

Community Issues Meeting Minutes
Monday, May 14, 2018— 6:00-8:00pm — Whittier Park

Attendees: David Bagley, Fred Glazer, Abdullahi Wazza, Jen Kader, Aden, Mohamed Mohamed, Hussein Mohamed, Greg Schmidt, Mary Gazca, Ron Harris, Wanda Classen, Brian Foster, Anne Pollock, Constance Taylor, Ashlyn Grynol, Crystal Audi, Viswa Challa, Dan Garrison, Robb Hubernow, Scott Melamed, Willow Kreibich, Felino de la Pena, Steven Stodolka, Michael Huffman, Laura Jean, David Schroth, Tachinia Moss, Rita Stodolka, Mohamed Farah, Abdineq Yussuf, Abdaziz Kadi, Abdilahi Dutech

Staff: Kaley Brown, Dan Stanton

Presenters: Kurt Vickman

Welcome

Welcome at 6:30 by Viswa Challa, Community Issues Chair.

Viswa introduces himself. It is his first Community Issues Meeting as CI Chair.

Agenda was reviewed. Standard of conduct policy was reviewed.

Motion to approve the Agenda. Seconded. **Carried.**

Minutes from April Community Issues Meeting were reviewed. **Motion** to approve made. Seconded.

Carried. Introductions were made.

Announcements/Community Comments & Discussion

Whittier Farmers Market - Jeff Cowmeadow, Pastor at Calvary Church

Last day of June-end of September, Saturdays 8:30-1pm, Calvary Church Parking Lot (2608 Blaisdell Ave)

- Could use more help on live music component or if you know any vendors
- Commitment could be only one Saturday if they want
- Calvary is very welcome and open to any new ideas

Event at Calvary this Friday night - 7-10pm: food and drinks, everyone is welcome

Whittier Park - Becky Lewis, Park Director

4 Upcoming movies in the park this summer (more info on Whittier Rec. Facebook page)

- Men in the Arena
- Men in Black
- Cool Runnings
 - first time at Washburn Fair Oaks

- Space Balls at Mueller Park
- All free

Lots of free drop in programs

- Pottery, Canoeing, Gardening
- Done on consistent days, anyone can just come drop in

Classes coming up

- Basketball camp in August, \$50 fee
- Art Sampler, Track & Field Class

Serve lunch snack every day (12:30-1:30pm), snack (4-5pm), free 18 and under
Mueller is evening snack and dinner

Hiring sports instructor, evening classes

- Grant to start running club

Garden beds:

- Teen team works will be doing this

Community Updates

Hennepin County Library

Tabling every other saturday at Whittier Farmers Market

Many resources - partners with community members to offer different programs for the community

Databases - from website, with library card, skillbuilding, job help

Entertainment, education, downloadable video/audiobooks/music, Book clubs, computer access

Will be issuing cards at the farmers market

Art Gallery - display case and featuring local artists

Ward 10 Office - Ron Harris

3-4 major priorities for Ward 10 Office

- 1) Housing
 - a) Affordable housing crisis → many are getting displaced
 - b) Office will roll out renter focused protections in the next couple of months
- 2) Community Safety
 - a) Police department does job of keeping people safe, but want to expand that
 - i) Next step program → treating people as a whole person to curb violence from multiple angles
- 3) Business
 - a) Focus on small business development
- 4) Infrastructure-related
 - a) Comprehensive plan

Questions:

- 1) Discussion regarding new developments & vacancy rates
 - a) Do these have to be reported to the City?
 - i) Currently, no

- 2) Sick time ordinance for today
 - a) Not giving up the fight to make sure law is fully enforceable

Community Issues Committee, 2018-19

Viswa Challa, Community Issues Committee Chair

What does CI Committee mean?

What do we do and how do we best serve community?

Viswa believes in community driving and determining the growth of that area

Proposes radically restructuring the way this committee works

Currently, great for providing updates but doesn't provide the community with hands-on opportunities for shaping the community

Subcommittees?

Project-oriented space?

What do you all think it could look like?

Feedback:

If project driven, where do we talk about development projects?

- could have focus-areas, where people focus on and provide feedback on development projects in the area
- be proactive, structured, work on those projects

Subcommittees?

- subcommittees do a lot of the work focusing on specific topics/projects, then → bring to the body at the main community issues meeting → focuses on approving things

Do you just want this to be the board?

- this can help speed up the process
- this could allow the board to be focused on bigger projects, outside stakeholder thinking

Work has to be consistent with the strategic plan

Idea-generation has not been the problem; sustaining momentum has been

- want to help establish new, effective leaders

Viswa background:

- Student gov is essentially like a neighborhood org.
- Engage stakeholders
- Secure half a million dollars in mental health grants

Concern:

- People that can come to this meeting have a certain amount of availability
- Subcommittees could engage groups with different availabilities and be more inclusive

How do we make it more inclusive/more accessible?

