

Whittier Housing and Land Use Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 21, 2023, 6:30-8:00pm

Hybrid Format: WhittierAlliance (10 E 25th St) +
Zoom Digital Meeting

Attendees: Jacob Molho, Aaron Keith, Josiah, Ben Johnson, Jo Ann, Daniel, HC Karlberg, Sarah

Presenters: Tom Fisher, Rachelle, Martin

Staff: Meggie Garcia, George Rishmawi

Welcome/Introductions

-The meeting is called to order at 6:30pm.

Attendees completed a round of introductions.

The meeting chair presented the agenda. Motion to approve the agenda is seconded and passes unanimously.

The meeting chair recognized Standard of Conduct; Non-discrimination and Anti-racism; and Conflicts of Interest Policies.

Motion to approve sept - oct - nov minutes

Search for Shelter - Tom Fisher

- American Institute of Architect Minnesota (AIA) is the only one left to still have a Search for shelter program, this give communities an opportunity to leverage the expertise of architects, landscapers, engineers etc to draw up a potential plan that the community can use to get financing etc. This happens in duration of a week
- AIA assigned Tom Fisher's team to the Kmart site to sketch out a potential layout
 - Goal of Fisher's team for this project is to give the community an ideal of what could be on the Kmart site for them and use it to push back the city from further developing the site in their favor.
- Fisher's team did some research on what other countries were doing to meet housing needs while centering community needs already expressed in the ongoing Kmart project,
 - Ex: grocery stores, housing: ownership vs rental etc
- 1st idea: City ownership is an asset that should be continued.
 - The city should keep ownership of the 2 blocks that make up Kmart. Not sell to developers but sell air right developments to them instead
 - 1) Doing this reduces the cost of housing
 - 2) Ground floor retail is hard for developers to rent this helps with that issue
 - 3) Distribute open space between the 2 blocks this allows all surrounding building to see and access some for of greenery
 - 4) allows other activities/structures to be built into the 2 blocks
 - 5) Enabling a better connection to the greenway
- 2nd idea: City to purchase vacant lots northside of greenway
 - This connects the 2 side more smoothly
 - Allows greater range of housing ownership
 - Sizes to fit bigger families such as 3 to 4 rooms
 - tiny homes on top of some of the buildings
 - A new mode of housing existing in other countries is Vertical RV parking that can be adjusted to housing needs in area

- Currently not allowed in Mpls because they are a hazard
 - How it is done in other countries is allowing RV type vehicles to be parked in parking ramps and allowing people to live in them
 - Currently a demand for parking BUT there is a shift in demand coming in the future
 - How to utilize parking ramps to meet housing and other needs as this shift happens
 - Converting rooftops of parking ramps (than normally remain empty and unused) to hold tiny homes, solar panels, etc.
 - Variety of building heights
 - Allow flex in building height but only along lake street and reduce height further into the neighborhood.
 - Nicollet ave should have space to host food trucks
 - The development of the site should be done in phases to help reduce cost and other issue surrounding developments
 - Phase 1: Small strip running along lake street
 - Phase 2: Block running down Nicollet ave
 - Phase 3: Block running down Blais. And 1st
 - Economic analysis on other ways to reduce the cost of housing
 - 1st idea: Normally seen in business renting called core and the shell
 - This model only comes with what's already there in the building, toilet, elevator, basic empty space etc. Then you decorate, remodel how you'd like. (not done/allowed in housing)
 - Could allow the rent price to be low because they could finish it as money allows. This is done in other parts of the world that has greatly help reduce the cost of housing
 - **Disclaimer** : this was a quick deep dive of the project
 - Why is it difficult to make things affordable?
 - Answer: Baseline development cost are SUPER expensive
 - Reasons that impacted 2023 2024
 - Construction prices inflated supply chain issues
 - Finding it hard to get more construction workers
 - Cost for mortgages also skyrocketed
 - Nothing has leveled out
 - Why do these projects all look the same?
 - Because these projects are routines within construction, finances that it is the only thing that can be built
 - What we are hoping to overcome this - come up other financial cost saving ways
 - Land cost is 10% of the overall cost
 - All the finishing costs
 - Many other variants - give and takes - green energy (brings up value bc of installation but evens out over time)
 - Co op housing new home ownership - could reduce the cost of housing
 - Adapting car ramps to adjust housing needs and using wood vs steel and concrete to reduce carbon emissions
 - Different forms of community gardens and recreational opportunities
Don't concentrate in one spot but spread out over lot
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- Comment: ownership is critical, diversity of uses on site agreed on, affordable housing on the site completely unrealistic, - this area is going to see more traffic and increase of public flow

- When we get into affordable housing many people already want to live here
- affordable housing is a need - not all affordable housing on just this lot
 - Building equity is need and important
- Q: clarify core vs shell units
 - Applying this to rental so people can adjust their space and lower costs - for this to ex
condo to reduce cost
 - Being able to convert car ramps included in this
- Comment - liked tiny homes on rooftops - developed with healthpartners - no one wants to park
on the top of the ramp always empty - turn these areas into tiny home areas
- Next steps? - more drawing, street views with realistic renderings - here to support and if
whittier alliance and lyndale neighborhood want to carry forward in the project with the city
- All materials will be uploaded for on WA site and already on [AIA site](#) for public view

Sustainable Resource Center - Martin/ Rachelle

- Lead hazard neutral center
- Offer weather stuff due testing for tenants - if lead involved will hep to replace them
- Grant to help this happen
 - Old home
 - Children in home frequent
- Takes 4 to 5 months to replace paint, windows and other
- Normally help low income families
- Primarily focus those having issues
- Offer assistance to landlords as well through them and county
 - Opens them to 5k healthy home grant
- Partner with community ro bring out van that does lead
- Leady Eddy van travels around to make this service more accessible

Whittier Alliance Strategic Plan update - Kami board memeber

- Increase power for existing community members - WA serves as the connector to resources and
other organizations and how we help build community
- Housing 2019 - 2024 strategic plan
 - Increase diversity
 - Protecting housing for all ages and stage of life
- Green lettering updated language <- for presentation format

Comment - feedback

Equity and ownership missing in this plan revisit plan to include this in plan

Co ops no good - spent millions of dollars and this just doesn't work

Affordable - require higher wages - give tax wages/incentives for small bus in our neighborhoods
and for low wage residents

Comment - best strat plan seen and clearly states missions especially including housing

The term sustainability is a little ambiguous as to what it might mean in the different contexts (housing,
community, network, etc). So I wonder if it could be more specific, especially when communicating to
the community.

- Presentation and other materials have been uploaded on Whittier Alliance website

ANNOUNCEMENT: Feb 27th caucus night - secretary of state many seats across the board open

Meeting adjourned at pm

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, March 19th , 6:30-8:00 pm - Hybrid in-person/zoom meeting

Meeting minutes submitted by Meggie