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Citizens for a Loring Park Community

Land Use Committee

Monday, January 31, 2011

Loring Park Office Building (430 Oak Grove), Room 207

Attendance: Dick Sandberg (1201 Yale Place), Jan Sandberg (1201 Yale Place), Janine Jelks-Seale (110 West Grant), Paul Hinderager (Summit House), John Van Heel (100 West Grant), Jana Metge (CLPC Coordinator), Gary Gliem (Summit House), Christopher Hoffer (510 Groveland), Pat Hafvenstein (World Mission Prayer League), Inez Bergquist (St. Mark's), Nancy Jones (Kenosha), and Mark Nelson (Summit House).

I. Call to Order—John Van Heel, CLPC Land Use Chair

John called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m. and led introductions of those in attendance.

Approved the agenda. (Motion Dick Sandberg, second Paul Hinderager) Motion passed

Approved the minutes from November 15, 2010. (Motion Dick Sandberg, second Paul Hinderager) Motion passed

Announcements

- **“LOVE LORING”** – CLPC Annual Fundraiser and Silent Auction – Friday, Feb. 11th – Hosted by The Woman's Club of Minneapolis/410 Oak Grove. Tickets Available!! Call CLPC to purchase tickets at 612-874-9002
- **CLPC Annual Meeting** – Tues., March 22nd – 5:30-6:45/Information & Resource Fair – 7:00-8:30 p.m. PROGRAM – CLPC Master Plan – Review of planning effort to date – Hosted by The Woman's Club of Minneapolis/410 Oak Grove – parking available adjacent to and across the street. FFI call 874-9002
- **Community Sing-Along** – Tuesday, Feb. 15th @ 7:00 p.m. @ Loring Park Community Center
- **Traffic Calming Task Force** - Mon., Feb. 21st from 5:30-7:00 at Loring Park Office Building/Room 207 (Note – this was cancelled due to blizzard)
- **Master Plan Steering Committee** – Wed., Jan. 26th – Loring Park Community Center. TOPIC: Synthesis of Discovery Phase-past documents review-Focus Groups-Stakeholder Interviews
- **Historic Resource Action Team** – Will reconvene in April.
- **Downtown Court Watch** – Fri., Feb. 4th and Fri. March 1st - 10:00 am-Noon – Downtown Central Library - 2nd floor
- **MCTC Health Fair** – WELLFEST – April 6th from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. @ MCTC Cafeteria
- **Peavey Plaza** – Open House Tuesday, February 1 at 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. at Orchestra Hall. Complete the survey at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/QN7DBF2>

There is additional information about the project at http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/peavey_plaza.asp

- Jana put a number of pieces of information on the back table including the most recent Friends of Loring Park newsletter, Loring Theater information, Annual Meeting Cards to distribute, and “Put Junk in Trunk” cards.
- **Plymouth Congregational Church** has a gallery and is currently presenting a Native American exhibit. Plymouth is located at 1900 Nicollet Ave.

II. 6:45-7:15 Cathedral of St. Mark’s – Inez Bergquist, Trustee

Inez described the process to date. About three years ago they started planning for a capital campaign focused on some parts of the Cathedral that needed work. At that time they interviewed a few neighbors about desired projects. The final list included tuck pointing, repairing a window over the altar, restoration of the organ, accessibility and parking. The campaign was successful for \$3 million total. Funding for the parking lot is about \$770,000, with about \$23,000 consultant fees.

The current parking lot has problems. The proposed work would focus on repairing potholes, eliminating areas where water gathers creating ice & mud, and proposing additional parking stalls. IT would be completely repaved. Inez displayed a map of the existing parking lot, noting that access is hampered by a broken door. They cannot do much now to address handicapped accessibility – this could be the focus of a future plan. A ramp is not an option. A church member, John Cuningham, is designing the new parking lot. One option would have had a circular drop-off for handicapped access. The final plan drops that option which gains a few more spots. The new plan increases their parking by 50 percent (from 98 to 145 spaces). They will add several rain gardens to help with runoff.

