

Community Engagement Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 10, 2022, 6:30-8:00 pm
Zoom Digital Meeting

Attendees: Nick Hutchinson, Jesse Oyervides, Laryssa Stolarskyj, Amy Stephan, George Rishmawi, Megan Mathew, Molly Lax, Sydney Burroughs, Jimmy Hoke, Nate Broadbridge, Hannah Kreibich, Willow Kreibich, Harry Davis, Kate Davis

Staff: Kaley Brown

Presenters: Erin Sikkink (City of Minneapolis Office of Violence Prevention), April Graves (City of Minneapolis Health Department), Teena Keiser (League of Women Voters)

Introductions & Meeting Overview

- Welcome at 6:32pm by Nick Hutchinson.
- A round of introductions is done.
- The Standard of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policies are reviewed.
- The agenda is reviewed.
- The minutes from March and June are reviewed.
 - Motion to approve the minutes from the March meeting is made, seconded, and approved unanimously.
 - Motion to approve the minutes from the June meeting is made, seconded, and approved unanimously.

WA Community Engagement Committee Chair Election

- Following the Annual Meeting each spring, the established Acting Committees of the Whittier Alliance elect a new Chairperson to set agendas, lead meetings, and guide committee project work.
- Nick Hutchinson is interested in running again for another term, and any resident or business or nonprofit representative that is registered to vote with Whittier Alliance can participate.
- An overview of the Chair responsibilities is provided followed by a call for nominations.
- Nick Hutchinson is nominated and accepts.
- A second and third call for nominations is made; no other nominations are made.
- A motion is made and seconded to elect Nick Hutchinson by acclamation to the position of Community Engagement Committee Chair for the 2022-2023 term. The motion passes unanimously.
- A congratulations and thank you is given to Nick for stepping up to serve in this important role!

Former Kmart & New Nicollet Ave Community Engagement Team - Kaley Brown, WA

- The City of Minneapolis has selected a consultant team to design and help lead the community engagement process around the former Kmart site and reopening of Nicollet Avenue.
- The consultant team includes a coalition of community organizations led by Whittier Alliance and a real estate consulting firm based out of St. Paul called NEOO Partners, Inc.
- The engagement process with community will be getting underway starting this Saturday at Open Streets East Lake with much more happening in September and through the fall/winter.
- Folks can read a lot more information on the project background, the high level overview of the community engagement process ahead, and sign up to receive the City's project updates on their gov delivery platform at the following link:
<https://www2.minneapolismn.gov/government/programs-initiatives/new-nicollet/>
- Stay tuned to Whittier Alliance communications to be informed of future activities and events to join in.

Presentation - Teena Keiser, League of Women Voters Minneapolis

- LWV is a volunteer, nonpartisan political organization doing advocacy, voter registration, voter education, and more encouraging civic participation.
- Teena overviews what is on the ballot for the 2022 midterm elections in the Whittier neighborhood; people can request a sample ballot now that the primary election is over and the candidates are set.
- Voting turnout for the Whittier neighborhood in the November 2021 election was 48.7%; voter turnout for all of Minneapolis for 54% in November 2021.
 - Voter turnout = % of registered voters, not eligible voters
- Tuesday, October 18th at 11:59 pm is the deadline to register to vote online or in advance by paper application, which does not require an ID; registering at the early voting site or on the day of the election, and you do need to bring proof of residency.
- Someone would need to re-register to vote if they move, have a name change, or if they did not vote at least once in the prior 4 years.
- Due to redistricting, some polling places have changed, as have some of the district boundaries.
- Employer must pay employees for the time required to go vote and make reasonable schedule accommodations for them to do so.
- If someone is unhoused, they can use the address of the location they are staying or sleeping to register to vote; a neighbor or other registered voter can vouch for them if they do not have proof of residency at that address.
- Early voting runs through Friday, September 23 through November 7, 2022 at Minneapolis Elections and Voter Services Office (980 Hennepin Ave E) or the Hennepin County Government Center (300 S 6th St) or by requesting a vote by mail ballot online at mnvote.org.
- A list of resources is shared for additional voting information and resources.
- LWV is always happy to come to events and set up a voter registration table if those opportunities are upcoming this fall.
- Q: Who should someone contact if they suspect someone is trying to vote fraudulently? A: The City Elections Services office if it's a municipal election or the Secretary of State's office if it's a statewide election taking place.
- Q: Curious if you know why the witness on absentee ballots needs to be a MN resident? This seems especially challenging for college students who vote absentee! A: Teena agrees; she can only guess at the reasoning, but definitely sees why that could be difficult.
- Q: Will they be doing more in person events and forums again? A: Good question, she hopes so but it has not been decided yet.

