

**Whittier Housing Issues Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday, July 17, 6:00-7:30pm**  
**Black Forest Inn, 1 E 26th St.**

**Attendees:** Kevin Chavis, Shannon Dotson, Scott Melamed, Stephanie Brown, Aldona Martinka, Nate Rastetter, Nate Broadbridge, Jessica Donahue, Christine Popowski

**Staff:** Kaley Brown

**Meeting called to order at 6:11pm by Stephanie Brown, Housing Issues Committee Chair.**  
**Agenda & Code of Conduct are reviewed.**

**Motion** to approve agenda. **Seconded. Approved.**

Brief discussion on how the group will work together:

- Stephanie requests volunteers for group members who can assist her with coordinating upcoming meeting logistics; Nate and Scott volunteer.
- Kaley will create a google drive folder for the group to work together out of.
- Establish Monday meeting dates for the rest of 2018 to work around the Planning Commission meetings:
  - August 20, September 24, October 22, November 12, December 10 (tentative)
  - Stephanie will work on establishing a regular meeting location.

Discussion on Make Homes Happen Coalition

- Coalition of various community groups and citizens that are collectively pushing the City of Minneapolis to commit \$50 million annually for 10 years toward the creation of affordable rental housing, expanding affordable ownership options, and establishing stronger tenant protections.
- MHH approached Whittier Alliance to ask if we would consider endorsing their efforts by signing on as a partner organization.
  - Discussion on MHH from members who are familiar with their efforts
  - Question: What exactly would it mean if we were to sign on? Are there obligations that go along with it, or are we just saying that we support their overall goals?
  - Stephanie will ask their organizers for more information and report back in preparation for the July board meeting.
- **Motion** to approve the Whittier Alliance Housing Issues Committee's endorsement of MHH Coalition's efforts. **Seconded. Carried unanimously.**
- **Motion** to recommend endorsement by the full Whittier Alliance Board of the MHH Coalition's efforts. **Seconded. Carried unanimously.**
- Members brainstorm a list of supporting points from the Housing Issues Committee to support the recommendation for full endorsement:
  - Housing affordability was the #1 concern raised by community members providing input on Whittier Alliance's strategic planning process this year.
  - MHH strategy has similarities to the Homes for All state-wide campaign to address housing issues in that it aims to present a united front and set of demands when communicating with elected officials and governmental bodies.

- MHH is working to find creative solutions to finding the \$50 million annually; we can help with those efforts as an official partner.
- This is a diverse community, and signing on would send a signal to our neighbors that Whittier Alliance is serious about collaboratively addressing housing needs.
- Whittier is 85-90% renters, and we hear frequently that renter engagement is a priority for neighbors and City officials, alike. Supporting MHH's efforts to strengthen tenant protections is a good opportunity to move in that direction.
- We would unlock access to a strong support system of other knowledgeable organizations and people working on housing that we could tap into as key resources.

#### Small and Median Multifamily Loan Policy

- Comment period ends August 20 (send to [ester.robards@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:ester.robards@minneapolismn.gov))
- Currently in pilot phase - applies to small and medium multi-family buildings from 2-49 units
- Participants can receive up to \$19,000 with a zero interest loan in order to buy a building and convert it to a condo or cooperative living structure
- Whittier Alliance will not provide a single comment as a whole Committee, but members are encouraged to submit a comment individually by the deadline if they have thoughts on it.

#### Meeting Guest: Carol Becker, City of Minneapolis Board of Estimate and Taxation

- Brief discussion on how property taxes are calculated
- City's budget is usually around \$1.4 billion; \$325 million of that is brought in through property taxes.
- Question: What are the biggest asks in the City's annual budget?
  - A: Depends on the year, but typically the big ones are police, firefighters, street maintenance and improvements, and parks
- Assessor's office determines how much your home is worth largely by examining comparable properties and area sales figures.
- Nate and Carol will connect to talk more about the 4D classification and how it could impact rent levels via property tax changes.

#### Planning Commission Meeting: Good Grocer

- Stephanie, Scott, Kaley, and Morgan Luzier attended and submitted official comments; learned a lot from the process to carry forward:
  - Huge need to organize on a project much sooner in the process -- ideally right when things are purchased.
  - Need for a clear vision to articulate for Whittier in these conversations
  - There is no clear process for responding to and engaging with City planners and commissioners.
    - Clear need to build relationships with City Council and CPED staff
  - Strive to get our positions into the conversation at the Committee of the Whole (sooner) instead of the Planning Commission
  - Need to get a better handle on affordability facts as they relate to Whittier; HousingLink is a nonprofit and is working with Stephanie to use Whittier as a pilot for developing better data related to housing issues.
- Approved version of the Good Grocer project is 1-2 bedrooms, market rate - \$1,400 for a one bedroom.
- Could improve a lot on aesthetic and architectural quality and interest.

- A lot of concern about it being the first development of its kind on Nicollet Ave in Whittier and setting a precedent for what subsequent projects might be like.

Next steps to be effective in our efforts:

- In order to have a basis to be convincing with our arguments we need to be able to confidently communicate a coherent and accurately collective vision for the neighborhood.
  - We need to develop a community survey and canvass the neighborhood to learn what that vision actually should include.
  - Idea: figure out how to incorporate housing into a larger questionnaire about Whittier; how can we deploy a full neighborhood voice?
- How do we sharpen up on engaging around development projects?
  - Who can we learn from regarding questions to ask developers? What does it take in the big picture sense for a developer to realize a new project in Whittier at this moment?
- Action Items:
  - Stephanie will send info on the 4D Classification & other City docs on development
  - Kaley and other group members will reach out to other neighborhoods to ask what process they underwent to administer a comprehensive questionnaire (Stevens Square did this several years ago).
  - Group members will collectively work on developing next steps for how to develop the survey and establish a process and timeline
    - Will use the google drive folder to share work

**Motion to adjourn at 7:26pm. Seconded. Carried unanimously.**

Minutes submitted by Kaley Brown.