

Whittier Housing Issues Committee Meeting Minutes  
October 20, 2020, 6:30-8:00pm  
Zoom Digital Meeting

**Attendees:** \*Stephanie Brown, Laura Hoffman, \*Nick Hutchinson, Jonathan Moses, \*Zachary Levonian, Alex Aspell, \*Margo Fritz, Marion Greene, \*Nate Rastetter, Michael Goze, \*Nicole Weiler, \*Brigid Higgins, Joshua Christianson, \*George Rishmawi, \*Jo Ann Musumeci, \*Matt Barthelemy, \*Cat Hammond, \*Caroline Alkire, Aaron Paul Keith

*\*Asterisk indicates they are a registered voter*

**Staff:** Kaley Brown, Julie Strand

**Speakers:** Michael Goze AICDC, Marion Greene County Commissioner

### **Welcome/Introductions**

- Meeting attendees went through a round of introductions sharing names, addresses, and affiliations with the neighborhood.
- The chair reviewed the standard of conduct & Non-discrimination and Anti-racism Policies / Conflicts of Interest.
- The agenda was reviewed with the group. A motion to approve the agenda. Motion carries.
- The September minutes were reviewed with the group. An edit to a meeting attendees name. A motion to approve the minutes. Seconded. Motion carries.

### **Updates from Hennepin County Commissioner Marion Greene & Michael Goze of American Indian Community Development Corporation (AICDC)**

#### **143 E 19th St**

- Commissioner Greene discussed the property owned by VOA; the County is in negotiations to purchase the building, 32 units. Had been used as a treatment facility. Plan is to turn it into housing for senior and vulnerable people because of the pandemic. Currently in due diligence period. The closing date should be soon.
- Rather than renting hotels this saves money and creates permanency. Plan is for people to move in in December after cosmetic and other updates.
- Have to spend CARES Act dollars by December 30 so that it can support the housing effort.
- Will be a caretaker on site, someone will be there to call for any issues. For people who have been stably housed in hotel rooms for the last couple months; the County knows them and knows this will be a good fit for them.
- They are in touch with Stevens Square Community Organization so they can have their questions answered too.

#### **121 W Franklin Ave**

- County helped AICDC with some funding for this project
- AICDC is located on Franklin Ave on the east side; they've partnered with CommonBond Communities to offer senior housing, other scattered site housing in the area.
- 2408 in Whittier, as well as 2423 Chicago and Elliot House are also AICDC's properties.
- Discussed supportive housing across the city, some are more independent living, and some are a continuum of care.

- Franklin House- independent intentional community serving 20 adults between carriage house and the main house. Lends itself to a good amount of housing.
- Last couple of years AICDC has developed a proven model at other sites. 24 hour staff, always someone at the location; case managers and in-house therapists to help the community members staying in these housing; meals provided because they feel nutrition is an important part of stability; work programs.
- AICDC provides educational outlets and is tied to the community in a number of ways; they use many types of community partnerships to support their programs.
- Native Community housing: they believe in supporting people and raising them up, which explains the scope of services they provide.
- This convo is the beginning of our dialogue with the Whittier community on this project.

### Questions?

Q-What kind of units are in the Franklin House?

A-Supportive housing, a stepping stone to permanent housing. There are 9 bedrooms in the main house and some Single Room Occupancy units, using Covid guidelines. Some rooms with more than one person in it. 6 bathrooms in the main house. The House lends itself to having a lot of space per person. We want to provide a place that we would want to live to the people we serve.

Property listing:

[https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/121-W-Franklin-Ave-Minneapolis-MN-55404/2009552\\_zpid/](https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/121-W-Franklin-Ave-Minneapolis-MN-55404/2009552_zpid/)

Q-Are there people already lined up to live there? What can we do for the people in our neighborhood sleeping in the snow tonight?

A-AICDC has been thinking about winter in July. They are developing a 50 bed shelter in Ventura Village opening mid-November; there's also an overnight shelter called Homeward Bound. Tough right now because the addiction piece is very difficult to deal with, along with mental illness needs and other barriers that need individual attention. Right now Hennepin County has 600+ people in hotels. We need to have a consistent message of offering housing to folks not yet seeking shelter every day. AICDC does not give out tents; they will work with anyone to fill their housing.

