

Citizens for a Loring Park Community
Land Use Committee
Monday, February 23rd, 2009
6:30 pm to 8:00 pm
@ Loring Park Office Building, Room 207
430 Oak Grove (between Loring Park & St. Mark's)

Attendance: Paul Hinderager (Summit House), Dick Sandberg (1201 Yale Place), Jan Sandberg (1201 Yale Place), Robert Cook (Urbanmakers), Jana Metge (CLPC Executive Director), Dan Hambrock (MCTC), Lissa Flaaten (Summit House), Christopher Hoffer (510 Groveland), David Hunt (Alatus), Bob Lux (Alatus), Phil Davis (MCTC), Kam Talebi (14th Street Ventures), Kevin Talebi (14th Street Ventures), John van Heel (210 West Grant), Mike Katch (Minneapolis Mirror), Kim Havey (1227 Hennepin), Beth Elliot (City Minneapolis), Neil Reardon (1401 Willow), Mike Marn (Summit House), Ryan Kronzer (Shea Architects), Damon Farber (Damon Farber Associates)

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

Dick led introductions of those in attendance.

The agenda was accepted.

Motion by Paul Hinderager, seconded by John van Heel to approve the January 26, 2009 minutes.

Motion passed unanimously

Announcements

- **CLPC Annual Meeting - Monday, March 9, 2009 at The Woman's Club of Minneapolis, 410 Oak Grove.** Parking across from and adjacent to the building.
 - **5:30-7:00 - Information Fair** featuring many city/county programs, court watch information, SSCO citizens patrol, the NRP Phase II plan, Hennepin/Lyndale corridor improvement plan, and other informational displays about the rich array of community initiatives that bless our neighborhood..
 - **7:00-8:30 p.m. - Annual Meeting featuring as speakers** - Councilmember Lisa Goodman; Mayor R. T. Rybak; David Rubador, project manager for the City's new Community Engagement Dept.; Inspector Janee Harteau on Loring Park safety; and Monika Nilsson on homelessness and the St. Steven's street outreach project.
 - **BUSINESS MEETING** – Election of Board members. Five two-year terms and one one-year term available. Anyone who is 18 and over and lives, works, or owns property in the Loring Park Neighborhood may run for the Board of Directors.
- The City is revamping the Historic Preservation Code; two meetings are scheduled for 7:00 p.m. February 26, 2009 at the Matthews Recreation Center and 5:30 p.m. March 2, 2009 at the Linden Hills Recreation Center. The City Council meeting of March 12 will have this item on its agenda for a public hearing.
- John van Heel and Dick Sandberg attended the Neighborhood Community Engagement Committee Process meeting last Saturday. The group is to devise a process to appoint persons to the commission for the eight open seats. For more information on the commission see the City's Web site at

http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/communications/WhatsNews_CE.asp

II. **6:45– 7:15 p.m. -- MCTC/Metro State Development** – Phil Davis, President; Dan Hambrock

CLPC invited MCTC to present some of their new planning efforts, appropriate in light of the upcoming neighborhood master planning work.

Phil explained that Dan Hambrock replaces Dan Kirk who was lured to Moorhead. MCTC has just opened the new Science Building in the old Billy Graham space on Spruce Place, a significant upgrade in appearance to the area.

Several student leaders are interested in adding services for students, particularly health services. About one-third of students have no health insurance and many others have limited insurance. MCTC looked for space on campus to provide health services leading them to a proposal for new construction to create a student center by expanding an existing building, probably the Helland Center. The proposal would add a three-story addition that would also improve access to the building and the park. Services would include health services, a fitness center and a quiet study area including gas fireplaces. Changes would include glass walls similar to those on the just finished Science Building. There are also plans to update the large T-building (500,000 sq ft) that faces the park. The use of the building has changed over time and some updating is needed. The biggest change may be to the concrete outdoor plaza that is really a roof over the loading area for the building – this roof has been leaking. Since projects to repair roofs are often a higher funding priority for the state, it offers the opportunity to expand the plaza across from the park. The timetable for the T-building is after the 2010 legislative session if funding is authorized. MCTC received planning money for this project from the Legislature last year.

