

Community Issues Meeting
Monday, August 10, 2015 — 6-8:30pm — Whittier Park

Attendees: Jeffrey Helseth, William Web, Sinem Casale, Giancarlo Casale, Mike Garity, Greg Gossel, Chris Popowski, Jeff Nelson, Matt Barthelemy, Natascha Shawver, Shane Morin, Greg Schmidt, Wanda Classen, Ted Irgens, Michael J. Mulree, Brian Foster, Claire Branigan, Mary Gazca, Bill Blanski, Felino de la Pena, David W. Schroth, Justin Kader, Jen Kader, Nicole J. Emery, Max Holdhusen, Kati Wirkkula, David Saarela, Mustafa Jumale, Dave La Violette, Michael Malone

Staff: Marian Biehn, Paul Shanafelt, Camilla Fartun Jamal, Lucy Lawson

Presenters: Sgt. Greeves & Sgt. Johnson, 5th Pct.; Daniel Oberpriller, CPM Development, & Scott Nelson, DJR Architecture; Councilmember Lisa Bender, 10th Ward

Welcome

Call to order at 6:15 by Brett Vandenbussche. Reminder to follow code of conduct and respect other's opinions. A **Motion** to approve agenda as written **Carried**. Attendees introduced themselves. Attendees were asked to review the July 13, 2015 minutes. A **Motion** to approve July 2015 minutes, fixing a discrepancy about hazardous waste drop-off dates, **Carried**.

5th Precinct Report – Sgt. Greeves and Sgt. Johnson

Chelsea Adams couldn't make it to the meeting, so they didn't have the specific crime stats for the area to distribute. Property crime continues to be the primary issue: purses and laptops left in plain view stolen from vehicles, and burglaries from open garages. Be sure to lock up bikes in garages. If ground-level windows are left open, it's easy to slash screens. Be sure to report people who look out of place - often burglars are noticed by neighbors but not reported. Chelsea and other crime prevention are happy to come and consult with residents about crime prevention measures they can take/window latches.

The assault incident a couple of days ago at 41st and Bryant was a random event. Two guys in a vehicle were driving around South Minneapolis, throwing rocks at people. A cyclist was laid out by a block to the face, sustaining severe injuries. Again, if you see anything like that, try to get a license plate.

Attendees raised speeding northbound traffic on Harriet Ave, with similar issues on Pleasant and 25th. Sgt. Johnson said they would try to schedule more officers--speed bumps can be raised with CM Bender.

There are ongoing investigations into narcotics touts in the area: The more calls residents generate to police, the more police staff they get in their neighborhood. Individuals showing up in crime reports with addresses outside of the n'hood may be due to online/phone deals, or people lying to police about their address. The free mobile app 311 sends reports straight to the City.

Community Announcements:

Calendar photo competition -- submit photos of your favorite Whittier things to the WA office. Thanks to all community volunteers at the Whittier Field Day.

26th St & Stevens Ave Proposal: Dan Oberpriller, CPM Development, & Scott Nelson, DJR Architecture

- Because more attendees than at previous meeting they recapped the history of the site. A very polluted Superfund site, cleaned up with a ventilation system that recirculates air through the soil. Site still contaminated. Groundfloor units not allowed without a vapor-mat.
- Presented changes to design since previous meeting: Reduced parking to get more green space. Have added bike parking to inside of building. Reduced parking count from 61 to 47. Have setback 5th floor of building by about 12 feet on west corner to address 109 E 26th St owners concerns about shadowing of his property. Electric car plugins added. Added landscaping on Stevens as a buffer,

with pots against the building. A bike lane is planned for 26th St, so designing accordingly. Landscape area has grown by 10%, to 30%, to comply with requirement of the pedestrian overlay.

