

**North Loop Neighborhood Association**

**Board Meeting Notes**

**August 31, 2016**

**7:00 P.M.**

**Heritage Landing Community Room, 415 1st Street North**

**Attendees**: Philip Ailiff, Tim Blidsoe, Fritz Kroll, Diane Merrifield,

Francesco Parisi, Katie Day, DJ Heinle, Scott Woller, David Frank

**Absent**: Bryan Hollaway

1. August Board Meeting called to order at 7:03 P.M.; those in attendance introduced themselves by stating names and building of residence or business or employment in the neighborhood.
2. **A motion is made (Fritz), seconded (Francesco) and approved by the Board to approve the Board Meeting Agenda.**
3. **A motion is made (Tim), seconded (Fritz), and approved by the Board to approve the July 27, 2016 Board Meeting Minutes.**
4. FINANCE REPORT – Tim Blidsoe
   1. Financial Statements
      1. There has been a change in the presentation of the financials; expense categories have been simplified. If anyone has any questions, please contact Tim. Copies of the revised financials are available. In his e-mail sent on Tuesday, Tim sent out the updated bank statements. There have not been many changes from those statements from last month.
      2. Bank statements for just the month of July were also included in Tim’s e-mail to the Board today. No questions regarding the statements were asked.
   2. CPP Funding
      1. The Board has until mid-November to submit its application for the 2017-2019 round for CPP funding. Met with Robert Thompson from the City, who is assisting with application. Much of the work has already been finished; however, the Board would like to solicit help from volunteers to keep the application on track and completed on time. Intend to bring City staff to meeting in October so that the Board can review and ask questions, approve the application, and then submit it to the City.
      2. Monies in both reserve funds will roll into next year.
      3. Diane volunteered to help with application.
5. Neighbor Comments
   1. Presentation from the Hewing Hotel – Jenai Sele
      1. Grand opening date is set for November 16, 2016.
      2. The development will be a 124-room luxury hotel on the corner of Washington Avenue and 3rd Street. It will have a restaurant, whose chef, James Beard Award nominee Greg Nones, is relocating from Austin and who has worked in Tuscany and in NYC with Mario Batali. The restaurant will have a Norwegian and North Woods focus and intends to embrace Minnesota’s culture by engaging local establishments: Spyhouse coffee will be served; wait staff will wear Redwing boots; Izzy’s ice cream will be available for dessert; rooms will be furnished with Faribault blankets; Tattersall Distillery products will be available at the bar.
      3. The ballroom will seat 150. The first floor will have a lounge for public and private meetings. Two private dining rooms will be available to reserve. The rooftop will feature a pool, sauna, (both private) bar, and lounge (open to the public). The pool will be converted to a hot tub in winter.
      4. Independent hotel developer and operator based in Chicago with existing hotels, the Iron Horse in Milwaukee and the Pontchartrain in New Orleans.
      5. Annual membership fee of $1,750 per year provides access to pool and sauna, preferred reservations in restaurant, programming for private events; preferred reservation for public events (New Year’s Eve, Kentucky Derby)
      6. David thanks them for investment in neighborhood. Hard hat tours coming soon!
   2. United Developers Presentation – Gordy Stofer
      1. David explains that this type of presentation doesn’t usually happen; instead, the developers would usually go to the zoning Board first. He iterates that the Board is not taking a vote, not deciding whether the neighborhood like this development. It is just chance to see what is happening and to learn about it, mostly because of so much interest around the project in the past.
      2. Given the informational nature of the meeting, and given the full agenda, David explains that neighbor’s questions and comments will not be taken on the United proposal.
      3. Gordy Stofer from United presents the project and explains that he is very excited to do so, as this is the first public unveiling of the project. United Developers, a local company, has been in business for 100 years and has developed properties like the Ford Center and Be the Match. They continue to own buildings in the North Loop and have a vested interest in the area; they are excited to be adding to list of their completed projects here.
      4. They own the site, which will feature a new modern brick warehouse building that is meant to recreate the older existing warehouses in the area. LHB and Hartman Cox, from Washington D.C., are the project architects. The project will have ten stories and be about 200,000 square feet, which includes 8,000-9,000 square feet of ground floor retail space, which will be home ideally to a restaurant or bar.
