



Event Record: Rental Property Owners
Loring Park Neighborhood Master Plan

Focus Group
Rental Property Owners of Loring

11:30-1:00pm

November 17, 2010

Hennepin United Methodist Church

The following is a summary of a focus group discussion conducted by Peter Musty, CLPC Master Plan Consultant, and Jana Metge, CLPC Coordinator. CLPC Master Plan Steering Committee Chair John Van Heel was also present. Representatives of rental apartment buildings throughout Loring Park Neighborhood were present. The Focus Group was held November 17, 2010 in the basement of Hennepin United Methodist Church. The focus group was held during the November meeting of the Loring Park Rental Property Owners Group, organized by Ione



Also present were Shane Zahn of the Downtown Improvement District, and Renee Allen, CPS, of the Minneapolis Police Department.

Of over 60 properties in the Loring Park Neighborhood, over 30 were represented at the meeting. (See list of participants and map on next page.)

Participants are requested to prepare brief statements prepared on behalf of each property, (submit before or after the event) that address the following:

- A. Identify three obstacles to success that your property faces today.
- B. Over the next ten years – do you anticipate any evolution in the kinds and types of tenant families that you will be serving?
- C. Are there ways the larger neighborhood (and community) can serve your property & tenants better?
- D. Are there specific planning & urban design issues in your part of the neighborhood that are worth addressing in a long term master plan for physical improvements?



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A. Identify three obstacles to success that your property faces today.

Four answers emerged:

- Parking
- Safety
- Government regulation
- No grocery store within walking distance

Parking

Not enough parking due to lack of land. One property experienced that a waiting list formed immediately when one spot became available. Many agreed that lack of parking affects marketability of units adversely.

Cleanliness & Safety

LaSalle & Nicollet needs to be addressed – cleanliness, beautification – make it inviting.
Tires slashed, larceny. There was some agreement that public safety is always a problem.

B. Over the next ten years – do you anticipate any evolution in the kinds and types of tenant families that you will be serving?

Many agreed with the point that there are mostly smaller units with very small households – many efficiencies and singles, with proportionally fewer two bedrooms, and very few small children. Only the representatives of 1350 Nicollet stated that they serve larger families, with 83 two bedroom units.

Initially, some agreed that they do not see a big change in the kinds of tenants they will be serving.

After some discussion, there was some agreement to a small trend towards an older client, in one case they were seeing more single and divorced women.

Some said they have been seeing more Spanish speaking tenants.

There was agreement when one person pointed out that there was more/continued student demand.

C. Are there ways the larger neighborhood (and community) can serve your property & tenants better?

Less government regulation was again mentioned as being one way. Government keeps telling you what you can't do.

- When a coffee shop was proposed for a building in Oak Grove, the City, instead of supporting the idea, gave the landlord a battle.
- (Required) elevator upgrades are expensive - \$400K to upgrade elevators in an eleven story building. "That's inexpensive!"
- City wastes time: The Fire Dept. gave one property reported quite a hassle from the Fire Department over fire hoses in building - fire hoses that were not actually required.



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- On-street parking management/enforcement can be addressed/improved.
- Required maintenance often honerous.

D. Are there specific planning & urban design issues in your part of the neighborhood that are worth addressing in a long term master plan for physical improvements?

- Better transportation
- Nicollet Avenue cleaned up
- More bike racks, bike lockers
- Walkways from Nicollet to Oak Grove – improvements needed
- Street lighting
- Nicollet Avenue – south to Stevens Neighborhood – its ‘like a wall’ – a solution could be food carts, market, shops – something that would pull people towards both neighborhoods from the other
- Small Retail
- Hennepin/Lyndale: George Puzak discussed that at the Hennepin/Lyndale charrette (2008), MNDOT informally communicated plans to widen I-94 to 5 lanes in both ways – that the Lowry Tunnel was a ‘choke point’. He mentioned that the master plan is a chance to have in place a plan for when this happens – to be ready to weigh in when the time comes. It would be a chance to reconnect Loring Park to the Sculpture Garden.

