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Citizens for a Loring Park Community

Land Use Committee

Monday, July 23, 2007

6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

@ Loring Park Office Building, Room 207

Attendance: Dick Sandberg (Loring Green East), Jan Sandberg (Loring Green East), John van Heel (110 West Grant), Diane Hansen (Copenhagen Enterprises & Loring Park property owners), Robert Cook (Eddy's Café), Michael McLaughlin (Loring Business Association), Jana Metge (CLPC Coordinator)

I. 6:30-6:45 pm Call to Order—Dick Sandberg, CLPC Land Use Committee-Chair Agenda Approval, Introductions, Approve June 4th Minutes, Announcements

Dick led introductions of the 7 people in attendance.

There were no changes to the agenda

Motion by John van Heel, seconded by Robert Cook, to approve the June 4, 2007 minutes.

Motion passed.

Announcements

- National Night Out (August 7, 2007) in Loring Park. Mary Turner and others are organizing the event which will include a garden tour and children's activities.
- Loring Park Art Festival is Aug. 4 & 5!! Jana distributed cards advertising the Festival. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact CLPC. CLPC will be hosting an Artist Breakfast (annual tradition) on both days. We would like volunteers to help distribute food at the breakfast and greet/talk to the artists!!!
- There will be no August Land Use meeting.

II. 6:45 p.m. – 7:15 p.m. 13th Street Pedestrian Plaza Project:

The CLPC Board referred this item to the committee. The Downtown Action Plan proposes a project for \$1.2-1.8 million to design/reconstruct the 13th Street pedestrian "front door" connection between Nicollet Mall and Convention Center just before Marquette Avenue.

There has been no neighborhood discussion of this considerable expansion of a smaller project that has been in the CLIC plan for several years. This earlier version of the item included additional lighting and planters at a cost under \$50,000.

For limited information about the project, look for project #P2 and T2 in the Downtown Action Plan at

http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/public-works/trans-plan/Downtown_Final_Adopted_062907.pdf

The committee chair contacted a city representative and requested feedback on several questions including:

- (1) When was the decision made to transform the smaller planters and street light project into a plaza/skyway access project? Which persons/groups participated in this modification?
- (2) What cost-benefit analyses have been done to assess the impact on Eat Street of diverting traffic from Grant and Nicollet to 13th and Nicollet? To what extent does this analysis consider the past investment in the Grant and Nicollet location?
- (3) Which local businesses have been involved/consulted in developing the project? Specifically, which businesses in the area of 13th and Nicollet, along Nicollet to the north, and along Nicollet to the south, including Eat Street businesses.

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- (4) What advantage would the skyway access component offer over existing access at the Millennium and Hyatt hotels and the convention center? In terms of cost-benefit, was an alternative of improved signage directing those on Nicollet to the skyways considered?
- (5) At what point will the neighborhoods (Loring and possibly DMNA) be involved in discussions about the project?

In the absence of a representative from the city, the committee discussion was limited. John described discussion of several items in the Downtown Action Plan that would impact the Loring Park neighborhood. A concept drawing of the design was reviewed by the committee – reconfiguring 13th Street into a one-way street between Nicollet and Marquette to allow broadening the sidewalks and greening. There has been less discussion of the skyway access part. There has also been little review with property owners although this would likely change if a grant source is identified. It seems that the goal is to complete the project before the Republican National Convention. It is not clear to the committee how this fits into CLIC and the CLIC timing or other funding sources.

Action item: The chair will follow through on this item and report next meeting.

