

**Whittier Alliance Board Meeting Minutes**  
**April 28, 2016 6:30-8:30 PM**  
**Whittier Park Community Center**

**Present:** Fadumo Abdinur Anab, Osman Abo, David Bagley, Erica Christ, Andy Cohen, Sarah Estey, May Gazca, Laura Jean, Geri Jerez, Christina Le, Marie Listopad, Michael Malone, Jesse Oyervides, Araceli Perez, Christine Popowski, Brett Vandebussche, Kenya Weathers **Absent:** Erin Sjoquist, Natascha Shawver **Staff:** Ricardo McCurley, Lucy Lawson **Guests:** Daphna Stromberg, Robert Thompson

**Call to Order** at 6:35pm by Erica Christ, Board Chair. Standard of conduct and conflict of interest were reviewed. **Motion** to approve the April 28 agenda **Carried**.

**Comments from the Chair**

Erica Christ

Erica welcomed new board members, and gave some background about the organization. WA is an advisory group, without much authority, but a champion for the neighborhood. Diversity of opinion is encouraged. Absence policy was reviewed: after three absences you are removed from board and need to be reinstated.

**Secretary's Report**

Erica Christ

Minutes from March 17, 2016 were reviewed and a **Motion** to approve as written **Carried**. Introductions were made.

**Executive Committee**

Erica Christ

**Executive Committee Elections**

Natascha is the outgoing Secretary. **Erica was nominated as Chair. Erica was elected Chair. Laura Jean was nominated as Vice Chair. Laura Jean was elected as Vice Chair. Motion** to appoint Erin Sjoquist as Secretary if she accepts the nomination at the next Board meeting **Carried. Andy was nominated as Treasurer.** Christina and Kenya were nominated as Treasurer; both gracefully declined. **Andy was elected Treasurer.**

**Board Appointments**

Outgoing board member Ted Irgens has said he would consider being appointed to the vacant 2017 board seat. He is out of town and it can be discussed at the next meeting. Former board member Daphna Stromberg is interested in being appointed to the 2018 board seat. **Motion** to appoint Daphna Stromberg to the vacant 2018 board seat **Carried**.

**Presenter: Robert Thompson, Neighborhood & Community Relations, City of Minneapolis**

Robert provided a briefing to the board members on the role of board members and neighborhood organizations. He thanked board members for their community service, and described his own experiences with board service and community organizing. Effective n'hood organizations build commonalities and social capital. City funding is provided with assumption that it will be used effectively. Board members have a duty of care and must act in the public interest and avoid conflicts of interest.

Board members and Robert had an open discussion about engaging with the community and with the City. Points discussed included:

- An example of engaging new renters is Stevens Square giving away lemonade & cookies in front of apartment buildings in the summer.
- New funding guidelines NCR sent out in February redefine the City's expectations a little, including Annual Meetings and Committees.
- A lot of money provided originally to n'hood orgs has been recycled and come back.
- In the 70s, city infrastructure was crumbling, particularly in nhoods like Whittier. The City addressed the crumbling housing stock with bottom-up planning, which is how NRP was born. It was a unique program in the control that n'hoods had over budgeting.
- If you want to get things done, often the middle managers (project managers and project directors) are the most effective people to reach out to -- e.g. about bike routes or street planning.
- With annual reporting NCR asks for 'highlights' to be included -- photos and videos.

**HUD complaint: Voluntary Compliance Agreement****Erica & Laura Jean**

The Whittier Alliance filed a complaint with federal Dept of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) about how affordable housing is distributed by the City of Minneapolis. HUD has suggested a Voluntary Compliance Agreement (VCA) to avoid litigation. Currently there are no stipulations on who gets HUD affordable housing funding. Whittier is an area of higher poverty, as are Elliot Park, Phillips and North Minneapolis. It took the Hollman lawsuit to get the City to pull down projects on the north-side. The City is not diversifying affordable housing or encouraging inclusionary zoning, so affordable housing can go into communities that aren't RECAPs (racially/ethnically concentrated areas of poverty). Impediments analysis of fair housing by the City have historically been poor, although that is also the Met Council's responsibility. The VCA retains our ability to proceed with the complaint if unhappy with progress of the issue.

Board member raised concerns about apartments being upgraded in the neighborhood and in the process families who have lived there for years are being pushed out. Sometimes WA mediating between the landlords and tenants is desirable.

Perception of the complaint is that it is against affordable housing, but it's actually an equity issue. It's an opportunity to hold the City accountable. The advantage for developers is that they can calculate the affordable housing rate using the market rate across the entire city, not the market rate in this neighborhood, which is the same as the affordable housing rate. Myron Orfield found that affordable housing is cheaper in the suburbs; some of the big non-profit developers award themselves a lot more money than regular developers to build these projects. The agreement does not absolve the recipient of any wrongdoing. It seems the other parties will be signing the agreement, and going with allies is usually a good idea. Some new board members may wish to abstain from vote as they have very little background on the complaint, which has been a year and a half process.

**Motion:** The Whittier Alliance Board supports the Voluntary Compliance Agreement and the actions outlined within the agreement between the City of Minneapolis (and other regional housing departments), the Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing and the Whittier, Webber-Camden and Folwell neighborhoods. **Motion Carried: 16-0-4**

**Finance Committee****Andy Cohen**

As the meeting is short for time, we will review the March 2016 Financial Statements next month and examine two months at once, in order to go over the finances properly with new board members.

**Old & New Business:****Neighborhood & Community Engagement Commission elections -- Ricardo**

NCEC establishes the guidelines for n'hood funding. An elector and one alternate are appointed to go to the elections by June 8. Closing date for candidate applications is May 13. Laura Jean and Michael Malone will be the elector reps. Kenya may consider candidacy.

**Capital Long-Range Improvement Committee update -- Laura Jean**

Laura Jean is a mayoral appointee to the CLIC. All the City Departments have to present their budgets and justify them. The CLIC tries to get the departments to address equity concerns -- looking at bike and pedestrian spending, for example. Reopening Nicollet Ave is not in there this year.

**Midtown Greenway Coalition Whittier Board Representative**

The representative can be appointed at the CI meeting. Hopefully, Jo Ann Musumeci will be able to attend.

**Citywide Neighborhood Council**

Will be held at the banquet space at Black Forest Inn. Sunday May 22nd.

**Adjourn 8:45 PM**

**Minutes respectfully submitted by XXX.**

Meeting Minutes Approved on \_\_\_\_\_

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Erica Christ, Board Chair

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Erin Sjoquist, Board Secretary