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Citizens for a Loring Park Community
Land Use Committee

Monday, June 28, 2010

6:30 p.m.

Loring Park Office Building (430 Oak Grove), Room 207

Attendance: Dick Sandberg (1201 Yale Place), Jan Sandberg (1201 Yale Place), John Van Heel (100 West Grant), Christopher Hoffer (510 Groveland), Paul Hinderager (Summit House), Neil Reardon (1401 Willow), Kara Raether (127 West 15th), Judy Reinehr (St. Mark's), Gary Gliem (Summit House), Dennis Alexander (Wesley Church), Shaun Murphy (City of Minneapolis), Greg Renstrom (architect for Wesley Church), Janine Jelks-Seale (110 West Grant), Mike Marn (Summit House)

I. Call to Order—John Van Heel, CLPC Land Use Chair

John led introductions of those in attendance.

*Approved the agenda. (Motion Christopher Hoffer, second Dick Sandberg)
Motion passed*

The CLPC Land Use Committee approved the May 24, 2010 Land Use Committee minutes. (Motion Dick Sandberg, second Christopher Hoffer) Motion passed

Announcements

- **Master Plan Steering Com.** – The next meeting is Wednesday, June 30, from 7:00-8:30 p.m.
- **Historic Resource Action Team** – The next meeting is August 4, Wesley Church, 7-8:30 p.m. The plan is for regular meetings the first Wednesday of each month.
- **Court Watch** – The July meeting has been canceled.
- **Community Sing-Along** – The next Community Sing will be Tuesday, July 20, 7:00 p.m. at the Loring Park Community Building.
- **“Aquatennial Pre-Parade Party at Loring Park”** – July 21st - 4:00-7:30 p.m. John distributed handout materials for posting in neighborhood buildings. The Woman's Club donated the Teddy Bear Band.
- **National Night Out – 1st Tuesday in August** – Time to plan neighborhood parties! John distributed flyers for the event at the Woman's Club.
- **Loring Park Art Festival** – August 7-8 at Loring Park

The CLPC Land Use Committee canceled the July Land Use meeting. (Motion Neil Reardon, second Dick Sandberg) Motion passed.

II. Loring Park Bike Gateway – Shaun Murphy

Shaun gave an update on the plans for the Loring Park Gateway (SW corner of the park), which have now gone through the process of MnDOT review. This project is part of a larger project to improve biking along 14th/15th/16th streets.

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As background, Shaun noted that there was a working group with members from CLPC, Friends of Loring Park and others. The concept presented at the last meeting was generally well-received and there have been some tweaks. The biggest problem was at the state level. The original approved proposal was to keep the current paths and infill all gaps with greenery. The design included an exit from the park into a larger, common bike-ped area so that bikes could then proceed to Uptown.

MnDOT's Cultural Resources unit had concerns with the proposal. Loring Park projects come under the purview of that unit as the park is considered a contributing part of the Grand Rounds. MnDOT staff reviewed historic photos of Loring Park and determined that the areas planned for infill had traditionally been mowed areas. There were also concerns that plants historically typical of Loring Park should be used. The proposed plants are more native prairie type rather than the more formal plantings that MnDOT staff thought would be appropriate. Shaun was able to achieve some compromises on the plantings and amount of turf and now has a letter that will qualify the project for federal funding. The solution is to use a flower border rather than mass plantings.

Discussion:

Paul noted that at the last meeting he voiced a concern about peds and bikes sharing space that was not addressed. Shaun said that they are removing the center line from the multi-use space that runs along Lyndale. There will also be signage that it is a shared space. The curb-cut on the north side will be double width; there will be no change to the curb cut on the south side due to cost. Shaun said that they proposed to make the shared area bigger as a way to reduce possible bike-ped conflicts. Paul's concern is that there will still be problems at the intersection because bikes are moving quickly and cars are not always watching for them.

Dick noted that bikes moving west are sometimes confounded by the double right turn from Oak Grove to Hennepin. Shaun said that there will be some dotted striping to help warn motorists that bikes may be going straight.

In response to a concern about paths within the park, Shaun said that there will be better signage to denote the bike paths near this spot within the park.

John repeated that CLPC funded the design work and Friends is donating \$20,000 for plantings. Shaun said that the entire budget is \$230,000 with \$30,000 coming from local funds.

Judy from St. Mark's reported on discussions to pull up a number of trees and vegetation to create hard space as one way to address some accessibility concerns. Judy said that as a physically challenged person herself she did not think the changes were necessary. Destruction of the vegetation would reduce the vegetation connection between St. Mark's and the corner. John later suggested that this be an item on a future agenda.

III. Save Wesley Church Report Dennis Alexander

Wesley Church was listed on the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota's ten most endangered historic sites in Minnesota. The church was also prominently

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featured in a two-page spread about the ten most-endangered list in the May issue of Minnesota Monthly.

Dennis represents the Conference and was pastor at the church for a number of years. Dennis gave background on the history of the church and its structure, including the Temple Building (taken down for the Convention Center). At that time the congregation began to ask why the church was not formally considered historic. Working with the Minnesota Historical Society, the church achieved several designations on the National (for the exterior) and local (for the interior—one of few buildings with this designation—and exterior) historic lists. The local designation is the more restrictive. The congregation itself is historic and ceased to be about a year ago when it was decided that the building had become too large for the congregation. The church has the largest sanctuary in the state.

The Conference owns the property and is now asking what to do with it. The building is expensive to maintain -- \$80,000 a year in utilities. Built in 1891, it is costly to find appropriate capital fixtures. The building has several very large spaces that could not be easily subdivided. There is a Committee examining three options: market and sell it; donate to a significant nonprofit that will use in the public interest; or, the Conference creates a nonprofit in the public interest. The first option is the last resort. They are currently exploring the second option and recently met with Aeon. It appears that nonprofit mission guidelines generally do not include renovating a church. As to the third option, a committee is looking at a nonprofit that could support the building with possibly a congregation to serve Stevens Square, Loring Park and Downtown West.

