



**NORTH
LOOP**
NEIGHBORHOOD

**North Loop Neighborhood Association
Planning & Zoning Meeting Notes
August 23, 2017
6:00 P.M.**

Heritage Landing Community Room, 415 1st Street North

- I. August Planning & Zoning Meeting called to order at 6:09 P.M.
- II. Three of fifteen committee members were in attendance: **Jo Vos, Neil Reardon, and Mark Huting**. *Note: No quorum is achieved.*
- III. **A motion is made by Neil, seconded by Jo, and approved by the Committee (no quorum) to approve the June 2016 Meeting Minutes, amended as follows:**
 - a. Regarding the amount of water that flows over the Falls: rather than one square foot, the text should read cubic foot per second, which translates to a million gallons per second.
 - b. The St. Anthony Falls Alliance does not oppose, but rather *supports* the Park Board's position.
- IV. Blue Line Extension (Bottineau LRT) Design Update, Sophia Ginis, Metropolitan Council
 - a. The presentation update is meant to reaffirm the direction that the Committee gave to the project team about 9 months ago and to show the changes that reflect that direction.
 - b. Schedule update: heavy construction is now pushed back, less than a full year, but enough to move the opening to 2022 instead of 2021. Designers are currently working towards 90% drawings.
 - c. A tree-lined boulevard has now been added to the streetscape along 6th Avenue North. Sophia mentions that possibility of 4x6 street grates, to which Mark responds, talking about the City's open design option without grates and with perennial plantings and soil mitigation features, that still meet ADA requirements. He mentions that the NLNA is promoting this option because tree survival rates greatly diminish after 10 years with the grates and each grate costs \$1,500. The design update also features additional street lights.
 - d. The wall has been lowered and now features a larger opening. Fences will help to direct pedestrian traffic and aggregate will be placed underneath in the

restricted areas to identify spaces where people are not permitted. The blue line train crossing is at grade; Southwest is elevated at the bridge structure. There are also 3 large 8x8 Xcel boxes on site to power the train and the HERC. Boulders in that area won't work because of need for access to that equipment. The random pattern wall treatment (painted in "Intellectual Gray") will match those at other train interchanges, like at 5th and 5th. The black metal post fencing type was selected to match fences nearby.

- e. The existing trees will be removed, which presents a potential opportunity for additional trees in the future; however, the sightlines of the train operators cannot be blocked.
- f. The corner of 6th Avenue is intended for pedestrian use, much more so than how it is used currently. Neil suggests that the MetCouncil is extra intentional about designing this space and making it visible and enjoyable for those who will use it. Curb cuts are at a minimum radii; lot of traffic engineers gave lots of attention to this space because it is so unusual and has to accommodate pedestrian traffic and 300 garbage trucks daily. Neil mentions that the bike lane striping looks great, but the pedestrian area could be better.
- g. Other updates:
 - i. There is a gap in the protected bikeway along the light rail route between Van White and 7th. After multiple iterations, it has been determined that there will be a shared-use path along Olson that will then connect to 7th into downtown.
 - ii. The 94 bridge will have an art installation; the larger, less detailed features will be on the outside for viewing from vehicles on the highway; the more detailed features will be on the inside, visible for pedestrians and train riders.
 - iii. Sometime after October 27, Highway 55 will be closed for two weeks to reconstruct the Bassett Creek storm water tunnel - directly under the station footprint - which will ultimately help with staging later in the construction of the light rail line.
 - iv. OCS poles along the line along Olson Memorial between Penn Avenue and Van White may present an opportunity for a feature that can be unique to that corridor. Perhaps there can be a sculptural element on top or they can be painted. They don't have to be strictly utilitarian, but outright art is not supported. MetCouncil is going out to the neighborhoods for input in September.

- V. Sweet Chow Takeaway, 116 North 1st Ave (former space of Tangiers/Hennepin Steam Room), Greg Cummins, Julie Hartley, Ami Francis, Laura Boyd
 - a. The restaurant representatives are requesting a letter of support for a liquor license. Mark suggests drafting a letter so that it has the required text. Mark will relay the ask and letter to the Board next week. The license would be Class E (which doesn't permit live entertainment and is less than what Tangiers had).
 - b. The southeast Asian concept restaurant will be the first floor only and have an indoor capacity for 113 with seating for approximately 83. There will a sidewalk café featuring 6 tables with 4 seats each against the building.
 - c. ESG architects are nearly finished with the final design; construction is planned to begin in September and last three months. They are not looking to change the historic windows due to HPC; they are, however, putting an opening in back - a fire exit with glass - which has precedent for approval with HPC as it was done in the adjacent building. They will come back for HPC support once the

design is finalized. The design features an open kitchen with seating around it and exposed lighting reminiscent of street lighting and awnings. There will be a separate, isolated bar area, too. The decor will be light, modern, airy. The handicap entrance will be alongside the building, as there are steps at the front entrance. Mark suggests incorporating planters out front - if not as a barrier between the diners and sidewalk pedestrians, perhaps as bookends to the seating area.

- d. Sweet Chow is working with former Sea Change chefs to design the menu, which will feature affordable foods with varied flavors from Southeast Asia. The chef is coming from Café Alma. There will be lots of noodles and salad dishes, with vegetarian-friendly options, too.
- e. There will be an emphasis and takeout and delivery - but only by bicycle and only in the North Loop. It is suggested that the restaurant contact the City to ask about adding bike circles to parking meters.
- f. There will be another component to the restaurant - 400 square feet in the northeast corner of the building will serve homemade ice cream, pastries, and coffee. Its hours are still being decided, but it will be open late with delivery well into the evening.
- g. **Neil makes a motion of general support for the liquor license and for the design changes to the building; Jo seconds (no quorum is achieved).**
- h. Before the official opening, marketing initiatives with deliveries to specific apartment complexes are planned.

VI. Committee Business

- a. Neighbor Comments
 - i. There are no neighbor comments.
- b. Committee Development
 - i. Checklist of questions - Neil has reservations about the extensiveness of the checklist, as it may allow developers to simply cater to what the Committee is asking and may then miss presenting on the overall vision for a project. Mark suggests that the developers know the questions ahead of time so that they can prepare. Jo suggests the implementation of two separate checklists; one more detailed for the Committee and one with less detail for developers. Neil iterates that not all projects need as much detail as what is proposed in the checklist, as some projects may have much smaller scopes. Mark plans to think about it some more, as the whole point of the checklist is to keep the Committee within the applicable parameters and to not forget to inquire about critical aspects of projects. Perhaps the Committee uses the two-pager and gives presenters a condensed summary (and also posts it on the website). The checklist should still cover “eyes on the street,” lighting, trees, safety, active streets, pet management, public realm, etc., but not be so specific as to not be applicable.
- c. New/Unfinished Business
 - i. The development of the lower basement level of the building the houses Crisp & Green into underground public parking is a possibility. It would likely be able to accommodate between 25-50 spaces.
 - ii. The triangle green space near Target Field Station (6th Avenue North and 7th Street North) is about 60 x 80 and is not active now, but could become a nice pocket park area with all the surrounding development. Perhaps its development could be split into phases, first with greenery and then at a later date with water features or a North Loop branding

sign. The space is a distinct entrypoint to downtown and visible from both light rail lines, yet the area is largely undefined. Maybe the NLNA could host a design competition for the space.

- iii. 3rd and Washington Avenues intersection project is currently in MNDot's hands; Mark has been told that it is moving forward, but he will wait to hear back from MNDot.

VII. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 20, 2017.

Adjourned at 7:37 P.M.