

Whittier Housing and Land Use Committee Meeting Minutes

August 16, 2022, 6:30-8:00pm

Hybrid Format: Provision Community Restaurant (2940 Harriet Ave) + Zoom Digital Meeting

Attendees: George Rishmawi, Shannon Dotson, Morgan Luzier, Stephanie Brown, Wendy Darst, Kami Brodie, Laryssa Stolarskyj, Brett Olds, Brock Rasmussen (MCAD), Adam Erickson, Andrea Lechuga, Maddy Schwartz, Nick Hutchinson, Jesse Oyervides, *29th & Harriet Ave Resident*

Presenters: Nick Hutchinson (Whittier Neighbor), Eric Whittaker and Aron Johnson (DJR Architecture), Jeff Mandyk and Amy Cheever (Cunningham Group)

Staff: Kaley Brown, Krystin Eldridge

Welcome/Introductions

- The meeting is called to order at 6:32.
- The committee went through a round of introductions.
- The meeting chair presented the agenda. Motion to approve the agenda is seconded and passes unanimously.
- The meeting chair recognized Standard of Conduct; Non-discrimination and Anti-racism; and Conflicts of Interest Policies.
- The July meeting minutes are reviewed. Motion to approve the July meeting minutes is seconded and passes unanimously.
- Attendees completed a round of introductions.

2116 Nicollet Lot

- Community Survey
 - Project background is shared and attendees are encouraged to take the survey
 - Request for Proposals document goes to WA Board for approval in August and will be released to community developers in September if approved
 - Whittier Alliance office will be relocated to the new building at 2116 Nicollet Ave

KMart Site Development

- Whittier Alliance is co-leading the community engagement team hired by the City along with a coalition of other community-based organizations and NEOO Partners, Inc.
- Focus of engagement will be on reaching folks most impacted by the project who live and work here now
- Will be lots of engagement opportunities to participate in, activities aimed at getting a broad range of perspectives
- Project page on City's website has high level goals based on established City policies such as the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Action Plan, etc.
- Sign up on the website for updates at <https://www2.minneapolismn.gov/government/programs-initiatives/new-nicollet/>

29th & Grand Ave Development Project, Eric Whittaker (Cultivate Capital) & Aron Johnson (DJR Architecture)

- Cultivate Capital is the group behind this effort
- He didn't like how Afghan families were left in a tough place after the U.S. withdrawal last year and has since worked with many families coming to Minnesota as refugees.

- Has 4 homes, 3-4 bedrooms each, and 4 families living in each one; he aims to continue/grow that effort with this project
- Proposed Development
 - Multifamily building with roughly 103-108 units, 7 stories
 - The zoning of these parcels should not be impacted by the lawsuit currently playing out around the 2040 Comprehensive Plan
 - Project is adjacent to the Lyndy apartment building, which has walk-up units on the alley
 - Site plan includes about 1 acre of land on the following parcels: 2916, 2920, 2924, 2926, and 2932 Grand Ave S
 - Walk up units on Grand Ave and the alley
 - Tall plantings, raised up walk up spaces, breakout space for larger families to play
 - Black and white exterior palette with earthtones (terracotta)
 - 1 level of underground parking
 - Roof decks on L2, L6 and L7, community gardens for residents and green roofs
 - Stormwater management plan required for all developments
- Comment: Hope to see this building stay locally owned and not sold to a real estate investment trust
 - How can they be involved in the community and business associations instead of just benefitting from the neighborhood's assets?
 - Create space for community at street level, be a part of the street art festivals, financial and time commitments in the community
 - A: Goal is to retain ownership; it's not a revenue generating project. One of the co-owners of Cultivate Capitalis Jason; Jason's wife owns The LynHall and has been an active member in the LynLake business community since it opened.
- Comment: Walk up unit renderings do not have any visible handrails or ADA ramps. Make sure it's accessible in all phases for folks with mobility challenges.
- 7 units currently on the property and all tenants have been notified that this redevelopment may be taking place in the coming months/year.
- Q: How will the storm drainage interact with all the other developments already in the area?
 - A: The green space is there to slow the drainage but it will connect to existing water management infrastructure that the City maintains
- Q: What convos were had with the Lyndy, walk-ups still feel like alley space despite their design
 - A: 15 ft setback allowed so the plan is to make it a nice space, especially corners where people pull in. It is not technically allowed to build in a setback.
- Q: Are the affordable housing units attached to subsidies or are they handling that? How could the community members living there now find other options to live?
 - A: No Afghan families live in the units, the current tenants are paying market rate
- Small group will convene to provide more in-depth built form feedback, and the project will be back again at next month's meeting for a vote to be taken.

Traffic Calming for 27th around Whittier International School

- Folks in the Whittier Solidarity Discord Network have been working on an application to the City's new Traffic Calming Program Pilot, which will prioritize where infrastructure improvements are made each year by Public Works staff
- They are going to apply for a number of different researched strategies, and if selected, there will be an additional community engagement process in 2023 to determine which strategies to pursue based on broader input. Ideas could include:
 - Pinch points with concrete blocks and barricades
 - Better signage

- Roundabouts
- Two way conversion of some problematic one-way roads
- Speed humps
- In order to submit the application, they need a formal vote of approval from the neighborhood organization to demonstrate some community buy-in up front
- A motion is made to support their application to the City's traffic calming program, seconded, and passed unanimously. 10-0-0.

MCAD Student Housing Project - Jeff Mandyk and Amy Cheever, Cuningham Group

- Campus master plan is in the design development phase
 - Needs affordable housing for the school, but also the institution wants to grow further
 - Long range plan looks 10-15 years out,
 - Located on the northeast corner of Stevens Ave and 26th Street, dormitory-style housing
 - Phase 1-4 is to develop 310 units for 1 and 2nd year students
 - Eventually they want to move the MFA building back onto campus to be included with the rest of the students and upgrade infrastructure
 - Have been working with the City, neighbors, and WA, look at height of building up to 6 stories
 - Height is designed with respect to Mia's closest buildings and other existing structures
 - College is wanting to create more connection the landscape, windows on the floor level, make it feel more in harmony with the exterior street experience
 - Potential for dining hall, public gallery space
 - North end for support and services to the students
 - Artwork on the North side of the building also more art murals in the middle of the campus
 - They are doing more exploration on material , quality and lighting in the night for safety
 - No green roofs
 - Q: What parts of this larger master plan are being decided now and what will be decided with community input later on?
 - A: Most of these pieces are much further out. These could be 5 -15 years out, they are focused on implementing 26th and Stevens student housing right now
 - Q: Public car share - can it be relocated or expanded?
 - Will make note of it and explore options
- This project will be back at our September Housing & Land Use Meeting for a committee vote

Meeting adjourned at 8:11 pm.

HLU Meetings Every third Tuesday of the month

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, September 20th, 6:30-8:00 pm - Hybrid in-person/zoom meeting

Meeting minutes submitted by Krystin Eldridge.