

Whittier Alliance-Community Issues Committee
Monday, April 13, 2009 6—8:30pm
Whittier International Elementary School
Draft Minutes

Attendees: John Wilson, Mary Cable, Erica Christ, Kurt Nelson, Laura Steinkopt, Tom George, Felino de la Pena, John Ball (MN Liquor Lobby), Hosmer Brown, Councilman Robert Lilligren, Alyson Coward, Sarah Zang (Wedge), Ryan McGee, Daphna Stromberg, Nora Novic, Jane Imaholte, Mike Tupper, Deb Sweetland (HCMC), Verne Greenlee, Tara Newberry, Sharon Lund, Neal Olson, Danny Schwartzman, Kimberly Hart, Chris Gottshall, Marcy Ryan, Soren Sorenson, Steve Pineur, Erin Sjoquist, Rochelle Woldorsky, Jeff Nelson, H. Baumbach, Uri Camarena, Jim Baker, Erin McKee Vanslooten, Scott Austin, Beth Harrington, Elizabeth Kronstad Judge, Sonny Lohmann, Lisa Lohmann, JoAnn Musumeci, Dan Malecha (HCMC), Megan Leafblad (MCAD), Lt. David Hayhoe, Mary Doffing, Lisa Vecoli, Anne Weber, David Bagley, Anthony Carchedi, Pat Fleetham, Jesse Oyervides, Susan Stewart, Elizabeth Lawrence, Cerise Ligneel, Lindy Bannister

Presenters: Mark Dziuk (Le Parisien 2), Jeffery Mandyck-MS & R, Michael O'Keefe -MCAD,

Staff: Marian Biehn, Becky Neamy

Call to order: at 6:15 pm by Destin Nygard, CI Chair The Conflict of Interest and Standard of Conduct policies were reviewed. Agenda: Destin amended the agenda due to absence of Lyn-Lake City planner, directed attendees to website for commentary. A **motion to approve** the agenda with changes **carried**. Introductions followed. Attendees were given time to review the minutes, and Destin asked for additions or corrections. None were offered; a **motion to approve** the minutes is written carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & COMMUNITY COMMENTS: Destin stated that at the 1st meeting after the Annual meeting a committee chair is elected. As acting chair he cannot run the election. He stepped down and Erica Christ gave an explanation of the process then opened floor for nominations of a CI chair. A motion to nominate Destin was seconded. Three calls for other nominations followed. The **motion** to elect Destin as Chair **carried**.

Erica spoke about the Whittier Alliance May Day Soirée Annual Benefit. Sven Sundgaard will emcee the event-some of the auction items ipod and flat screen TV. The Alliance is still accepting donations, and that tickets can be bought from the Whittier Alliance office now.

The Whittier neighborhood is now connected to WI-FI with USI wireless. Destin said that it is easy to sign up and can be accessed at www.usiwireless.com. A community member said that are still some dead spots in the area, as she cannot access it in her home off of 22nd and Blaisdell. Destin said their may be some patchy spots, and that residents who cannot access the Wi-Fi should contact USI directly.

Business Updates: Representatives from HCMC spoke about the demolition and construction of the HCMC family clinic. Deb of HCMC introduced Dan Malecha, from McLaughlin construction. They left a demolition schedule and contact info for both HCMC and McLaughlin. They opened up discussion to attendees.

Meeting Announcements: St. Stephen's Shelter will have an open house/ meeting on April 21st at 6 pm. Erica encouraged community members to attend to voice concerns and ideas to St. Stephen's staff. There will also be a Traffic Congestion Task Force meeting on April 21st at 4:30.

5th Precinct Report: Lt. Hayhoe reported that crime is down 2.3 percent in burglaries and auto theft. However, there has been an increase in stolen flat screen TVs in businesses, and coin laundry machines in apartment building laundry rooms. Hayhoe, provided some reminders for preventing auto theft such as: keeping valuables out of vehicle when unoccupied and out of trunk, as there has been an increase in theft from trunks. With the warmer weather they anticipate an increase in crime such as petty theft in households, for those who may leave front doors or

windows open, while in the backyard. Please lock doors and secure windows. Hayhoe also said that they will have bike patrols for Greenway. An attendee said that with warmer weather, brings an increase of people who sleep in their cars/ live in cars, while waiting for Loaves and Fishes near the 22 and Clinton Ave. Another attendee said that there has been some suspicious drug dealing behavior on 3rd and 19th during the day, where the individual is soliciting residents and others passing by. There was also some reports of questionable activity on Blaisdell and 22nd of individuals who were loitering and appear to be getting on the bus but do not. Fair Oaks Park still continues to have issues with individuals loitering and drinking during the day. Marian said that at the B.A. the issue had been brought up of pan handling around Whittier businesses, specifically the BP on Franklin and Third.