Dan said that the Wells Family Center re-use project would cost about \$20 million and would connect into the Helen Center. This project would add classrooms. The project proposal failed to gain support and remains in the unfunded list for the future.

MCTC has retained LHB as the master planner to complete work on a revised master plan this spring with completion anticipate by the end of the 2009.

Questions and discussion:

Is there pressure for a large-scale expansion of the campus in the future? Phil said that the current master plan had them looking for acquisitions but this preceded availability of the Billy Graham property. Since 2001, the college enrollment has grown by about 50 percent and there are no signs of that diminishing. The planning with the Billy Graham site called for an eight-story building but this is not likely to happen in the near term, as there are zoning issues in the area of Spruce between Hennepin and Harmon.

Suggestion -- the Loring Park master Plan is underway this year and should be coordinated with the MCTC master plan.

Suggestion -- MCTC students and staff might be interested in working with CLPC on neighborhood planning issues.

Phil has talked with Ray Harris about Ray's ideas for the park.

They have been working on the old dog park site to make improvements to that public space.

III. **7:15-7:45 p.m. Master Plan Development** – Beth Elliot/Downtown Planner

The Loring Park Neighborhood NRP Phase II plan has funding dedicated to the creation of a Loring Park Master Plan. At the November Land Use meeting, it was requested that Beth come

and discuss with us what a Master plan is, what are the advantages of a Master plan, does the City use/respect Master plans, the amount of staff support we can plan on, and what the process/timeline is for developing such a plan.

Beth has responsibility for one of the City's five long-range planning sectors including Loring Park, Stevens Square and downtown. She described the recently completed work on the City's comprehensive plan that looks at what the City will look like in 20 years. This plan does not get down to the neighborhood level.

Beth distributed copies of the "Neighborhood Guide for Planning Documents" that is on the web site. [See the City's site at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/business/economic.asp> and the Guide at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/docs/NeighborhoodGuideforDevelopingPlanning.pdf>]

[Note that the guide refers to small area plans. According to the guide, "Examples of small area plans include neighborhood master plans, transit station area plans and corridor plans."]

The guide includes plan elements and the required community engagement process. The city uses small area plans adopted by the Planning Commission and City Council in all decisions affecting that area including the land uses for public and private property. Property sales and capital budgets use the plans since the City is trying to connect small area plans with infrastructure decisions.

Not all master plans are adopted by the city although they may still be used as advisory to decision making. Beth recommends getting the plan adopted. Beth directed members to the criteria for determining when to develop a small area plan. Plans are often most useful when land uses are shifting or there is strong community interest. Plans should have certain components, including a survey of what exists and a description of what should be. Past planning efforts should be reviewed to determine if they are still priorities. The City is looking for a technical analysis and proposed changes in a number of areas such as future land use, urban character (including bulk, height, general characteristics but not specific façade elements), housing, transportation and public realm. The plan should also analyze opportunity sites – there was some of this work done for the Meter Farm a few years ago. The plan should provide detail about how elements in the plan should be implemented, including timelines.

Questions and discussion:

What is the relationship between a master plan and small area plans and zoning? Beth said that we would need to evaluate the two previous efforts (Nicollet Avenue and Loring Hill) and look at what has happened since they were completed. Zoning is one way to implement the policy articulated in the small area plan. Small area plans are usually followed up with a rezoning study. The small area plan contributes to decisions about variances.

Are there enough dollars to do the entire neighborhood? Some areas may not need to be studied. Definitely include Nicollet Avenue and Loring Hill. Also, consider Harmon Avenue as there is more there than just the historic district (which could be a good candidate for updating by the city). Part of the scope depends on the issues that CLPC wants to tackle. Nicollet Ave is seen as an area open for opportunity. Zoning along part of Nicollet may not be appropriate. For example, downtown districts have no height limit but just outside downtown, the limit is mostly four stories. Perhaps there should be something in between. A perceived need for new zoning districts might fit in nicely with a plan. The issues on the Hill are different – OR3 zoning allows the institutional uses on the Hill. It may be more difficult to reduce density there but it is not impossible.

