

Citizens for a Loring Park Community
Livability Committee
Wednesday, Oct. 21st, 2009
6:30 pm to 8:00 pm
@ Loring Park Community Center

Attendance: Edward Biegging (Xcel Energy), Jana Metge (CLPC Coordinator), Dick Sandberg (1201 Yale Place), Jan Sandberg (1201 Yale Place), Gary Gliem (Summit House), Steven Pinkal (Loring 100), Renee Allen (Minneapolis Police), Bob Hansen (Loring 100), Inspector Kris Arneson (Minneapolis Police), Lt. Matt Clark (Minneapolis Police), John van Heel (110 West Grant), Deputy Chief Janee Harteau (Minneapolis Police), Sherman Patterson (Mayor Rybak's Office), Mike Addy (Greenway Gables), Matt French (prospective businessman), Paul Prenevost (Kirt Properties), Michael McLaughlin (UrbanWorks), Jim Daly (Booth Manor)

I. 6:30-6:45 PM - Call to Order—

Bob Hansen led introductions of those in attendance. Bob then turned the meeting over to Gary Gliem.

Approved the agenda as amended to add an item from Lt. Matt Clark before safety zone expansion. (Motion Dick Sandberg, second Bob Hansen). Approved by consensus

Approved the minutes of the September 16, 2009 Livability meeting amended to correct two names. (Motion Dick Sandberg, second John van Heel) Motion passed

Announcements and Reports

- Jana circulated an MCTC invitation to tour the new science building on Friday, November 20 at 3:00 p.m. RSVP to Karen Oliver by November 17, 2009 at 612-659-6316
- Jana announced that there will be salsa dancing lessons in January at the Community Center.
- Jana distributed St. Steven's cards, curfew magnets and aggressive solicitation cards.
- Community Sing-Along – Tuesday, November 17th, Tuesday, Dec. 15th at 7:00 p.m. in the Loring Park Community Center
- Jana distributed flyers for the candidate forum at the Woman's Club on October 26, 2009.
- CLPC Newsletter: Connection Wednesday. Deputy Chief Harteau and Sherman explained the outreach effort to get together with neighborhood folks to get feedback and share concerns.
- Light Up Loring
- Court Watch – Friday, November 6th, 10:00-11:30 a.m. Central Library 2nd floor

Inspector Arneson and Renee are on the agenda for November. Inspector Arneson noted that she came from the 5th Precinct and is looking forward to her post here. Renee came from the 3rd Precinct and Cedar Riverside and starts officially November 2. Deputy Chief Harteau and Sherman Patterson from the Mayor's office explained that as part of a new initiative from the Chief's office, weekly they will attend neighborhood meetings to review items of local concern.

II. 6:45-7:05 PM – “Lights Out” in the Loring Park Neighborhood

Mike Addy has been the point person for the neighborhood in getting lights fixed. Edward Biegging Jr. (Project Coordinator for Xcel Energy Outdoor Lighting) explained that Xcel's responsibility for the LaSalle street lights is bulb and photocell replacement. The city is responsible for the pole and underground cable. The lights of interest have a cable problem and should be resolved within a week. The fix is fairly simple because the cable is in conduit. Edward reported that under state law and per

Public Utilities Commission requirements, lights are to be fixed within 72 hours. Lights are normally repaired in 24-48 hours unless there is damage to the wiring or underground faults. If not, per Public Utilities Commission, Xcel is to be charged back 1/30th of the cost per day per light until it is repaired. Edward also reported that LaSalle was refurbished a couple of years back. The city removed the lights and put in conduit. At that time, it was discussed that the City should take over the maintenance and repair of the lights.

Committee discussion:

Bob Hansen noted that there were problems with the same lights last year.

Jana reported that, according to a property owner, the light on the southwest corner of 15th & LaSalle had been out for three years (outside the Buckingham). Edward agreed to take a closer look at the light.

Dick remembered that 311 is the touch point for reporting problems and there had been some communication problems. Edward met with 311 staff and believes that communication should be better. However, within Loring Park residents can call Xcel directly. Sherman asked if the committee thought that communication with 311 is working well.

Jana reiterated that it is important for residents to have one place to call. There is still a mix of lights for which either Xcel or the city is responsible. Xcel is not responsible for the pedestrian level lights on Nicollet. Several committee members reported that a set of lights along Nicollet Avenue will go out together and then re-light an hour or more later.

