

Whittier Housing and Land Use Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, July 18th, 2023, 6:30-8:00pm

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

Attendees: Jacob Molho , Sonia Coley, Laura, Nate, Mike & Luna Bakerian, Aaron Keith

Presenters: Aisha Chugthai, Kelsey

Staff: Kaley Brown, Meggie Garcia,

Welcome/Introductions

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

-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.

-June Meeting Minutes were reviewed and approved.

-Attendees completed a round of introductions.

Whittier Alliance -

2116 Nicollet

- No new updates - quick recap for those who don't know what it's about.
- Project Whittier Alliance took on to create affordable housing and partnered with Alliance housing to make this happen.
- Will be coming back to talk more about the design of the building with the community.
- Currently finding funding for this project
- In the fall will be engagement over the public art that the building will be having

Kmart update - Kelsey city staff

- City working with 4 neighborhood organizations to make this happen: Whittier alliance, Phillips west, Cando, and Lyndale
- About the project:
 - The city of mpls owns 10 acres of land between Lake st., greenway, 1st ave, and Blaisdell
 - Nicollet ave between Cecil Newman will be reconnected
 - Focusing on community input to bring site back and reflect those that live here
- Phase I engagement findings: did a range of engagement activities to gather information from the community
 - 9 main themes: housing, public safety
 - **Top 3 goals:** reconnecting nic, safety, pedestrian safety
 - **Top 3 areas of improvement:** trees/greenery, day to day needs, improvement of walkability
 - Desired Outcomes: 23 total desired outcomes, organized into 6 themes
 - Connecting people to places
 - Culturally relevant community spaces
 - Housing affordability and wealth-building
 - Business opportunities and success
 - Space for community services
 - Designing for inclusivity, safety, and sustainability
 - Updated Project goals: Based on Phase 1 engagement reconnect people and places

more towards lake st. - Nicolet has the space and ability to become a light rail (improve the transit) or other fun transit types. Really pushing for street cars. MORE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

- Questions for group:
 - **What is most important to prioritize on the new street?**
 - Tree boulevard (+2)- bring the greenway into the business
 - Walking/rolling (+2)
 - Biking(+1)
 - C: accept that cars will be on this road but pedestrian safety and walkability should be prioritized
 - No cars - only walking/rolling
 - Q: Will this bring more tax revenue into the city? Cost benefits?
 - 3rd phase of engagement that will be asking these questions and getting these ideas
 - C: this needs to be brought up sooner in the discussion because this is not a free project
 - C: Return of investment wouldn't be a problem because lake st/nicollet are a high place for foot traffic, unlike kmart which was a growing concern
 - This is something the city has already built in to care for the site (green spaces) more about allocating money than a new expenses
 - **What is most important to you? (greenway existing ramp access point)**
 - Pro-moving ramp to connect to existing network: existing bike ways are scary and unsafe to bikers because of cars that are speeding
 - Add a new ramp on the south side and connected to existing network
 - Don't think of the connection to the greenway as just a ramp or bridge and open mind to bigger ideas
 - Pillsbury bridge to be reconstructed soon
 - **What activities are most important to have onsite for you and your community?**
 - What conversations are being had with the park board so there isn't overlap with this project? - They are being made aware.
 - Need lots of activities for children like playgrounds
 - If you want to bring people in and this might not be it for this specific project site. Kansas city site is a good example of what to do with the site
 - Need to see spaces for teens/young adults. Middle school and up
 - Should prioritize indoor spaces and have a well interconnected with the greenway
 - **What features or facilities should be included in this space?**
 - Green spaces around buildings brings people
 - Need available seating/tables in this site
 - Bike repair spots would be great
 - Public restroom not portapotties
 - Signage that includes how versatile this area is. Like lakes to the east etc.

- **What size community gathering space is most important to you?**
 - Small (2-8)
 - Medium (10-50)
 - Large (100 or more) +3
 - Promenade (100 or more) +3
 - Few hundred people for nothing bigger can become an issue
- **Public art?**
 - **Include the elementary kids what they would like to see**
 - **Parks are about walking around, walking on trails: Build in play!**
 - **History plaques that tell the story of the area - make it interactive**
 - **Important to represent ALL the communities that are here: Should center the native americans that were here and are here.**
 - **Something that can be interchanged maybe seasonally versus something stagnant.**
 - **Not political**
 - **Native and black history**
 - **The vibrant history of lake street**
 - **Artist community - represent the student breaking chains/ tell their story**

Housing Policy - Rent Stabilization - Ward 10 council member Chughtai

<https://www.cura.umn.edu/sites/cura.umn.edu/files/2021-08/Minneapolis-Rent-Stabilization-Study-web.pdf> - Will be on last meeting minutes as well/ research talked about in the last meeting

- End of June: The city council sent the ordinance to the committee and they voted against further exploration of this policy/ordinance
 - This means they will not be exploring the policy the rest of the year.
 - Does not mean it can not be explored or taken up in later years
- What was brought up was that there was a lack of engagement from tenants in the city and around along with small landlords that own 5 or fewer rental licenses of 4 or few units/buildi
- Q: Thoughts on the finance committee shutting down the rent control?
 - Work group was created to give info on what type of rent control policy that the city should consider. Every economic researcher approached for this policy said that they could speculate what could happen but can not predict what will happen. There's too many unstable factors in the equation
- C: We can do without the rent control policy. What the city needs to acknowledge is that insurance has doubled in this area after george floyd, investors aren't wanting to be in this area because of the risks. What the city can do is open a 3rd precinct that will make insurance rates go down and bring back investors. The city can also correct the court housing system because it takes months to evict someone and claim back the property. You can get the county to stop dispensing drugs and needles to drug users and get back onto maintaining the curb appeal of this neighborhood.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.

HLU Meetings Every third Tuesday of the month

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, Aug 15th, 6:30-8:00 pm - Hybrid in-person/zoom meeting

Meeting minutes submitted by Meggie Garcia.