

Whittier Alliance Business Association Committee- Draft Minutes
Wednesday, April 14, 2010 4-5:30 at MIA

Present: Erica Christ (Black Forest), Sharon Lund (Falls Agency), Liz Grzechowiak (Azia), Tom Bissen, (MCAD), Paul Jablonsky (Nicollet and Loring Car Washes), Becky Olson (Fair Oaks Apartment), Mary Anne Hoffman (Community Connections Partnership), Pam Newsome (MCAD)

Presenters: Bill & Nancy Blanski, Lisa Vecoli (MIA) **Staff:** Marian Biehn, Jessica Rosenberg

Call to Order at 11:46 by Erica Christ, BA Chair, followed by introductions. Erica recognized the Conflict of Interest & Standard of Conduct policies. Marian added Eat Street Excursion to the agenda. The agenda was approved as changed. The BA Committee Minutes of March 10, 2010 were reviewed and approved.

Spotlight on Business- MIA – Lisa Vecoli & Kaywin Feldman

The MIA is an encyclopedic museum; works from every recorded human civilization. The permanent collection is free everyday. Third Thursdays (museum open later with music, events) are blossoming, attendance has increased by 100%, and is getting younger. They have eight collecting departments at the MIA, including a newer contemporary art curator. This will be featured in the next exhibition is opening on Friday, Until Now: Collecting the New. They haven't done contemporary art in a while, b/c of Walker, but that freezes MIA at 1960. Contemporary art is much more global, more interdisciplinary, less about borders and boundaries, which the older work is more about. And contemporary art is more welcoming to younger audience. MIA, CTC and MCAD will be doing a neighborhood cleanup on April 26th. Once a month Target Family Day: art making, movement, music, fun times. Property is Mpls Public Park property. Donated in 1911 for gallery and school, when MCAD & MIA were Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts.

Election of BA Chair: Annual Meeting Recap: Annual Meeting was last Thursday. We elected five new board members: Tom Bissen, Daphna Stromberg, Jesse Oyervides, Rob Davis, Robert Nogler. We recognized Good Business and Good Neighbor awards. We renewed the CI and BA committees, and at the next meetings need to elect representatives. Tom nominated Liz Grzechowiak as Chair of the Business Association. Liz was elected chair. Erica nominated Lisa Vecoli as nonprofit rep to the Board. Maurice Battle, currently serving as a BA non-profit rep, was elected CI Chair, so his spot is open. Lisa was elected nonprofit rep, and noted that Rob Davis, who was elected as a community member at large, works at MCAD, and so for the first time the arts campus will have 2 reps. Sharon nominated David Schuster for for-profit rep to the Board. David is in Cancun, so will be voted on at the next meeting. It is important that we have both business and resident perspective on the Board, as they sometimes differ.

Joe's Chicken Shack- Bill & Nancy Blanski are here to introduce themselves. They purchased 109 East 26th St., through Farrow LLC, not only owners. They live in St. Louis Park. They hope and plan to live in the building. Bill is a design architect with HGA downtown, with lots of vision for the building. They are excited to get connected to the n'hood. They will show drawings soon, once contractor prices it and bank approves. Questions? It is not in the historic district, is in the pedestrian overlay. They've talked to owner of lot to the west (former Lee's Laundry at 101 E 26th St), but are not looking to buy it. They want to live there and have a small business: mixed use. Lisa mentions the virtual art instillation that the MCAD class did last year. Erica asked whether they are going to keep up the building. Though it may not qualify for historic designation, it is one of the older buildings in the neighborhood. Is the 1883 orb legit? Yes, and they're excited to have an older building, would like to stabilize it. They're not going to be able to take it to the full historical glory, but they aren't going to take it down. Marian suggests calling the Hennepin Historic Museum for an overview of the building.

MCAD Storefront Project– **Marian Biehn**: WA has been working with MCAD “Art in Community” class. With economy down and businesses empty, students will design art installations to fill vacant store fronts, Whittier neighborhood, and make street look appealing, inviting, interesting. April 24, from 3-6 there will be a reception, open house, visit with the artists, at Pay Day America on 26th and Nicollet. There will be balloons in front of the windows that have art in them. Most art will be between 24th and 26th. The art will be on vinyl posters, so it can be moved to other storefronts as spaces get rented. They also have a facebook page, so you can cross promote on your website. MCAD is also doing a free gallery opening for student art, this Friday, April 16th, in the vacant storefront next to CVS. Jay Coogan presidential inauguration will be this Saturday, with an open house for the community at 4pm.

Development Update- Review of developments in Whittier. Marian puts this document together every year. You can see how projects are introduced, morph, come together, or go away. Copies here, or call the WA.

Old & New Business: Façade Improvement Grant – Matching funds, for lighting, doors, signage, painting, not landscaping, awning not preferred. Lyndale, 2-1. Nicollet 1-1. Max \$10,000, May 30th deadline. **BA-CPED grant** – Marketing Commercial Corridors. We have until 8/31 to spend it. We want to continue marketing vacant store fronts on commercial corridors. Vacant storefront project will be part of it, and we could also use some of that for ESE. Places will do it again, if we ask. Need to plan meeting. **Graffiti Removal** – Available removal materials, and grant reimbursement for permanent anti-graffiti supplies. **May Day Soiree** - Thursday May 6th, Blaisdell Manor. Benefit for Whittier, fun party, entertainment, food from n’hood restaurants, cash bar, live and silent auction. This year’s goal is 200 guests. Bring your friends, we need people to bid. We usually make over half of each year’s unrestricted funds here. Please see Marian if you’d like to buy tickets, or take tickets to sell at your business. We’re looking to diversify silent auction, so if you have any items please contact WA. Parking will be at the Waldorf School. **Eat Street Excursion** – The plan for this spring is to tie ESE to MIA’s Third Thursday in May, 20th and 21st. Thursday will be a later happy hour, possibly 8-11, Friday 5:30-10. We’re looking to go monthly through August in conjunction with Third Thursday. Lisa says MIA’s contract with D’Amico doesn’t work well for food on Third Thursday, and MIA is very happy to be able to send people to Nicollet for specials. We have some budget left, and we’ll be talking to food suppliers for sponsorship. How are we going to reach out to people who live in the neighborhood? We’ll have a website again, and have announcements out earlier, get it in the Southwest Journal. Could we do a banner across the street? Might be well done through the Special Services District, but would take a while. Could we do a Groupon? Marketing power is big, but harder for the business. One thing that worked about this was that businesses could determine their own special. It would be hard to get everyone to agree to one special. Hopefully this will grow; Third Thursday took 2 years to build. Paul commits to putting up banners on his building, suggests getting this out to the Wedge’s list serve.

Meeting adjourned at 1:00. Minutes submitted by Jessica Rosenberg

Next meeting: May 12, 2010.