

Whittier Alliance-Community Issues Committee- DRAFT MINUTES

Monday June 14th, 2010 Whittier Elementary School

Attendees: Timothy LaPean, John Wilson, Erica Christ, Mary Cable, Lisa Vecoli, Jesse Oyervedes, Verne Greenlee, Don Davis, Anne Weber, Felino de la Pena, David Schorth, Mike Meland, Lisa Vecoli, Brent Roeger, Binh Le, Nora Novic, Anthony Carchedi, David Bagley, Felino dela Pena, CM Robert Lilligren, Jeff Carlson, Jo Ann Musumeci, Chris Popowski, Laura Jean **Presenters:** Chelsea Adams & Lt. Tony Diaz (MPD 5th Precinct), Anita Tabb (Mpls Park Board), Jenifer Loritz (City of Minneapolis), Jim Grube (Hennepin County) **Staff:** Marian Biehn, Becky Neamy, Jessica Rosenberg

Call to order: at 6:08 pm by Erica Christ, WA Board Chair, who reviewed the Conflict of Interest and Standard of Conduct policies. Erica amended the agenda due to absence of the Center of Light; they will be on the July agenda. A motion to approve the agenda as amended carried. Introductions followed. Attendees were given time to review the May CI meeting minutes, and Erica asked for additions or corrections. None were offered; a motion was made and carried by unanimous approval.

Announcements & Community Comments: A resident asked about the sidewalk fixing letters that the city has sent out. Marian reported that they city is serious about the fixes; you can get quotes from other contractors, or the city will send their contractor, but you have to get them fixed. A resident is unhappy that there wasn't more advance notice, in these economic times. CM Lilligren apologies for the lack of notice, but encourages people to engage with the public works department if they have questions or want to challenge a decision, they are very responsive. **5th Precinct Report:** YTD crime rate is up overall, due to theft, auto theft, and theft from motor vehicle, it is down in everything else. Majority of auto theft is along Nicollet. Assaults are down, burglaries are down. There are 2 beat officers at Franklin and Nicollet in the morning and evenings, and Lyndale and Lake. Anthony asked about recent murders in the precinct. Lt. Diaz says out of 24 (YTD?) 5 are gang related. Recently, at 26th & Lyndale, the violence was not random. They try to find people on gun charges, before there is deadly violence. Last year, the city crime was at a 40 year low. You could find info to compare us to similar sized cities online. Majority of murder is in precinct 3 & 4, some in 2. The tile mural was taken from 2008 Pillsbury. It would have been someone who had the code, but it would have taken them perhaps an hour to get it out of the house. If anyone saw anything, between 3pm on April 24th and noon on April 25th, please contact the WA. A resident asked about pit fires, people's backyard fires and noise. There are some ordinances about distance from buildings, but police don't typically go looking for them. **NCEC** – The City is working on the program that will replace NRP, as it is sun-setting: The Neighborhood & Community Engagement Commission, in the NCR office. They are in the process of figuring out how it will be structured and funded. CM Lilligren says good news is funding will continue to come to neighborhoods. They are trying to refine what the formula will be, and are doing a lot of outreach to talk to people. They will be at the Board meeting next Thursday, and are interested in hearing from people directly. If you have thoughts on structure of the department, you can contact the NCR office. **Anita Tabb** – Park Board. The China Friendship Garden Society has approached Whittier with a proposal to put a northern style China Garden in WFO Park. On Wednesday, there is a motion at the Park Board to approve the concept, and support fundraising for the park. They need a substantial amount of money, and this gives a beginning and end date, 4 years, with benchmarks along the way (20% in first year). By the end of the 3rd year, if they have raised the 60%, the park will come back and engage the citizen advisory process to get community feedback. Project management is under the purview of the park board. There is a memorandum of understanding, to protect the interests of the Park Board and the neighborhood. It is the responsibility of Anita and Bob Fine that the garden doesn't happen in a vacuum; to have a master plan for WFO. They can't do all the maintenance at once,

but whatever happens should fit the architectural and landscape design of WFO. Has the group discussed a maintenance fund? That's not included in this park board resolution, but Anita is thinking about that; the CFGS understands that that is part of it. Marian says residents have supported continuing the discussion, but the CFGS needs to think about how the park is used. Is the proposed location for the China Garden within the park set? Anita thinks they like the topography of that corner, but they are willing to work with the neighborhood. Anita will also be meeting with HPC to discuss the historic district implications of having the garden in the park. In this economy, where do they expect the funds to come from? Anita and Bob think wherever they can get it. Perhaps some funds from Harbing, China. What about lighting in the park? They would look at that with the master plan. This is a great opportunity to think about overall design of the park. Anita will be in communication with the n'hood. A resident asked about Ash tree on the boulevard. There are tree replacement options. Call the Park Board and talk to the Forestry division. They will give you a choice of several trees. What is more dangerous, Emerald Ash or Dutch Elm? Emerald Ash hits much faster. Anita announces the Park Board's purchase of the Scherer Brothers Lumber Co. land. It gives the park board a lot of land along the river, the chance to make a big impact on the river. **Commercial Corridor Design Guidelines** are done, on the website. Please use them if you are doing work on your business, they are meant to inspire. Becky is handing out **Whittier Summer Events** and **Whittier Youth Programming**. Check our website for more events, take an Eat Street Guide.

