

Citizens for a Loring Park Community

Land Use Committee

Monday, June 4, 2007

6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

@ Loring Park Community Arts Center, 14th and Willow

Attendance: Dick Sandberg (Loring Green East), Paul Hinderager (Summit House), Robert Hansen (1355 Nicollet), Terry Thompson (Loring Green East), Jan Sandberg (Loring Green East), Jana Metge (CLPC Coordinator), John van Heel (110 West Grant), Neil Carlson (Summit House), Jess Eiesland (1300 Harmon), Michelle Bruch (Downtown Journal), Robert Cook (Eddy's Café), Bob Copeland (The Wellington), Richard Anderson (Loring Way), Dave Hile (Summit House), Steven Vranian (Nick & Eddie), Doug Anderson (Nick & Eddie), Jessica Anderson (Nick & Eddie), Dennis Acrea (Dunn Brothers), Ann DeGroot (OutFront MN), Bill Levine (Loring Green East)

I. 6:30-6:45 pm Call to Order—Dick Sandberg, CLPC Land Use Committee-Chair

Agenda Approval, Introductions, Approve April 23rd and March 26th Minutes, Announcements

Dick led introductions of the 20 people in attendance.

Motion by Robert Copeland, seconded by Terry Thompson, to approve the March 26, 2007 and April 23, 2007 minutes as amended.

Motion passed.

Announcements

- Steven Vranian, along with Jessica Anderson, are partners of **Nick and Eddie**, a new restaurant in Loring Park located at 1612/1614 Harmon Place next to Joe's Garage. According to Steven, "Nick and Eddie is committed to uncomplicated American cooking, without the tedious grapho-mania of pedigreed ingredients and shocking prices." Nick and Eddie is planning to be open for breakfast, brunch, lunch and dinner, with summer sidewalk café seating, late night dining options, a full bar and remarkable yet affordable wine list. The restaurant is pursuing a Class C-2 On-Sale Liquor License with Sunday Liquor and 2 AM service with an opening scheduled for early August. The partners are working with Councilmember Goodman's office to work through the various city requirements.

Motion by Richard Anderson, seconded by to Terry Thompson, to support the new restaurant, Nick and Eddie, to open in the location of the former Loring Grill.

Motion passed unanimously.

The committee also supported the concept of providing box lunches for picnicking in the park.

See additional comments below about the issue of the number of liquor licenses on Harmon Place.

- Jan distributed a flyer announcing the schedule for Stevens Square Cinema and Civics program of movies and music at Stevens Square Park, East 18th St & 2nd Ave South. For more information see <http://www.sscoweb.org/> For information about a specific night, see the SSCO calendar at <http://www.sscoweb.org/cgi-bin/calendar.pl>
- Jana distributed PRIDE activity information and later introduced the new PRIDE executive director, Cheryl Maloney. For more information about Dr. Maloney, see http://www.tcpride.org/pr/documents/2007-01-10_Exec_Director.pdf

II. 6:45 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. “Condoizing” Office Buildings: Bill Levin, Loring Park resident

The historic Loring Medical Building at 1409 Willow recently sold to Manley Commercial is being promoted as an office condo project. Unlike other office condo projects in the suburbs there is no rehab work planned and no additional parking. The new owners are aggressively marketing the offices as condominiums and some of the practices appear naive. Plans for replacing the parking lot with a parking garage or garage/condo combination have also changed and demonstrated little understanding of the procedures for modifying a potentially historic building and dealing with parking lots in the city. The person originally in charge of marketing has changed and efforts now appear to focus on marketing floors rather than individual units. Manley operated primarily in Eagan (solid rep according to Bill).

Committee discussion focused on the potential historic classification of the building and the potential impact on the neighborhood of condoizing. While it appears likely that the building has not been designated it might be eligible. Jana noted that condoizing residential building became a huge issue at the city level. Jan added that she spoke very briefly with Doug Kress and it seems that office condoizing is not on the city’s radar as an issue. Concerns about impact on the neighborhood included the potential loss of tenants and potential degradation of the building.

Action item – The chair is to contact Lisa’s office and ask for clarification of the office condo issue including applicable ordinances and relationship to residential ordinances. He will also contact the Heritage Preservation Commission staff about the building’s qualification as a historic building.

III. 7:00 p.m. – 7:20 p.m. 13th Street Pedestrian Plaza: Mike McLaughlin, Loring Business Association

Item postponed to the next meeting.

The CLPC Board referred this item to the committee. It involves a new project for \$1.2-1.8 million proposed in the Transportation Action Plan to design and reconstruct a 13th Street pedestrian “front door” connection between Nicollet Mall and Convention Center including a plaza and possible skyway access on the short section of 13th Street that connects Nicollet and the park area in front of the Convention Center just before Marquette Avenue.

There has been no neighborhood involvement in discussion of this considerable extension of an item that has been in the CLIC plan for several years. CLIC plans usually do have neighborhood input. The earlier version of the item envisioned additional lighting and planters at a cost under \$50,000. Local businesses appear unaware of the new plan. For additional information, look for project #PV045 as discussed in the Downtown Action Plan at http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/public-works/trans-plan/Downtown_050407.pdf

IV. 7:20 p.m. – 7:40 p.m. Review Community Notification Procedures – 1301 Harmon Place: Robert Copeland, Loring Park resident

Robert reviewed the background of lack of effective notification to the community for a recent liquor license application, including failure to notify residents at The Wellington, just across the street from the Loring Park City Apartments building that houses the retail space. Residents at Greenway Gables were notified individually. There was also no communication with the neighborhood organization office. This issue is part of the ongoing discussion about community engagement and notification. At the follow-up meeting held between the café owner and interested residents (facilitated by Councilmember Goodman’s office), Bob understands that there was no discussion of notification procedures.