Dennis has received phone calls about the availability of the property, including one from a suburban congregation. He turned them down as they are still focused on the third option. They are most concerned about appropriate use for the future. Historic designation was pursued in part to preserve a resource for the community. Bob Mack and Greg are architects involved in pursuing options. Greg reported that they have met several times to discuss options for the church.

Discussion:

Judy noted that the Edwardian design of the church with an opening wall made interfaith events with St. Mark's truly spectacular. Judy wondered if more could be done with nearby agencies such as the Convention Center. Dennis said that they have consistently had good relations with the Convention Center. They also do other events such as weddings that provide business for local hotels. The Conference is providing a part-time building manager, full-time custodian and part-time events manager. Local, neighborhood events are encouraged.

Dick asked about the letter in Minnesota Monthly from the bishop in response to the June Minnesota Monthly article. Dennis said that that the Bishop became concerned with some of the original language, such as wrecking ball, that implied that demolition was imminent. However, it is fair to ask how long the Church can maintain their financial support. The trustees would like to have some decisions by November 2010 to address the ongoing financial costs. They have been told that it would take up to five years to sell the building. They were

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also approached by an Islamic group that wanted to purchase the building, for the first central city mosque.

Christopher asked about immediate capital needs. Dennis said that the larger components such as roof and mechanicals were in good shape. To rent to nonprofits might require bathroom and similar upgrades.

Dennis hoped that as they move through this process, they want the neighborhood to be involved at the front, rather than back end. For example, they may need some help with parking space and the City.

Dick asked about possible use as a GLBT community center. Greg is working on this option.

Paul asked about the relationship with the Convention Center. Dennis noted that the Convention Center does not need additional space but it does have use as unique space although they would again need upgrades for bathrooms, AC and media. Paul then asked about donating the property to the City. Dennis said that the public's reaction to similar projects (Shubert, Grain Belt) have not been well received. The bottom line is that the City does not want the property.

IV. Clean Energy Jobs Legislation

Sierra Club would like our neighborhood support for a letter to our two Senators. John distributed a handout on this issue, similar to the attachment to the May minutes. There was some discussion about whether this was within the purview of the Land Use Committee. John noted that the proposer lives within the neighborhood.

The CLPC Land Use Committee recommends that the CLPC Board send a letter to our two Senators that includes the content of the handout. (Motion Dick Sandberg, second Kara Raether) Motion passed.

V. Master Plan – Request for Proposal – John/Robert

John reported on Robert Cook's heart problems.

The Steering Committee had the final interviews last week. Neil reviewed the process.

We released our Loring Park Master Plan Request for Proposal on April 19th.

We held a Pre-Proposal Meeting, attended by Robert Cook, Neil Reardon, John Van Heel, Jana Metge, Lauren Huygn, and Beth Elliott on May 12th.

There were 20 interested individuals in attendance during the informal, 2.5 hour session.

Proposal submissions were due on June 4th, 2010. We received five submissions. Robert Cook and Jana accepted the submissions, dated and timed them.

We interviewed all five firms: two on Tuesday, June 15th and three on Thursday, June 17th.

Jana contacted references listed for all 5 proposals, compiled and gave to

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all on the Selection Committee for review. We developed a scoring sheet based on the stated selection criteria in the proposal.

City Planner Beth Elliott participated with the interviews, as did Coordinator Jana Metge. The Selection Committee was comprised of members of the Master Plan Steering Committee which are John Van Heel, Mike Marn, Mark Nelson, Christopher Hoffer, Janine Jelk-Seales, Neil Reardon, and Paul Hinderager.

Though hospitalized, Robert Cook emailed comments on his top two proposals and weighed in on his proposal of choice. Dick Sandberg submitted scoring sheets on all proposals though unable to attend interviews.

The Steering Committee will deliberate and forward a recommendation to the CLPC Board of Directors.

We will announce the selected team at our next Land Use Committee meeting.

The Board will meet after tonight's meeting to discuss this issue.

John circulated copies of the proposals. Dick noted that a number of the proposals had good ideas that hopefully can be adopted.

After Board approval, there is a steering committee meeting on Wednesday to finalize communications with the applicants. Contract signing may take a good part of July. Contract scope will be developed by the CLPC Coordinator, NRP Staff, and City Planning Staff, based upon the proposal, in conjunction with the Master Plan Steering Committee, and approved by the CLPC Board of Directors. Beth Elliott, our City Planner, has been providing technical support throughout this process. The public process will begin in September. The LEED sustainability assessment occurs over the summer as well as Action team that will both develop recommendations. The process should wrap up in the first half of 2011, possibly in conjunction with the annual meeting.

VI. Report from Task Forces

•**Historic Resource Action Team** – Report from the June 22nd HPC meeting-419 & 337 Oak Grove-Christopher

Christopher reported that there were 13-14 folks at the June 22 meeting that covered the homes proposed for interim protection by HPC. They hope to provide some help for city staff. They anticipate a roving meeting site (part of the meeting will include a presentation of the site) every month on the first Wednesday.

•**Traffic Calming Task Force** – Dave Hile

No meeting is scheduled for July. Individual task force members will work to compile a list of recommendations discussed during the year. At the next meeting the task force will review the recommendations and approve a final list for consideration in the Master Plan. There are also plans to pursue options for the Oak Grove/15th Street crossing.

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•**Walker Art Center Community Participation** – Gary Gliem

The Board supported the grilling license for the Walker. Gary and John (Janine alternate) will be attending meetings.

Adjourned 8:20 p.m.