

**Whittier Alliance Business Association Committee- Draft Minutes  
Wednesday, May 12, 2010 11:30-1,**

**Mpls 1<sup>st</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventist**

**Present:** Maurice Battle (Mpls 1<sup>st</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventist), Liz Grzechowiak (Azia), Felino de la Pena, Carolyn Humphrey (AAUW/Gale Mansion), Ethan Jutter (Armor Security), Erica Christ (Black Forest), Sharon Lund (Falls Agency), Nimco Ahmed (City of Mpls)

**Presenters:** Amanda Arnold (CPED), Ana Flintof (Transportation Planning & Engineering) Jenifer Loritz (Transportation Planning & Engineering), Jim Grube (Hennepin County Transportation Dept.)

**Staff:** Marian Biehn, Jessica Rosenberg

**Call to Order** at 11:39 by Liz Grzechowiak, BA Chair, followed by introductions. Liz recognized the Conflict of Interest & Standard of Conduct policies. Marian added an announcement from Carolyn-AAUW to the agenda. The agenda was approved as amended. The BA Committee Minutes of April 14, 2010 were reviewed and approved.

**Spotlight on Business- 1<sup>st</sup> Minneapolis 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventist Church.** 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventist has been at this location for four years, was at 27<sup>th</sup> and Stevens from 1900 until then. Congregation has individuals from 19 different countries, membership at 250 and attendance at 300. It is a young congregation, many children. 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventist are the 10<sup>th</sup> largest world religion, begun in the U.S. Worship is on Saturday, the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the week. Key beliefs are in Jesus Christ as the savior, and there is a big focus on healthy living. There are about 20 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventist churches in the Cities, and Maurice is going to be assigned to two new churches in July, a one in Minneapolis and one in Stillwater. Maurice is the pastor, the only one at the congregation. He is the only paid staff, the rest of the administration is volunteer.

**Election of BA Reps:** There are open seats for Business Association representatives to the Whittier Alliance Board. Please talk to Marian or Liz if you are interested.

**South Minneapolis Development Plans South Mpls City Planner – Amanda Arnold, Transportation Planning & Engineering, Project Manager - Jenifer Loritz**

We've combined the discussion of land use and transportation planning, as the two are linked. When you build, it changes transportation needs; when you change transportation, it changes the market for development. Planning has been doing a lot of work in the last five years: land use and development is guided by the comprehensive plan, submitted to the Met Council. Has to be updated every 8 years, last one was completed in 2009. It focuses on land use development, also talks about parks and open space, heritage preservation, housing, zoning, economic development, public services, environment, urban design, arts and culture, and is adopted by the city council. "Land Use Features" are noted in the comprehensive plan. Roadways are divided into commercial corridors and community corridors: identified commercial corridors have the infrastructure to develop commercially. The plan also designates activity centers: destinations, ie. Lyn-Lake, 26<sup>th</sup> & Nicollet (Eat Street), Kmart site. Kmart is one of the few places that could host a major redevelopment. The plan is an outline for the whole city, and then the city goes back through to fill in details in specific areas. In Whittier: There was the Midtown Minneapolis Plan, 2005. This covers a lot about the Greenway, Lake, and 35W. It is slightly out of date, it has been updated, but it has great visuals. In 2007 city planned for Greenway: Midtown Greenway Land use and Development Plan. Plans go parcel by parcel to show what city wants to develop. Nicollet Avenue Plan (2000) goes block by block for the length of Nicollet, generated by community steering committee, adopted by city council. We aren't doing much more planning for Whittier, these plans, while slightly aged, still layout the basic ideas for local planning.

We've been talking about policy, but we also have the zoning code. Ideally, the long range plans match the regulations in zoning code. CPED is working on that, updating them, working to include green incentives in the zoning code.

**Attendee Questions:**

How does CPED work to increase business? CPED has a business staff, who do outreach to potential businesses. How is city development working with HCMC, is it looking to develop more medical infrastructure? The city will work with HCMC. With Kmart viewed as a major redevelopment property, does that mean it would be redevelopment of retail at that site, or reopen Nicollet? Both. We have money to build the street, but would be expensive to use eminent domain to build the site. If a developer comes forward, they could redevelop the site, and work with the city to build the street. Marian understands that Kmart is low on the priorities. Is the city having it there as ongoing conversation, but no real momentum to get it done? The CLIC group has to look at the whole city, and readiness is very important. With no developer, they've got leaking pipes to fix now. It is in there, ready to move forward, but without a developer there isn't anything the city can do. A few years ago, the city did an Industrial Employment plan. There is less encouragement for industries. While they can be less attractive they are employment centers, and they fit well in Whittier. What was the

rationale for phasing out light industry? Some of it is the market, but the city is looking to encourage green development, and to cluster industrial areas together. While it might work okay for the neighborhoods for now, long range the industrial users are going to be better served clustered together. What is the thinking for concentrating things? N'hoods are like little cities, and clustering all of one thing in a n'hood seems like it would be bad. Can you explain? Yes, there's been a shift, zoning used to be about separating, and then it was about bringing different things together, the one exception is industry. And as industry is changing, and as industry has a variety of impacts on its neighbors, the city is struggling to figure out how much they control, how much they leave to the market

