

Community Issues Meeting DRAFT Minutes
Monday, August 8, 2016 — 6:00-7:30pm — Whittier Park

Attendees: Edsel Ammons, Felino de la Pena, Alia Yaremkiw, Jen Kader, Emanuel Tekle, Brett Vandebussche, Jeremy Striffler, Teresa Murphy, Greg Schmidt, Brian Foster, Mary Gazca, Deb Girdwood, Christine Popowski, Daphna Stromberg, Marie Listopad, Christina Le, Michael Malone
Staff: Ricardo McCurley, Paul Shanafelt, Lucy Lawson, Camilla Fartun Jamal **Presenters:** Lindsey Wallace & CM Lisa Bender; State Rep. Karen Clark; Max Musicant & Kathy DeKray,, Musicant Group

Welcome

Welcome at 6:10 by Brett Vandebussche, CI Chair. Agenda was reviewed. Standard of conduct policy was reviewed. **Motion** to approve the Agenda **Carried**. Introductions were made. Minutes from 7-2016 CI meeting were reviewed. **Motion** to approve 7-2016 CI meeting minutes **Carried**.

Announcements/Community Comments & Discussion

10th Ward update

Lisa Bender & Lindsey Wallace

Councilmember Lisa Bender briefed attendees on City Council activities. Lindsay Wallace has taken over for Matthew Crockett; she is a Whittier resident.

- Pedestrian Overlay update – east side of Lyndale only, Whittier part affected. Nicollet Ave regulations being used as a model. Currently refining proposal w/CM Goodman and will go to Planning Commission in the Fall.
- Orange Line BRT – Dakota Co. electing to opt out of planning committee. Project has high-impact cost per rider. The City is trying to build support for the project, but it hinges on Dakota Co. Press conference to be held later this week in Burnsville and at Lake St. to build support.
- Minimum Wage/Police Liability insurance policy ballot measures – City attorney stated the City should not put the measures on ballot. Both campaign supporters are now suing the City. CM Bender is supportive of raising minimum wage and they will create ordinance next year, giving them time to talk to numerous businesses to shape proposal. Police liability insurance is complicated and will be addressed through other police policy proposals throughout the year.
- New 5th Pct. Inspector Kathy Waite started a couple of weeks ago.

Legislative Update

Karen Clark

Karen introduced herself and briefed attendees on the previous legislative session.

- Divided government frustrated progress in 2016. On the horizon is a possible special session.
- A tax bill was passed, with some child care tax credits and help for students, with tuition loan credits, & some job creation incentives. The government vetoed that bill because it needed to be corrected, and that could come back in the special session.
- Racial equity bill passed, with \$132 mn to address disproportionate impacts. N’hood orgs may be eligible for racial equity funding – e.g. for women/minority owned business, capacity building, youth, etc. Karen can write a letter in support of proposals.
- She proposed a bill on the issue of childhood lead poisoning but it could not get a hearing. She also put forward a bill about astro turf and its chemical hazards & one in favor of drivers licenses for undocumented Minnesotans.
- Attendee asked what she plans to do differently in future to get more results. Karen replied that a lot of things would have gone through if the Democrats had control over both House & Senate. She feels this upcoming election is very important.

CI Chair Election

Brett Vandebussche

Chair of the CI Committee is elected by popular vote, and serves on the WA Board for a 1-year term, or until the next Annual Meeting. As no-one asked to be nominated for the position, the board will reconvene and decide who will do the job on an ongoing basis.

Front Yard Placemaking

Kathy DeKray & Max Musicant

Max introduced himself, and the placemaking work the Musicant Group does. The Friendly Fronts Project aims to create friendly communities one yard at a time. Both Max and Kathy live in the neighborhood. During a fire drill at his apartment complex, Max realized he didn't know his neighbors. He put some chairs outside his building, and in the next few weeks, people started also using those chairs & he met half of his neighbors. Unfortunately the property manager wasn't supportive. From that small beginning, they created the Friendly Fronts Initiative. Kathy and Max passed around a copy of their [placemaking toolkit](#). The FF initiative had 20 pilot participants in St Paul, mostly with homeowners, but they will be starting with renters in the Whittier pilot.

Tips & Tricks for homeowners or renters to do front yard placemaking

Max & Kathy are both renters, and Max's property manager has come around, as you can see on the 2200 block of Harriet. In terms of bridging the gap between property managers and residents, the Whittier Alliance project will be recruiting property managers up front, so they see it's not just a rogue individual but an organization behind it. The early adopters of the initiative will encourage the project to expand through the n'hood. The project will test the hypothesis that it will increase tenant retention – a benefit for landlords.

- The toolkit has examples of worksheets to help you break down project ideas for your yard. An open expanse of grass will feel exposed & vulnerable, a 9-foot fence will feel cut-off. You need to find the happy medium.
- Moveable chairs work better than fixed chairs. Having possible activities in the space is good: grilling, games, etc.
- Protect your back: psychologically people prefer having something behind them and looking out to a more open space such as the street. Consider daylight & sunshine.
- Active edges make active interiors. Edges in a front yard context: where the grass meets sidewalk, the pathway from sidewalk to house and where lawn hits house. If edges are defined it's more pleasant, which is why porches are so nice. The entire front yard is also an edge between public and private space.

Old/New Business

Community Announcements

- September 10, 10-2, bike event at Sunrise Cyclery. Open Streets Nicollet on September 18.

Task Force update

- Crime & Safety TF meeting this Wednesday. TF is great forum for community to exchange ideas with the 5th Precinct. Jamie Keefer who works for the sex offenders unit will attend.
- Enviro TF meeting is last Wednesday of the month. Working on the Whittier Wheels initiative. Hosting some raingarden workshops at private residences in the n'hood.

Community Announcements

- Transition Towns Group – Stevens Square and Whittier are collaborating. Meeting on Monday.
- Deb from Children's Theater announced they received a youth microgrant from WA to promote access to disadvantaged kids. They have affordable \$5 tickets for shows, and scholarships to summer classes. They want to provide sustainable access to make it a part of the childhood of neighborhood kids. It's called the ACT Pass program.
- Jen Kader recommended the Master Water Steward program: it's very informative and constructive, check it out. The Women's Environmental Institute focuses on sustainability and has training October 1 and 2. Will Allen former basketball player, who has transformed urban agriculture in US, will lead the training. Scholarships are available.

Motion to Adjourn: 7:45pm. Motion Carried. Minutes by Paul Shanafelt/Lucy Lawson.