### New Development Project Discussion - [112 E Lake St.](#)

-This building is proposed in place of a building burned down in June. There are 13 apartments (all 1-bedroom) included in the building, one ADA accessible unit, and one commercial space on the ground floor. A small group initially met with the architect to provide initial feedback and talk about our committee process. The developer decided not to further engage with the committee.

Q-Why was the site not developed all at once? Why isn't the developer working with the rest of the site?

A-The architect shared that all three owners of the adjacent burned buildings were interested in buying each other out, but none were interested in selling. This owner wanted to move quicker than the others, which is why it's a stand-alone proposal.

-The site is the first around the Kmart lot. It would be a gateway building to the neighborhood. It would be good to be planned with the other parts of the buildings there, but may not be possible.

-No elevator. The Nico plant owns the parking lot parcel adjacent to this site.

Comments:

-The development hits on none of our goals for buildings in our neighborhood. They aren't willing to engage with us. Not interested in rebuilding Whittier into an uplifting future.

-The architect indicated that he doesn't know much about the neighborhood.

-Some of the constraints are that the owner is new to development. The architect doesn't know our city and neighborhood. The reconstruction of utilities on Lake St creates a need for urgency; it is a huge cost advantage to break ground before the spring, otherwise they will have a penalty to cut into freshly placed concrete.

Chair opened the floor to questions and then next steps.

Q-Are there any green infrastructure or features proposed?

A-No

Q-Who lived here before?

A-Used to be three separate businesses. This will replace the space for the one closest to the highway. Not planning in conjunction with the other developers. There will be retail space in the ground floor. Not sure who will be there. There weren't any apartments before.

City staff has expressed concerns about the blankness of the walls facing the highway, but it is technically following requirements. Will go before planning commission possibly in November, but more likely in December. How do we want to push forward at these meetings?

Q-Does the city or county have any sort of coordinated effort around Lake St rebuilding? Is the owner planning to own the building after development?

A-Yes, it seems that they aren't a developer, but rather they are a property owner.

-The Committee discusses ideas for how best to influence the project from here. An informal straw poll is taken on crafting a letter, requesting that the owner make amendments based on our committee priorities for this site; then going to the city with another letter.

-Commissioner Greene-someone can send an email about that property that's next door to her office, and they can let the committee know what/if conversations are happening about that site.

### **Discussion of proposed changes to the City of Minneapolis Zoning Code**

#### **The 2040 plan**

-New buildings in our neighborhood are required to be 3 stories because our neighborhood is interior 3 zoning mostly. The affordable housing projects coming into Whittier are needing a larger option. What of proposing an idea that a developer can get more floors if you meet certain goals such as affordable or shelter housing? Can we talk to the City about our desire to have more stories for affordable housing in our neighborhood?

-If anyone wants to put that issue and story in front of the City Council and write that up let the chair know.

#### **Updates from Committee's subgroups:**

-Developer Engagement: Nate, Shannon, and Steph met about developer scorecard

-Anti-Displacement: Met and talked about core questions; wrote a doc with definitions and policies. Next steps are now needed. Advocacy needs to be on a city level for these issues, rather than just by neighborhood.

-Kmart Site Engagement: The group met and is putting outreach plans on hold until WA's AmeriCorps VISTA organizer starts in January and determinations are made on grant funding in December to support this engagement.

#### **General Announcements, Updates, and Opportunities**

-The Whittier Alliance is holding a special neighborhood meeting on January 14th to present a proposal for our organization's amended bylaws to increase access to participation and decision-making. Please attend and cast a vote!

=The chair reviewed the to-dos and next steps from this meeting.

**Motion to adjourn at 8:02pm. Seconded. Motion passes.**

HI Meetings Every third Tuesday of the month

**NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, November 17th, 6:30-8:00 pm @ Zoom**

**Meeting Minutes submitted by Julie Strand.**