Coordination with the City – staff can help with the RFP process including developing the RFP. They have a long master list of consultants and Beth recommends sending out the RFP to all on the list. She can help evaluate proposals, evaluate interim products, attend meetings, and guiding us through the approval process. John said that there is upfront work to be done to figure out how to use volunteers for the community engagement part as well as identifying the areas of the neighborhood to include. Essentially, we will need to identify consultant tasks and in-house tasks. The City requires an extensive record of community engagement and the guide defines some of the elements.

One of the first steps is to define the scope of the plan. Suggestions include excluding the Convention Center and condominiums along 12th. Include the Harmon area (Lunds owns much of this property and something will be done eventually. The other buildings across the street are individually owned). There is also some concern about institutional creep and maybe Harmon works better for this use—talk to St. Thomas (which signed agreement that the Law School was the last building in the campus) and MCTC

The comp plan revisions designated Nicollet and Hennepin as commercial corridors – check this against possible areas to include in the neighborhood master plan.

Robert Cook and John have done some preliminary work – see attachment. Robert distributed a list of Loring Park Master Plan Tasks. He also described several areas that might be targeted – Harmon, Nicollet Ave into Stevens Square, the area between the Greenway and 15th that includes the Eitel site and the Super America, and Hennepin/Lyndale.

Beth noted that sample plans are on the City's web site (at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/plans.asp>.) Beth also distributed elements of a recent plan for Cedar Riverside. It is available on the City's Web site at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/cedar-riverside.asp>. Audubon Park also recently completed a plan with NRP funds and we should speak with them – see http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/audubon_park_plan.asp. Marcy Holmes updated its plan -- see <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/master-plans/marcy-holmes/index.asp>. Some of the older plans may not have future land-use maps that the City now wants to see in plans.

Timelines? – Beth thought a year might be reasonable.

IV. 7:45– 8:00 p.m. Loring Park Parking Ramp – Ryan Kronzer/Shea Architects, David Hunt and Bob Lux (Alatus Partners), Damon Farber (Damon Farber Associates)

Bob reviewed previous discussions for improving the ramp including adding housing around the ramp that would increase its attractiveness. A study found that this is not economically viable. They would have to sprinkle the entire ramp, which the 30 units of housing would not justify. The budget for exterior improvements is about \$800,000 with a focus on improving the appearance at street level

Ryan displayed some photos of the exterior of the ramp and a drawing of the footprint. They are trying to improve the appearance of the lower 20 feet. Materials might include precast concrete base, masonry and metal trim for the 1-2 story section to add texture and visual interest.

They also plan to install several neighborhood plaques commemorating the history of the neighborhood although the lighting method is not final. They are using a similar approach at the Gateway Ramp. Kim described several elements of the area's history. Kim would be willing to pull together a group of neighborhood history groupies to share information with the developers.

The signs are two freestanding signs and projection sign. The signs will be LED technology that can change infrequently to indicate early bird or event specials. The signs will avoid use of the temporary sandwich signs that most parking lots use.

The projecting sign requires a variance for size and projection depth; the freestanding signs need a variance for the sign itself and the height and square footage. The sign size is necessary to accommodate lettering. The freestanding sign design replicates the Convention Center signage to give a sense of continuity to the area. The Nicollet Mall guidelines also apply to work in this area.

Damon described the public realm elements of the corner. Currently it is unattractive and less safe than it could be. This area is partly owned by the parking ramp and partly owned by the city as part of Nicollet Mall. The pine trees currently in the area should be removed as there are folks sleeping in this area. They want to make sure that any changes to the corner are sustainable. To give the committee an idea of what could be done, Damon presented three options (other options are possible) for landscaping the corner. The options include

- (1) Breaking up the planting area with a walkway closer to the building, planting near the building, adding some benches closer to the mall, and including vertical orange lights similar to those at the Eitel apartment building. They would also like to add some vendor carts and planters.
- (2) Keep the existing trees; take out the existing planter and replacing it with a circular wall for seating. This would require an encroachment permit to remove some of the existing concrete and adding some new concrete further back toward the door.
- (3) Turn the entire area into one space with a pavement-level planting area that would capture storm water below a grove of trees. Include 10x10 tents for vendors with the idea of providing a venue for farmer sales or similar.

