

Whittier Alliance Board Meeting Minutes
February 23rd , 2017 6-8:30 PM
Whittier Rec. Center

Present: Fadumo Abdinur Anab, Erica Christ, Andy Cohen, May Gazca, Laura Jean, Geri Jerez, Christina Le, Michael Malone, Jesse Oyervides, Araceli Perez, Christine Popowski, Ted Irgen, Daphna Stromberg, Kenya Weathers, David Bagley

Absent: Erin Sjoquist

Guests: Council Member Lisa Bender
Minneapolis City Planner Brian Schaffer

Staff: Ricardo McCurley, Joey Whitesman

Call to Order at 6:15PM by Erica Christ, Board Chair. Standard of conduct and conflict of interest were reviewed.

- Daphna adds board packet timeliness to agenda in old and new business

Motion to approve the amended February agenda **Carries**.

Comments from the Chair

Erica Christ

No comments

Secretary's Report

Review of January 26th, 2017 Board Meeting **Minutes**. **Motion** to approve minutes **Carries**.

Board Meeting Attendance

Correct- Marie was Absent from January meeting

- Sarah Estey will be resigning
- Osman has been terminated and can run for reelection through the BA

Board Representatives from the BA must be re-elected, in April after the Annual Meeting the BA will have an election.

Next Board Meeting: 3/23/17

Annual Meeting: 3/30/17

Executive Committee

Erica Christ

Annual Meeting:

- We have 11 board candidates, 6 open positions (5 at large, 1 from Sarah's resignation)
- All candidates are eligible.
- Should we open the 6th seat? According to by-law no reason to. Can fill as necessary
- Tim Lovitt, Jen Kader, Scott Melamed all former employees and are eligible

- All candidates are residents in the neighborhood, some business owners
- Should one year rule apply to staff in coming year? (neighborhood would need to vote on)
- CI is not an at-large Board position, CI will also elect chair in April at meeting. We can suggest running as board chair appointees for board member candidates that are not voted in

Motion to approve slate of candidates. Motion **carries**

Guests: Lisa Bender- City Council Member Ward 10 & Minneapolis City Planner Brian Schaffer

- Lisa attends other 4 neighborhood board meetings, happy to be here although available for CI

Lisa will address Development and the Neighborhood's role in shaping it, concerns about the durability and aesthetic of building materials, and the the release of NRP phase 2 funds, restoring more than 9 million dollars to neighborhoods from a 2010 freeze. Brian Schaffer will address the legal framework of the process.

CM Bender is interested in passing an ordinance discouraging (informally) multiple material use. Building material guidelines do currently exist

CM Bender and Brian open up the room to Comments and Questions with Key ideas from discussion following:

NRP Phase 2 Funds Release:

- 2010 city put a freeze on uncontracted NRP 2 funds
- Some neighborhoods disproportionately affected (all were in various phases of contracting)
- Cam Gordon and others council members realized potential to unfreeze funds and the Council voted 2 weeks ago to do so
- Funds will be released in stages 3 years
- Why now? More funding than expected in TIF District
- This was a Non-controversial, unanimous vote. Freeze likely due to bad past budget situation
- Hawthorne neighborhood got the most back, we'll get 55k next year and remainder after
- Goes back to unfunded strategies
- Does a percentage of the money have to be spent on housing or if past quota met can it go to any strategy? Not sure
- Last year a policy passed that if Neighborhood plan 7 or more years old they must update their plan to receive funding. WA's Engagement strategy for strategic plan fits into that schedule of updating our plan to comply with city rules

Development:

- The use of metal paneling on Franklin/ Lyndale development with 25 year lifespan is a concern. Flimsy metal paneling is on all these new developments
- The Neighborhood is full of brownstones why can't they fit into existing character
- Longevity vs. short-term investment from developers
- Affordability is also an issue with these non-durable buildings
- Young Adults working downtown can afford but will they stay here?
- We get an ugly ice cubes for a cheap return on investment
- Replacement in 20 years doesn't make sense
- General frustration with the development engagement process

- Over last 7 years it seems the process is checking a box to say they talked to community
- Results from CI meetings are null
- Why invest community time in discussions when they change nothing? 5 motions from the last development proposal were rejected and 1 was approved. Does it matter?
- Developers should build underground parking, Density requires parking. CPM lyn/frank development has no underground parking
- Wiser for developer to listen to some neighborhood needs
- There is a general desire to push for density by the city but we need for more housing
- When will we reach tipping point where you can put more pressure on developers?
- Last few developments have had no commercial on ground floor
- Lots of vacancies currently so perhaps market reasons
- More housing not more jobs means more dependence on car / overloading transit routes
- How is this balanced/ sustainable? More people where not more jobs? Example: condo-market collapse
- Not that many young profession. to fill small expensive units/example: CPM vacancies WAHU

