

**University District Zoning and Planning Regulatory Review  
Task Force Meeting #5**

Tuesday, October 28, 2008  
12 Morrill Hall  
100 Church St SE  
8:00 AM – 9:30 AM

**MEETING NOTES**

Task force participants present: Florence Littman, Skott Johnson, Mary Miller, Merrie Benasutti, Tim Harmsen, Rachel Gartner, Bill Dane, Diane Hofstede, Ron Lischeid, John Klohs, Brandon Springer

Others present: Peg Wolff, Haila Maze, Jessica Thesing, Joe Bernard, Robb Clarksen

**Welcome and Introductions**

- Task force members and other attendees introduced themselves

**Design and Development Review**

- Presented matrix of proposed strategies to improve process; the following comments were made:
- Conservation of existing housing, even if it is run down, can be desirable for a neighborhood; lose irreplaceable character when old homes torn down, even if new development is attractive
- Need to ensure tenants get notification of hearings when they are to be displaced by redevelopment; related concern that it can be difficult to accurately identify and contact all tenants (some neighborhoods have tried); do we need to do a better job about collecting this information?
- Some policies in city or neighborhood plans are so vaguely worded that they can be interpreted in multiple ways; need to be as clear as possible in statements
- Need direction specifically on transitions between uses, such as between high density and single family areas (including where there is little space to do much)
- Properties in Como which are bad for the neighborhood and discourage people from living near them, “big ugly boxes”: 1004 18<sup>th</sup> Ave SE, 1094 17<sup>th</sup> Ave SE, 1015 15<sup>th</sup> Ave SE, 1019 15<sup>th</sup> Ave SE, 2409 Cole Ave SE
- Need more coordination between permits and zoning at the City; permits are sometimes issued even though zoning doesn’t allow the use (getting better); example of allowing a stove on the second floor of a residence
- Have limited control over electrical permitting as it is done through state, instituted about 2 years ago
- Do a better job of tracking nonconforming rights and determining when these lapse; can be very challenging to get this right, requires a lot of research
- Identify areas of stability and areas of change within the neighborhood, to direct where new development and growth should go

- Need more input from property owners on what to do
- City can regulate process, but not control market; however U of M can control access to market through the information on housing it provides to students; increased requirements of landlords through this screening process can motivate them to do the right thing
- Address parking issues both in terms of direct and cumulative effects
- What can be done to encourage faculty and staff living in the area? Would have calming effect on surrounding student population, perhaps
- Concern with family homestead issue: how can we regulate? In general, need to encourage parents to help students make good housing choices

### **Enforcement**

- Presented matrix of proposed strategies to improve process; the following comments were made:
- Landlords can respond to citations from inspections by obeying the letter of the law, but not the spirit – i.e. only doing the bare minimum, and waiting until they are cited/fined before taking any action (a business model that works for them)
- Market will do some good against bad landlords, as students appear increasingly unwilling to put up with housing in bad condition
- Higher fines could have an impact, but could penalize decent as well as bad landlords – particularly good ones who have just acquired a property and don't quite know the current conditions
- Consider instituting required point-of-sale inspections; some areas considering making seller repair properties before selling, but that may make it infeasible for some of them to sell
- Consider policies where people lose tax advantages if they have too many violations?
- Circulating and using “party pamphlet” to inform students about impacts of problem parties and consequences
- Pilot U of M community outreach program in Como to fund student liaisons (currently 20 of them) living in key locations; facilitate communications between students, neighborhood, and U of M; if successful may continue/expand program
- Students should be penalized directly for misbehavior related to parties
- Environmental management department at the City monitors and enforces noise penalties; however little equipment and staffing is available to do so
- Landlords can craft their own contracts with tenants to penalize anyone convicted of violating regulations/laws
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Precinct is not a high priority for police, compared with other places in the city; need to find ways to make it more of a priority
- St Paul has good examples of creative policing to discourage house parties, which could be implemented here
- How do we identify resources to fund increased policing or inspections? Ideas include: higher rental license fees, higher liquor store fees, paying extra fees per student to allow for higher occupancy limits

- Since noise is not effectively regulated, could there be a more common sense approach to this – for example, audible from a certain distance – rather than using noise monitor to record a certain level of noise over time?
- CM Hofstede has recently introduced noise ordinance language which will be going to PS&RS – deals with business-related noise complaints
- Should inspect owner occupied properties too (including family homestead) to ensure fairness in enforcement

### **Next Steps**

- Next meeting tentatively rescheduled to Wednesday, November 12, same time and place – moved from November 11, which is Veterans' Day
- Focus of next meeting will be continuation of design/development review and enforcement topics
- Rezoning meeting to be scheduled separately