

August 15, 2017

RDLU Meeting Notes

Meeting held at WSCO Office, 209 Page Street W

Meeting started at 6:35 p.m.

Attendees: Monica Bravo (staff), Gjerry Berquist, Robert Ferguson, Derek Johnson, Hoka Miller, Carol Neumann, Karen Reid, and Carol Swenson. Guests: Lucy Thompson (PED), Marcell Walker and Phil Barnes (both from MNDot), and John Henderson (rental property owner).

Introductions were made.

Hoka identified a possible 9 items on the agenda and allocated 10 minutes for each item, to keep the meeting on schedule.

1. Robert Street Construction: Marcell Walker presented information on the planned Robert Street reconstruction/repaving from 94 to Annapolis. The construction is planned for summer of 2020. They will be addressing four bridges that pass over the road and ADA compliance/accessibility. They are still in drafting stage of the project documents. There will be public meetings on the project planning progresses. Carol Neumann strongly promoted the viaduct repair: the art (refurbished? moved?) and weeding. There is a certain % of budget that can be targeted to art. However there is no money for on-going maintenance of any art introduced. WSCO will be part of a citizen's advisory committee for the project.
2. Smith Avenue / High Bridge Closure: Marcell Walker also provided material and information about the pending closure of the High Bridge and its impacts on traffic. MNDot has prepared an alternative route. There will be public meetings about the closure on the 16th (Capital View Café) and 22rd (Bad Weather Brewery). The bridge project will start September 5, 2017 and will last until December of 2018.
3. John Henderson: Owner of 184 E. Baker and 652-654 Oakdale: He is applying to the City to participate in their Rental Rehab program. (The City of Saint Paul Rental Rehabilitation Loan Program is designed to provide moderate rehabilitation assistance to eligible, responsible landlords of occupied single-family, duplex, triplex, or fourplex units desiring to make property improvements that provide safe, decent, and healthy rental units in the City of Saint Paul. Because investment pressures are coming into play to upgrade these units into market rate units with the risk of displacing current residents, this Program would help preserve affordable rental housing options for City of Saint Paul low income residents. In addition, the program could result in the alleviation of the work load for the City of Saint Paul Department of Safety and Inspection (DSI) inspectors, thereby reducing annual inspection fees for landlords.) He plans to use the funds to replace/repair the roofs on both properties. Committee members moved and seconded to support his application. A letter will be sent to the City.
4. Committee Updates:
 - a. Development Scorecard: In partnership with the University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA), WSCO is hosting a three-part series in September. These are

- deep-dive workshops that will produce the West Side Development Scorecard. This Scorecard will be used by residents to evaluate every new development project, big or small, happening on the West Side. The Score on each project will determine whether West Siders will offer a supportive welcome or if we will use every action at our disposal to stop development that does not have the agreed-upon community benefits.
- b. Parque Castillo: There refurbishing/redesign will be delayed until 2018. Committee members wondered why? Road construction did not interfere with ballfield rehab at the Wellstone Center. The committee asked Monica to address a letter to Parks Department to indicate our extreme displeasure and ask them why public investment within the West Side neighborhood is again put off.
 - c. 17 Hall Lane: A neighbor is appealing the planning commission's approval for the variance required to build a house on Hall Lane. A neighbor will be appealing the ruling at the Council meeting. WSCO will resend its letter.
 - d. Railroad derailment. Apparently several railroad cars left the tracks between near Plato. No cars tipped but they were carrying Chlorine. Committee members were concerned that the public did not know. The railroad is governed by federal government. WSCO will write to our Senators and Rick Larkin, City of St. Paul's Director of Emergency Management. We were wondering if Mr. Larkin was notified.
 - e. Lilydale: The joint powers agreement among the City and the cities of West St. Paul and Mendota Heights regarding the Erosion Stabilization of Cherokee Heights Upper Ravine has been approved. There was no West Side community input.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m. Compliments to Chairperson Hokan Miller for keeping meeting on track and on time.