

Meeting Minutes

North Loop Neighborhood Planning & Zoning Meeting

Heritage Landing Community Room, 415 North 1st Street

April 20, 2016

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| Welcome and Introductions—DJ Heinle* The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.
* Seven committee members were present: DJ Heinle, Dave Decker, Katie Day, Alice Eichholz, Karen Lee Rosar, Neil Reardon, and Francesco Parisi
* The Committee approved the meeting minutes from the January meeting. (Alice, Neil)
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| Hennepin Avenue Reconstruction - Simon Blenski, City of Minneapolis* **Simon Blenski comments that he is presenting at the committee to preliminary concepts of the corridor, receive feedback, provide updates, and share opportunities. Background on the project is that the City will undertake a full reconstruction of Hennepin Avenue from Washington Ave to 12th St in 2020. Public Works is currently conducting preliminary planning work to apply for a federal transportation grant, through the Met Council, June 2016. Project components include: Sidewalk area, transit facilities, protected bikeway, and roadway design. Simon explained that the proposed project includes a four-lane roadway configuration, which would remove many of the left-turn lanes. The City has commissioned a study of how removal of left-turn lanes affects travel time, and it showed that the travel time will perhaps have a slight increase, which also accounts for anticipated growth of city traffic. The proposal also includes a protected bike lane and enhanced transit stops.**
* **Simon outlined the next steps in the project schedule: June 2016, Seek city Council approval of preferred street corridor; July 2016, Submit application for federal transportation grant, through the Met Council; 2017-2019, Detailed street design and engineering; 2020, Program year for project construction, schedule and staging TBD**
* **DJ asks if the City has spoken with organizations that do art along the corridor (e.g. Hennepin Theater Trust). Simon replies that there have been many conversations, but at this stage the plans are at a very high level. Hennepin Theater Trust is very tuned into the conversation and will be part of the conversation in later months, as the project moves forward.**
* **Alice asks how many blocks will have transit stops. Simon explains that there will be a transit stop about every other block.**
* **The next public meeting regarding the Hennepin Avenue Reconstruction will be held on Monday, April 25 at 4:00 pm with a repeat presentation at 5:00 pm at the Minneapolis Central Library, Doty Board Room (2nd Floor).**
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| Metro Transit Police and Bus Garage Update – Robert Rimstad* **Robert Rimstad presents the plans for a new Metro Transit Police Department (MTPD) Headquarters, a building which will be 60,000 square feet on four floors. It will serve as a home base for officers. The second project is the Heywood II Bus Garage which will provide storage for 200+ buses, and a location for basic maintenance and repairs. Buses are currently stored outdoors on the site. The garage is needed to respond to growth in public transit service, improve an underutilized site, and save money and time on operations (fewer breakdowns, less time digging out of the snow in the winter).**
* **The timeline for the project is: 2016, design and site cleanup for the Heywood II Bus Garage and MTPD Headquarters; 2017, construction begins for the Heywood II bus Garage and MTPD Headquarters; 2018, anticipated opening for the Heywood II Bus Garage and MTPD Headquarters.**
* **DJ commented that he would like to encourage that the project pushes forward with including street trees and public art.**
* **Neil asks if there will be any joint development on the project. Robert replies that there is not any now. They had looked into it but there were not any opportunities identified.**
* **Neil asks about the status of the MTPD Headquarters’ preliminary design. Robert responds that it is currently in process.**
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| 419 Washington Avenue project - Dean Dovolis, DJR* **Dean Dovolis presented for approval, a proposal for a new office building. He stated that he is representing Swervo Development Corp and CPM Companies, the co-developers. They have already brought the proposal to the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) and Councilmember Frey’s office in order to maintain their timeline, and apologize for presenting the proposal to the Planning and Zoning Committee last.**
* **Aron Johnson shared the proposal for a ten story office building with parking. The site is in the Warehouse/Historic district, in a B4N Zone, which has a ten story, 140 foot height limit. The site is currently an open parking lot and includes a building that faces Washington Avenue, thus the current address for the project shows is listed as Washington Avenue. The building will include retail/restaurants on the first floor and office on the upper floors, with a common-use roof terrace. The design features arches, large windows, and two facades - one facing North 5th Ave and the other facing the railroad tracks.**
* **Alice asked how the dock will integrate with the streetscape. Dean replied that they will leave the alley that runs between buildings as an access point. He added that the new skyway that connects the new office building with the neighboring Tech Center will provide ADA accessibility to the Tech Center.**
* **Alice asked about the Washington Ave address. Dean answered that the new building will likely get a N 5th Ave address.**
* **Dean further described that the HPC liked the design, including the arches, the rhythm of the architecture, the double façade, and the skyway. Their only criticism is that they would like to see the trellis for the roof top terrace to be scaled back. Councilmember Frey also received the proposal well.**
* **DJ asked if they are submitting any variances. Aron explained that they are submitting for one, to put the entrance on North 5th Ave instead of the preferred N 3rd St. The reason for the submission is that although N 5th Ave is a freight street and N 3rd St is a commercial street, N 3rd St is a dead end. They would prefer to have their entrance on N 5th Ave. Another submission for variance may be for the skyway, but it was determined that the project will be bringing back a pre-existing connection.**
* **Dave expressed his concern about the large area of brick space without windows. Dean describes that that areas is the service area, and that because of the 60% glazing restriction and the double façade, they designed the elevator bays without windows.**
* **Neil asked which entity places the restriction on windows - the Historic District or the HPC. Dean answered that both do. Neil asked if the team is interested in going for a variance to get approval for more windows. Dean replied that they are happy with the design, especially because of the placement of the alley.**

