

## Whittier Housing and Land Use Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, July 16th, 2024, 6:30-8:00pm

Hybrid Format: WhittierAlliance (10 E 25th St) +  
Zoom Digital Meeting

**Staff/Chairs:** Meggie Garcia, George Rishmawi, Anna Schmitz

**Attendance: (voting members)** Natalie Strait, Natalie Somerson, Halley Norman, Meggie Garcia, Kedar Deshpande, Nick Hutchinson, Jill Hamilton, Morgan Appleberry, Sonia, George Rishmawi, Graham Faulkner

**Not an eligible voter:** Aaron Keith (verify), Sarah Robison, Carlie Migdall

### Welcome/Introductions

- The meeting is called to order at 6:30pm
- Attendees completed a round of introductions.
- The meeting chair recognized Standard of Conduct; Non-discrimination and Anti-racism; and Conflicts of Interest Policies.
- Motion to approve today's agenda - **approved**
- April minutes review or motion to approve - **approved**

George Rishmawi nominated for chair - **approved!**

**(natalie som - yes to joining HJL)**

### Housing Justice League - Halley

- Coalition of organization across Minneapolis working on housing policies and power building
- Current Focus - TOPA (tenant opportunity to purchase act) policy: gives tenants the opportunity to purchase their building when it goes up for sale and decline if they don't want to.
  - Why?
  - Currently a change in ownership can happen without notify a tenant and most of the time the new owner increases rent prices - pricing out long term tenants and other
  - The intent of this policy is to first give tenants an opportunity to purchase their home and build equity with the right to decline and continue renting
  - Currently the way this is getting constructed focuses on single family homes, and duplexes/triplexes. This eventually could cover all types of housing depending on how its written
- Reason here today - Whittier Alliance considering joining HJL on their housing efforts city wide. Making a formal ask that WA becomes a coalition member.

Open up to what it may mean for WA to join HJL:

- How has this looked like in the past ? What resources are there to help tenants?
  - Policies passed in San francisco/new york
  - Current focus is on single family homes and smaller buildings like duplexes. Bit more difficult once it gets bigger but there is co-ops that exist and working to be an example

Comment - this feels like a conflict of interest bc it feel like it is against property owners

- Good point, WA is partially funded by the city and which is why WA brought this to the community. Want to make sure that the community is aware and can share thoughts about this decision . WA believes we are doing what we can to be representative of its constituents.

- Acknowledging that there are landlords that do care deeply about their tenants community but also acknowledging that there are a lot of landlords that don't have the best interest and this policy/coalition is to give further protection to tenants that will have to uproot their lives and given a feasible opportunity to purchase their homes and protect themselves.

Comment - There has been studies that talk about what TOPA can do here in the city. Yes, from an owner perspective it can be intimidating and tenants are also left in the dust and this would give them the opportunity to become owners and know that they CAN be owners of their home.

HJL is a policy and power building organizing - We see ourselves partnering with other organizations organizing around similar policies and other housing related efforts to share and expand capacity.

Ask of Whittier Alliance and Community Members - to bring this to the board and that staff become a coalition member and commit some staff time to share events and share capacity.

Vote - 7 approve

1 abstain

Motion - Natalie Strait to bring to board and become coalition

### **New Nicollet Redevelopment - Rebecca - [YT video](#)**

- About the project
  - 10 acres between Lake and Midtown Greenway
  - Phases one and two complete, now in phase 3 (started in April, going through early spring 2025, then into phase 4)
  - Currently focused on development objectives, specifics of street design and engineering
  - Construction will start in 2025, along with issuing first RFPs
- Phases recap
  - Phase 1: connecting with communities, learning and understanding priorities, translating those into desired outcomes doc to guide the project; top priorities were transportation, public space, housing, commercial activity
    - Desired outcomes centered on community connection and development, wealth-building, housing stability, community services, sustainability
  - Phase 2: focus on street layout and public space (what elements to include, layout, types and amounts of public space); community feedback on roadway priorities (green space, walking/rolling, biking, transit)
    - Four design concepts, PW collected feedback - final concept was essentially concept one, with some modifications
    - Greenway ramp reconstruction will connect directly into two-way bike lane on 1st
    - Public space prioritized green/flexible/community space, emphasis on trees specifically (there are none!) - three options for site design, option C won
  - Phase 3: development plan (goals, market forces, ownership strategies), detailed design and engineering, final site design
- Discussion
  - What priorities do you have for this upcoming development? What opportunities or concerns do you have about this project?
    - Concern: Major development hype it up and get to final execution is disappointing. Understand this is not a proposal that will be voted on by residents
    - Important to be transparent to community members what to actually expect

- Why we never show pictures of developments because people get attached to it.
- Not asking for a realistic depiction but actual committing to what you say are going to provide and is realistic
- Concern: Park will be owned by park board - don't want it to sit there empty bc PB doesn't have the fund to development
- Opportunity: elevate the design of the upcoming building - can we get some design diversity a unique spaces
- Question: have you tried to acquire the empty lots on the other side of the Greenway.
  - Have tried but none of the owner were cooperative
- Focus on the square - one block east a bus stop that is not being considered
  - There is alot going on around - need to broaden the scope and think about what is happening around the developing site
  - A lot of traffic analyze is being done but maybe worth sharing the bigger picture
- Concern: Congestion in traffic during the construction - what are you doing to mitigate and maintaining the safety
  - Want more flashing pedestrian crossing/ traffic light
- Push to advocate the angle design of concept c
- There needs to be tons of focus on centering ped and bikers
  - Don't wait for cm to come to you - meet them where they are
- Event Aug 20th - walking around the site
- Survey - sept to nov
- Sept 26th open house - Abyssinia Cultural Center
- Door knocking
- Transit stop pop ups
- Will go back to some prior focus groups met in the past

### Updates

- Draft Midtown Greenway Regional Trail Plan open for comments now!
- Pillsbury Ave bridge over Greenway is getting an update

### Next Meeting:

**Aug 20th 6:30-8pm**

Meeting Minutes submitted by Meggie and Halley