35W Access Project. – Jenifer Loritz & Jim Grube. What was talked about 8-10 years ago as the 35W Access Project, is now the 35W Transit/Access Project. In the past few years, the Urban Partnership Agreement allowed for Bus Rapid Transit on the freeway. Transit has become more prominent in the thinking nationally, and there are discussion about fixed rail transit in the Greenway, and streetcars. Mpls City Council, Hennepin County Board of Commission, Met Council, MN Department of Transportation are looking at transit and access, and how to bring BRT from 46th up through downtown. How can we improve transit and access to it? The partners are willing to go to 30% design, a point at which they can start. The basic building block is the footprint of the access project. Also, MN DOT took a look at all of their bridges, found two that are subject to failure if one part fails. They have to replace those by 2018, by law. They are looking at how to replace those bridges in coordination with a transit station in the vicinity of Lake Street, connected to the Greenway. Questions include, how do we get access from southbound & northbound 35W to and from Lake Street? And does it make sense to still have the 28th St exit to Wells Fargo? The 5 key elements: transit station at or near Lake Street, high quality connection to Midtown Greenway, SB exit and northbound entrance and exit to Lake Street and 28th Street. They are looking to move the braid bridge so that the buses coming out of downtown can easily get to a stop on Lake Street/Greenway. They are also looking at the 35W flyover into 94, to reduce weaving. Is there a way to find out how much traffic is coming from and going to where? There is data available on that. They are looking at whether the best location for a transit stop is Lake Street. There is some agreement that it should be at the middle of the freeway, but how do you make this attractive and safe to bikers and pedestrians? Next steps will be a consultant team. Jim finished his report to the county board of commissioners. They are interested in developing a project advisory committee, and will be looking for reps from n'hoods, council members, county commissioners, business associations. Dorfman and McLaughlin will be sending a letter. There will also be a technical advisory committee. There will be open houses and public meetings. Jim thinks the project will take about 3 years to do. They will look at access project foot print, lay on what they want to do with transit access and bridges, see what makes sense to do. As they do this, they are trying to figure out what this will look like for businesses, have design guidelines. This project does not go down past 32nd. This is focused north. They are looking at landscaping, how to soften the impact this has on the environment around it. They are

also looking at the environmental impact: water, air, noise, people, historic, etc. This is just unfolding now, the neighborhoods and Council Members are going to be asked to participate.

Erica outlined the big differences between this plan and previous plans: expanded transit, and not considering south 35th St ramps. Also, CM Lilligren adds, the Chapter 152 Bridge replacements are law, must be replaced. Jeff says that the transit station is urgent; the buses get the 46th exit middle, and then have to weave to the side for Lake St, and then back to the middle; why would you tie up the urgent need for a transit station with the flyover bridge that will interrupt houses and cast a shadow on 2nd? Jim says this isn't a flyover bridge, but an exit lane. The idea is that 2nd shares a lane with the 35W exit, would demolish 6 homes, and move the McDonalds. On the East side, taking a look at how wide Lake Street needs to be. The Access Project says that there would be 7 lanes, because it considers opening Nicollet and having a turn lane. The next 2-3 years is to develop the project component to a 30% level, so that no one component is precluded by another. Marian comments that if this project moves forward the opening of Nicollet has to be in the planning. Opening Nicollet impacts Lake St, the number of lanes, the traffic flow, the possible freeway ramps, etc. Jim concurs. Jim says this is starting to look out, how can we start to do one part of the project without precluding the other. CM Lilligren says this is a total reconstruction. Jim says the freeway reconstruction happens very quickly, the freeway station. Would the transit station look similar to the 46th? Jim sees that as a transit stop; that the Lake Street stop would look more like the Lake-Hiawatha station, many people moving vertically. Verne has concerns over the 24th Street pedestrian bridge; it has more use for crime than for pedestrians. It should go or be improved. CM Lilligren adds about what else has changed: Federal Transit Fund went broke. There is the acknowledgement that we don't have the funds to support the current highway system. Now the focus is on transit. One of the few things that everyone agrees on is the Bus Rapid Transit. That needs to be completed all the way along. There is the idea that b/c of foreign oil dependence, we can't rely on the highway system, and there is a focus on rail at a federal level. CM Lilligren says we're at a critical threshold; expectation is at the next few years, Congress will have a bill that funds transit at a big level. What we need would serve BRT on 35W, local transit on Lake, and transit in Greenway, seamlessly. CM would point to Hiawatha has a negative example. There are good elements, but the pieces got built independently, and don't all cooperate; there was financial disincentive for departments to cooperate. This is a compelling opportunity to do things differently. What's the reason for everyone to work together? Attitudes have changed quite a bit. Commissioner of transportation has new reasonable thinking. However you wish to talk about the Met Council, there is some compelling thinking that they get it, at least in terms of this debate in this location. The DC administration emphasizes regional cooperation, and financial cooperation. That will make this project more competitive at federal funding level.

Meeting adjourned: 7:59pm

Minutes submitted by: Jessica Rosenberg, Administrative Assistant, Whittier Alliance

Next meeting: Monday, July 12th, 6 pm, the City of Lakes Waldorf School