Diane Hansen’s input (right after meeting):

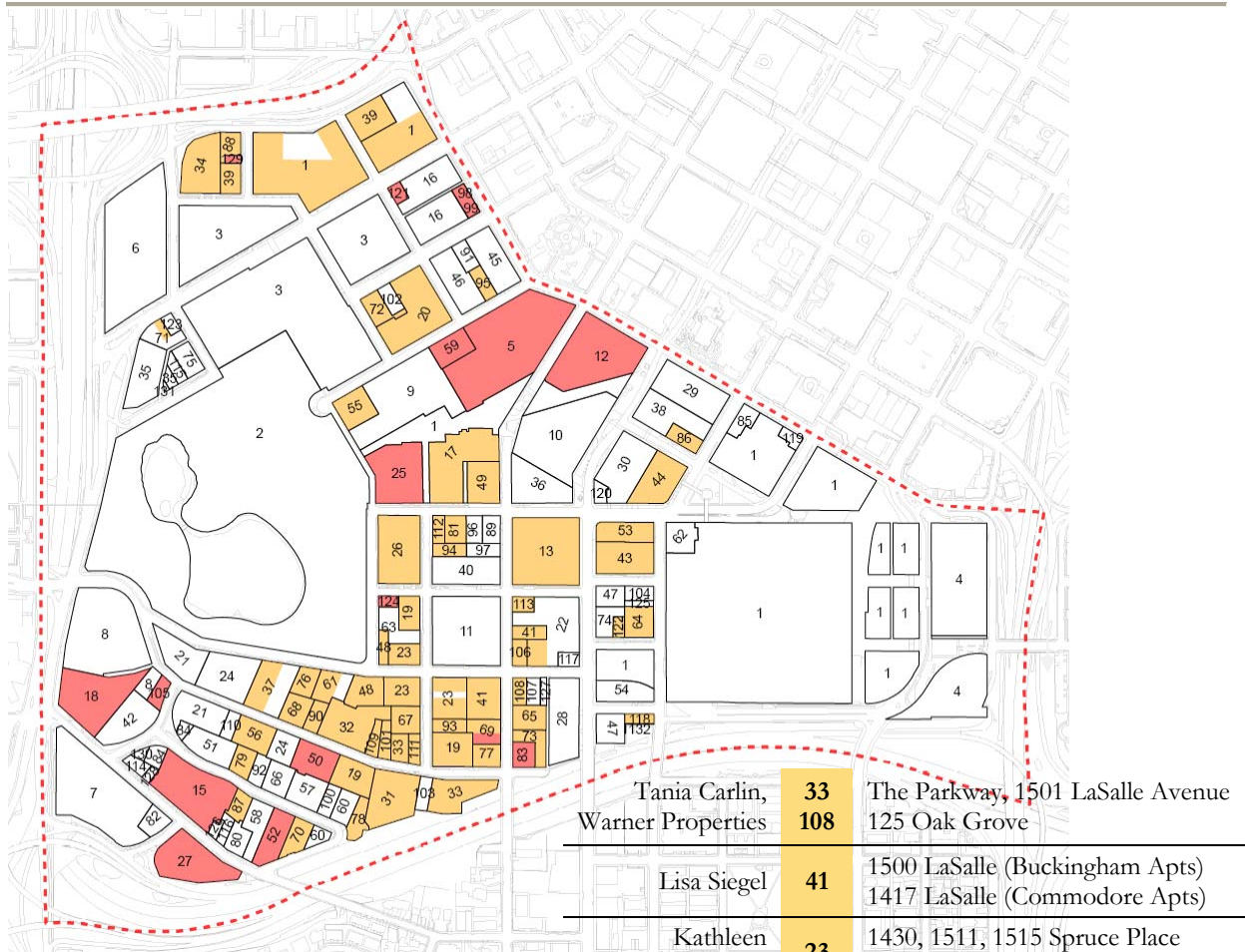
Lasalle Bridge ‘turned out okay’ – despite little notice (or involvement of stakeholders) by MNDot – and the traffic management plans were not smooth (signs were unclear). They did a ‘pretty good job’ on the bike lane.

Interaction with Stevens Neighborhood would be beneficial – to integrate thinking. She mentioned that there have been ‘on and off’ plans for the sit south east of the Nicollet Bridge – most recent a proposal to build an extended stay hotel.

It will be important that any redevelopment along Nicollet be respectful of neighboring buildings and integrated into the neighborhood (for example, not too tall).



