

Whittier Alliance Board Meeting Minutes

March 17, 2016 6-8:30 PM

Whittier Park

Present: Erica Christ, Andy Cohen, David Bagley, Laura Jean, Christina Le, Erin Sjoquist, Kenya Weathers **Absent:** Brett Vandebussche, Daphna Stromberg, Ted Irgens, Natascha Shawver, Ted Irgens **Staff:** Ricardo McCurley, Lucy Lawson **Guest:** Damon Berg
Call to Order at 6:10 by Erica Christ, Board Chair. Standard of conduct and conflict of interest were reviewed. **Motion** to approve the March 17 agenda, with a few minor additions, **Carried.**

Comments from the Chair

Erica Christ

Erica found a *Whittier Design Study* from 1974 – 1st and 26th street has remained the #1 traffic accident intersection to this day. N'hood was 94% renter occupied back then, now 90%. Their suggestion for the freeway soundwall was a 'Potemkin Village' streetscape façade with a landscaped foreground. A lot of the issues have remained unchanged.

Secretary's Report

Minutes from February 25, 2016, were reviewed and a **Motion** to approve as written **Carried.**

Executive Committee

Erica Christ

Voluntary Compliance Agreement – Housing complaint against City of Minneapolis

Groups involved in the complaint have agreed to have a lawyer draft some language that everyone can agree to. The lawyer has not got back to us about comments/questions/edits. One of the executives in HUD, Secretary Castro, came to Minneapolis recently, and Minneapolis is going into 9-month review period. HUD is creating a guidebook for cities as to how to do things in a fair and equitable way; however, as it is voluntary, it is unlikely to change the status quo much.

Community Issues Meeting

The I-35W transit/access project presentation was not very informative. The 26th & Stevens development update was informational, but the design upgrades sounded like improvements.

Crime & Safety Task Force – Kenya/Ricardo

Next meeting's tentative agenda will include the bike patrol. We will discuss with Lyndale possibly sharing bike cop patrol, with proportional allocation according to funding. Should also consider talking to Stevens Square as we already share beat cops with them and they take their crime and safety very seriously. Crime data for Whittier shows definite clusters, and need to focus on building up block club leaders. Phillips West uses some residents in supportive housing as part of their safety patrol. We are going to start the Earth Day weekend clean-up at St Stephens shelter – some shelter residents have participated in past clean ups and been very positive about the experience.

Environment Sustainability Task Force – Ricardo

Collected 67 lbs of salt in the excess salt clean-up, in partnership with some LHNA residents. Discovering other similar initiatives in the community – e.g. Children's Theater and MIA have green teams. There is a lot of interest in community solar initiatives. Board members found that no-one ever called them back from MN Community Solar. A lot of different models out there; some outfits better than others. ESTF members will do some research and pick one that WA can sign up to. The n'hood is very diverse, and the biggest impact could be to get some of the big multi-unit apartments to participate in recycling and organics. The school doesn't currently recycle, and teaching the kids would be low-hanging fruit. The PTA is saying they might get composting so things might be changing.

Business Association - Erica

MCAD presented, wanting to link MCAD artists and businesses. Both Treehouse Records and Zeus Jones want murals. Joan Vorderbruggen suggested applying for a Blue Cross Blue Shield 'building healthy communities' grant, or applying to the National Endowment for the Arts for a 'creativity connects' art & non-art institutions partnership grant. Paul has also been talking to MCAD, where students would not be leading mural design but doing research and painting work designed by others.

Annual Meeting

Board discussed whether or not to appoint a Crime & Safety Cttee, rather than only the CI and BA, at the AM this year. Previously WA had many cttees, but there seemed to be a natural limit to how many cttee meetings people want to attend. Will keep as a TF for now and track its progress.

Bd Motion 2: The Whittier Alliance Board recommends establishing the CI and BA as the 2016 Acting Committees of the Whittier Alliance. **Motion Carried: 7-0-0**

Finance Committee

Andy Cohen

February 2016 Financial Statements: The Feb financial report was presented and discussed. The balance sheet was reviewed. We are owed some money for youth grants. The 2016 budget is now in place so we can track costs against the budget. Board discussed youth grants, how the recipients report and what they need to demonstrate to get the money, such as serving kids in the n'hood, and whether the youth-serving organizations are visible enough to n'hood residents.

FC Motion 1: The Whittier Alliance Board accepts the February 2016 financial report for the Whittier Alliance. **Motion Carried.**

Old & New Business:

Cuningham Group contracts – Already approved \$5000 for the phase II approach, putting the pretty package together, drawings, website, enticing pitch. Stage III will be hustling some support.

Eat Street Special Service District Update – District will be approaching Stevens Square, Loring and Whittier to help fund new trash cans. Will only put in what funds Stevens Square and Loring put in. This is just a heads-up, they won't be asking for it till after their next meeting in June.

Citywide Council Meeting – Ricardo has met with a lot of EDs and Coordinators, talking about City budgets, everything leads to 2020 when our funding stream from the City ends. The CARAG cttee is meant to design what happens yet, but many participants don't particularly like n'hoods. Will create a meeting between n'hood associations either May 7 or May 22 and will need board member assistance.

Somali Independence Week – Had a meeting with Ka Joog, going to provide Camilla as a resource to help them run the event – e.g. will help them get food vendors, as they are struggling with that. WA will be acknowledged for in-kind contributions. It is a \$250,000 event, so won't be huge share. Board member questioned whether the Somali community is over-emphasized in community spending, there is not as much talking about black or Latino communities, and it can be alienating for members of those communities. It's a sensitive issue. Board members discussed what could do to help with racial equity and social justice in the City.

D&O Insurance – We have it now and there is a reasonable deductible.

Whittier Elementary School Plant Sale – Fundraiser in May will have plants outside the school, master gardener sessions plus vendor tables featuring vendors to do with healthy eating.

Adjourned 8:35 PM

Minutes respectfully submitted by Lucy Lawson.

Meeting Minutes Approved on _____

Erica Christ, Board Chair

Natascha Shawver, Board Secretary