Presentation - Erin Sikkink & April Graves, City of Minneapolis Office of Violence Prevention

- They use a community-focused, public health approach to prevent violence and are a part of the Health Department currently at the City
- They work to prevent violence, support those impacted by violence, and help individuals and communities heal from violence using three primary approaches: evidence-informed strategies, capacity building and innovation, and youth-centered violence prevention
- A timeline overview is shared of the history of the Office of Violence Prevention from the time it was created in 2016 under the previous mayor through 2021
- This office is now moving into the newly created Department of Community Safety under the newly appointed Commissioner Dr. Cedric Alexander; more changes are likely to come in staffing and structure
- Evidence Based Strategies:

- Hospital Based Violence Intervention - called the Next Step Program in partnership with Hennepin Healthcare, North Memorial, and Abbott Northwestern
- Violence Interruption Street Outreach - called Minneapolis Strategic Outreach Initiative - members of the community often who have experienced violence themselves which allows for relatability; often become a buffer in situations needing de-escalation that avoids bringing in law enforcement
- Group Violence Intervention Strategy - partners with law enforcement to identify people most at risk of engaging in violence in hopes of steering them in a different direction and connecting them with case workers to help them change their course and lifestyle
- Blueprint Approved Institute - work with grassroots community organizations doing violence prevention work to build capacity and a broader network of violence prevention partners; they receive funding and hands-on training to implement violence prevention strategies in the communities they know well
- They've had a lot of really successful projects led by community partners who receive funding from the City; the outcomes and metrics of funded projects are overviewed.
- They'll be opening the RFP in early September for new project work led by community organizations for 2022-2023.
- Additional programs that the OVP operates in partnership with other entities such as the 24/7 Youth Connection Center and Coaching Athletes Into Leaders.
- They received a new grant from the CDC to implement a new approach to safety within the school environment with young people at the helm, democratizing the conversation around security and safety in schools to build shared responsibility and outcomes.
- There is also an upcoming opportunity to join the next Minneapolis Violence Prevention Community Champions Institute that is available to anyone in the community who is interested in helping to prevent violence.
- Q: Are they familiar with the idea of wet houses? A: There may be other folks in the Health Dept. who are familiar with those programs who know if Minneapolis is considering implementing them in the future.
- Q: Are we able to access the slide deck that you shared? A: Yes, they can share the slides with Kaley and they can be made available upon request.
- Q: You mentioned the restructuring happening at the City level with moving to the new Dept. of Public Safety. Do you think that will shift how the work or programming will be done? A: They can't say for sure what that will look like, but current leadership and staff input were involved to a degree in shaping that decision to shift. They feel strongly that it continue to be a public health centered approach, though it's not clear how or if that will change based on what that has been shared with them so far. They were told it could be around November when there may be more tangible changes in the department.
- Q: For folks who have concerns about crime in the neighborhood, what is the best way to direct that person in terms of engaging with the OVP? A: Depends a bit what the concern or issue is specifically, however the [Community Champions program](#) that is starting up is a great gateway to learn about violence prevention work and build up those skills and network with intention. They can contact violenceprevention@minneapolismn.gov; they can also help folks get connected with the Crime Prevention Specialists and Community Navigators.

2116 Nicollet Ave Redevelopment Considerations & Community Priorities

- WA has a community survey open for folks to help determine how to prioritize different community needs and benefits in the new development.
- There are different concepts with definitions for each that can be ranked into first, second, and third choice priorities, as well as a space for people to add additional thoughts and submit a nomination for the new building name.

- We will be doing pop-up tabling throughout the neighborhood over the coming months, sending a postcard out neighborhood-wide, and promoting the survey on digital channels.
- It can be accessed at whittieralliance.org/2116nicollet.

Upcoming Meetings, Events, & Opportunities

- Open Streets East Lake is on Saturday from 11am-4:30pm just on the other side of I-35W
- WA Housing & Land Use Committee Meeting is on Tuesday, August 16th from 6:30-8pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:12 pm.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Kaley Brown.