

## **Whittier Alliance-Community Issues Committee- DRAFT MINUTES**

Monday May 10, 2010 Whittier Elementary School

**Attendees:** Tom Bissen, Anthony Carchedi, Laura Jean, Maurice Battle, Felino de la Pena, Mary Cable, Jesse Oyerdes, CM Robert Lilligren, Daphna Stromberg, Ted Gleckner, Brain Foster, Aaron Hanauer, Darrell Washington, Erin Sjoquist, Jeff Nelson, David Schuster

**Presenters:** Lt. Diaz (5<sup>th</sup> Precinct), Elizabeth Gales (Hess Roise) **Staff:** Marian Biehn, Becky Neamy, Jessica Rosenberg

Call to order at 6:23 by Maurice Battle, CI Chair, who noted the Conflict of Interest & Standard of Conduct policies. A motion to **approve the agenda** was made and carried. Tom asked that the April 12<sup>th</sup> minutes be adjusted to clarify that the architect of Inn at Karmel said that parking there is in compliance, it was per the presenter, not confirmed by site plans or the WA. The 4/12/10 CI minutes were **approved as amended**.

### **Announcements and Community Comments**

**Comments/Topics from Whittier Residents** Anthony asked CM Lilligren to talk about the sidewalks and the little white dots. CM Lilligren says that the city is on a 15 or so year cycle of inspecting every sidewalk. The areas that need repair are marked, the city communicates to the property owner, gives them a chance to repair it, or the city will repair it and the property owner can repay at once or over time. Daphna says the city will inspect with you again and work with people. Felino saw two people picking up garbage from MCAD and wants to commend them for cleaning up the neighborhood. Marian and a resident add that MIA & CTC were part of an Arts Campus Earth Day Clean Up and Fallout has also been doing cleanup in Whittier.

**CI Motion 1:** The Whittier Alliance thanks MCAD, MIA & CTC and the Fallout for their work in cleaning up the neighborhood. **Motion Passes 12-0-1.**

**5<sup>th</sup> Precinct report** – Lt. Diaz. We've had 24% overall reduction in crime 06-09. From 2009-2010, the only YTD increases in crime is robbery (by 2), thefts (by 5), and auto thefts (14). Most auto thefts in the precinct aren't in Whittier, but it is a good reminder to put things away. There was a shooting last month on Stevens. One person has been charged, is currently in custody, and has been charged with 2<sup>nd</sup> degree assault and possession of a handgun. The gang enforcement team worked on it. Tom asked about a crime at Karmel Plaza. The 5<sup>th</sup> Precinct Open House will be this Thursday night, food, fun. Lt. Diaz talked about the meeting at the 5<sup>th</sup> Precinct with Somali elders and leaders in the community, to build relationship, let the community know they are there for them, and also need community members to come forward and report things. They will try to respect people's anonymity. This is the first of what will be a monthly meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> Mondays to get to know people and build trust. **MCAD Storefront Project** – Marian shared about the MCAD storefront project. An MCAD class, Art in Community, collaborated with the Bus. Assn. and the neighborhood to put art in empty storefronts on Nicollet Ave. They interviewed community members, and the pieces they created are in Nicollet windows now. When a space gets rented, the art can move to other spaces.

**CI Motion 2:** The Whittier Alliance thanks MCAD Art in Community class for their work in the Whittier neighborhood. **Motion Passes 13-0-1.**

**May Day Soiree:** Thanks to everyone who volunteered, donated, and attended. It was a great event, raising money for the Whittier Alliance. The restaurants in the area donated great food. Support local businesses, they support us. **Eat Street Excursion:** The next Eat Street Excursion will be Thursday and Friday May 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. There will be deals and discounts at Eat Street. The Thursday event will be in conjunction with the MIA 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday. Check the WA website for details on the specials. **Earth Day Clean Up and Graffiti Removal** – Date Change to May 15, the last day was rained out. Meet at 10am at the WA office to get bags and gloves, celebration after at Calvary Church with food donated

by Calvary. **World of Whittier Family Fair:** The World of Whittier fair will be at Whittier Elementary school on Saturday May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1-4pm. There will be food, games, activities, and information from youth and family organizations in the neighborhood, including summer youth opportunities. **Rental Property Owners group:** This is a new group forming with the 5<sup>th</sup> Precinct. If you are interested in getting involved, contact Becky and check the WA website for more information.

