

Whittier Housing Issues Committee Meeting Minutes
April 27, 2021, 6:30-8:00pm
Zoom Digital Meeting

Attendees: Stephanie Brown, Andrew Faulkner, Jordan Hedlund, Dominique Devereux, George Rishmawi, Josh, Kami Brodie, Matt Barthelemy, Hannah Jerrie

Presenters: Leah Stockstrom & Marques Morgan (CommonBond Communities), Anthony Taylor (Cultural Wellness Center)

Staff: Kaley Brown, Oscar Nieves Rubio, Robb Larson

Welcome/Introductions

-The committee went through a round of introductions.

-The meeting chair presented the agenda. **Motion to approve the agenda. Seconded. The motion passed.**

-The meeting chair recognized Standard of Conduct; Non-discrimination and Anti-racism; and Conflicts of Interest Policies.

-The committee reviewed the March minutes. **Motion to approve the March 2021 minutes. Seconded. The Motion passed.**

CommonBond Communities, Leah Stockstrom & Marques Morgan; (follow up on architecture firm name) Kimbra Breth & Bill Niebu - 2609 Blaisdell Ave S

- Project update on [adjacent expansion for Whittier Community Housing](#)
- CommonBond came to a WA Housing Issues building early on in the project planning to share their goals and intended timeline; WA supported them with a letter to help secure financing for the project.
- They have now received funding and are back to share the updates on the project.
- Since the last meeting, the City's zoning code has been updated, which required them to change their building plans from a 6 story building to a 3 story building (35 ft. max) on that parcel.
- Project has been awarded vouchers by the city to ensure units are affordable at 50% AMI so that residents will not pay more than 30% of income.
- The project will need to seek a conditional use permit from the City, because they will need to reduce the setback from the street given the reduced number of stories on the project overall
- The existing building will be renovated with mortar repair on the exterior and interior refinishes and plumbing updates; renovations will be made while residents stay in their homes.
- There will be an underground parking feature and an underground tunnel connecting the existing building to the new building
- Q: Were balconies considered for units to have access to outdoor space? Can planters be used as community garden plots? Green roof?
 - A: General management policy is not to include balconies or patios in new construction because balconies are typically used for storage, and ground floor patios are a security concern. Residents can access outdoor common green areas. Existing garden plots will remain for residents who currently garden. A green roof is not possible due to expense of stormwater management per City draining requirements and cost vs. benefit. City does not support financing of green roofs.

- Q: Will lack of air circulation on ground level be addressed in building upgrade? Residents have not been apprised of new building plans. There has been a lack of communication and support from management for the past five years.
 - A: Management does not want to unnecessarily worry residents with plans that have not been approved. When we know we're going to close on financing, we hold resident meetings, inform residents of the timeline, and take questions.
 - A: There are limitations on the ventilation that can be installed on ground level. They are currently reviewing current scope of work for what needs to be repaired or replaced - corridor air makeup will be included if they can include it in the budget.
- Q: What discussions were there for the children's spaces? Has CommonBond considered the ages of the children in the building and what their needs are? CommonBond needs to provide social work and rehabilitation resources for residents in the next 45 days to avoid conflict with residents. Staff need to be experienced in social work.
 - A: There will be a full-time staff member on site.
- Will apply for 4% tax credits from the City. Will apply for bonds in January. We're considered a preservation project because we're preserving affordable housing. We are not raising rents.

Simpson Housing Project - 28th St & 1st Ave

- With our letter of support they are pursuing financing from the city. They are now moving on to secure state-level financing
- 5-story building, 70 shelter beds
- Funding decisions by end of year, hope to begin construction a year from now

Wells Fargo / Kmart Area Redevelopment - Anthony Taylor, Cultural Wellness Center

- Anthony Taylor provided information on development of the burned down Wells Fargo building on 31st and Nicollet in the last meeting. Wells Fargo has hired Cultural Wellness Center to engage the community in conversation on how to move forward with this site.
- PPL is managing the housing side of redevelopment. Community engagement process encourages the community to think about how the built environment impacts us, and how to think more creatively about how to invest in the community.
- Wells Fargo project can be thought of as in conjunction with Kmart, even though they're on different timelines. Community engagement process can be the beginning of the vision of the development of this area.
- More information at www.lakeandnicollet.com
- Engagement sessions in June, July & August with different themes each session: history, community aspirations, culture and community.

Rex26 Development on Lyndale/26th

- Next Housing Issues Committee meeting will have more information on this development and plans for potential expansion.

Housing Issues Committee Subgroup Updates

- **Developer Engagement:** Please encourage neighbors to get involved.
 - An update on the Developer Scorecard is provided; committee volunteers are welcomed to contribute to the final draft of the scorecard, which we hope to present in April or May for a committee vote.
 - The Developer Scorecard is a form for developers to rate themselves on their projects. Then the committee can rate them, and discuss any differences with developers.

- Scorecard will be weighted with emphasis on affordable housing, sustainability, and community benefits. Subgroup is seeking more input on the scorecard draft from community members before submitting to committee vote
- How do we get the feedback we need to know that the scorecard is reflective of what the community cares about?

Other updates, announcements, opportunities

- Looking for people to support organizing for Tenant Opportunity to Purchase ordinance
- Community Issues Meetings - 2nd Monday of each month
- Save the Date - WA Annual Meeting, Wednesday, May 26th
 - Consider running for the WA Board! 4 resident seats, 3 non-profit/business seats
 - Awards for good neighbor and good business
 - Performances from neighborhood spoken word artists paying tribute to George Floyd
- Save the Boards - Saturday, June 5th. Preservation of plywood murals from last summer in partnership with Pimento and Save the Boards to Memorialize the Movement
- Committee Chair Election will take place at the June meeting

Motion to adjourn. Seconded.

Motion to adjourn at 7:59pm. Seconded. Motion passes.

HI Meetings Every third Tuesday of the month

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, May 18th, 6:30-8:00 pm @ Zoom

Meeting Minutes submitted by Robb Larson.