Dick asked if the maps of streetlights are available in electronic format suitable for the CLPC web site. Edward had paper copies and agreed to provide an electronic version.

Robert asked if the bulbs are directional. Edward explained that the fixture has a reflector at the top of the fixture directing light down. The effect is 'bi-directional' and must be aligned to give stronger light up and down a sidewalk, for example. If a light is not properly aligned it should be reported so it can be corrected. The refractor is designed to spread the light.

LED is a hot topic because it is green but there are a few problems, including initial cost. Edward described an LED pilot project nearby. Another issue is the light color which may be the lens or the bulb.

Edward noted that they are governed by the PUC and are committed to repairs within 72 hours of a report to them. If it is not repaired, there is a "fine" charged back.

Jana asked Mike, Bob and Paul to send her additional information about lighting problems.

[NOTE: Shortly after the meeting, Edward emailed that he was advised of some changes, and suggested that there may be more, concerning what Xcel Energy will do regarding the maintenance of the LaSalle street lights the City of Minneapolis is taking over. Today he was told that the street light will be metered, a deviation from what he mentioned in the meeting.]

III. 7:05-7:35 PM – Nicollet Avenue South Service District

Michael passed out a handout. He is considered the local expert on special service districts. These districts allow property owners to assess themselves to fund special services and these vary by district depending on the district's priorities. By law, these services must exceed those that the City typically provides. There are 15 services districts, the first was in Uptown. Two more are on the horizon – East Lake and LynLake.

The Nicollet Avenue South Special Service District (NASSSD) was established to maintain the amenities developed as part of the renovations to Nicollet in the late 1990's. See a map of the district boundaries at

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/boards-and-commissions/docs/NicolletAveSouth.pdf>. The district board meets in the fall to develop a budget. Residential properties must not be assessed, by state law. Property owners are notified of the assessment yearly. For 2010, most of the budget will be spend on seasonal twinkle lights, landscape maintenance (mostly in front of the decorative fencing) and repair services. One option within the scope of services is to sweep sidewalks although this has been deferred for several years. There is a spring cleanup including pressure washing and fall cleanup including leaf removal. There is also container maintenance and banner replacement and maintenance (significantly higher for 2010 due to complete replacement of all Eat Street banners). The total budget is \$85,000 for 2010. Assessments are prorated based on lineal feet and land area. Advisory Board members are listed in the handout and include business owners the length of the part of Nicollet included in the service district. According to the City's web site, board members must be "a resident, property owner, tenant or concerned citizen within the district."

Committee discussion:

Will the banners have a half-moon cut? No because they are smaller and the cut was not recommended by the vendor. The fabric is a higher quality fabric with silk screened images that should last longer. Michael will send images to Jana.

There was discussion about the adequacy of electric supply to power lights in some locations. Two large trees in front of Loring Towers may not have enough power to support the lights. Michael thought that there are often problems with twinkle lights in some settings -- GFIs frequently cause problems. On Eat Street, the outlets are on the poles, about 12 feet off the ground. This makes them less susceptible to vandalism. Note that in Peavey Plaza they have gone with LEDs on a pilot basis -- LEDs use much less power but are more costly to purchase. Paul Prenevost said that as part of the pilot project, there will be LED twinkle lights north of the freeway on Nicollet. Twinkle lights cost about \$37,000 per year.

Pedestrian lights on Nicollet: Michael said that there is an assessment on properties for the low level lights directly by the city; the service district is not a part of this.

John raised the issue of the Westside Convention Center Improvement Project, the 2001 city project that was funded through the expansion of the convention center. The purpose of the project was to strengthen the connection between Eat Street and the convention center, and included over \$300,000 of streetscape improvements along Grant Street. No plan for maintenance of the project was ever implemented by the city. Much of the project is currently in disrepair. The big issues are the kiosks and gateway banners. This area overlaps the boundaries of the NASSSD but is not within the scope of the district. It was suggested that the committee formally draft a letter to the advisory board for the NASSSD. Jana also mentioned problems with the signs in the kiosks which were installed with incorrect maps.

Public Works coordinates with a vendor to determine the planting materials within the district. Hanging baskets are not used in the NASSSD. Note that many businesses put out their own plantings.