Committee members had many questions and comments to include:

- What about the new bike rack? A = They are working on relocating the art bike rack.
- Are you eliminating the grass? A= Some former green grass/space will be turned into parking, especially along Hennepin Ave.
- Are you losing any trees? A= They are cutting down some trees but not the good trees.
- What about sustainable surfaces? A committee member expressed unhappiness with the plans for Hennepin—would prefer a brick and grass option rather than asphalt.
- What about the entrances from Hennepin. A = Retain both from along Hennepin, but drop one entrance along Oak Grove so that there will now be two.
- What will the landscaping/Edge planting along Oak Grove look like? A = It will likely be bushes.

Due to trouble crossing Oak Grove, they would love to build a bridge to the park, but that would be another campaign. Stengthening safety is an issue for pedestrians and bicyclists.

The additional parking will address about two-thirds of their needs. They have cooperative agreements with nearby buildings to get extra parking but it is not a guarantee for parking. If buildings have events or other activities, spots are not available. They will continue to rent a certain number of spaces to Continental Properties/430 Oak Grove, LLC. (430 Oak Grove) for use by tenants of the Loring Office Building.

Christopher asked that they had contacted 510 Groveland. Twenty-three (23) stalls shown in their plan, are owned by 510 Groveland and the plan indicates that these are included in the renovation work. Christopher (the 510 Board President) is unaware that the 510 Groveland Board has been consulted about the proposed work.

- Would they support additional cooperative arrangements rather than additional parking? A = Inez said that they need the parking now.

The committee asked if the would postpone decisions/construction to see if there is an alternative to adding asphalt along Hennepin, rather than removing the greenery that is there now. Permeable paving options should be explored. With less frequent but more torrential rainfall, asphalt may not be a good option. Additionally, the city wants to minimize rainwater run off.

Question was raised as to whether or not this parking will require a variance? Jana stated that CLPC will follow up with Councilmember Goodman's office.

Another committee member expressed disappointment that expansion in parking is coming without additional screening greenery.

After Inez left, Committee discussion continued. Comments included:

- That the presentation reflected a shocking lack of stewardship.
- Why not just get twenty persons to sign up to park at the Walker Ramp? This is a transportation problem not a parking problem. This is a suburban solution.
- Jana reported on an incoming call to CLPC that this proposal does not help the handicapped-accessibility issue.
- Just to repave would cost maybe \$200,000. So, the total project spending would be less than then this project projected at \$750,000.
- Suggest to Continental Properties that there may be an opportunity to trade use of the 401 property and drop rent for use of space by the Loring Park Office Building.

Consensus that the Committee will take no action at this time but forward comments to St. Mark's.

III. 7:15-8:00 MCTC Master Plan Update – Reede Webster & Bruce Cornwall/MCTC

Reede has been with the college for nine years and there have been many changes. There are several new buildings and remodeling continues. The college has grown by about 50 percent in the last six years to about 15,000 credit seeking students this past year. Some time ago Phil Davis and Scott Erickson visited with the committee. Since then, MCTC has made some changes to the master plan including the Wells Center and expansion options.

Bruce has been working on the campus since 1984. MnSCU represents all public higher education systems except for the University of Minnesota system. MCTC is the most urban of the colleges in the system. This plan is a roadmap, not specifications for construction. The plan is a 40-year plan but is revised every five years. Changes correspond to enrollment, market changes and other factors. The plan allows the college to get in line for bonding money.

