

## **Minutes Lot A Update Meeting 9/19/19**

### **Attendees:**

Jamie Schumacher, WBBA  
Dan Prozinski, resident  
Amano Dube, Brian Coyle  
Emily Stern, City of Minneapolis  
Jameson, HUB  
Dave Alderson, C-R NRP  
Russom Solomon, Red Sea  
Carla, Minneapolis PD  
KJ Starr, WBBA

### **Cedar-Riverside Partnership subgroup**

Dave and Jamie gave an update from the C-R Partnership subgroup on Lot A. They have had two meetings with the group which includes the Community Advisory Council, Parks Board, YWCA, Augsburg, Fairview, Pillsbury

The morning of 9/19/19 they met for 2 hours reviewing the proposed RFP for the Lot A development. The group agreed on the following recommendations:

- 1) Combined utilization of space from the city and county so the community space is also usable for Brian Coyle and so there is more green space. This would also help to avoid interruption of services.
- 2) Incorporation of these agreements prior to work done on Lot A. There is a concern to get any agreements regarding the space and development in writing so they are enforceable.
- 3) Wayfinding, signage
- 4) Anti-displacement for existing businesses
- 5) Get community input on RFP.
- 6) Advocate for parking mitigation both during construction in and in the final project
- 7) Advocate for more people at the table as RFP is finalized. For example, the mother's group again asked to be included. In addition, youth representation is needed. The subgroup is currently not representative of the community.

### **Community Input So Far**

Dave noted that Yusuf Arab had said that this process needs to include diversity of opinions and that there is focus on inclusiveness and transparency.

Jamie said that there is a mixed response from residents but that WBBA is not hearing any support from the business community. Warsame's office had said that 73 businesses supported the idea at the forum held this summer but there is no evidence that these were actually neighborhood businesses. Jamie requested data from the city showing that these businesses were actually neighborhood businesses. She also asked for a community outreach event to seek actual local business input.

Russom expressed concern that at the forum people self-identified as business owners but they were not asked to identify their business location so there is no guarantee that these were neighborhood businesses. He noted that reaching out to the general Somali business community for feedback is not an honest representation regarding support for the idea. Dave said that CM Warsame's aides Yusra and Ryan admitted that they reached out generally to the Somali community rather than the neighborhood.

### **Planned Forum to be Sponsored by WBBA and NRP**

A forum has been planned for Oct 17, 5-7 at Brian Coyle (this has been rescheduled to Nov 21 since this meeting took place)

Emily suggested we learn from what didn't work at the forum and learn how to conduct these types of events properly to get community feedback. Jamie said that a feedback session needs to take place for community members and would like to see an open process rather than a review of a specific proposal. She would like to see a general meeting about neighborhood development, including spots like Dania Hall. Russom disagreed and thought a very specific meeting about this proposal is needed. A discussion followed and it was agreed that the conversation should be specific to this development proposal at Lot A.

Jamie said she would reach out to Wilder Foundation or the University of MN Evaluation Research to demonstrate that we will be using a reliable third party. She needs to see how much WBBA could afford to pay for that work. Dave said NRP money would be available also.

Dave commented that they may need help from outside entities/individuals to prevent passions from running to hot. In addition, KJ suggested calling in the League of Women Voters to help verify whether the attendees have a neighborhood business or are residents. That organization is experienced doing that in this community after the NRP elections last year. Jamie asked whether that would push out homeless residents that are still part of this community. KJ suggested we could vote/meet by groups and if there is a contingent of stakeholders without homes they could vote in a group for that.

Carla said that there should also be "suggested guidelines" for conduct posted in the needed languages around the gym in multiple locations. She also noted she is going on Medical leave Sept 30 so she cannot attend. She noted the capacity of the gym is 415. She also wanted to make sure the timing is considerate of prayer time. Amano said that space is very tight so there is not a lot of room other than the locker rooms for people to pray. However, the 5-7:00/7:30 is a good time so that people are not expecting to pray.