CM Bender Responds to development engagement process concerns:

- She was on LHENA board before city council and understands feelings of frustration
- She is visiting the issue with NCR and CPED and wants to change the city process
- Praises WA's work on Nicollet Ave pedestrian overlay
- Brians team working on legal doc guiding land use in city (what you can/can't do with private property)
- Continuum of perspective on permissive restrictiveness /continuum of design critiques
- Varying views from neighborhoods and within neighborhoods
- Banks have a lot of influence through financing-Requirements they want from investment (lisa as policy maker cannot force banks hand)
- Land use, zoning, and banks are main players
- Truth is not always consistent from developers about why they can/cannot afford to make a change

Materials Response:

- There is no consensus in city on materials. Modern vs brick debate
- One aesthetic for the city of Minneapolis would not be supported/Materials affect rent raises
- How do we steer them towards better materials? Not taking us seriously....so what can we do
- CM Bender thinks it's strange for neighborhoods to vote on legal and land use issues
- In Planning Commission approval process it is not about making a policy decision but rather making a judicial decision "does it meet the requirement" is key
- General feedback from neighborhoods is good but voting on variances and CUPs is trickier because of legal foundation
- City has to make legal decisions in these situation
- The issue is the meeting of criteria vs. good development/ good investment for city
- All decisions are outlined in zoning ordinances

How to engage development proposals moving forward:

- How does this move our values forward as a neighborhood? (legal perspective)

- Is there any value in communities taking scarce time and focusing on development input? unless city passes laws, (meeting state statutes as well)
- Neighborhoods should do what they want but more pro-active approaches better in communicating with developers
- 80% of households in Ward 10 are renters
- Minneapolis has some of the lowest rental vacancy rates in the country
- People are moving to city so people will be displaced / Experience of other cities shows displacement
- A lot of varying perspectives in whittier on parking, materials, density
- Where is there room in adjusting the law to make communities be able to have meaningful input otherwise?
- CM Bender recommends developers not coming to too many meetings
- Facilitation of Development Discussion important (shouldn't be developer)
- Some neighborhoods have sophisticated questions
- Clear consensus important (if it will be built anyway)

- What is the city department responsible for ensuring we get good development?
That's not happening now
- City of minneapolis and CPED are responsible through the Comp. Plan- how we grow, housing options, affordability, racial disparity, etc. (informs zoning)
- WE ARE IN THAT PROCESS NOW
- Meeting April 1st at community connections conference
- Engagement vs. show of engagement is an important distinction (not feeling heard at city level)
- Families pushed out, only studios being built / Already seeing displacements
- Next phase of Comp. Plan is U of M research on housing policy from past. Redlining history of city. Today redlined areas have more renters
- Goal of city : we are committed to acknowledging redlined history and ensuring accessibility and affordability
- Land-use patterns reflect the redlining (some still codified in law unfortunately)
- R1 zoned neighborhoods should change to welcome duplexes, triplexes, etc.
- How do we have multi-life phase neighborhoods?
- Recent CPM building not being held to task
- Projection is to add 70-100 thousand people to city (means more in Whittier)
- Census change over time (same unit number, twice as many people)
- We are a fully built out city
- As we add more apt buildings on corridors, duplexes and triplexes will convert to single family
- Whittier is a self contained community, we have a high street, a school. We want more balance in terms of owner/renters. A lot of long-term renters
- Stability is what is key (more than renter/owner discussion). City does not have policy goals for homeownership
- We should look at housing stock/ We should make it easier to encourage homeownership
- Change policies of land banks to help build homeownership
- Encouraging homeownership in neighborhoods has been moving in the opposite direction for 100 years so difficult trend to fight
- 3 markets in minneapolis seeing growth: U of M, Downtown, Lakes/ Uptown/ Whittier (90% of all city growth occurring there)

- Livability concerns- WA board member lives in an owner occupied 4 plex for decades, height is impacting the livability, green space ratio to higher building ratio is a problem
- Came here for a certain quality of life
- Lake and pillsbury bus stop does not make sense/ Different spot with more density better
- Please engage in Minneapolis 2040 plan to affect how we will grow as a city
- Communication important between CPED and NCR
- Comp Plan process has expanded since last iteration
- WA is updating our strategic plan. Done in aug/ sept. Can we still contribute to Comp Plan?
- In the Fall Comp Plan goes from conceptual to a more solid document
- April there will be response to how input is being used, continuing dialogue is important
- **Make sure WA gets relevant data to city on time**

Finance Committee

Andy Cohen

January , 2017 Financial Statements: The financial report was presented. The balance sheet was reviewed.

