

Minutes (Approved)
Community Development Committee
April 10, 2018

Attending: Dan Handeen (Acting Chair), Alexis Troschinetz, Sheldon Mains, Jim Dowds, Tim Ontko, Daniel Lundquist, Geoffrey Abbott, Jim Hasnik, Deb Malkovich, Robin Garwood (Council Member Gordon's Office), Scott Shaffer (Seward Redesign), Doug Wise (SNG Housing Coordinator).

The agenda was approved with the addition of a request from the Eagles for a new sign. The February 13, 2017 Community Development Committee minutes were approved.

Aurora Charter School Expansion

Jim Dowds said the Aurora Charter School currently occupies 80% of the building located at 2101 East 26th Street. They would like to expand into the last 20% of the space in the building, which will come available on January 1, 2019. The expansion requires an expansion of a non-conforming use, which they are requesting from the City of Minneapolis.

The school has been in existence for 14 years and primarily serves Latino children grades K-8. They also offer preschool, which they would like to expand. The school currently has 4,205 students and is looking to expand up to 5,000 students. Students primarily come from south Minneapolis.

State legislation for Charter Schools prohibits them from owning real estate and requires them to pay real estate taxes.

Motion: The Seward Neighborhood Group (SNG) recommends approval of an expansion of a non-conforming use allowing Aurora Charter School to occupy 100% of the space in the building located at 2101 East 26th Street. Geoffrey Abbott moved and Sheldon Mains seconded. Motion passed. Alexis Troschinetz abstained because she was not present for most of the discussion.

Eagles Sign Request

Deb Malkovich with the Fraternal Order of Eagles – Post 34 handed out photos of a proposed new sign for the Eagles building at 2507 East 25th Street. The sign would be a pole mounted sign on the corner of 25th Street and 25th Avenue. It would be a two sided sign facing east and west. It will be electrically lit with the bottom part of the sign changing to show current specials.

Deb said that pole signs are not allowed in Minneapolis, so they are requesting a variance from the city to construct the sign. The purpose of the sign would be to increase the visibility of the Eagles. She said that many people don't know they are there. It will hopefully be visible from 26th Avenue.

It was pointed out that the nearest residences are only one-half block to the north. However, the sign would not be facing that direction.

Motion: The Seward Neighborhood Group (SNG) supports a variance to allow the Eagles to construct a pole sign at 2507 East 25th Street, provided the sign only faces directly east and west. Sheldon Mains moved and Geoffrey Abbott seconded. Motion passed. Robin Garwood abstained.

Discussion of Previous Action Requiring Energy Audits for SNG Loans

Doug Wise explained that at the January 2018 meeting, the board approved a recommendation from the CDC requiring applicants for SNG Home Improvement Loans to obtain a Home Energy Audit if they had not received one within the last five years. Doug said some issues have come up with implementation of the requirement. In particular, the current popularity of the audits has resulted in long wait times for an audit, which creates problems for people needing to move ahead with their project. Currently, audits are scheduled out 2-3 months for daytime audits; evening and weekend audits are booked through August.

Jim Hasnik from CEE was at the meeting and said when people apply for the loans they have all their contractor bids and they often need to move ahead with their projects right away. Jim said that currently income qualified people are able to get free energy audits and the city is expanding the program to provide free audits to everyone in the Seward neighborhood. There will also be interest free loans available for insulation and weather sealing work. Jim said this will be a more powerful incentive for people to have audits done.

Alexis Troschinetz said that she had spoken to Stacy Boots Camp with CEE and Stacy said she could keep an eye out for cancellations so Seward residents could get their audits done sooner. Doug Wise suggested SNG change its previous action to require applicants to schedule an energy audit when they apply for a loan, but not require that the audit be completed.

Jim Hasnik said that CEE is offering two options for the administrative fee to Seward for next year, which starts September 1st. Because they are taking over most of the loan programs from the Greater Metropolitan Housing Corporation (GMHC), they are offering a fee structure similar to GMHC's, which is \$2,500 per year plus a 10% origination fee on all loans. He said that they are offering Seward the option of staying with their current flat fee of \$5,000 per year or switching to this new fee. He said that under the new fee we would have paid \$6,716.92 for 2016 and \$7,315.70 for 2017. He suggested that we stay with the current flat fee.

Jim said that since a contract amendment will be necessary for the energy audit requirement, we should also go ahead and roll the current program income into the program (\$18,318 as of the end of February).

Motion: The Seward Neighborhood Group (SNG) approves the following actions regarding its NRP contract with the Center for Energy and Environment (CEE):

- **Change SNG's home improvement program guidelines to require applicants to schedule a home energy audit if one has not been done within the last five years;**
- **Continue with the current loan administration fee of \$5,000 per year; and,**
- **Reallocate the program income available at the time of the CEE contract amendment to the SNG housing loan program, with \$5,000 for CEE program administration and the remainder allocated to the Revolving Loan Fund.**

Sheldon Mains moved and Alexis Troschinetz seconded. Motion passed. Robin Garwood abstained.

Report from Robin Garwood, Council Member Gordon's Office

Robin said that Cam Gordon and a couple of other council members are drafting a resolution directing the city to create a plan to reach 100% renewable electricity by 2030 or sooner, including 25% of the electricity generated from within the city limits, as proposed by the Minneapolis youth (see February 13, 2018, CDC minutes).

Cam Gordon has scheduled a public meeting on the draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan for April 26th from 7:00-9:00 at St. Francis Cabrini in Prospect Park. The meeting will be focused on issues in this part of the city and Seward residents are encouraged to attend.

Robin said that Public Works is looking at constructing a permanent barrier at 29th Avenue and the Midtown Greenway this year. He said the barrier they are proposing would be a concrete slab at curb height allowing emergency vehicles to go over it. Committee members raised concerns about how to prevent cars from driving over it. Robin said that they have a source of funds that limits the ability to make design changes.

Robin asked if anyone had concerns about the increase in the assessment value of their home this year. He said that the average assessment increase for the Seward neighborhood this year is 18.8%. It was pointed out that Cam Gordon is trying to set up a public meeting with the City Assessor.

Report from Sheldon Mains, Seward Redesign

Sheldon said that the Riverside Avenue Bridge, and possibly, the 25th Avenue Bridge over I-94 have been deemed to need structural work in 2020 or 2021, and this might necessitate the replacement of the bridges. Sheldon passed out a drawing showing a proposed cross section for a new 25th Avenue bridge. The drawing showed a pedestrian way and bikeway separated from car traffic by planters. He said this plan requires the complete reconstruction of the bridge and shows a most desired solution. He said that questions have been raised about the survivability and maintenance of the plantings.

Redesign has scheduled community open house meetings on the Reconnecting Neighborhood Program on Saturday, April 28th, 11am-3pm at the Seward Tower West Community Room, 2515 South 9th Street; and on Tuesday, May 1st, 3pm-7pm, at the Augsburg University Oren Gateway Center, Room 100, 610 22nd Avenue South.

Sheldon said Redesign is continuing to work on Seward Commons, Phase III.

The meeting adjourned at 8:34.