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Tania Carlin, Warner Properties	33 108	The Parkway, 1501 LaSalle Avenue 125 Oak Grove
Lisa Siegel	41	1500 LaSalle (Buckingham Apts) 1417 LaSalle (Commodore Apts)
Kathleen Grendahl	23	1430, 1511, 1515 Spruce Place 115-129, 201, 205, 209 W. 15 th St.
Jean Innes David Marsh	13	1350 Nicollet Avenue 1350 Nicollet
Carry Drever Cathryn Olson	25	Loring Way, 210 West Grant 210 W. Grant #317
Misti Walker Manager	19	225, 227, 233 Oak Grove 1400-1408 Spruce Place 116 Oak Grove
George Puzak	79	322 Clifton Avenue
Mark Tiede	32	230 Oak Grove
JD(?)& Leslie Dennis	20	1212 Yale Place
	94	1365 Spruce Place
	67	1512 Spruce Place
	92	314 Clifton Ave
Jennie Kunz	113	21-27 W. 14 th St.
	49	Maryland Apartments 1346 LaSalle Ave
Diane Hansen	73	14 Oak Grove
	83	22-26 Oak Grove
	77	1525-1530-1536 LaSalle

Loring Park Master Planning Process

Property Owners & Managers Focus Group

Wednesday, Nov. 17th, 2010

Thanks to the Loring/LaSalle Property Owners Group for hosting this meeting!!

Those present: Diane Hansen (Copenhagen Enterprises), Lisa Siegel (Buckingham & Commodore Apts.), JD & Leslie Dennis (Dennis Investments), Ione Siegel (Buckingham & Commodore Apts.), George Puzak (Clifton Ridge Apts.), David Marsh (1350 Nicollet), Jean Innes (1350 Nicollet), Tania Karlin (Warner Properties), Shane Zahn (Downtown Improvement District), Renee Allen (MPD-CCP/SAFE), Kathleen Grendahl (Park Apts.), Larry Drever (210 W. Grant), Cathryn Olson (210 W. Grant), Misti Walker (Oak Grove Realty), Mark Tiede (230 Oak Grove), Jeannie Kunr (Maryland Apts.), John Van Heel (Master Plan Steering Committee co-chair), Peter Musty (Master Plan Consultant), and Jana Metge (CLPC Coordinator).

Ione Siegel welcomed Peter, John, and Jana. An overview of the Loring Park Master Planning process was given. Participants asked to note down 2 top items to be addressed in the plan on post-it notes and place on the maps located table center.

Master Plan Event Overview handouts were distributed. Invitations to the Jan. 20th and Jan. 22nd set of Community panels/workshops extended.

Introductions – participants were asked to sign the meeting log and list which buildings they owned in the neighborhood as well as contact information. Focus Group preview was displayed and Peter walked through the four (4) questions for the day.

Below are participants comments to these questions;

A. Identify three (3) obstacles to success that your property faces today.

- Lack of parking spaces
- Lack of parking for residents/tenants – many buildings have no parking available for their residents (i.e. Dennis Investments, Oak Grove Hotel)
- Low lighting concerns, especially on 14th St.
- Lack of Parking
- Unattractive Nicollet from I-94 to Nicollet Mall
- Government regulation
- Capital expenditures of older buildings, hard to maintain and ensure affordable housing.
- Legislative regulations such as elevator updates; almost impossible to fund.
- Government Regulations at ALL levels
- Parking on street – towing & ticketing
- Little grocery stores in buildings
- No parking for tenants
- 1346 – No parking for tenants – would enhance marketability if there was available parking. Buildings with parking have waiting lists, those without – vacancies.
- Residents are being bumped from municipal parking ramp; used to be a Section 8 building with parking available at the ramp. No families are opting into this building because there is no parking.
- Parking on the street is hard, impossible – many residents leave cars in the suburbs with family/friends vs. park on the street.
- Critical parking should be on weekends and hours increased from 9-4 to 9-6
- Parking should be free around Loring Park
- Allow only residents to park on the street, not business or visitors
- There is no land available to create parking, but parking is a need
- Dennis Investment properties have no parking for residents

- Build over the Lowry Hill tunnel – green space to connect Loring Park to the Walker Art Center/Sculpture Garden
- Better transportation coming down Nicollet Mall
- Clean up Nicollet Ave./bring in certain destination shops
- No HPC designation – creates more expense to upkeep/maintain older buildings
- Clean up trash/litter along Emerson School fence/LaSalle Ave.
- Ensure neighborhood safety, enhance lighting
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B. Over the next ten (10) years – do you anticipate any evolution in the kinds and types of tenant families that you will be serving?