- The current color option remains. Bigger crown added for street presence. All corner units are larger, now 2BR, 2 Bath. Added night-time illumination, with 22 different colors and 122 settings. All sides of building will have same appearance, another requirement of City. No retailers lined up yet.
- Have added 6 units for total of 70, increased size of 2BR units, and eliminated studios – now have 'junior suites' with a half-wall. Rental rates (broad range) will be \$1.65 to \$2.10 per square foot (PSF), which will be less than \$1000 per month for a lot of units.
- Attendee was concerned that it will be one of the tallest buildings in n'hood, with not enough parking. CPM said the City has asked them to reduce parking spaces, and the City wanted only 35.
- Attendee concerned about affordability for low-middle income families asked when will have breakdown of rents. CPM said typically start marketing a site with those details as it's coming out of the ground, because there are lots of floating items at this stage.
- Asked how it will compare to buildings along Greenway and Uptown, CPM said will be considerably cheaper PSF.
- Attendee asked about how repairs and maintenance will be handled at the building, as from experience with HOME Line tenants advocacy, tenants at a CPM building in Ventura Village n'hood have had a lot of issues. CPM responded that it is working with City on that building. CPM picked up management in December. The building has been in disrepair for 10 years, and has infestation issues that have to be eradicated before repair people will be willing to go in.
- Attendee asked if the roof deck is for tenant or business use. DJR said it's a tenant amenity.
- Attendees asked about parking entrances. Fence and landscaping will be installed along the alley. Access to parking will be from Stevens or the alley off 26th.
- Attendee expressed concerns about number of units and extra floor that violates zoning for the sight. Contrasted similar recent developments in n'hood that are four stories tall. Those projects would also be able to have underground parking and units on the first floor because the ground was not contaminated. Attendee says that the block has 11 single family units, and development will be out of character. Clarification of what is meant by 'affordable housing' housing that is priced affordably or publicly subsidized affordable housing. This development is fully private. If don't get approval for height variance, developer will have to look at feasibility of doing project.
- Attendee asked about design features, housing for families (number of 2BR units has not increased) and luminosity. CPM felt the color option selected was attractive so stuck with it. Have increased size of 2BR units, with fewer 1BRs and junior suites to compensate. They feel density is appropriate for busy street, and future plans for Nicollet to get another public transport mode. Lighting will comply with City requirements. It will be an indirect light source, creating a gateway effect as come over hill into n'hood.
- Attendee concerned about traffic congestion asked if feasible to have no exit into alley, just Stevens. CPM's understanding is that Public Works doesn't want a dead-end parking lot.
- Residents who object to the size and the zoning variance was directed to the Planning Com meeting.
- Attendee expressed support for density, height and encouraging of transit options.
- Attendee asked if developer could make the project work with three stories, and was told no.
- Garbage disposal will be inside building, including recycling and composting.
- Would like to start construction in November/December, dig foundation system through winter. Top-down construction, not pile-driving.
- Further concerns raised about CPM's Ventura Village property and if residents being given the legally mandated 120 days' notice for rent increases. CPM responded working to fix that building up – over 300 work orders since took up management.

- Asked about fence along alley, DJR said a decorative metal fence has been saved for that purpose. Bill Blanski raised concerns about alley width, and when cars try to pass each other it's dangerous. Also questioned blue, grey, white color scheme – may be unfriendly in winter and boring. CPM offered to send him the files if he wants to play with it.
- Attendee concerned about short-term affordability versus long-term affordability asked how long this style of housing will last for. Response was that the product life depends on the tenant and how hard they are on it. Carpet/flooring will last 1-10 years, depending. Exterior has a 25 year life
- In terms of exterior building materials, the first floor will be all brick. The grey material on the facade will be Nichiha (a form of hardi plank) panels, with reveals every 4 feet.
- Variances looking for from community: CUP for height – zoning code for this sight is 4 stories at 56 ft, and this will be 5 stories at 62 feet. Variance for floor area ratio (FAR) of 12%, roughly half the fifth floor. Variance on property line setback on alley side, down from 15 ft to 13 ft.
- Attendee concerned that 47 parking spots for 70 units is inadequate by around 50%
- Attendee said building would be appropriate for Dinkytown and Uptown but not this n'hood, and will set a bad precedent for future, and that there are many successful developments of a smaller scale. CPM says more density is needed to offset rising property values.
- Attendee said this development has unique constraints because of contamination. (Remediated with State funds over the past 9 years)
- Attendee asked if can see a more realistic image of building, without forced perspective.
- Attendee asked whether there are controls on the retail resident. CPM says \$16 PSF is affordable for most regional and local businesses, but can't discriminate against a larger corporate retailer.
- In response to concerns about alley, CPM says that Public Works determines whether an alley is one way or two or can be change to a one way.
- CPM and DJR are happy to give facade or value engineering updates to n'hood groups.
- Attendee is supportive of replacing an eyesore corner.
- Discussion of height of surrounding buildings on nearby corners, some are similar in height, although with smaller footprint.
- CPM says land price will be going up and projects will be increasing in Whittier.