III. 7:15 - 7:45 p.m. Nicollet Avenue Pedestrian Overlay District: Diane Hansen and John van Heel

Diane updated the committee on the existing overlay district that ran up Nicollet and starting at Grant stopped at 19th Street, mostly in Loring Park Neighborhood. The boundaries of the new district will run on Nicollet from 19th to 29th and to LaSalle along Franklin. The impetus for the district was the Wendy's located on Franklin and Clinton. At the time the store opened, it needed several variances including one for the drive-in feature. There was neighborhood opposition because of the nature of the business and drive-through. The work on the overlay district started in the Whittier neighborhood. There were also concerns about the CVS drive-through at Franklin and Nicollet. The new overlay district would go beyond the requirements for the standard district in Loring Park and include newer elements such as minimum FAR (floor area ratio) for new construction which would pretty much require two stories, bicycle parking, travel demand management, and other requirements. The interesting piece is that there is an opportunity to craft more site/area-specific district requirements to better meet the needs of a neighborhood. John feels that there may be an opportunity to modify the Loring overlay district to incorporate some of these new features. He mentioned that in Seattle there are some exciting greening requirements. Diane thought that lighting requirements could also be included.

Robert Cook and others agreed that the Nicollet Avenue Task Force should be re-convened to examine the issue more closely.

Mike asked about the timing for the district. Diane said that it was approved by Stevens Square but she is not sure that it has gone through the City as yet. The committee discussed the FAR requirements which would not allow a business like Market BarBQ because of the parking in the back.

Diane and John presented an update on the Great City Design Teams – Vision for 18th and Nicollet. According to Mayor Rybak's Web site, "The Mayor's Great City Design Teams are made up of architects, landscape architects, urban designers and developers who work with Minneapolis residents and community groups to develop design visions for opportunity sites in their neighborhoods. Rybak's Design Teams are comprised of volunteer professionals from AIA Minneapolis, the Urban Land Institute (ULI) and the Minneapolis Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (MASLA)." Diane described the design competition run through AIA to develop five plans. The first plan focused on Washington Avenue. The project at 18th and Nicollet would include the old Johnson Meat site and an empty lot. The projects are being government promoted but privately developed. There are no projects as yet proposed for development and the next step is to get the neighborhood back together with the property owners to discuss the proposed ideas. Diane stressed that a big plus for the process was the ability to bring the property owners and neighborhood together to generate excitement for redevelopment in the neighborhood.

There was a question about the lack of street features? Without knowing what will happen with LRT or trolleys, it is difficult to propose any design ideas.

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IV. 7:45 – 8:30 p.m. Updates

- **Office Condo Issue**

The current owner is seeking long-term five-year leases and appears to have abandoned the condo idea, at least for now.

- **1501 Nicollet**

A report was briefly discussed at the June 19th Community Development meeting. A copy of the report will be available at the meeting. One issue is whether District 202 can be included in this development as was originally discussed in the Kandiyohi proposal for the site.

Action item: the chair will invite Ann DeGroot to return at the September meeting.

- **Eitel Hospital**

The status of plans for the other parcel are unclear. Questions include: Did Magellan sell to Village Green? Is Magellan still holding the site? Are there any changes to the approved design? What is in the mix for the mixed/use-commercial?

Action item: The chair will invite a representative of BKV to give the committee an update at the September meeting--possibly Mike Crych or Bill McGrann to address the possible implications of the limited partnership agreement.

- **1730 Clifton Place**

The project has passed City Council. Hunt Associates is currently in the process of choosing a general contractor, working on unit plans and the selection of a marketing/sales team. They hope to start pre-construction sales in the fall and ground breaking in the late spring or early summer.

- **Sale of Loring Parking Ramp –**

Altus is proposed as the purchaser for the Loring Ramp and others. The July 10th city committee agenda item at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/2007-meetings/20070720/cd.asp mentions the committee's support for a housing option and streetscaping. While there was some opposition to the sales, the Council approved the sale at its July 20th meeting.

Action item: The chair will contact Bob Lux to congratulate him on the sale and tell him that CLPC is interested in working with him on housing and streetscaping projects.

- **Lunds**

Lunds sent a letter to neighbors in April advising that they were still committed to two downtown grocery stores. There are a number of rumors about what may or may not happen and where.

Adjourned 8:10 p.m.