MCAD Alternate Parking Proposal –Mike O’Keefe-MCAD, Jeff Nordyke-MS&R: MCAD discussed its challenges with student and faculty parking. They currently have 260 students living on campus, about 700 students total attending classes on site and remotely. During peak time they have 546 cars coming to the area. They need to accommodate 246 cars to comply with the city. They are promoting transit passes, school owned vans, zip cars, etc. in an effort to reduce the number of students who use cars to come to the campus. A previous proposal discussed demolition of an older blue house in the historic district, however, the new plan proposes to move the house. Jeff the chief Architect for the flat lot project presented on the new plan. MCAD is looking at adding a permanent sculpture garden on 26th to serve as the entrance to the parking structure and MCAD. MCAD wanted to define the edge of the campus while leaving traces of the previous historical structures. Starting at corner of Stevens and 26th there will be a wall of 3-4 feet high until 25th to define MCAD’s boundary and serve as an entrance. The green space could be used as outdoor classroom/sculpture garden/ garden beds. They proposed a secured parking for 100 stalls and 120 bike racks, along with space for motorcycles and scooters. The plan will keep mid sections to serve as rain gardens and drainage. The parking lot will be a pay parking lot, in which the fee has not been determined. A resident who lives across from parking lot brought up issue of lighting, and spotlights that are not pleasant for residents. The issue of student safety and that lighting should not be compensated with poorer lighting to accommodate the desires of the neighborhood. Jeff said that lighting will accommodate both the needs of the students and residents, energy efficient and not over powering. There will also be pedestrian walking paths to help the flow of traffic in to the campus.

Tom George asked why the Whittier Alliance and its Board members were opposed to the flat lot. Destin said that the decision was based from current parking space usage, (i.e. original parking spaces have not been utilized efficiently) and that it had been turned down to encourage MCAD to look for alternative shared parking sites such as the dispatch site on east 26th. However, according to MCAD, supposedly the dispatch site cannot be used as the owner has plans to develop it in the future, and does not want space to be used as parking site. MCAD can no longer use the MIA parking lot as MIA has its own needs for the parking space. Erica said that proposed lot will not alleviate the parking problem as they are losing 140 spaces at the MIA parking lot and are only making a lot for 100 spaces. MCAD said there will be a net loss of 30-40 parking spaces even with the lot. An attendee questioned if the students will avoid parking in the lot if it costs money, and will park on the street instead, creating more congestion. A 2-hour limit on street parking outside of MCAD was suggested to help alleviate issue. Erica questioned if MCAD had done a projection study as to anticipate future needs of the campus and the number of students it will need to accommodate. Another attendee asked if MCAD has considered the potential use of an LTR stop on 26th or 25th on 1st, should it be implemented. Councilman Lilligren suggested the use of alternative parking spots just after the bridge. He then questioned the MIA staff, as to how budget changes have influenced the decision to not allow MCAD to use the parking ramp. Lisa Vecoli from the MIA said that the parking ramp is currently used by

MIA, MCAD and Children's Theater Co. and that by 10 am when the doors open most of the parking occupied, and there is vary limited parking for visitors and patrons. They would like to see their business grow, but foresee difficulty with inadequate parking.

Felino de la Pena made a motion to accept the MCAD proposal that was presented with the addition that the Blue house be moved instead of demolished.

CI Motion 1: The Community Issues committee supports the proposed flat lot as presented with the addition that the blue house on campus be moved instead of demolished.

Motion carried 22-0-5

Le Parisian 2 Presentation: Mark Dzuika a local developer whose other developments include Le Parisien, the blue bldg with Dunn Bros. and Quiznos on Lyndale, and the Waldorf School.

