

Whittier Alliance Board Meeting
Mar. 19, 2015 6-8:30pm
Whittier Park

Attendees: Natascha Shawver, Daphna Stromberg, Erica Christ, Erin Sjoquist, Laura Jean, Mike O'Dell, Diane Moe, Tom Bissen, Christina Le, Joan Vorderbruggen, David Bagley **Absent:** Andy Cohen, Ted Irgens, Grayson Carr

Staff: Marian Biehn, Rita Stodolka

Call to Order, Erica Christ The Board meeting was called to order by Board Chair **Erica Christ at 6:10** with the establishment of a quorum. Standard of Conduct/Conflict of Interest policy was noted. The March agenda was reviewed and a **Motion** to approve **Carried**.

Comments from the Chair: This is the last board meeting before the election at the annual meeting next month. Erica thanked the board members for their service and for those running again. Significant things were accomplished in 2014 like rehabbing and selling the Stevens Ave houses – it was a big project and organization took a lot of time. The first round of By-Laws changes was also a time consuming project; good to have it done – will tackle the second round of changes in 2015.

Secretary's Report, Erica Christ

As Natascha is applying for reinstatement, Erica started the secretary's report by reading the attendance and reviewing the February 2015 minutes. A **Motion** to approve the Feb. 2015 minutes with the addition of Joan and David to the attendees **Carried**. Natasha was asked to leave the room. This is the 3rd miss for both Ted and Andy and in anticipation of their absences; they both submitted their requests for reinstatement. All requests are in the board packet. Board members discussed their opinions of each board member and their contributions to the board.

The reason board members are removed after three absences is that there is an expectation for a level of commitment. As the board has only 11 mandatory meetings per year, missing three can be significant. However, there is more to being on the board than just attending the board meeting. Each member seeking reinstatement has also spent a lot of time on other activities to support the Whittier Alliance so have shown the commitment in other ways.

Bd Motion 1: The Whittier Alliance moves to reinstate Natascha Shawver to the Whittier Board of Directors.

Motion Carried

Bd Motion 2: The Whittier Alliance moves to reinstate Ted Irgens to the Whittier Board of Directors.

Motion Carried

Bd Motion 3: The Whittier Alliance moves to reinstate Andy Cohen to the Whittier Board of Directors.

Motion Carried

Officers will be elected in April. The board officer positions are: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer

Executive Committee –Annual Meeting, Daphna Stromberg:

For being one week out from the meeting, all seems quiet. The WA anticipates a challenge; there will be some veteran registrars and some new ones. There will be one Good Neighbor and one Good Business award. Volunteer task assignments were emailed out – it's assumed board members are able to commit to the specified time. Timing will be tight since the multi-purpose room won't be available until 5:30 p.m. Daphna will send a reminder email out the day before. Quite a few are assigned to set up, and attendees arriving early typically help as well. Food will be provided by Agra-Culture – from the MIA – deviled eggs, pita, feta, juice, coffee. Remember to register right away. Need to have a ballot chit in order to vote for the at-large candidates. Need a voting card to vote on the NRP reallocation. If you lose either, you don't get another.

Although the WA isn't expecting any troubles, there will be representatives from NCR and Abdirashid the Somali liaison. Someone will be on board to field questions from business owners about the By-Laws changes – remember businesses must register in advance. It can also get confusing if someone has more than one possible membership – business, property owner, resident. Registration will be kept open for the duration of the meeting.

Some other things to be prepared for that have happened in the past are objections to the formation of standing committees (BA and CI) – people seem to sometimes want more committees. But, the acting committees need to be set at the annual meeting per the By-Laws. In the past there have been more committees, but meetings only had one or two people attending. So, the two committees have had more attendance and have the same topics as were at the other

committees. If a specific issue needs more attention, a task force can be convened for a finite goal. Attendees at times want to ask about Marian's salary; it's public information, but not our practice to announce it at the annual meeting.

The NRP reallocation will be a big segment of the meeting. There will be questions about this. The meeting needs to have a quorum of eligible voters at the meeting in order to put the motion to a vote; and, it has to pass by 2/3. The WA mailed out over 1000 postcards for the annual meeting. We've received a fair number back in the mail. People don't usually notify us when they move. It gets expensive, but only way to keep the list clean.

BD Motion 4: The Whittier Alliance Board recommends establishing the Community Issues and Business Assoc. as the 2015 Acting Committees of the Whittier Alliance. **Motion Carried. 11-0-0**

NCR Annual Report needs to be turned in as soon as possible. Reimbursements are not paid unless the annual report is submitted. Marian sent the draft report to the board for review. One recommendation was to add other names in the area of feedback. Or, not to include names at all. The annual report will be made public by posting on the NCR website. Attendance numbers, volunteer numbers are cumulative for the year. It would be nice to see data on how the Whittier neighborhood compares to other neighborhoods in terms of percentage of residents that participate.

