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Citizens for a Loring Park Community

Land Use Committee

Monday, February 27th, 2006

6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

@ the Woman's Club

I. 6:30-6:45 pm Call to Order-- Bob Copeland, CLPC Land Use Committee Chair Agenda Approval, Introductions, Approve Minutes & Announcements

In Attendance:

Those in attendance included ????

Bob led introductions of the 35 or so persons in attendance. There were eventually about 40 persons in attendance. Bob turned the meeting over to Mike Marn. Mike described some of the background for design guideline process.

Bob Copeland announced that he is retiring as chair of the Land Use Committee.

II. 6:30-8:15 Loring Hill Draft Design Guidelines--consultant team (Michael Lamb and Monique MacKenzie)

Members of the Loring Hill Task Force described some of the activities and venues used to collect information for guideline development.

Liz Hutter described the renters' focus group. Issues included affordability of rents and affordable housing, parking (although many do not own cars but their guests do), pedestrian-friendly character, green spaces, access to alternative transportation, safety, and diversity of the neighborhood.

Pat Havenstein and ????? described a meeting for destination organizations. Issues included parking for those using the facilities, attractiveness (no graffiti), and safety. There is also interest in pedestrian shortcuts and ways to get across 15th Street.

Sunny described the neighborhood summit meetings. Group facilitators collected feedback from a nonscientific survey followed by small group discussions. One issue is parking—a possible solution would be one regional parking area modeled after the facility at Grand and Victoria in St. Paul. There is also interest in neighborhood community art as a way to screen some less desirable features.

Ann Marie Pawalta??? Described the walking tour that started at Dunn Brothers, with comments on the difficulty crossing 15th Street, dog issues, great features like neighborhood churches and mansions, homeless persons, shortage of parking with a comment that new developments should include neighborhood parking.

George attended the property owners group. Themes included safety, rental affordability, landscaping on corners, a walkway to 15th Street from the hill, and a designated crosswalk (mid-block) to Loring Park.

Michael Lamb began a slide show (he distributed a brochure afterward) describing the scope of work and schedule. He summarized information collected for the guidelines, including a demographics survey, feedback from developer roundtables, and a financial summary. Also, at the community meetings they asked what to keep and what to change and summarized responses to four key questions.

Monique displayed zoning maps show that the Hill is zoned Office Residential 3 (OR3) allowing up to 84 feet for multi-family buildings. There is also a shoreland overlay district that falls within 1000 feet of Loring Pond with a height restriction of 35 feet. However, exceptions by the City

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Council are possible and application is inconsistent. Monique showed a graphic of current buildings and then superimposed six-story buildings where there are existing surface parking lots to demonstrate the possible look if developable lots are built out.

There are several options for development approvals depending on what a developer proposes to build. For example, no public approvals may be needed if the proposed building meets existing code (“as-of right”). Proposals requesting additional height beyond that allowed in the code need a conditional use and a public hearing that addresses the physical impact of the proposal. Residential development is usually subject to site plan review. This process involves city staff, the Planning Commission, and the City Council.

The zoning code differs from guidelines. Zoning has the force of law but allows some flexibility. Guidelines do not have the force of law. However, zoning does not take a site’s character into account. Issues for zoning include height, setbacks, density, land use, parking count, and the city site plan review. Michael said that the Task Force is still reviewing draft guidelines. The guidelines for Loring Hill are based on the character of Loring Hill land look at physical form, character, and condition such as building type, entry type, courtyards, boulevards, and similar. Michael described how the guidelines were organized, similar to that for a small area plan. However, they do not comprise a formal small area plan.

Part of the study involved building types, described on one of the slides. These types formed the basis for the guidelines. Loring Hill was then broken down into sub-areas. Based on input from the committee, the consultant team then developed a plan that indicates vistas to be maintained, and possible sites for shared parking and pocket parks, an area that might be suitable for buildings with additional height, and a potential location for a connection from Oak Grove down the hill to park. The team identified six basic building types such as detached/mansions. There are also six frontage types such as court yards. There are four street types. Michael described several architectural standards (for entries, materials, roofs, windows, balconies/patios) and landscape standards (yards, plazas/open space, walls/fences, parking, and public art)

Questions:

- Discussion about deadlines with the moratorium ending March 31. The Task Force is having some problem finding a meeting date, probably the week of May 8th, perhaps Wednesday May 10th.
- Who are the Task Force members? The group has been fluid but there have been 10 or so members who have attended many of the meetings. Jana introduced those members at tonight’s meeting.
- Many of the recommendations deal with expensive options including affordable housing, connections, and similar. Did the tax force consider financing options such as a special taxing district, grants, or similar? No, the focus has been on the guidelines, although there has been some discussion about the use of NRP Phase 2 dollars.
- What is the status of the shoreland overlay issue in the guidelines? Michael said that the assumption is that the existing zoning and overlay will stay in place.
- Some discussion about whether there can be recommendations about zoning. Jana said that the draft guidelines from the Task Force will come back to the Land Use Committee and will then go to the CLPC Board. If there is interest in recommending zoning changes then CLPC would need to start something.
- Consensus may not be possible and there needs to be something that goes to the City Council. Jana reiterated that this is not a small area plan that would go the Council but it is guidelines that would go to Council Member Goodman.
- The overlap of the shoreland overlay and the OR3 zoning is a conflict within the city, not just Loring Park. Monique described overlays often allow more flexibility but the shoreland overlay is more re-

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strictive. The shoreland overlay may not make sense given real estate values and character of pre-existing buildings. A review of recent applications indicates that decision makers have not known how to handle the inconsistencies. The guidelines will give more detail than decision makers have previously had and should help them define what is appropriate for a specific parcel.

- Concern that the materials distributed do not include the OR3 zoning and shoreland overlay. Should the guidelines recommend that shoreland overlay should always take precedence? Michael said that the two documents do not necessarily intersect. Monique explained that the zoning code reads that the overlay takes precedence but the way that the City Council works, it falls into the area of judgment. There are two areas of conflict—(1) zoning that doesn't fit with what is already in the neighborhood and (2) conflict between OR3 and the shoreland overlay. One size will not fit all. A set of rules that forbids all tall buildings is impractical as is a set of rules that allows anything. Shoreland overlay has an interesting history--previously the city had ignored state law requirements. The OR3 category has some pluses—it gives the neighborhood lots of flexibility, for example a parking facility that could serve multiple sites. Minneapolis has a very case-by case intensive process in virtually all zones.
- What does it mean to say that zoning should be more form based? Michael explained that this is a direction in which the city may be moving. Form-based looks at building types, massing, and the relationship to the street.
- Elevation changes are important and it would be helpful to have a way to show this in materials distributed to citizens.

Adjourned 8:15 p.m.