January Financial Statements

Andy briefly reviews financials and with expected figures shown, no discussion necessary.

Motion: The Board accepts the Whittier Alliance January, 2017 financial report. **Motion Carried.**

Acting Committee & Task Force Reports & Motions

Community Issues

Mike Malone

Mike reviews the CI Motions from the February meeting (including failed ones)

- March 20th planning commission review
- Can we send rep. from neighborhood to speak? (yes if we feel strongly)
- Building material might be battle we focus on
- We can try talking to Dan and Scott first or send letter stating position, no guarantee we could speak during commission meeting
- Our practice is to take CI motions up and take a position, we have to address all motions that came forward
- Let's take one motion on site plan and say this is what we don't like overall plan
- We have to focus on changes in city law, we need to represent what we hear from committees
- WA needs to have what we like/ don't like on record

Motion to deny conditional use permit for increase in height

12-0-2

Motion carries

Motion to deny variance to increase FAR

11-0-3

Motion carries

Motion to deny variance to decrease parking requirement

- Financiers are requiring parking not city

13-0-1

Motion Carries

Motion to deny variance to reduce required alley setback from 15 to 12 feet

- Pedestrian safety, fire hazard
- Support for pedestrian way of city planning but short-sightedness

11-2-1

Motion carries

Motion to support a variance of pedestrian overlay building placement standard to allow portion of building (SW corner) to be beyond 8 feet from the property line for guest bike

12-0-2

Motion carries

Motion to deny the overall site plan- material choices, window orientation, access to site, landscaping, and exterior package of development

- Should have durable building materials (more than 40 years)
- Foundation problematic
- Looks like an icecube

14-0-0

Motion carries unanimously

Other comments from CI Meeting:

- April/May vote likely on purchase agreement for Kmart
- Money could go to Northside project if not us
- How do we engage other council members to vote for this?
- Whittier Alliance should publicly invite people to support/ get other neighborhoods on board
- Is support for project being surveyed? Reach out to Lisa to give support for reopening

Business Association

Andy Cohen

- Met at Learning in Style
- Discussion on \$15 minimum wage
- Discrimination ordinance rep from city

Motion to recommend approval of transfer of the liquor license to Jasha

12-0-2

Motion carries

Crime and Safety - TBA

ESTF - Christine- Citizen's utility board came and gives free consults. Potential transition from Task Force to Committee also discussed. Motion for WA office to use sustainable paper and dining materials

Substitute for ESTF motion

Motion to WA purchasing 100% recyclable printer paper and using reusable or compostable dining materials starting in April

12-0-1

- Eureka sells 100% office paper
- Comes in colors
- Cost of recycled office paper- it will be a wash because of bulk purchase

Strategic Plan Steering Committee

- Joey gives overview of meeting: goals, RFP posting, timeline for submissions
- Ricardo discusses groups that are interested in submitting proposals
- Laura Jean and Erica should help with continuity of last strategic plan with this one
- Compiling guiding documents for a clear sense on how to operate is key

Staff Reports:

Reports from Paul, Ricardo, and Camilla are in the board packet.

Old & New Business:

Fall Fundraiser Report Reviewed

Lupe development- Lake & Harriet

- Affordable housing Apartment Building
- A neighboring resident owns several properties and has concerns
- They are building skyway and parking over/under the alley
- Better mix of units
- No commercial on ground floor
- Discussion of aesthetic follows
- A lot of affordable housing in Whittier, a lot not well maintained
- They get tax credits to help with maintenance
- There will be a Tour- Tuesday, March 7th at noon
- **Send out invite**

Annual Meeting

- Task list goes around for volunteering at meeting

Board Packet

- Should be read before meeting
- Friday before meeting was past deadline
- Starting packet at beginning of month so that things could be added

Future of Neighborhoods Meeting

- Day before annual meeting *Has been postponed now

Ted Irgen is moving and will no longer be a resident of the neighborhood so no longer eligible as a board member (this his last meeting)

Adjourn

8:34PM

Minutes submitted by Joey Whitesman.

Meeting Minutes Approved on _____

Erica Christ, Board Chair

Erin Sjoquist, Board Secretary