BD Motion 5: The Whittier Alliance Board accepts the 2014 NCR Annual Report with suggested changes.
Motion Carried. 11-0-0

Finance Committee, Tom Bissen, Treasurer – Financial Statements: The January financial report did not have the 2015 budget numbers entered. The budget is now entered so both the Jan. and Feb. financial report need to be approve. Tom reviewed the Feb balance sheet and profit/loss statements. The expenses and income are in line with the budget so far other than the sale of the 2nd Stevens Ave house which skews the income.

A **motion** to remove FC Motion 1 from the table **carried.**

FC Motion 1: The Finance Committee accepts the Whittier Alliance January 2015 financial report
Motion Carried

FC Motion 1: The Finance Committee accepts the Whittier Alliance February 2015 financial report
Motion Carried

CPP budget adjustment: In order to submit a reimbursement, the CPP budget needs to be adjusted. Some line items are out of funds. Funds from line items with available funds will be moved to areas that need it. Funds remain in the 2014 CPP budget that can be rolled into 2015 budget. It was anticipated that about \$50,000 would roll over, but it is about 43,000. The adjustments do not change the balance.

FC Motion 2: The Finance Committee recommends the following budget adjustment to CPP Contract 37565 to balance the 2014 budget deficit in Line 1 Staff Expense and Line 5 Communication & Outreach.

Move from and reduce the balance in:			Move to and increase the balance in:	
Line #2	Employee Benefits	\$ 14,708.61	Line #1	Staff Expenses
Line #4	Occupancy	\$ 6,262.00	Line #1	Staff Expenses
Line #10	Other Services	\$ 3,696.02	Line #1	Staff Expenses
Line #6	Supplies & Materials	\$ 1,817.67	Line #5	Communications/Outreach

Motion Carried

Single Family and Rental 3R loan guidelines: Marian & Tom have been working with Greater Metropolitan Housing Corp to update the Single family and 3R Loan guidelines. A several page document with the of proposed loan guidelines changes was distributed for review. Loan servicing was changed from CEE to GMHC due to fee increases. CEE was going to charge \$5,000 per loan. Suggested changes were discussed: change interest rate from 3% to 2%. That's enough to cover cost of loan fees that are usually paid by the WA. Other fees that the customer needs to pay can be rolled into the loan. Whittier chose to do loans with its housing funds rather than grants in order to preserve the pool of funds. All residential loans have been repaid.

Other recommended changes include adjusting the loan to value from 120% to down to 100%. It was recommended that a value source be added to determine the value – property tax statement or appraisal. Throughout the Development Review Task Force will be changed to the Finance Committee. References to CEE will be removed. Change description from absentee to non-owner occupied. None of the changes are significant.

GMHC will do some marketing; they will help people find contractors, etc. There are people waiting to apply for loans, including one of the new Stevens Ave house owners, so want to get this in place soon to get the funding to start offering the loans. GMHC is also putting together a loan program for our historic loans.

FC Motion 3: The Finance Committee approves interest rate change and language changes to the Single Family Home and Rental Rehab and Renewal Improvement Loan guidelines. **Motion Carried**

Acting Committee Reports & Motions – Business Association and Community Issues: The Bad Waitress has applied to expand their liquor license from Class E to Class C1 to include live music. Nothing would change other than music would be provided occasionally in the South area of the restaurant. It does not require any more parking or management change. The condo board is aware that music will be added but they did not want a presentation. They were concerned that it not be loud like Jasmine 26 Karaoke night was. The garage door/windows will likely be kept closed if music is being performed.

BD Motion 3: The Whittier Alliance Board of Directors moves to support the application for a Class C1 entertainment license for the Bad Waitress at 2 E 26th Street. **Carried. 11-0-0** (Andy Cohen was absent)

Community Issues: Colin Gatling presented plans for rebuilding components of his home at 2512 1st Ave. He removed some porches when he first purchased the home – they were poorly constructed, posed a hazard, and were not original to the house. He is working with HPC as the home is in the historic district. His designs include some modern approaches to railings on the non-street facing sides. There aren't any records of what any original porches would have looked like, and it isn't his intention to imitate exact historical style. He has already incorporated some feedback from HPC and has not been given any indication that they won't approve his plans. The more modern components will not be visible from the street. The consensus from neighbors of the property is that it is a huge improvement and he has put a lot of effort into rehabbing the interior already. However, a cautionary comment was made that once approvals have been made for non-conforming elements on a contributing structure, or if the applicant was more questionable, it will be hard to keep integrity in the process and continuity in the district and in decisions.

Bd Motion 4: The Whittier Alliance Board of Directors moves to support the application for a Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) Certificate of Appropriateness by Colin Gatling for 2512 1st Ave S.

