

**Linden Hills Small Area Plan Steering Committee #2.**

**February 21, 2013, 6:30 PM St. John's Episcopal Church Community Room**

**Attendees:** Christy Prediger, Grant Hawthorn, Jean Johnson, Dave Luger, Ann Voda, Ken Stone, Eric Hanson, Jim Scott, Aaron Tag, Larry Lavercombe, Sara Jaehne, Pat Smith, Gretchen Johns, Brian Schafer, Dan Cornejo, Chuck Liddy, Bob Kost, Roger Cummings, Caroline Kent.

**Discussions:**

1. Committee members were asked to provide insight and comments on the 1997 Linden Hills Design Framework Plan:

- 1997 Plan wasn't adopted, this was primarily because it wasn't intended to serve as an official SAP (Small Area Plan) and as such didn't include a future land use plan or some of the other detailed components. The planning process was primarily led by residents /LHiNC members not Linden Hills Business Association members and many business owners didn't feel it adequately addresses their needs/concerns.
- Keep (and update) the design guidelines. They should deal with building siting and setbacks, moderate density, transition between new and existing development.
- Need to define terms such as "moderate density", etc. so everyone is on the same page also include better illustrations and current examples from Linden Hills, SW Minneapolis and other areas.
- Use visuals to help people visualize density, not just talk about numbers like "x units per acre."
- Design guidelines can't be too specific on things like building materials, style, color, etc. They should focus on clarifying and illustrating the zoning code and address building placement, parking placement, building massing, articulation and height. Design guidelines can help developers and their designers to better understand the neighborhood's design preferences for scale, contextual and complimentary design, but the guidelines can't control development the way zoning does. They can influence, but not control.
- Also need to be careful not to stifle creativity and innovation.
- The plan and guidelines need to speak to connectivity, lighting, bump-outs (as many as possible) to make the area more walkable.
- The new plan should address new and different future for the "Boulevard Ave Woods." Identify new uses; the trees are old and need thinning out.
- Identifying and addressing potential areas for future redevelopment is important. Previous 1997 design concepts are out of date with City's Comprehensive Plan and although these sites are still strong possibilities, other sites not considered in 1997 have emerged with real redevelopment proposals such as along France Avenue north of 46th.

- Current stakeholder interviews are revealing that more could be done to reinforce the interplay between land use and markets, movement and circulation, built form, and the public realm of sidewalks and other open areas (these items were the organizing elements of the 1997 Framework).
- Consultants mentioned that there are a number of Linden Hills buildings not on the Minneapolis list of historic structures. Many of them could take advantage of historic tax credits that could be worth up to 40% of redevelopment costs. This could help prevent wholesale demolition of important, older buildings while allowing them to adapt to changing needs and opportunities.  
It was pointed out that while this is a good strategy it's also important to acknowledge that providing parking can be tough (for developers and for compliance with City codes). Developers mostly want large sites and big buildings (partially to handle the parking requirements).
- Issues related to convenient parking, parking supply and management have been discussed by the business community and LHiNC for many years. It may be worth considering resident-only parking permits in some areas, revisiting ideas for shared parking outlined in the 1997 plan as well as educating / informing people on the realities (if there is no parking spot in commercial area, then people go to nearby residential areas) and options for structures or redesigned surface parking lots.  
Reopening the alley access to Xerxes from the rear building parking lots between 43<sup>rd</sup> and Sheridan was also mentioned as a helpful improvement to circulation within the area. The city's project manager mentioned that the Planning and Public Works departments were looking into this.
- It was noted that in the 43<sup>rd</sup> and Upton area, commercial property owners are flexible with parking in their lots, recognizing that most shoppers patronize several places. They realize that being flexible with their parking lots is good for the business district generally.

## **2. Creative CityMaking Update**

- Artists, Roger Cummings and Caroline Kent and Samuel Ero-Phillips are working with students at South West High School to engage them in the neighborhood planning process through an artist-in-residence program and other activities. This was well received and committee members encouraged them to include students in performing arts as well as the visual arts programs at the school.
- They are also exploring ways to get out into the neighborhood to conduct one-on-one or small scale conversations with residents and visitors using venues such as the Co-op, Turtle Bread and France 44 Liquors.
- Additional updates on their process and activities will be provided at future Steering Committee meetings.

### **3. Online Survey Update**

- Consultants reported that over 230 responses have been logged to date and excerpts were displayed and briefly discussed.
- LHiNC has also created and distributed paper copies of the survey as well as posters (being displayed at area businesses) announcing the February 28<sup>th</sup> workshop.

### **4. Feb. 28 Issues, Opportunities and Visioning Workshop**

- Consultants explained that the evening would be organized into two sessions, one starting at 4:30 and the second starting at 6:00. The key for the workshop is to have “face-to-face” interaction with participants.
- The session will be organized into 2 primary components: a brief orientation/presentation and small-group discussions. The orientation will explain SAP (Small Area Plan) purpose (including shaping long-term change), process along with a primer on the most prevalent topics, issues and ideas expressed in the on-line survey to serve as a starting point for discussions. Part of the orientation will address “change” and what it means for small area planning, i.e. the external forces of change (larger marketplace) and the internal forces (changing demographics in Linden Hills). There would be 6 professionals (consultant team plus Brian Shafer) serving as facilitators at tables for up to 10 participants. If crowds are much larger than 60 or so per session, a few more tables will be set and members of the Steering Committee will need to serve as facilitators. If considerably more people show up, we may have to do something a little different such as ask late comers to fill out paper surveys before sitting down at tables. Handouts, including the survey will be provided. It was also suggested that the lobby area of the Park building could be used for workshop overflow. Committee members suggested that participants be presented with more detailed assumptions, or opinions and ideas collected to date. Rather than starting from the blank survey. In this way, participants are doing more editing and advancing the discussions in greater detail rather than starting from scratch. Consultants and City project manager will cover this in the initial orientation. If participation is modest, the small groups will provide reports back to the whole prior to closing out each of the two sessions.
- It was pointed out that the Business Association is still unclear and somewhat uninformed as to the SAP project. Many are unaware that the SAP process has started, and others don’t know what a SAP is. We need to make a special effort to reach out to them, to invite them. The City’s project manager indicated that he will be attending the next LHBA meeting to advise them on what is going on and how important it is for them to get involved.

### **5. SAP Task 1 Progress Update**

- Consultants discussed their progress in developing a market overview work, zoning code review, bike lane and circulation issue analysis, historic property reviews and other

background analyses. Draft info-graphics addressing relevant aspects of residential living, movement systems and business-service characteristics were presented. These will continue to be refined and posted on the project web site, displayed at upcoming community meetings, etc.

**6.** The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:20 PM