Questions and discussion:

Are the signs required for them to complete the rest of the beautification efforts? They will not do the signs without doing the other exterior work that is approved by the committee.

Can the LaSalle exit be used as an entrance and the current entrance as an exit? While not studied there may be problems with elevation changes and need for multi-exit lanes.

Timeline and process – signage approval is important tonight. They would come back in 30 days and integrate input from tonight's meeting into the ideas for exterior improvement.

How to achieve the programming ideas? The new Mill City Farmer's Market is successful and a Saturday market might work in this area. They could offer an hour of free parking.

It is a great idea to have flowers in the area, possibly next to the building as well as freestanding planters.

Anything on Nicollet Avenue south of 12th will be an improvement. Activity near the building is a good idea. He would like to see a water feature or sculpture. There was general support for water features although one member cautioned about the upfront cost as well as continuing maintenance.

He is not sure of the programming given the large number of people in the two buildings on the corner who are lower income.

The sidewalk along Grant Street is very tight with little pedestrian buffer unlike LaSalle. Give some thought to a mural on this large area of building surface. Several members expressed strong interest in art.

Façade materials are not final and maybe some sort of a thin brick system. Perhaps use several colors on the upper levels not just light gray. Bob Lux said that they did look at mural screens on the upper level but decided to focus spending on the first floor.

Lighting will be very important although the ramp is unattractive during the day also, in part due to the bright white color that can be seen across the neighborhood.

Motion by Kim Havey second by John van Heel, to approve the signage as proposed for the Loring Ramp.

Motion passed unanimously with Richard Sandberg abstaining.

As a last item, a committee member asked about plans for Lunds in the parcel that Alatus controls. Bob Lux said that the original large-scale plan has been dropped. A smaller plan that would include apartments and an extended stay hotel is also doubtful given the current state of the hotel market. Lunds is very interested in a project proceeding.

Adjourned 8:50 p.m.

Agenda Items for Future Meetings:

- 1500 Nicollet Development Proposal
- NRP Housing Loan Examples
- Berger Fountain/Loring Park Master plan
- Eitel Hospital development commercial space

ATTACHMENT

Proposal by Robert Cook and John van Heel
Loring Park Master Plan Tasks (amended)

[Clarify when the areas of the neighborhood to be included in the plan will be identified.]

1. Outreach and community participation
 - Rental/owner buildings
 - Public
 - Religious
 - Commercial including large developers
 - Educational
 - Ethnic/cultural
2. Partnerships
 - CPED
 - Public Works
 - Other Minneapolis City Offices
 - NRP
 - Heritage Preservation Commission
 - Downtown and neighborhood organizations
 - Adjacent neighborhoods, AIA
 - Park Board
 - Hennepin County
 - MnDOT
 - Metro Transit
3. Compile existing completed area plans and design guidelines
 - Nicollet Avenue Design Guidelines
 - Loring Park Master Plan (park plan)
 - Loring Hill Design Guidelines
 - Loring Park/Minneapolis Bicycle Plan
 - Minneapolis Pedestrian Master Plan (to be completed in 2009)
 - Walking Minneapolis Plan
 - Downtown Transportation Action Plan
 - Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan (especially land use policies and urban design policies)
4. Survey other completed master plans
 - Develop table of contents
 - Develop format
5. Mapping system
 - Historical assets
 - Existing conditions
 - Areas planned and unplanned
 - Opportunity areas
 - Transportation
 - Public spaces
 - Pedestrian corridors
 - Proposed land use changes
 - Proposed zoning changes
6. Stevens Square/Loring Park/I-94 Bridging Issue
7. Nicollet Avenue/Streetcar Issue
8. Large expansion institutions
 - Convention Center
 - Minneapolis Community and Technical College
 - St. Thomas
9. Work program
 - Schedule
 - Work division (in house, city, consultant)