See the updated plan at:

<http://www.minneapolis.edu/pdfs/improvingourcampus/masterfacilityplan012111b.pdf>

Bruce displayed a map of projects recently completed, under construction and slated for work. Some projects are short-term (five to ten years) and others will wait. Some of the planters along Hennepin will be removed from Spruce back toward the Basilica to make the section more pedestrian-friendly. They would like to add campus information signage at key corners. A campus gateway is planned (where Harmon dead ends into the campus) that will include a garden and trees. The loading dock will stay. There may be new signage including lit signage on Hennepin near the parking lot. For the long-term, replace the bus shelter but don't add a second shelter a block or so away. At the point of the parking garage near the Basilica, they would like to install a sculpture and greenery but cost is a factor. Upgrade the streetscape along Hennepin to make it more pedestrian friendly such as better surfaces. Similarly make changes to the section of Spruce between Harmon and Hennepin to better facilitate street crossing. Make the street facades along Harmon near the old Standard oil building more pedestrian friendly.

The college will not purchase the Lunds property based on current purchase price and a decision to be less intrusive to the neighborhood. There are no current plans to expand the campus footprint but instead they will focus on more fully building out existing underutilized buildings.

One of the biggest needs continues to be parking despite subsidized Go-To passes. They may use shuttles from the parking area under the highway. Bruce mentioned that shuttle systems are difficult to organize and the best solution would be for the City to implement its circulator system. They have talked about partnering with St. Thomas ramp or Dunwoody.

Committee members had questions which Bruce addressed.

- Partnering with the Walker was suggested.
- Streetcars on Hennepin? Nicollet appears to be focus for now but this is a 40 year plan so Hennepin should be kept in the mix.

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The college is committed to improving the streetscape including softening the boundary with the park. They are adding bike racks in front of the Fine Arts building and elsewhere.

Wells Center: the President is willing to give the neighborhood until 2021 to move the building which allows the community to would retain it as is. If that is not successful, the College would look at selective deconstruction to keep many of the older sections. The Wells Center Reuse study proposed several options. One was for MnSCU to sell building for \$1 to the City and then the City or other purchaser would move it. They estimate the cost for restoration at \$4-8 million; it might cost \$2 million or so to move.

Bruce then reviewed plans for buildings in the order things would happen: skyways scaled back to one, develop corner of Spruce and Hennepin, develop the Standard Oil Building for classroom use but will ultimately need bonding dollars; a neighboring ribbon-looking building would be rebuilt. Long term projects include a small expansion to the Fine Arts building and possibly a community green house near the plaza.

Committee questions and comments addressed the following:

- To what extent do projections about where students come from and available housing affect projects? There is no interest in housing. Students are typically urban youth and adults. It was suggested that college could work more cooperatively with local property owners.
- It is possible but expensive to develop underground parking. The first floor is taken up by parking access so, with relatively short buildings, underground parking is not a cost-effective option.
- Parking is subsidized but it is as much of a political as an economic issue.
- Add retail? If built with bonding dollars the College is barred from leasing space to a for-profit.
- Height. Typically they recommend no more than three stories. Part of the reason is that I classroom buildings, students want to use elevators if they need to move more than three stories. There are also appearance issues with fitting into the neighborhood.
- This master plan has no additional parking facilities.
- Timeline for master plan--it is 95 percent completed. Following a few more meetings, it will be revised and sent for submission to MnSCU Board.
- Seems more community friendly.

The Land Use Committee asks the Citizens for Loring Park Community Board to express support for the MCTC Master Plan as presented. (Motion Dick Sandberg, second Paul Hinderager) M/S/Passed Unanimously

IV. 8:00-8:15 Loring Park Master Plan Update – Bill Weber

Bill reported that the intense six months of learning about the neighborhood has ended. Tomorrow the consultants will shift gears from discovery to synthesizing

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the plans and developing policy recommendations. Jana noted that all of the panel presentations have been taped by Minneapolis Television Network and will be broadcast on local cable. The long-term renters focus group will be moved from the Discovery to the Planning phase. There will be a joint meeting with Stevens Square for a 2nd Panel Discussion on Transportation. A second Harmon Area focus group is underdevelopment to include additional residents in the area.

Adjourned 8:40 p.m.