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Citizens for a Loring Park Community

Land Use Committee

Monday, June 27th, 2005

6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

@ CLPC Offices/Loring Park Office Bldg.
430 Oak Grove St.; Room #207 612-874-9002

I. 6:30-6:45 pm Call to Order--Agenda Approval, Introductions, Approve Minutes & Announcements Bob Copeland, CLPC Land Use Committee Chair

Motion by the chair to approve the agenda.

Motion passed.

Motion by Richard Anderson, seconded by John van Heel to approve the minutes from May 23rd, 2005.

Motion passed.

Bob led introductions of about 25 persons in attendance. There were eventually about 30 persons at the meeting.

Announcements:

- In June 20th Skyway News there is an article about the Berger Fountain renovation. Robert Cook, architect, is present and will answer questions after the meeting. There is a meeting at 5 pm at the Loring Park Building on June 29th.
- Jana passed out information about HourCar, now in business.
- There will be a mayoral candidate forum at the Woman's Club on August 24th. Flyers are on the back table and will be posted on the CLPC Web site.

II. 6:45-7:20 pm Eitel Hospital Development Review--BKV, Village Green and Magellan Group representatives, and members of the SRF team; Katie Hatt & Robert Cook, co-chairs, Eitel Hospital Task Force

The local architects presented a series of drawings for the two-block project—one block at the current historic hospital site on 14th Street and Willow Street, and an east block that is currently a surface parking lot. The project entails (1) the renovation of the historic hospital and conversion to loft units, and new construction on (2) Grant Street between Willow and Spruce Place (tearing down the new part of the hospital) and (3) 14th Street between Spruce Place and LaSalle Avenue.

There will be an open plaza between (1) and (2), including a pedestrian connection between Willow and Spruce Place. The two buildings will be connected with a second floor pedestrian bridge. There is space for a restaurant facing Loring Park in (2). The setbacks for the buildings have been established to blend with existing setbacks in the area, especially of the historic hospital building. Access for underground parking comes off of 14th Street.

The building on the east block (3) has the larger footprint and has the townhouse units that front on 14th Street. Two spaces are dedicated for retail, one on the corner of LaSalle, the other on Spruce Place. The site is served by a ramp behind the building accessed from Spruce Place that will include architectural details that mirror the rest of the buildings. A somewhat oval 39-story tower rises behind the townhouses that will be point toward the park. The service entrance will be off LaSalle with some retail parking.

Other items discussed included the materials that might be used (to mirror materials used in other neighborhood buildings) and linking the styling of the three buildings to each other and to other structures in the neighborhood. Building materials will include brick, synthetic stone, colored pre-cast, composite

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cement board siding, metal, and glass. The plans to pedestrianize Spruce Place are being dropped. Of the 324 for-sale parking spaces for (3), about 10 would be for guest parking--the standard width for parking spaces in 8.5 feet wide and 8 feet for compact spaces. . Spaces in excess of one per unit would be offered to homeowners and if unsold, they could be offered to local residents. There could be a similar plan for the retail parking spaces in (3).

There were several questions about the parking arrangements, elevators, townhouses, traffic flow within the buildings, setbacks (they will probably request setback variances to better match current setbacks in the community).

The draft traffic demand management study from an independent consultant was distributed—it will be presented to the city, revised, and finalized. The consultant selected six intersections of higher traffic volume (the study excluded Spruce Place, based on city input) around the development and collected traffic information from those sites, comparing them against industry standards of service, and against typical growth in the area if the project was not built. Then they assessed the likely impact of either (1) & (2) or all three buildings.

There were questions about why Spruce Place was not included—it is a low volume street and all of the other intersections “catch” the traffic that would ultimately get to Spruce Place. The study was based on a worst-case scenario of 300 living units (according to project architects, 198 rental units are proposed on the front block and 264 for-sale units are proposed on the back lot).

There is an increase in traffic from current conditions, but it does not stress the existing system.

A question addressed an earlier study by the city of traffic around the park and how to get people across the street, possibly by using traffic calming. This is probably more of a question for the developers. There was also a question about using LaSalle vs. 14th for a driveway that may require the developer to reduce the use of parking spaces in (3).

