

Minutes of the CIDNA Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, February 1, 2005 @ 6:00 p.m.
Jones-Harrison Residence
3700 Cedar Lake Avenue

Chad Larsen, President, called the meeting of the CIDNA board to order at 6:17 pm on Tuesday, February 1.

The following directors were in attendance: Kathy Hendricks, Chad Larsen, Bengt Sohlen, Bob Corrick, Ken Moritz, Ed Bell, Cherrie Zitzlsperger, Tom Buck, Steve Gove.

Guests: Rodgers Adams, Lake Point; Jeremy Stratton, SW Journal; Mike Elson; Allan Bernard, 3304 Hennepin; Linda Schutz, 1523 W. 22 St., East Isles; Lara Norkus-Crampton, 3149 James; Chris Boylan, Lake Calhoun Sailing School; Nicole Hagen, 2928 Dean Pkwy and 6818 Minnetonka Blvd., Margaret Moritz; Ruth Jones.

Excused Absences: Charlie Elowson, Judy Berge, David Shirley

Unexcused Absences: Carla Egerman

Tom Buck moved that the minutes from the January 4, 2005 meeting be approved. Bob Corrick seconded. All voted aye.

Lisa Goodman presented her city council report. Ewing Avenue leading toward the Cedar Lake Parkway will be milled and overlaid this summer. She has two appointments that she can make, and told interested parties to contact her office. The first appointment is to the Midtown Greenway Land Use Committee. The time commitment would probably be for about two meetings per month. The second appointment is to a committee that will study industrial land use in the city. The aim of the committee is to find ways to promote more industrial development in order to improve the tax base and generate more employment.

The next Lunch with Lisa will take place on the last Wednesday in February. Steven Bosacker will speak on the 311 pilot project. 311 call centers have already been implemented in cities including Baltimore and New York City. Citizens call in problems to 311 call centers, get a ticket number, and receive follow up notices on action taken to resolve the problem.

Lisa distributed two reports: the monthly Public Works update and a graph of Dwelling Unit building permits issued over the last 5 years.

Walker library proposals were due today. A subcommittee meeting will consider these proposals on February 23 at 4 pm.

She mentioned that she would not be able to attend the CIDNA meeting March 1st because this coincided with DFL precinct caucuses.

Board members posed questions to her concerning development in the neighborhood. Upwards of thirty projects have been proposed in the Lake St. and Lake Calhoun area. Chad asked what the city can do about traffic. Lisa responded that the city's options are limited. The only effective way to control traffic is to get people out of cars. Tom suggested that our objectives might be more modest, for example, trying to time lights along Lake St. so that traffic moves more steadily with less congestion. Lisa said that light timing was within the purview of Public Works Transportation and Traffic group, currently directed by John Wertjes. Bob expressed that the neighborhood needed help on traffic because of the likely severity of problems after new developments are added to an already overloaded road system. Chad asked whether the city can take small steps such as prohibiting u-turns where they would impair traffic flow, adding signs requesting that drivers not block ingress and egress to driveways, and adding signs that prohibit left turns out of certain driveways, especially at rush hour. Lisa responded that these things can be done, warning also that in the case of u-turn prohibitions a problem has to be observed first before such a sign can be posted. Lisa emphasized again that the only effective solution to congestion is to get people out of cars and on to transit, indicating that the city council had no control over transit services and no control over the choice that people make individually about whether to use transit. She mentioned that other areas of the city have worse traffic problems than those seen between Lake Calhoun and France Avenue. Ed Bell suggested that discussions between the neighborhoods and the traffic department could lead to at least small suggestions to improve the situation. Chad brought up that the Ackerberg development would charge tenants separately for parking, which action would be likely to push tenants to seek parking on the street, and asked what we might do to have the parking space be included in rent with no additional charge. Lisa answered that, of course, neither the city nor a neighborhood can force a developer to do such a thing, since it is not required by law. The law in question is a state law. Ruth Jones asked whether the CIDNA board could nonetheless go on record as opposing paid parking in the project. Lara Norkus-Crampton asked if the city had any plan regarding traffic. Lisa responded that the city does have a comprehensive plan, but that within this context different groups have conflicting interests that the plan cannot automatically resolve.

The board thanked Lisa for her attendance and input.

Representing the Variance Committee, Chad reported that a variance requested by the Frey family on Cedar Lake Avenue had been withdrawn after opposition was expressed by neighbors.

Under new business, Chad asked those present to try to recruit new board members prior to the May 3, 2005 annual meeting. Also, the nominating committee needs members.

