

Whittier Business Association Meeting
Draft Minutes
Black Sheep Pizza (2550 Nicollet Ave S) – Wednesday, February 10, 2016

Attendees: Andy Cohen, Bad Waitress; Erica Christ, Black Forest Inn; Nancy Blanski, Faro Properties; Sabine Shea, Christianson & Co; Mark Trehus, Treehouse Records; Brianna Darling, Wedge Co-op; Laurie Engle, Brave New Media; Paul Jablonsky, Nicollet Car Wash; Jose Ramirez; Jordan Smith, Black Sheep Pizza **Staff:** Ricardo McCurley, Lucy Lawson
Meeting **called to order** at 4:10 pm by Andy Cohen, Business Association Board Chair.

Introductions: Introductions were made. The agenda and code of conduct were reviewed. A **Motion** to approve the agenda as written **Carried**. The January 2015 minutes were reviewed. A **Motion** to approve the January minutes **Carried**.

Spotlight on Business – Black Sheep Pizza – Jordan Smith

Jordan and his wife Colleen started the business. The Eat Street restaurant was the third location, and has a full bar. They love the neighborhood. It has been a more traditional build up than the St Paul location.

Item 1: Update on Whittier committees & task forces

Ricardo McCurley briefed attendees on a number of new development proposals in neighborhood:

29th & Harriet: Developer Solhem worked with City for 4-5 months then presented to n'hood at last minute. Potential issues: the building will be shading Greenway for 109 days per year, and their pedestrian walkway will be closed at night. CI meeting motions passed the height and zoning changes. The Midtown Greenway had a difficult fight on another development and gave in on shading of the Greenway 3 1/2 months per year, creating a precedent.

26th & Lyndale: Developer Masters Properties has made some changes to their proposal from the first presentation at the combined meeting in January to the February meeting. The underground parking exit has moved from Lyndale to 26th Street, and the retail grocery tenant is still up in the air. City and County are in discussions on Lyndale Ave – talking about going from four lanes to three lanes. Attendees discussed the traffic down Lyndale Avenue.

29th & Pleasant: Sabri Properties is proposing a building to the south of the Greenway. Sabri has presented to the Committee of the Whole, and is at a similar point in the process to the Harriet Apartments development.

Environmental Task Force: Ricardo McCurley briefed attendees on different environmental initiatives in the n'hood. Lake Street Council is providing free energy audits for businesses. Black Forest Inn had an energy audit, and found the energy auditors have some interesting partnerships with companies that provide energy saving devices. Attendees discussed when you can expect to break even on these energy-saving investments, and different Community Solar models. Annual meeting is coming up and looking at offering Whittier reusable bags if businesses are interested in sponsorships.

Plastic Bag Ordinance update: The City will implement a plastic bag ban, with a 5 cent charge for paper bags. Enforcement will start a year or two in – similar to the styrofoam ban for takeout containers. An information session is coming up towards the end of February.

Crime & Safety Taskforce – Bike Patrol Proposal: The WA board approved a community bike patrol starting summer.

Item 2: Whittier Business Grants & Loans & Open Streets Nicollet

Open Streets: Lyndale Neighborhood Group has invited Whittier to participate in Open Streets Nicollet in September because Kmart has agreed to open up its parking lot, and there could possibly be an opportunity for Eat Street restaurants to sell street food with seasonal food permits. Nicollet would be closed from Lake Street to 46th Street. The Lyndale Avenue Open Streets is a separate unrelated event. The devil will be in the logistical details.

Grants & Loans: Ricardo sought some feedback from attendees about what they would like to see in terms of capacity-building grants and loans. Attendees discussed being more active in recruiting businesses to develop their own properties, rather than outside developers always coming in and losing some of the character of the n'hood.

In terms of business start-ups and hurdles that they faced, attendees mentioned, for example, that application processes for liquor licenses are very bureaucratic, and navigating neighborhood associations and City Councils can be confusing. We will put how to make the neighborhood association more of an asset to businesses and property owners on the agenda for the next meeting. Anyone who has ideas is encouraged to email the WA office as well.

Paid Sick Leave Update: There have been a bunch of 'listening sessions'. Committee will have a recommendation for the Council at the end of February. Black Sheep Pizza has already implemented it. **Graffiti Removal Resources:** Materials and supplies are at the office. Restorative Justice people sometimes send n'hood associations taggers, but offenders have to choose to do RJ and choose your organization. **Whittier Annual Meeting** will be March 24, and BA reps to the WA board will be elected at 1st BA meeting after Annual Meeting.

Meeting adjourned 5:40pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by Lucy Lawson