Mark gave a brief overview of his development of Le Parisien 1, the contamination he cleaned up, the change in market, the challenges of building something nontraditional. Mark said that from the beginning he had originally planned to construct the Le Parisien 2. The Le Parisien 2 development would contain 58 market rate condos following European design and commercial space on the lower levels, similar to the original Le Parisien. Mark said that he is planning that one tenant would be a bank and the other would be a Trader Joe's. He said that from his research Trader Joe's is about one-fourth the size of the Wedge, with an average annual revenue of \$10 million, compared to Wedge's annual \$40 million of which \$10 million of the Wedge's revenue comes from their warehouse. The installation of a Trader Joe's near the Wedge will not compete with this revenue stream. Trader Joe's is niche market retailer that carries privately labeled products and specialty boutique wine and beer, which will also not compete with the Wedge. The major problem that is preventing Trader Joe's from becoming established in the Lyndale Corridor is a liquor law for the city of Minneapolis, which states liquor vendors have to be 2000 feet apart. This city ordinance is about 70 years old. Mark approached the city about 2 years ago in an effort to change this ordinance city wide—that effort failed. In order to pursue Le Parisien 2 with a Trader Joe's which includes a wine and beer shop, he need to get an exemption from the state legislature allowing the City to consider issuing a liquor license as part of the development. He brought the request for an exception to the state subcommittee the first week of April. The State subcommittee requested that the Mpls City Council take a preliminary vote on whether the state should consider the exemption The City Council supported the state allowing the exemption in a 7 to 6 vote. In a few weeks it will go to the State commission, if approved it will come back to the City of Minneapolis for approval. Mark anticipates that the Le Parisien 2 will bring 58 new jobs to the Whittier Area. Mark has signed contract with Trader Joe's, and if the state supports the exemption for the City to consider a liquor license with the development proposal ,Mark will move forward with his development plan. He would like to start this fall.

Oppositions: It was noted that the Lyndale Corridor is last area in Minneapolis with no national chains. An attendee did not want to have a national chain compete local businesses. Current Le Parisien has vacant retail space. Mark said that several local businesses have approached him about leasing the space (such as Kim, the owner of Bryant lake Bowl, Barbette, and Red Stag) but many owners have shied away from renting due to economy. He has avoided renting to franchises like Starbucks and Subway although they have wanted to lease the space. Another attendee was concerned that by letting a Trader Joe's in town it will open the door to allow other national chains and foreign owned corporations into the neighborhood. Another attendee felt that there is a surplus of condos and an over saturation of food providers in the Lyn Lake, Uptown and Whittier areas. Several employees of the Wedge felt that Trader Joe's will directly compete with the Wedge. Although Trader Joe's sells privately labeled products it sells the same types of products that the Wedge also sells, such as organic milk, organic butter, etc. Trader Joe's is not a community-based organization such as the Wedge, and does not give profits to improve the community. If Trader Joe's takes business from the Wedge, it means less money will be given

back to the community. Frank Ball of the Minnesota Liquor Lobby, felt that a Trader Joe's would compete directly with Humms Liquors. He also mentioned that Trader Joe's has 13 other possible locations in Minneapolis besides the Lyndale Corridor. He said that residents should be concerned that if Trader Joe's obtains this special permit it could mean that others could apply for the same exemption---attendees applauded that comment saying that competition was good.

For: Previous project was high quality that attracts purchasers who are seeking to purchase at a market rate, which add value to the neighborhood. Even though the original project was designed for sellable condos, with the downturn in the economy all 13 units are currently rented at a market rate. The Parisien 1 is unique in design and living space. It is over engineered and high quality. Several comments from attendee thought that the Trader Joe's would be an asset to the Wedge. The stores are different enough to compliment each other. One attendee thought that a Trader Joe's will become a destination store that will bring more people in to the neighborhood that doesn't necessarily live in the area. Long term it will add more money in to the neighborhood.

Councilman Lilligren explained the process and reason that an "exception" has to be granted to the City from the State. The State has jurisdiction over some areas and in this case the liquor law that prohibits another off-sale liquor license within 2000 is one of those oversight areas. This law only applies in Minneapolis and St Paul—not in the suburbs or out state. Unless the law is changed for the entire city (a previous attempt failed) and exception has to be applied for on a case-by-case basis. If the State grants the exception, then the City and the neighborhood will have the opportunity to debate whether the development is good for the neighborhood on several levels and if the wine and beer shop is an okay part of that. Attendees commented that they thought the law was onerous and that an exception should be given. This is a local question—not a State question. If the State does not allow the exception, the conversation doesn't go any further. Several people wondered why the state had that kind of power over a City issue?—Old liquor lobby law. Several people supported the exception in order to have the conversation and to open up competition.

Regarding traffic congestion Mark said that he has been planning potential solutions for the past 4 years. He stated that he cannot address traffic congestion at this point as the project is its early phases. Should project progress and be approved, a traffic study would be conducted. There would be the potential to add traffic lights and turn lanes to control and alleviate current and future traffic problems. Mark also discussed the bankruptcy on last project. He had filed for bankruptcy but it was settled as of Oct. 2008. In the bankruptcy, something has to give so he did not pay property taxes in full, but they are scheduled to be current within the month.

Mark restated that the point at this time was to support the exception at the state level so the discussion could go further. He offered a petition for people to sign and emails for the state representatives in order to contact them.

Meeting Adjourned. The meeting was not officially adjourned but was terminated at 8:21.
Minutes submitted by Becky Neamy