The developer is figuring \$1.60 to \$1.80 per square foot per apartment; up to \$1,000,000 for the penthouse condo. Data on the affordable units will be available at the next meeting. There will be interior bike hooks or bike rooms in the buildings and bike racks outside for the building and retail.

They visualized a nice coffee shop and nice restaurant. A recent problem with the restaurant is the zoning of OR-3 which does not allow for a liquor license. They found that there are only two ways to get beer and wine—direct request to the state legislature or to rezone that part of the block to commercial. They want to hear from the community what would be acceptable. No one voiced opposition to the idea of further pursuing a liquor license.

The next task force meeting is 5:30 pm, Wednesday, July 6, 2005.

IV. 7:20--8:30 pm. Reports

- **Small Area Task Force** – Scott Mayer and Mike Marn

- Responses to **Request for Proposals** – Mike Marn

- The request went out on May 17th, proposals were due June 22nd at 5 PM. They received two collaborative proposals and will review the proposals before making them public. They hoped to get more but felt that they had asked for a lot in the RFP.

- **Timeline** and Next Steps

- The review group will come together and review the two proposals this week and they will be interviewing each proposer shortly after. They will not have the regular meeting on the first Monday in July since so many on the task force are also on the selection committee. They will meet the first Monday in August and that meeting will include the consultant. They will use a specific evaluation tool to review the proposals.

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In response to a question about funding, Scott said that all funding was not yet secured, and Jana added that funding will be the priority in the next month. Katie mentioned that the Met Council has Livability Demonstration grants specifically for planning—this may require meeting with CPED. The estimated cost is \$60,000 to \$80,000 and the group has \$25,000 in NRP money in place now. The proposals were required to submit a plan for phased funding just in case all funds could not be raised.

- **Moratorium Waiver Process – Bob Copeland**

Bob said that anything that is viewed by City Planning to violate the integrity of the small area plan or require variances to existing zoning would require a waiver. Bob suggested that any waivers should go directly to the Zoning and Planning Committee and several committee members supported him. CLPC would promote the public hearing for the waiver request. The goal is to minimize workload on staff and committee members. Other committee members argued that to fail to at least listen to waiver proposals would not be helpful for the neighborhood's image and seems inconsistent with the committee's role to provide feedback to Zoning and Planning.

- **NRP Commercial Corridor Funding - Jana Metge**

Deferred from the last meeting, a draft public funding tool for Housing Initiatives on Commercial Corridors was created by the NRP. Jana reviewed specifics of the plan, including allowable costs and timelines, and distributed a copy. She requested that any suggestions be sent to her ASAP. We may need to check on whether the Nicollet Corridor qualifies. Also, what is the incentive to the developer?

- **Nicollet Avenue Task Force Report/Partnership with Stevens Square - John van Heel & Robert Cook**

There is continuing work on Nicollet Avenue. The city is going through a process to make city “meter farm” property available for sale and a deadline of this summer. The next step would be to find a development partner for the site. They are now holding joint meetings to alternate between the two neighborhoods (Loring Park and Stevens Square) on the third Monday of the month at 6 PM (see the Web site). Stevens Square has ongoing relationships with some of the property owners in the area. Also, MnDOT will begin work on the stretch of I-94 through the tunnel and this may open possibilities for new bridges and landscaping. Members emphasized the importance of raising the “meter farm” issue with Lisa Goodman's office.

- **Downtown Bus Fare Zone Expansion - John van Heel**

Discussions continue on expanding the downtown zone on a trial basis. John will get the group of partners together to meet with an MTC specialist to discuss strategy.

- **Lunds Request to Eliminate Trees from the Parking Lot – Jan Sandberg**

According to Skyway News, Lunds is proposing to drop the tree island requirements for the parking lot in lieu of additional green space on the roof. There is concern on the part of some members about the change to the appearance from the street. Alternatively, members understand that changes occur during the course of a project. There were also concerns that we had no communication from our city officials on this issue or on a recent issue with Salsa a la Salsa. The committee asked that individuals contact the city and request retaining the tree islands—landscaping on the roof is not a trade-off for landscaping at the street level. The committee also requested the CLPC board research this issue and pursue further action.

Adjourned 9:00 pm.