Listening stations and focus groups were discussed as well as use of a moderator. This forum can provide the community engagement that is called for the C-R Partnership subgroup discussions.

Emily said that it is the city's standard to have proposers and developers meet with the community and neighborhood organizations. She said that developers take community input seriously because they have to go through all those layers of review and the neighbors' voices in these forums matter. She noted that the RFP is actually the start of a multi-year process to even get to the start of construction. She said that it is a 1 year to 1.5 year process and that there will be no sale of city land until the developer has all the approvals needed in the process.

Dan asked whether the RFP has been finalized. Jamie said the C-R Partnership subgroup is to inform the development of the RFP plus include all the work WBBA has already done regarding Lot A. Emily said that the city is working on zoning currently and that the heart of the proposal is for an African Village

but there are a lot of specifics in flux right now. Jamie said that the Africa Village idea seemed to have come out of nowhere and disregarded all the other work that has been done regarding Lot A previously. She noted that retail and storefronts do activate the space.

Russom expressed concern specifically about the African Mall concept. He said that a mall is very concentrated and there is a big difference on impact if its 10 stores or 40 stores. He noted that traffic is already crazy in this area and that the planners seem to have no idea how this will impact the neighborhood. He is also concerned about replacing the lost parking which is in the WBBA vision for Lot A. He is concerned that the only answer he gets from the city in this regard is “we will try.” He said that in his experience, “we will try” means it does not happen and that the community has been “cheated” before. Emily responded that the city did expand parking in the current proposal in response to these concerns. Russom also asked what the planning department vs Warsame is doing in regards to this proposal. He is concerned that Warsame has his own agenda and the city just does what he says and so if Warsame does not listen to the community, no one does. Emily responded that he is only 1 of many councilmembers but Russom answered that he has heard that councilmembers do not oppose what a councilperson wants to do in their own ward. Russom expressed concern that, like listening (or not) to the community, Warsame can choose to listen (or not) to the partnership.

Jamie said that the partnership informs Mpls CPED RFP process and that the group will be notified if Warsame cuts anything from the RFP. Emily said that her understanding is that Warsame will support recommendations to the RFP from the partnership.

Dan asked whether, in weighing proposals, there are areas of the RFP that “must be met” vs “may be met.” He wanted to know if the African Mall is a “must be met” element. He said that community should be focused on getting items into the “must be met” category. Russom said the mothers were concerned about the bus stop on 4<sup>th</sup> Street. Jamie said the youth space is a requirement.

### **Parking**

Jamie noted that the community needs to consider that eliminating or shrinking surface parking lots is consistent with both the Mpls 2040 plan and the small area plan. She noted that the city is focused generally on reduction of single person fossil fuel vehicles and less car traffic. The WBBA needs to help businesses rely less on car traffic and more on transit oriented solutions. She said the city is never going to be champion for saving parking spaces. However, they will try to help save businesses but businesses need to be willing to adapt.

Jameson noted that he has not heard any discussion about improvement for pedestrians.

Dave said this mornings meeting included discussions of transit-oriented development and non-motorized trail development.

Dan commented that modal parking which is a design that allows for use of space for parking but then that space can easily be transitioned into a use other than parking (such as retail) as parking needs decrease.

KJ noted that the neighborhood was cleaved apart by freeways and that the Reconnecting Community project should be considered here – what if a land bridge connected the neighborhood to downtown again and that was part of this project?

Dave said even a ramp up from the trench in this location could help.

Emily said there was a study done on the market based on existing successful markets. She said any proposal must include renderings of the mall and housing and other elements so that everyone can visualize what is being proposed. She noted that while she supports moving away from car-dependent development, developers can't get financing unless they include parking. Jameson said that it appears to be getting easier to finance with less and less parking because the developments he see all have less parking.

**To Dos**

Jamie will be reaching out to the youth to get them a seat at the table including Mukhtar and Sisco.

Jamie will reach out to Wilder/ U of M to get estimate of independently conducted forum.

David will reach out to the League of Women Voters.