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| ****Discussion Forum: 721 N 1st St Project - Curt Gunsbury, Solhem***** Curt Gunsbury presented plans for the Solhem project and answered questions from the neighborhood in an open forum. The project has already received approval from the Planning and Zoning Committee, so the discussion was designed for informational purposes. There were approximately 43 participants in the discussion forum.
* The major themes of the discussion and concerns of the neighborhood participants included: parking availability, height of the building, design and building materials, proposed streetscaping, and disruption to the neighborhood during construction.
* David Frank wrapped up the discussion by thanking the participants for their interest, encouraging anyone who enjoys these conversations to consider joining the Planning and Zoning Committee. Those who would like to follow up on discussion of the Solhem development can contact Hillary Dvorak, project manager for the City of Minneapolis on this project. David also reiterated that the Planning and Zoning Committee has already approved the project.
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| **----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------**Neighborhood Comments* **No Neighborhood Comments this month.**

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**----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------****Committee Business*** (Election of Co-Chairs) Dave Decker and DJ Heinle were approved. The decision will go to the NLNA Board.
* (P+Z Membership) Mark Hill and Francesco Parisi were approved. The decision will go to the NLNA Board.
* (Park CAC) No update this month.
* (West Broadway Transit Study CAC) Karen reported that the committee prefers streetcars to other modes of transportation. It will be a CAC decision; no formal timeline has been released.
* (Art for Neighborhood Electrical Boxes) Francesco has volunteered to take the lead on this effort. He had a conversation with the City about the process and reported that only traffic light boxes are eligible (not Xcel boxes). Each box will need to be self funded (no City funding available) and will cost approximately $750-$1,000 per box. The cost is the same for both wrapped boxes and custom painted boxes. The biggest difference between the two is that custom painted boxes are easier to maintain but require $.5 million in insurance; wrapped boxes would be insured by the installer. The City also requires proof that the artist was paid a fair wage. The question is whether we have the budget and the will. Alice commented that Jo and Sydney took photos of all the boxes in the neighborhood, she would like to know which of those boxes would be eligible. DJ stated that Wendy Holmes is willing to help with artist outreach. Karen commented that it sounds cost prohibitive, and would need someone to champion the boxes in perpetuity. Neil suggested that the committee reaches out to other neighborhoods, such as Lowry Hill East and Wittier, to ask how they funded their boxes. Alice agreed that it is worth trying to figure out how to do it. The committee agreed that next steps are to inventory how many boxes in the neighborhood would be eligible and then decide how to proceed.
* (419 Washington Avenue Project discussion) The committee discussed that they like the proposal but would like to ask DJR to return with more information. Three areas of concern are 1) the inclusion of street trees and landscaping; 2) whether the patio includes greenery and has both public and private space; and 3) the renderings that were provided did not have a lot of detail. Neil would like to ask about the decision to locate the entry as is represented on the rendering. **The Committee makes and approves a motion to support the proposal under the condition that DJR provides information on the landscaping/trees, patio, and entrance. (Dave, Alice)**
* DJ notes that tomorrow (4/21) is the NLNA Board retreat. He will share what the board discusses with the committee next meeting.
* The next meeting is scheduled for May 18, 2016, at 6 pm. The committee adjourned at 8:22 pm.

**end of minutes** |  |