      5. The key focus of the project will be the plaza – a quasi-public amenity, not just for building tenants, but also neighborhood residents. United is really taking the time and putting in the effort to program the plaza to make it the best in the city. This high profile location warrants that effort. Max Musicant has been engaged to program the outdoor space. This placemaking and space activating professional has also done projects for Capella Tower and 333 South 7th. United wants the space activated and used throughout all seasons.
      6. The project is nearly at the end of concept phase. United met with the City today; they are reaching out to surrounding building owners, to the 2020 group. They are also going for City approvals and for a major meeting on September 22 for conceptual review. They are also meeting with HPC, as they are subject to HPC and the Planning Commission. No rezoning is required.
      7. Bassett Creek, which runs below the property, has posed challenges to the amount of underground parking that can be accommodated. They can go one level down with the water table proximity. The project will be able to park 120 cars below grade. There will also be a 5 level above ground ramp on the 3rd Street side, which will serve 350 vehicles and have a ground level retail component there as well. The structure will be made of good materials; they don’t want it to look like a parking ramp. They want to break ground in the spring and plan to prelease a portion of it.
      8. Matt asks if there will be public parking available. Yes, says Gordy, public parking will be available nights and weekends, as United wants it to occupied at all times.
      9. Francesco asks about the substantial opposition last year to building height, as it is substantially higher than neighboring building. Gordy responds that it is 140 feet tall and within the zoning code. The tower across the street is 157 feet tall.
      10. Katie asks how large the green space will be. Gordy answers about 18,000 square feet.
      11. David asks what the Board and neighborhood should do now if they want to connect. Gordy says that he will be reaching out to the 2020 Group and is happy to present to anyone. He wants to listen and absorb as much feedback as possible. He has cards available to circulate.
   3. There is interest in having a circulating bus for Washington Avenue, the North Loop, and the Mill District area. Is that something that the Board might want to entertain? How would it be different from MetroTransit buses that already serve the area? It might be similar to circulators at the University and along Nicollet Mall. David thanks speaker for idea.
   4. Matt asks: in addition to the initiative to add garbage receptacles along Washington, could we also have smoker poles? There are a lot of cigarettes on the ground.
      1. Tim reminds the Board that there is the cleanup on Saturday September 10 at 10:00.
      2. Tim says that yes, smoker polls are available. It is not something, however, that the City puts outs. Property owners have to do it. Tim is currently working with the solid waste staff from the City to add trash containers around the neighborhood, which will cost $20 to City per month for collection. Tim reached out to business owners and got a good response, but no solid traction. Additional help would be great and persuasive.
      3. Matt asks about another option: trash receptacle with a small attachment for cigarette waste. Tim says that because the City has plastic and concrete containers, he doesn’t know if these are something that could be added, but can talk with solid waste manager this week. The goal is to have as much trash off the ground and to the City as possible.
6. Committee Reports
   1. Marketing and Promotions – Scott Woller
      1. Last Friday was the showing of Star Wars at Target Field. We greatly appreciate the Twins and Target Field staff for their cooperation. The event was very successful.
      2. Scott encouraged everyone to give one hour of their time on Saturday, September 10 and participate in the Washington Avenue cleanup. The outing will begin at 10:00 AM with the group meeting at Whole Foods.
      3. The Board needs to pick a location by next month for the party, as well as options for securing licenses for food beer and vendors.
   2. North Loop Business – Scott Woller
      1. No update.
   3. Website – Diane Merrifield
      1. Volume is at about 4,000 visits per month. There has been a large increase in Facebook views and last month there were 300 referrals to the site. There still has been a fair number of inquiries (over 50 last month). The site remains quite active, with great participation.
      2. Fritz submitted checks.
   4. Planning + Zoning Report – DJ Heinle
      1. DJ provided an update on the 419 Washington building that CPM is doing: the building has been amended to include two levels of additional parking within the existing footprint, but because the number of parking spots now exceeds the maximum allowable, they need a variance.
      2. **A motion is made (DJ), seconded (Fritz) and unanimously approved by the Board to approve the variance and to support the planting of street trees and perennial gardens.**