The Alliance's board has the elected power, but the committee has the power to do work → how do we avoid an abuse of power

Kaley- the board vets the recommendations/decisions of the Community Issues Committee
Sometimes, the board goes against the recs of the CI Committee but it is very rare

****For this meeting next month, bring one more person along that you want to engage in the conversation****

318 W Lake St Development

Ashlyn Grynol, UrbanWorks Architecture

Historical Background

- Working with UrbanWorks - Grand & Lake St
- 2 buildings
- Currently, G&L furniture, which will be demolished for this project

- Offers new housing & economic development
- Most structure before 1939
- 23.5% of neighborhood is unemployed
- Transit-oriented development
- Demographics - 27% speak language other than English
- At G&L, 6 different languages are spoken

Abe & G&L's Background:

- Abe acquired building in 2007
- 1992, started liquor store across the street, building burned so they moved in across the street, then sold (where Lake Wine is now)
- Building across the street was for sale
- Used to be a bar, high crime rates, only made a minor change and changed it to a furniture store
- Then, approached by another investor that wanted to keep it as a bar
- They said no, wanted to keep it a furniture store
- 2011- Basim Sabri bought Karmel Mall
- 90% of customers have children, 3-4 months later there was a lot of crime
- 2012-13- did not do appropriate screenings to start business there in Karmel

- 2013 - shootings by G&L furniture: drive by shooting
- Abe spends 90% of his time at the store
- Abe went to meet with Betsy Hodges to try to improve safety in the area
- Committed to keeping the neighborhood safe
- 2010, works with traveling boys soccer team → building a community
 - Working to get rid of gangs/get kids off the streets by engaging them in sports
- “I want this building until I die”

Design

- Transparency, active retail at the pedestrian level
- Main retail entrances off of Lake St
- G&L will operate the entire first level
- Mezzanine level - enter through separate lobby
- Residential functions all occur off of Grand Ave
- Large indoor bike parking room, bike stalls at streets & racks
- Secure fence on north side of fence
- Efficient units, smaller side, microunits
- 11-units per floor
- Exterior, - transparent, lots of light

Micro Units

- 370 ft squared

How do we know this is what the neighborhood needs - unit and size wise?

- 3 market studies
- All of Abe’s previous renters have worked two jobs
- In interviewing them, they didn’t need space, they needed clean safe etc
- \$900/month
- Roof-top deck with garden

2644 Nicollet Ave Development
Vickman, Executive Director of Good Grocer

Kurt

Kurt Vickman, Founder & ED of Good Grocer

Peter Murphy - Design Team

Jesse Harris - Design Team

Jesser Hammer - Design Team

Good Grocer Background:

- GG is founded in 2010 as social business → focused on helping people who struggled with access to food to get food
 - Rising cost of food prices is something we all deal with to one extent or another
 - Disturbing - people struggling to afford enough food
 - Traveled to different places and saw hunger, but found it to be very prevalent in our own neighborhood
- Better access to healthy, affordable food → GG founded on that very mission
 - Run for community, by community, running every aspect of the grocery store
- Used to be at 122 E Lake, operated by 500 volunteers mostly from Whittier
- We talked about how neighborhood can be so divided; GG brings people together through volunteerism
- Then, found out 35W expansion project would require their building's space, and they began looking for new building
- Couldn't find one in five-block radius - found lot at 2644 Nicollet Ave S , right next to Christos
- 6-8 months ended up purchasing that property
- Density requirements: City required more density because on pedestrian overlay → how to create more density → add apartments on top; GG on first floor

Design

- Want as much windows on the Nicollet side as possible
- GG on first floor; apartments above it
- GG is meant to be community hub → allow community to run it
- Engagement at street level on sidewalk
- Micro-unit apartments

Question:

Why so many stories?

Would tallest building on the block, but wouldn't really flow that well

Has anyone given you the Whittier design guidelines?

- Yes

What type of metal?

- Metal panels

What are the specific density requirements?

- Do not have the specifics, but one story was not possible given the pedestrian overlay and density requirement

This subsidizes Good Grocer, but have you looked into how it factors into rent?

- 1 bedrooms, 2 bedrooms → haven't determined exact numbers for rent, but hope to make it affordable

Note from Viswa from Facebook:

- Feedback about more art on south facing side
- Reduce parking -- too much

Feedback → can reach Kurt through kurt@goodgrocer.org

Or through the Whittier Alliance office

Old & New Business

Motion to move fireworks discussion up in the agenda. **Seconded. Approved.**

Fireworks Discussion - Laura Jean

- Recent years, firework laws have changed and make them more accessible → stretch out firework season
- Asking that the WA could support motion to educate people in the community about fireworks and the hazards
- Affects: those with PTSD, pets, veterans, refugees

Reads motion:

Motion of support to educate community about laws, set expectations for neighbors on why this matters, through flyers, postcards, social media channels

Seconded.

Discussion: office could decide postcard usage, how to include it best

Fireworks in the park → is that illegal? Yes

Vote:

2- abstentions

15-yes

0 - no

Motion approved.

WA Housing Issues Committee Visioning Session Pt 2 & Community Iftar - Jen Kader, Whittier Alliance Vice-Chair

At AM 2018, motion to create Housing Issues Committee → but had to determine all specifics

What is the vision, what does success look like, how do we get there?

Coming back from first conversation to present a vision → transform circumstances

Then, second meeting will be how do we get it done

Structure, meeting time, nuts and bolts

Wednesday, May 23rd -6-8pm, Calvary Church (2608 Blaisdell Ave)
Ramadan starts tomorrow, ending the event with an Iftar potluck
Inviting people to bring food, no pork/alcohol, only halal meat

If you did not get to participate, there is an online survey open until wednesday at midnight
WA will blast it out on Facebook tomorrow

Viswa thanks everyone for being here, first meeting

- Please come back again, thank you for coming and showing up, providing energy
- Bring a friend next time

Motion to adjourn. Seconded. Approved.

Adjourned 8:17 pm

Minutes submitted by Dan Stanton.