John noted that he thought that the service district board had approved a plan to expand the district to include the streetscape project -- he presented the request in person to their board. [NOTE: after the meeting, John found the April 15, 2005 letter from CLPC that went to the service district board chair Tom Berthiaume, requesting that the district be expanded.]

The CLPC Livability Committee recommends that the CLPC Board send a letter to the Board of the Nicollet Avenue South Special Service District requesting that the service district expand its scope to include the kiosks and gateway banners on the north end of the district. (Motion John van Heel, sec Robert Hansen)

Motion passed

The CLPC Livability Committee recommends that the CLPC Board send a letter to the City and Public Works asking that they implement a long-term maintenance plan for the remainder of the West Side Convention Center Project. (Motion John van Heel, second Robert Hansen)

Motion passed

IV. Lt. Clark Loring Neighborhood Survey

Lt. Clark has put together a ten item survey to address perceptions about safety in the Loring Park Neighborhood. The feedback will help inform the policing plan. Lt. Clark asked that we distribute the survey as widely as possible.

IV. 7:35-7:45 PM – Expansion of Safe Zone Cameras down Nicollet Avenue

Last month there was some discussion about the expansion of the Downtown Safe Zone cameras to 15th Street, along Nicollet Ave. Shane Zahn from the Downtown Improvement District, talked about potential costs.

Inspector Arneson reported that there have been more directed patrols into the 14th and 15th Street area during the dinner to midnight time frame which may take care of some of the problems.

Sherman said that the Mayor's focus is on getting police on the streets and there is no City money now for cameras. Jana responded that CLPC realizes that we would have to raise funds for them.

Deputy Chief Harteau noted that there is increased capacity for cameras due to the new system and the Downtown Improvement District is monitoring the cameras. However, cameras are still reactionary, not preventative. [NOTE: in a subsequent email Deputy Chief Harteau said that she had checked on the camera issue and the system can handle more cameras so that it is OK to move forward with fund raising. She confirmed the approximately \$11-12,000 cost per camera.]

Inspector Arneson noted that Stevens Square has a proposal for cameras in the vicinity of Nicollet, 18th to 22nd that is on hold for now but could go forward again. Inspector Arneson is the point of contact. This could be a topic for the Nicollet Avenue Business Owners meeting when our new CPS is on the job.

V. 7:45-8:00 PM – Expansion of the Downtown Improvement District to 15th St.

Last month it was presented that the DID goes to Grant Street. Several residents have called into the CLPC office concerned that DID should be expanded to 15th St., that by stopping at Grant Street, we may only be pushing downtown crime into Loring Park. So, let's talk about it, what do folks think??

There is concern that the Downtown Improvement District (DID) has pushed bad folks toward Loring Hill. Jana discussed the recent robbery near the Groveland. There will be a broader safety meeting for residents of Loring Hill hosted by Summit House at the Woman's Club. The next step would be to pull together the businesses on Nicollet for their input.

Two suspects who had operated for years in Phillips were implicated in an assault near 14th and LaSalle. Renee noted that we need to figure out why they have been attracted to this area. Dell Place is a new area of concern. 14th and Nicollet continues to be an area of concern.

Renee asked committee members to report aggressive panhandling. While it is a low priority item, it needs to be reported.

Jan asked Michael McLaughlin about expansion of the DID. Michael said that the DID boundary on Grant Street was set there because there are many properties further on there that are not taxable. Jana asked about the Safety Ambassador piece – Michael said that this could be done on a fee for service basis without changing the boundaries.

Note that residential properties may opt in to a district or arrange for fee for service. This could be a topic for the Loring Greenway Association.

Adjourned 8:20 p.m.

NOTE – NOVEMBER MEETING – Inspector Kristine Arneson will come and introduce herself and engage with us and Sector Lt. Matt Clark on our 2010 goals for Loring Park and Community Policing ideas and initiatives.

Monthly Court Watch Sheets are now available on the Downtown Improvement District website.

Future Meeting topics:

Outreach and Community Events; Restorative Justice – Develop Scope of Service for use of NRP Phase II dollars; Downtown 100 – Develop Scope of Service for use of NRP Phase II dollars. Also note: increased crimes including assaults, non-stranger rape and thefts from motor vehicle.