Action item: the Chair will follow up with Doug Kress and planning staff (Phil Schliesman, Grant Wilson, and Ricardo Cervantes) to determine the typical notification procedures, why the system seemed to fail in this instance, and plans to prevent such failure in the future. In addition, the city should be encouraged to build in notification of the neighborhood office. Finally, inquire about procedures to notify renters.

As a related issue, Bob Copeland commented that the number of liquor licenses on Harmon Place might be an item for future discussion. There have been various on-sale venues that have opened and closed in the past few years. A new twist may be added with the off-sale venue that may come with Lunds. There were some problems

with the old City Liquors store at 12th and Hennepin. John van Heel noted that historically, Harmon has been commercial and could go into any direction. Such considerations should be part of an area plan.

V. 7:40 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Sale of Loring Parking Ramp – Emily Stern, CPED; Bob Lux (Alatus Partners)

The city issued RFPs for several of the eight parking ramps for sale including the Loring Ramp. Emily said that the City is close to finalizing terms for the sales. Emily recalled that CLPC was interested in the Loring Ramp, particularly the "streetscaping," which is why she asked to be on the agenda.

Bob Lux said that his group is looking at bidding on all of the ramps and may be the frontrunner on several of them. Some ramps will lend themselves to additional development. He has been involved in working with other ramps including screening them from the neighborhood. For the Loring ramp, there is room to add apartments (about 100 units or so) around the ramp (between the ramp and Grant Street and possibly around to Nicollet) that would improve the appearance of the ramp from the street. The first goal in the purchase of the ramp is to improve the ramp technology. The second step is either housing or landscaping such as greening the exterior. Bob noted that the hotel ballroom is actually owned by the ramp and leased by the hotel.

There was discussion about the amount of parking needed for housing and how this fits with use by the hotel. John van Heel suggested that adding housing would help mitigate the disconnect between the parts of Nicollet north and south of this point. The ramp does not appear to have the capacity to support additional stories. If the bid is successful (and we would possibly know near the end of the month) his company would be ready to return to start discussions with the community around spring 2008. The company would hope to work with a task force of 4-6 persons that would meet with the developer weekly.

Several committee members said that the plan to mask the ramp with housing was brilliant and all committee members appeared to be in support of the project.

VI. 8:00-8:15 p.m. Nicollet Avenue Pedestrian Overlay District: John van Heel, CLPC president

Currently Whittier and southern edge of Stevens Square are putting a pedestrian overlay district in place along Nicollet Ave south to Franklin. This would complete the overlay district that starts in Loring Park neighborhood. The City would like to have a consistent overlay district. John is not aware of the specifics although this item is being discussed at an open house Tuesday, June 5, 2007 from 5 – 7 p.m.

John thinks that there may be an opportunity to change some of the elements of the overlay district now in place and improve the existing district in Loring Park. It may also be time to reconvene the Nicollet Avenue Task Force. It was suggested that the task force also invite Ann DeGroot, Kam Talebi, and the Triple Espresso owners. John will add a link on the Web site to information about the overlay district.

Action item: put the pedestrian overlay district on the next meeting's agenda. Jana suggests inviting someone from Stevens Square to discuss the issue. Determine the status of any moratorium: there may have been an item on the Zoning & Planning or Transportation committee agendas discussing a possible moratorium on development along part of Nicollet.

IV. 8:15 – 8:30 p.m. Updates

•1501 Nicollet – Ann DeGroot, OutFront MN

Ann hopes to come to future CLPC meetings to update the committee on progress on the GLBT Community Center. They are considering site expansion including such options as: expanding into 15th Street (certain federal funds would have to be repaid); turning old 15th Street into a pedestrian plaza; and, looking at the old Johnson meat site. OutFront MN is now working on fund raising and identifying a project manager. There will be a CPED presentation on June 19th to update the Council.

There are a number of questions to be answered by September including the possibility of including housing. From their perspective, if including housing will help move the GLBT project, then they will include housing. They are working with several housing folks including Cornerstone. One important factor is that Lisa Goodman does not want the development to exceed five stories and this may limit what they can do.

Their vision is a place where the GLBT community (35,000 sq ft, about 3-4 stories without housing) can gather and share ideas in support of GLBT rights. This will require meeting rooms, multi-purpose rooms, office space, incubator space for emerging organizations, a gathering space such as a coffee shop on first floor, Quatrefoil Library, cyberspace, District 202 (apparently still interested), and possibly a senior center. OutFront hopes to narrow options by September. For example, in order to construct underground parking the site would probably have to be expanded. They have also talked to Trader Joes about leasing the first floor retail space. A hotel may be an option. OutFront will have to form an LLC to build and operate the facility.

Question: How do other similar operations in other cities support themselves? Ann said that most funding is from governmental source, which the Minneapolis center will not get. The Chicago center opens next week with a Whole Foods on the first floor. Ann is very optimistic about fund raising opportunities. They are hiring a firm to coordinate a capital plan.

Ann thinks they are talking about a building in three years. OutFront wants to be part of the neighborhood—she would like to be part of the Nicollet Ave Task Force and a working part of the community.

•Eitel Hospital:

Jana heard from Emerson School representatives that things are going well and the Eitel project is not impacting them negatively.

Question: what is planned for the other parcel? Jana will check on the status and forward the information for addition to the minutes.

•1730 Clifton Place

The project passed the Planning Commission and goes to City Council. The developers may still have to close on the property.

Adjourned 8:25 p.m.