Motion Carried 8-1-2

Mpls Park & Rec-Ash Bore: Anita Tabb and Ralph Sievert presented the city's plan for preventing an Emerald Ash borer infestation. The city plans to cut 20% of the ash trees every year for the next 8 years. There is no indication that there is devastation from the borer yet; there are hot spots, but not total infestation. Residents can opt to treat trees with an approved inoculation – there are two blocks of Pleasant that are getting treated. Right trees need treatment every two years. If the borer becomes controlled in the future, trees could maybe go to a 3-5 year inoculation schedule. One risk of the inoculation is the potential to harm pollinators since the ash trees do produce a flower. It's not the first choice for nectar, but it's out there. Residents will need to take care of any trees on their private property. If there are trees already damaged or sickly for other reasons, those trees will be taken first. The goal is to have a range of diversity of trees per block that way, if another opportunistic parasite or disease comes, it won't devastate an entire block.

Business Association:

Reopen Nicollet – Paul Mogush and David Frank from the City of Mpls updated the group on the reopening Nicollet project. They feel they are close enough with the Kadesh group / land owner/Kmart owner that they will be able to present a price to buy the land lease free; either just the land or the land plus a new store for Kmart.

When the project started their assignment was to bring a deal to the city; the city can either accept the proposal or not. Kadesh group is willing to sell; Kmart doesn't want to pay more than they are paying now in rent. Erica mentioned and others have suggested that the city should just buy the land and wait for the building to fall apart. But, the city doesn't want to take that approach after working on the full proposal (land & store) for 3-4 years. But, it's still possible Kmart won't want to even stay – given the volatile retail segment and recent closing of many stores nationwide; it may not hold true that the Lake Street store is the most profitable. The parcel with the current Jerry's grocery store has been purchased – the agreement yet unsigned – by the developer that works with Walgreens. The City was outbid, but approached the developer right away with the requirements for the site: needs to be mixed use and be forward thinking to development on the other parcel in terms of access, parking, etc. The Whittier Design Guidelines have been given to the developer. The new Walgreens would be built on the SW corner while the grocery store would sit there empty.

The city has not divulged how much money has been set aside for the deal. There is a real chance the City Council will object to the purchase/redevelopment price. It's fairly certain they will have to raise revenue to purchase the site. Paul and David indicated they believe all Councilmembers understand the importance of reopening Nicollet but it's unclear if the council will feel it worth the price. Concerns that this will turn into Hiawatha. Suggest the Board lobbies the Council to get them on board.

The car wash and PhoTau Bay each own part of what was formerly Nicollet Ave as part of a deal that started the whole closing of Nicollet process – the city required more space for the cars to queue up for the car wash so they gave it to them. The plans for the Nicollet Street Car will go forward regardless of Nicollet reopening – they have a route planned for both scenarios.

Strategic Plan – NuWay Appeal summary: The Whittier Alliance and Ted Irgens have parallel goals with the appeal. The board feels that WA time and financial resources should be put toward this. It's important to attend the appeal – there was anecdotal reporting that there isn't neighborhood support. The petition shows otherwise. The focus is how clustering is a discriminatory practice. This is an emotional issue but respectful language and addressing the concentration of supportive/transitional housing is the issues—not the population served. There is also the issue of the City's zoning ordinance and policies.

This is a complex issue and legal counsel was needed. The board felt it appropriate to support the investment for the legal advice for the Zoning & Planning Appeal. An attorney from Lindquist & Vennum who is familiar with municipal law was retained by Ted since he could be vetted quickly. The board discussed ways to approach legal representation to receive an affordable fee/non-profit rate. Don't expect to need the full amount.

BD motion 4: The Whittier Alliance Board of Directors moves to authorize spending up to \$5,000 to retain an attorney, either shared or separate from Ted Irgens, for the NuWay/2118 Blaisdell Zoning & Planning Appeal. **Carried 9-0-1**

Historic Designation Study: A proposal to complete a Historic Designation Study for 2118 Blaisdell – NuWay – was solicited from five preservation consultants. An abbreviated proposal from Thomas Zahn and Associates is in the board packet. Hess Roise cannot do the study but provided the WA with the information. The WA could apply for a legacy grant to help cover the cost of \$6500 - \$7000.

Staff Reports, Community Organizer Hiring Status:

Ready to make an offer on a new Somali organizer to share with Lyndale. Eight people were interviewed. WA Staff Organizer: Marian completed some first interviews and need to complete some more. So far no candidates moving to second interview.

Old / New Business **May Day Soirée**, May 7 – Blaisdell Manor, **Cleanup Day**, April 25 – Whittier Park, **Artists in Storefronts** is on indefinite hold after losing leadership. **NCR conference** – about place making, etc. Some from n'hood going. If anyone wants to go, it is open and there is no registration fee. The **affordable housing complaint** from Myron Orfield, will be filed soon. Orfield has been in the news last two weeks, was presented pretty well. This seems like the right time. There are two issues - affordable and supportive housing. They are different, but will overlap. This is going to be a complex issue; attorney feels like the city has maneuvered into position to benefit them. Going to take a lot of work to change.

Adjourn 8:40

Minutes respectfully submitted by Rita Stodolka

Meeting Minutes Approved on _____

Erica Christ, Board Chair

Natascha Shawver, Board Secretary