      3. The owner of Smack Shack made a short presentation about the canopy they are installing over existing patio. They will return with their architect for a full presentation next month.
   5. Livability – Greening & Lighting – Fritz Kroll
      1. No update provided.
   6. North Look Park – Katie Day
      1. There continues to be a lot of interest for awareness for a greening event. Councilmember Frey and developers have expressed interest; however, the group still needs to identify potential pathways and spaces. Katie says the theme of progress that permeates the meeting applies here as well.
   7. Safety and Livability – Phil Ailiff
      1. An analysis of crimes in the last week includes: robbery of a person at the corner of Glenwood and Royalson Avenues; burglary of a dwelling at 545 1st Street (during which windows were kicked in and laptop was stolen); burglary of business at Ford Center (gained access with fob that had not been deactivated and stole laptops); auto theft from 401 2nd Street; theft by swindle (woman contacted by phone by someone claiming to be IRS personnel and demanding the payment of $4,000 in back taxes in the form of iTunes cards).
      2. The mobile camera at 2nd Street North and Washington Avenue is going to be removed and relocated to Elliot Park. Phil would like to know what dollars are available to address crime and safety, for instance, for the purchase of a permanent camera like that across from Pizza Luce. Camera purchase options include spot lights and even more bells and whistles, like voice activated speakers. The camera would be connected to the Fusion Center in the 1st Precinct. Perhaps the Board could negotiate with businesses to provide matching funds for additional lighting in trouble areas.
      3. Phil looked, but didn’t make a deep dive, into crime data from January through July 2016. The overall crime rates were lower than last year’s; however, Phil is not sure if the distribution of crimes changed significantly.
      4. Next PAC meeting will feature a field trip to the North Minneapolis Greenway site. The next first precinct meeting is on Friday, September 9 10:00 AM-11:30, 2nd floor of the Hennepin County Library. The next Block Club meeting will be Tuesday, September 20, at 6:00 at the Dunn Brother’s. Look for an invitation to follow in your e-mail.
      5. Tim says that there is between $4,000 and $4,440 in budget available; if investing in camera equipment – 2nd Street North and Washington Avenue might be the best place.
7. Neighborhood Priorities:
   1. Infrastructure Investment
      1. Tim mentions that the meeting with Councilmember Frey on August 15 was very successful and thanks him for hour he and Zack spent reviewing a listing of requests of outlined categories, as well as for bringing the speed wagon to the neighborhood. Tim thinks it’s a great idea to rally the neighborhood around putting some pressure on the County and MNDOT for some other improvements related to Washington Avenue and the block right off of 394. A few groups are already working on that, but what else can we do? The area is an introduction to the neighborhood. CM Frey continues to be very helpful in moving these things forward.
      2. Councilmember Frey presents
         1. if the NLNA Board and members could spread word on how to ask and get things done, that would be great, as so many of the requests received are generic and vague and they are unable to instruct Public Works on how to address them.
         2. CM Frey made a very strong ask to get 3rd, 7th, and 8th Street improvements on the docket, but can’t guarantee. CM Frey does feel confident that we can get to a mid-term plan.
         3. CM Frey feels that we should be undergoing a very similar strategy regarding park space. As one of the fastest growing neighborhoods in the City and in the Country, the NL should have a park – we have the land; we have some spots available, it is just about aligning jurisdictions, the park Board, perhaps the park foundation and developers. CM Frey is happy to work together on kick-off event.
         4. There is great interest in the 700 parcel of Washington Avenue. A purchaser is in line for the property. CM Frey hasn’t seen designs, but preliminary concepts are very exciting.
         5. Parking continues to be a concern. Parking solutions within developments are great ideas.
         6. CM Frey asks if there are any questions; there are not. He then thanks the Board for preparing the list of requested improvements.
         7. A note on major issues of citywide importance: there have been two separate ballot initiatives regarding minimum wage and police insurance. Proponents sought to amend the City Charter to include the two via referendum. CM Frey has been one of the earliest supporters of minimum wage at the City level, but is adamantly opposed to doing so via referendum, as the method doesn’t address nuanced issues and allow for major changes that could benefit all parties. The City Council had voted against the referendum; was sued; lost; and then appealed the case to the Supreme Court of Minnesota. Today the Court reversed the decision.
         8. Matt asks about the phone app for parking during Twins’ games. CM Frey can’t remember answer off hand; asks Matt to call Heidi at his office.