- Increase of Latino population
- More Hispanic renters
- Likely increase in the number of formerly homeless households served.
- Apartments in Loring are not geared for families, they are efficiencies & 1-bedrooms mostly. 1350 Nicollet has 83 - 2 bedroom units.
- Apts. are geared for single use
- Diversity of tenants will increase
- Feel tenancy will be much the same in 2030 as it is now
- Starting to see more 40-50 year olds vs. college students – single folks wanting to live in the City.
- Majority of property owners rent to college students/MCTC, U of M, St. Thomas
- If the assets/economics were enhanced, it would be very beneficial to the property owners – would recruit more renters.
- We should market to MCTC students more.
- Condo represented is seeing more 2nd loans, for folks to have a “place in the City”.
- Oak Grove and Nicollet are experiencing increase in crime – larceny, robberies, tires slashed, more graffiti, more unsavory characters walking the street, more aggressive

C. Are there ways the larger neighborhood (and community) can serve your property?

- Increase cleanliness around properties.
- Encourage owners to clean up after their dogs.
- Expand security camera network south to Franklin.
- PR campaign from the Mayor for shop owners to sweep in front of their store, keep area free from litter and clean.
- Organize litter clean ups
- Regulations from the City / State are really hurting private property owners
- Create incentives for more small retail to locate on Nicollet and thrive – this would get more folks out to walk around – get a Caribean Coffee on Nicollet. Businesses will need parking for these customers, though, so plan for that.

D. Are there specific planning & urban design issues in your part of the neighborhood that are work addressing in a long term Master Plan for physical improvements?

- Ensuring safety of street crossings for elderly and disabled.
- Consider wider sidewalks.
- Consider space for more community gardens.
- Maintain high level of public transit.
- Remove all parking meters around Loring Park.
- Lobby for a full scale grocery store.
- Create bike parking
- Create storage places for bikes which is safe and secure
- Create places for bikes vs. building fences and/or taking inside buildings
- Improve the Oak Grove walkway adjacent to Freeway up to Nicollet Ave.

- Fix the Streets – holes
- Improve / enhance neighborhood lighting – infill and upgrade
- Extend the Downtown Safe Zone to 15th Street/Freeway
- Extend Nicollet Mall to the Meter Farm or Freeway and put in Downtown District
- Create a neighborhood plan for Hennepin/Lyndale area – hard to cross
- Remove parking meters around residential meters so that residents can park
- Lead-based paint regulations are driving us out of business – too expensive; next to impossible to fulfill and keep rents affordable. Too much paperwork.
- Mandated State Elevator updates are killing us – costs are ranging from \$400,000- \$2 million!
- Complaints about inspections – appointments are set up, arranged & signed off by tenant & owner and then they are cancelled, sometimes 3x in a row. Uses excessive amount of manager/owner time to arrange and then cancelled, disrespectful.
- Application fees on improvements need to stop escalating.
- City Staff need to be friendly and helpful, vs. rude and regulatory.
- Government continues to tell us what to do vs. help us – seems to not “serve” but rather order, fine, and regulate and say “no, no, no” to any and everything vs. “this is a great idea, let’s see how we can make it work”.
- Make the freeway bridges more friendly, greener, better lighting
- Green up over the freeways
- Better transportation options

Items identified in Post-It Note Exercise:

- Need more parking
- More promotion of available housing opportunities to MCTC students
- Lobby for more and improved transit opportunities
- Ensure the safety of the neighborhood
- DO NOT make the Loring neighborhood a Historic District. It would be unaffordable for the properties owners!
- Improve the neighborhood lighting
- More Police walking the streets, building relationships, meeting folks, preventing crime
- Enhance the neighborhood Vitality – More Events, More Publicity, Grocery Store
- Need more parking for residents
- Grocery Store within walking distances for residents
- Develop more small retail (coffee shops, gift shops, dry cleaners)
- Continue to ensure the safety of the neighborhood
- Need more parking
- Safety in the neighborhood
- Re-direct traffic – Eliminate rush hour congestion on W. 15th St.
- Lowry Tunnel – Choke point for MNDOT – Develop new green space above the tunnel to connect Loring Park to the Sculpture Garden.

Respectfully submitted, JLM/CLPC Coordinator