **Motion Carried:** 11-5-4.

A resident expressed interest in touring the four-plexes along 24th, noting that he would like to view the residences now to see what kind of condition they were in; he was encouraged to work with Marian and MCAD.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS (there was none offered).

Meeting adjourned at 8:23 pm. Minutes submitted by Karin Knudsen.