         9. There has been a resolution to maintain neighborhood funding requests; the budget was just presented to the Major. CM Frey thinks that the Board will be happy with NRP funding.
      3. Fritz is working on banner quote – a new company is working on the proposal.
      4. DJ continues to push for a signal light at 8th Street and Washington Avenue. The County continues to monitor and update pedestrian traffic information, but we have to wait a little while.
   2. On-Street Parking
      1. Tim referenced the parking study, which identified that underutilized bus zones, curb cuts, bus “lounges,” and staging areas all contributed to the parking area shortage. He has been taking a tour of the area to find room for improvement; one area in particular is on 3rd by Martin Patrick, where there is a possibility for changing some short term parking to give businesses more opportunity.
      2. Tim also asked to have a NL rep on the capital improvement long term committee – appointments are coming up in January. The CIP has a term of 5 years. If a proposed project is not on plan, the City will not fund it.
      3. Tim spoke with the City today and the Board can use NRP money for the area at the intersection of Washington Avenue, the 394 exit ramp, and 3rd Street. A monument would be eligible with current funding requirements. There are two groups at MNDOT who can help and would want to do contribute to the beautification of the area. Brian, Scott, and DJ all volunteered to have a meeting with MNDOT.
      4. Diane asks what happens once speed wagon is gone and with the data it collected? It was just a deterrent, not a data collection device. We will need to ask for more patrol in the area as well as a stop sign.
   3. Beautification – Mark Huting and Mike Dye
      1. Mark continues to work on trees near 8th and Washington, as 15 trees requires lots of city approval and planning. Mark is looking to plant the trees in the spring, when there is better funding lined up and when it is better for the trees to be planted. In the past month, Mark has raised $20,000! Many great companies have invested in the plan. He is still in negotiation with Tractor Works and 801.
      2. Guidelines for planting required there to be some sort of container, but Mark would like to avoid “tree coffins” – grates that restrict the growth of trees. He would like to put in open planters, like those in front of Spoon and Stable, to add body and greenness to street. He has sent plans to the Forestry Department and just got approval for open planters.
      3. $56,000 in total costs are pretty reasonable, especially because expensive grates are no longer required. After October and November, there will still be time to connect with donors. Mark is thinking that there will be an ask of $10,000 from NLNA, but will try to make it $0.
      4. The City has signed off on the design, concrete, and utility work. It knows that we are adjusting the grates. Another meeting is being scheduled with Forestry.
      5. Other downtown associations, like Loring Park, are doing the same thing. If we are successful, we could use this project to leverage additional money and apply for additional grants.
      6. Residents asks about the temporary grass installation on 1st and 2nd of grass. Phil mentions that it is a cool thing, but can create some accessibility issues.
8. OLD BUSINESS
   1. NRP funding update – Tim Blidsoe
      1. The Board needs to spend allocated funds. At the next meetings, they will take suggestions from Francesco about lights; Tim to bring back more ideas; Scott announces that the new metal cutout signs are up at Washington and Broadway.
   2. Farmers’ Market Advisory Group update
      1. No update, as Bryan was not in attendance.
   * Downtown Neighborhoods Group – DJ Heinle
     1. No update
9. NEW BUSINESS
   1. Tim proposes hosting a community engagement event, as fits in well with the Board’s mission and the requirements of NRP and CPP funding. The challenge, however, is in notifying folks of events and getting more people involved. The suggestion is to post notice of a community party and gear it towards three groups:
      1. Property managers – and ask them how best to engage renters? The meeting would be a benefit for them, too.
      2. HOA Boards – a party/listening session that aims to ask how do we work better with you?
      3. Businesses in the neighborhood.
   2. Katie asks why the need for separate events for HOA Boards and property managers? David responds that the idea is not to segregate the groups, but to accommodate their likely different schedules and times of availability.
   3. Tim adds that the City is hosting an event for property managers on how to engage renters, which aligns well with the timing and aim of pending applications. He is looking for volunteers. Katie volunteers, as well as a neighborhood member.
   4. David announced that NCR will be here from the City to conduct a survey of Board members at the beginning of next month’s meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:08 P.M.