The balance of the meeting was devoted to a discussion of the Mathwig and Ackerberg projects on Lake Street. The Land Use and Development Committee has had extensive meetings with the developers, and the developers have made major efforts to accommodate the concerns of the neighborhood. Chad informed the board that the developers desire a preliminary statement from the board indicating whether the board

supports their projects so that they can move forward through the city approval process. One option would be to vote as a board tonight. Alternatively we can provide them first with a list of concerns, and then vote later on a resolution.

Through the course of meetings the developers have made adjustments to their plans. These adjustments include lowering the height of structures close to the Greenway, and optimizing ingress and egress from the properties. Tom offered the opinion that we should vote no opposition at this time, saying that although it was a good idea to give them a list of unresolved problems, we could go ahead and vote based on the overall concept. He expressed appreciation that they have worked hard to accommodate the neighborhood's concerns. He also said that approval of concept does not automatically constitute approval for every variance that they may request later. Steve asked if the height in the center of the building still exceeded that permitted in the underlying OR2 zoning. The answer was yes.

Bob mentioned that, as discussed previously, the plans require a conditional use permit under the shoreland overlay district. Kathy asked what the leading concerns of committee members were. Chad listed adequate parking, building height, shading of nearby properties, and traffic as the top problems. He mentioned that developers have moved height back from the Greenway. They have not provided as much parking as we would like, but have provided more than they are required to do. Kathy asked if the committee was comfortable enough with the current understandings to recommend a resolution. Chad answered that the committee would like to put committee concerns in writing, and similarly get developer commitments in writing.

Ruth Jones brought up a concern about shading of apartment buildings fronting Dean parkway and just to the northeast of the Ackerberg project. Chad promised that we would request a study of how shading would affect those properties. Bob noted that the developers need to achieve a certain density in order to make the project feasible, and that one way to achieve this without shading existing residences and the Greenway would have been to build a 12 story building near Lake Street, and expressed the opinion that most residents in the area would regard this as less appealing than the current proposal. Ed suggested that one way to get shading relief for the properties fronting Dean Parkway would be to cut the units at the end of the project closest to those properties from four stories to two stories. Ed also feels that the board should take a stand on parking, and include this in any resolution that we approve, even if there is no way that we can require compliance from the developers. He recommended that the developers put in place a written statement on how they will control traffic, safety and parking. Bob offered the opinion that, although the city cannot impose such requirements on a developer, the neighborhood could nonetheless negotiate formal agreements with a developer.

One of the neighbors expressed concern about the alley from Dean Parkway into the Ackerberg project. In winter the slope ices up and becomes very hazardous. Would it be possible to place a barrier on the alley that could be raised when navigation was dangerous?

Bob said that one possible disadvantage to approving a resolution now is that we have not yet thought through all the details, and would probably miss something. He recommended one more committee meeting with the developer and advocated approval of a resolution at the March 1, 2005 meeting. He expressed concern that if we pass a resolution now our intentions could be misinterpreted, and that we would then have no further effective input. Bengt advocated that we approve the concept now, and accompany it with a list of our concerns. Tom said that the developers will probably have to move forward regardless of what we say, and reiterated that they have been very accommodating. Ed expressed the opinion that among our concerns, the parking policy will probably not change, and that shading for the Dean Parkway apartments should be studied before the board votes on a resolution. Bob said that in these development situations the board has influence, even if it has no legal standing. The process is political, and given reasonable relations between the board and developers, accommodations and compromises can be reached. Chad emphasized that it is necessary to provide developers a list of our concerns in the next few days, regardless of whether we approve a resolution tonight or not. Bob suggested that the list should request a clearly stated parking policy, support traffic circulation acceptable to the neighborhood, including such issues as controlling U-turns. Chad offered that our list should include signs on exits from the property that prohibited left turns on to Lake Street. Ed listed again the neighborhood concerns as : parking, shading, signage for traffic control and safety, landscaping, and careful attention to height variances both on the bridge in the center of one property, and on staircases leading to the rooftop in one property.

A neighborhood resident expressed concern about the height variance. Tom expressed the opinion that in a situation where the developers had given significant accommodations, we needed also to give them some things. Also, the main part of the project that exceeded the height permitted by the zoning, was a bridge with a roadway underneath it, which on balance improved traffic and safety.

The projects have underground parking, and concern was expressed over pollution. Committee members expressed the opinion that city storm drain requirements are quite strict and would be adhered to in the project. Bob said that the committee would broadcast a draft of questions and concerns via e-mail in the next few days, and requested that board members review these and make comments.

An expression of appreciation by an area resident for the efforts of the committee and board to work cooperatively with developers ended the discussion of development projects.

The board agreed to shift the meeting time next month to 5:30 pm, to accommodate any members who might wish to attend precinct caucuses.

Tom moved that the meeting adjourn at 8:06 pm.