

Whittier Housing Issues Committee Meeting Minutes
Aug 18, 2020, 6:30-8:00pm
Zoom Digital Meeting

Attendees: Katie Anthony, Jennifer Wollner, George Rishmawi, *Nick Hutchinson, Meg Reid, *Christine Popowski, *Jo Ann Musumeci, Aaron Keith, *Nate Rastetter, *Morgan Appleberry, *Nicole Weiler, D'Ana Pennington (Ward 10 office), *Brigid Higgins, *Stephanie Brown

Staff: Kaley Brown, Julie Strand

Speakers: Mike Huffman, St. Stephen's Human Services; Katie Anthony, Sheridan Ventures LLC

**Asterisk indicates they are a registered voter*

Welcome/Introductions.

Welcome & recognize Standard of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policy.

Motion to approve agenda. Seconded. **Motion carries.**

Motion to approve July meeting minutes. Seconded. **Motion carries.** The PowerPoint presentation discussed in the July meeting will be linked within the final version of the minutes.

New Development Introduction - 2210 4th Ave S, Mike Huffman and Katie Anthony

St. Stephen's is asking for the committee to provide a general, written statement to support this project as they seek financing. They will come back multiple times as the project progresses to share and seek feedback on design elements and the site plan. Project context and the Committee process is overviewed.

St. Stephen's' representative gave a history of the organization. The organization works toward ending homelessness through emergency services, long term permanent housing, and community engagement. The current shelter location was never intended to be a shelter for as long as it has been. The organization's request to try and relocate is similar in layout and services included in Simpson Housing's current plan and recent request to the committee. The organization's hope is to provide shelter in housing to people who are languishing in the current shelter system and to create something that will be an asset to the Whittier community at large.

St. Stephen's has been looking for a site for some time. Two adjacent parcels on 4th St are the current target. The preliminary project design would create 44 units of affordable rental housing--single room occupancy, studios and one bedrooms. Of note, 30 units have been approved for subsidy (tenants would never pay more than 30% of rent) others are planned for \$400-500 dollars a month with utilities included. The emergency shelter portion of the preliminary project design would accommodate 54 persons nightly. Also two market rate two-bedrooms are planned to be included per a requirement of the seller. St. Stephen's is driving the vision and partnering with Trellis. The partnership will need to raise both private and public dollars. Assuming all goes well, they would start construction in the beginning of 2023.

Q: How many people have you transitioned from shelter to homes? What will be different about this project? What will create equity in the community? Will partners retain fees or earn dollars to help support their programs? A: The partners (St. Stephen's and Trellis) are still working on who owns what in terms of the project development. Shared ownership model most likely with Trellis owning a large portion.

Q: Will ADA accessible units be mixed evenly across unit types? A: They will meet and aim to exceed code for ADA accessibility and wheelchair accessible units will be spread throughout the unit types.

Q: Has retail space has been discussed as an income stream for the project? A: Space is tight already and they want to maximize the space to include as many beds as possible. Additionally, they will already be likely asking for a variance on building height.

A: Does Trellis have existing buildings in the neighborhood? A: St. Stephen's owns a few in the area, but that St. Stephen's is the org with shelter experience. They do not know about Trellis' holdings without further research and reporting back.

Q: Will the residents there be consistent? Will there be 24 hour access? A: They operate and will continue to be similar to Simpson Housing, in that folks come through adult shelter connect and then they are routed to St. Stephen's for a 30 day bed. They hope to develop the project to accommodate 24 hour access as well. They mentioned that staffing costs will grow by 40% when they go to 24 hour access. Additionally, they added that the CARES Act injected support dollars but that will run out before this project breaks ground.

Q: A shelter bed is not always enough; we as a community need to work toward ending institutional racism. Is the project doing enough to provide equity? A: It is critical that we advocate for housing options all along the spectrum. They are offering one part of the spectrum and hopes that the committee understands that this project cannot be everything.

Additional comments:

--There are multiple different types of work that the HI committee works toward. One is reviewing projects in the neighborhood of all kinds and that we are working on crafting a complete picture that provides a diversity of housing options in Whittier.

--This is a good step in the right direction to support one necessary type of housing in the neighborhood.

The committee chair reminded the meeting attendees that St. Stephen's is asking for a recommendation to the board of WA to write a letter of support for the St. Stephen's project to raise needed funding. **A motion was made to recommend that the Whittier Alliance Board of Directors approve a letter of support for the St. Stephen's project in general as they raise funding.** Seconded. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Sub-Group Project Discussion Focus

Developer Engagement: Equitable Development Scorecard draft

The history of the developer scorecard process and purpose was reviewed, which is to streamline our work with developers and help to document our work. The committee worked with a group of U of M

graduate students in the fall to document and develop the process and a draft was created. It was shared with the meeting members and feedback was requested.

The score card includes info about the neighborhood. An informational section on housing, transportation, sustainability, design, and resources. Its categories were informed by past developer engagement and lessons learned through different projects. There are different weights assigned to values such as affordability, accessibility, displacement of current residents, public space, larger units, architecture, etc. The idea of the scorecard is to say what we care about to developers, to have a tool to support developers based on our values, and to have a tool that maps out our work with developers as a whole.

Comments:

- Good projects tend to get at least 60 out of 100 points on this card.
- This is a really useful tool to evaluate our work and folks are excited to use it.
- They liked its inclusion of energy efficiency and compostables.
- Are we valuing net zero highly enough?
- Since Whittier's AMI (annual median income per household) is lower than other neighborhoods, the weight of affordability should be higher.
- We should not let perfect get in the way of good. There are limits on each project and we can't get everything we want in just one project. Hopefully this will help us track getting everything we want overall. In other words, when we don't get something in one project we can get it in another, essentially providing all the options in the neighborhood.
- This tool will definitely improve the current process for committee members and that it should help with developer presentations.
- This tool will be used by developers to evaluate themselves and by committee volunteers before developer presentations.

Other Committee Sub-Group Project Updates, Next steps & Coming meeting time(s)

If any meeting members wanted to get involved in these sub-groups they should email the committee chair and she would connect them. Larger updates will be shared at the next HI meeting.

- Anti-displacement Strategies - Eviction prevention & tenant support, other activities; sub-group is currently working with HOME Line.
- Unhoused Neighbor Support - There was a meeting with CP Bender to hear what she has been working on and struggling with in regards issues concerning the homelessness crisis.
- Kmart Site Engagement - The sub-group reached out to the city to learn more about their process. They started working with adjacent neighborhoods to form a coalition with a consistent message. The coalition is beginning to collect neighborhood feedback.

General Announcements, Updates, and Opportunities

None.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:01pm

HI Meetings Every third Tuesday of the month

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, September 15th, 6:30-8:00 pm @ Zoom

Meeting Minutes submitted by Julie Strand.