Jenifer – Update on 35W transit center. This plan has been around for a long time, and they are getting ready to start a next phase. In 2004, the plan came out at \$450+ million. The last few years have been doing a feasibility study, boiling down the big project to smaller phases that can be rolled out piece by piece, they've got it down to \$225million for 6 specific components of the project: 1-35W Transit Station, Northbound I-35W entrance from Lake Street, Southbound 1-35W exit to Lake St, Northbound I-35W exit to 28<sup>th</sup> St, Northbound I-35W to Westbound I-94 flyover bridge, and Southbound I-35W braid bridge. The next engagement is 2-3 years of developing plan to 30% level. The plan that came out in the late 90's, there was a lot of angst about the entrance to 35W. The UPA has put in the hot lanes on northbound 35W, the communities came together and agreed on a transit access point at 46<sup>th</sup> Street, and the Marq-2 project downtown has changed transit. Now we see the conversation is moving forward on fixed-rail transit in the greenway. And now what was the secondary conversation of 35W, Lake, Greenway is gaining energy. They've jettisoned 35<sup>th</sup>, 36<sup>th</sup>, 38<sup>th</sup>, and the conversation is now around 31<sup>st</sup>. The footprint is similar to what it was, but City, County, Metro Transit, and MNDOT have agreed to conversations. They're not going to the city yet, stopping just short of that. What you can see with this proposal, we're starting with the access project, and we're going to be talking about streetscape, talking about what it will look like to open Nicollet. Lake Street between Blaisdell and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, the freeway area, needs help. If we can agree on the future of that area, we could build a good portion of that Lake Street five years from now. So much of this will be funded by the federal government. Will that introduce new aspects? What is the projected population growth? Will the lure of fed gov't funding drive expansion that is not in the best interest of the n'hood? From the freeway perspective, the issue is one of not increasing capacity to a great extent, but having managed lanes, configured correctly. The increase in capacity is a result of putting structures in the place to smooth out the flow: ie, having buses in the correct lane to end up at a transit station at Lake Street without too much weaving. Also, looking at the entrances, exits around downtown, they are not looking to increase capacity, but to increase efficiency, decrease accidents. From the local street, we've got to figure out buses, how to open up Nicollet, how to direct traffic. Lisa talked about the give and take of the freeway: it runs through us but it doesn't serve us, how can we change it to meet our needs better? City council, MNDOT, Metro Council, all saying this issue is a big deal, wanting to keep the cooperation going to fit the pieces of the puzzle together. Amanda and Jenifer are going to come the Whittier CI meeting in June or July, and present with graphics. They'll be putting together an advisory council, invite participation and feedback. Where does trolley come into this? We've got to respect the chair of the county commissioners, who said they wouldn't be talking about the transit trench, but we respect the city of Minneapolis and this project, can't help put engage this conversation. Will this transit station impact the width of Lake Street, will that be part of the plan, or will that be a byproduct? The width of Lake Street will be a byproduct of the transit access. We need to look at where the buses sit to transfer people, how will the traffic increase when Nicollet reopens. It seems like we can't even imagine how reopening Nicollet will transform the area, and building all this before the reopen, will seriously change what the street looks like. Engaging a project like the 35W transit center creates buzz, momentum, focus; this might stimulate some creative minds loose, bring some "white knights" to the project who are interested in development. How do we define white knight, though; Kmart was a white knight in 1970. Jim hopes there will be four or five people bringing their ideas, to choose between (see what happened at Midtown exchange).

**Old & New Business: Eat Street Excursion** – The plan for this spring is to tie ESE to MIA's Third Thursday in May, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. Thursday will be a later happy hour, 8-11, after the MIA; Friday 5:30-10. We've got postcards and flyers, please take and promote. **Façade Improvement Grant** – Matching funds, for lighting, doors, signage, painting, not landscaping, awning not preferred. Lyndale, 2-1. Nicollet 1-1. Max \$10,000, 5/30 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 and ESE are parts. **Graffiti Removal** – Available removal materials, and grant reimbursement for permanent anti-graffiti supplies. **Gale Mansion**: has just been redone, is reopened after major renovations, new elevators, renovated bathrooms, redone big room. There will be an open house Wednesday June 9<sup>th</sup>, 4-7, the neighborhood is invited. **Black Forrest Inn** is being honored on their 45<sup>th</sup> birthday, Friday morning by the city council. Friday night there will be music, Saturday is free strudel day, Grain Belt specials all weekend, and old menu items will be back.

**Meeting adjourned at 12:53.** Minutes submitted by Jessica Rosenberg  
**Next meeting:** June 9, 2010.