### **Whittier Historic Preservation Guidelines - Elizabeth Gales – Hess Roise**

Hess Roise was hired to do four things: look at the n'hood's historic context, complete a context study, update the WFO preservation guidelines, and create a Whittier n'hood preservation guidelines. The WFO district was designated in 1976, one of the oldest historic designation areas in the city. They are 4 pages, and have no pictures. By today's standards, the guidelines don't cut it. You can look at the recent (12/09) guidelines for the Warehouse Historic District to see what more complete, easy to use guidelines. Hess Roise is working with WA and Heritage Preservation Commission to do this update. There will be community and HPC hearings, and then go to the City Council, hopefully by the fall. These guidelines, when they are adopted by city council, would be binding for the WFO district. Hess Roise is also working on The Whittier Neighborhood Preservation Guide. WA received a grant from National Trust for Historic Preservation to work on this. This guide will be to identify prevalent building types, provide info on how to preserve, renovate, and repair buildings w/o destroying historic character. Guidelines will be illustrated and easy to use. These guidelines will be voluntary. Elizabeth showed examples of guidelines from Duluth. Though historic preservation can sound daunting, it is really just about keeping your building while using specific materials. Historic preservation is about valuing a "sense of place," the buildings and landscape that make a place special and unique. It stabilizes communities, maintained properties are safer and more valuable. It can support sustainability, the local economy, and can generate heritage tourism. Elizabeth mentioned the idea of "conservation districts," which is a slightly looser way of thinking about planning in the n'hood. It goes beyond buildings, looks at layout of streets and houses, etc. This could provide more protection.

**Attendees Comments and Questions:** Has there been any talk of expanding WFO? No, not by time or by size. It is an option, but would take research and work with the Heritage Preservation Committee. Marian says we'll work with HPC, as there are some buildings newer than the designation, that we'd like to protect. The general rule is 50 years. If you wanted to designate an individual home in a district, would you need the property owner's approval? Ideally, you do, but the city can do it without the owner's approval; it would be important to have political support. That happened at the Greek district by the university. David points out that most people are looking to make small changes, and Elizabeth said that the old guidelines don't even mention windows. Erin would like recommendations of contractors who are knowledgeable about historic preservation. Marian has a list from HPC that is very complete, she will send it to anyone who is interested, could be posted to the website. Aaron from HPC at CPED says that Center for Energy and Environment loans through Whittier can also be helpful. Aaron will put together the resources they have available for historic preservation and home repair. How will the recently passed tax credits help? Elizabeth explained that there were tax credits passed in the 1970's for up to 25%, then 20% and only income producing properties. For the last 15 years, preservationists have been trying to get something similar passed in Minnesota, and it passed this year. State tax credit piggy backs on federal one: same form, different cover sheet. To get it, your property has to be designated historic, and income producing (within WFO and rental). If your house is older than 1935, not designated historic, you can get a 10% tax credit for repairs. Check out the National Park Service (nps.gov) and search for historic tax credit. Will there be a revision of what is designated historic, how things are holding up? Yes, that will be part of what's looked at, some buildings in WFO are gone. There are 12 historic districts in Minneapolis, and it is better to have different guidelines for each area. Some things will be the same (siding, windows), but you want your guidelines tailored to the area and historic designation. Marian is passing around two examples of guidelines from other

cities. Do you have a plan for outreach to property owners in the area? Yes, an unimplemented plan. Will this affect the park? The Park Board is independent, but plans that change the makeup of the park should be considered part of this, of the composition of the WFO district. Jesse mentioned that we need to work as a neighborhood to preserve the Greenway, keep it up. The Greenway trench is historic, some of the buildings are included, mostly not, and the bridges are considered contributing. B/c it is historic, you could have a public hearing on what a replacement bridge looks like. Marian shares two recent successes with n'hood historic designation. We've got Rex Hardware designated historic, and there will be a review for local designation of both the interior and exterior of 2008 Pillsbury. CM Lilligren suggests that the n'hood keep using tools to protect more of the n'hood. MB says that the n'hood is still vulnerable to speculators who can buy buildings and carve them up or use them for purposes that are not assets to the community. CM Lilligren gave an update on Salem Church. Who should we contact about identifying structures, who should identify structures? The n'hood should contact HPC, and tell them what buildings are important. Could we expand the district to Pleasant and the Greenway? Elizabeth says it may not hold up. Individual designations do hold teeth, and can be done without the property owner's support, and she thinks is better than trying to force the WFO district bigger.

Hess Roise looks forward to updating the neighborhood about the work on both the WFO and Whittier neighborhood guidelines. Both will come through the neighborhood committee process, and then the WFO historic guidelines will go to the City Council.

**Old / New Business.** Black Forrest is celebrating their 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. 9:30 am, Friday May 14<sup>th</sup> City Council is presenting them with a certificate, neighbors are welcome to come and support, and there will be celebrations at Black Forrest on Saturday. Darrell Washington announced the Whittier Park usage task force, which has formed and will look to get a space usage agreement between the park, school, and neighborhood. He is also working on reserving spots at Whittier Elementary for kids in the neighborhood, while it transitions to a magnet school. Marian says that the WA will put together a school board candidate hearing, this could be a question for them. Do we have an official liaison from WA to the school? No, it happens ad-hoc. Could we have that, to try to repair and build relationships? Darrell says that there are a lot of people in the school who don't get involved with the neighborhood, and he thinks that there should be a more formal relationship, he volunteers to be more involved. Jesse asked about, and Marian reported that The Inn at Karmel agenda item has been postponed at CPED until June 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Meeting adjourned: 7:55pm**

**Minutes submitted by:** Jessica Rosenberg, Administrative Assistant, Whittier Alliance

**Next meeting:** Monday, June 12th, 6 pm, the Whittier Elementary School