CI Motion 1: The Community Issues Committee supports a Conditional Use Permit to allow five stories in a 4 story zone 56' zone and allow 62' at the two corners of Stevens Ave. as shown on August 10, 2015 rendering. **Motion Carried. 15-11-0**

CI Motion 2: The Community Issues Committee supports a setback ratio variance on the west side alley, from 15 to 13 feet. **Motion Carried. 14-7-3.**

- In response to query about adding balconies on top floor, adds significant costs because water run-off from deck has structural impacts and safety issues. If took 7000 square feet away from building, would be huge problem for financials, particularly with current property taxes. If wait further to construct the building costs go up.

CI Motion 3: The Community Issues Committee supports the increased Floor Area Ratio from 59,258 to 66,985. **Motion Carried. 13-10-1**

Continued discussion re the Stevens Ave proposal

- A motion to support the site plan was not presented.

- Asked about retail tenant, CPM made retail space small to encourage local businesses. Commercial rent is \$30 PSF in neighborhoods like Dinkytown, but will be \$16 in this building. The apartment building is subsidizing the commercial space.
- Asked about Midtown Greenway Energy Challenge, building will have solar panel array and working with Xcel Energy program to reduce overall energy usage.
- Told Metro Blooms has a stormwater runoff incentive scheme, CPM is interested in contact info.

10th Ward update – Councilmember Lisa Bender

- N'hood updates: Re the sewer repair project, unfortunately property owners were given less than a week's notice, and some tenant businesses only found out the day before. Will be working with Public Works to fix the process.
- Citywide updates: Close to releasing policy draft of the Working Families Agenda. Will be working with business community and worker advocates. Several meetings will be scheduled.
- Hope to bring Complete Streets policy forward this year. In Hennepin Ave recently saw a bike lane left off a public project, so hopefully can improve the public design process. Mayor's public address soon. Hazardous waste collection event coming up on Aug 20-22.
- Attendee asked about the sewer project and whether there would be polypropylene leaching into the Mississippi. Councilmember will follow up on that question.
- Two homeless shelters meetings held recently. A number of Whittier residents attended and talked about their experiences living near shelters. Some of the policy proposals would concentrate shelters, and unlikely to be pass the Council. Heading towards an approach with more flexibility and smaller shelters. Proposal probably ready in late September. May host one more community meeting.
- Attendee raised traffic concerns. With Lyndale being a primary thoroughfare, residential streets such as Harriet Ave are become cut throughs, with a lot of speeding cars. It is number 1 issue councilwoman hears from residents about, and she wants to sit down with Public Works to discuss traffic calming measures. Even speed bumps are surprisingly expensive, and other measures have trade-offs.
- Attendee suggested yellow paint at corners to prevent people parking and obstructing vision of moving cars. Minneapolis has to restripe everything annually, which is expensive.
- To change speed limit would have to change state law, which is not very conducive to bike and pedestrian safety. Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota has been working on that.
- Attendee noted that parking availability in n'hood is a problem which is related to car ownership. For a long term behavior change on car dependency, has the city has consider lobbying the state to raise driving age to reduce car use/ownership and increase use of other transit modes.
- Residents can initiate a request for speed bumps: 70% of property owners decide and cost is around \$10,000 per bump.
- Asked about consultation on wages and conditions policy, with a lot of restaurants in the n'hood, the Councilwoman may have her own meeting on the 10th floor or an open meeting.
- Residents can call St Stephen's about people panhandling on freeway exits.
- Regarding the 26th and Stevens property development, WA will be working on getting a small business in. Besides affordable retail is a priority.

Adjourn: 8:32pm

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by Lucy Lawson