

Meeting hosted by Jennifer Gelhar, 295 Sturgis Street, 7:00 PM

Co-chaired by Lindsay Kimball and Mark Fangmeier

Breaking news. The proposal for an indoor storage facility at the Schmidt Brewery was a “non-conforming use.” The city passed it, but the Fort Road Federation appealed. As of today, the storage facility zoning petition has been denied.

Update on LBNA Bike Path with Anthony Wotzka, Landscape Architect (Associate ASLA) with MNDoT (Jennifer) We’ve been concerned about safety, upkeep and erosion control for a while. There is a grant program that helps fund improvements. Tony Wotzka noted that the grant will cover the cost of the plan, the actual plants, mulch and edging—community members need to do the work of planting. There are some challenges to the bike path corridor. The plan begins near Journeys School, in Pleasant Park. Tony presented a “plant palette” and a preliminary plan.

Question: will the existing wall be replaced? Tony has asked, but has not yet heard back.

Could the existing wall be made higher? We’ve heard ours is one of the shortest in the city.

Tony says it probably falls outside the scope of this plan. We’d want to talk further with MNDoT to pursue improvements to the wall. Tony’s been told we cannot plant between I-35 and the wall.

Tony’s plan includes a variety of tall grasses, shrubs, perennials and trees.

Can we emphasize butterfly- and bird-friendly plantings? Yes, and there’s already a lot of good native plants out there. Most of these plants are low-maintenance. Plant choice depends on how much work the neighborhood group is willing to take on, and Tony wants our honest input. The consensus is to go toward the lower end of maintenance expectations as we go down the path toward St. Clair, except possibly in or near Pleasant Park.

Tony notes that MNDoT crews would help remove buckthorn and other nuisance plants. Work can begin in spring 2015. The work crews can be organized any number of ways, including a lot of direction or very little. Tony is prepared to go out the day before and mark planting beds, even coded for specific plant types. He is still waiting to hear from the City of St. Paul on their end of the project. (The City buys the materials and is reimbursed by MNDoT.) The budget is about \$10,000, and that’s plenty to work with given the scope of this project.

Update on Bad Weather Brewing. (Mark) Joe Giambruno with Bad Weather Brewing introduced himself again—he’s met with us before—and circulated some current architectural plans for the BWB brewery and taproom to be built at the old Northwestern Tire location. (If you’re new to this group, it’s directly across West Seventh Street from DeGidio’s.) There have been some setbacks, but the building project is on track once again. Before winter, it should be painted and get a new roof. It will need a bigger water line; the City is creating some difficulty about this point.

Joe hopes that the project could be complete such that the facility is open by the middle of 2015. Ironically, given their firm's name, completion and opening depend on having some good weather for building this winter. The plans include using reclaimed wood, exposed beams and (of course) better insulation. Joe is glad he's met with us before. There are not significant problems with nearby neighbors. And yes, they're thinking about food trucks, as well as talking with DeGidio's and Mancini's as well.

Update on PED (Planning and Economic Development) Department RFP (Mark and Lindsay) We sent a letter outlining our concerns about teardowns and vacant lot rebuilding. Mark updated us on the reply.

*Current neighbors can't simply purchase vacant lots or portions of them. The City has to go through the formal sale process. All properties are listed here:
<http://www.stpaul.gov/inspiringcommunities>

*47 Douglas is for sale—for \$1.

*The RFPs went up November 3. What happens if some of these lots or houses don't sell by spring? Mark notes that the City does not have a "Plan B," or at least has not mentioned one.

*Preference will be given to owner-occupied proposals, but rental proposals will also be accepted.

*The 2 small Harrison Avenue lots are going to be combined. The DuPays will be able to purchase 15' adjoining their property. The remainder will be a 50' lot, for a single house to be built.

*All developers chosen through this process will be asked to present their plans to us at a future neighborhood meeting! We don't have formal approval authority, but we will have a chance to express our views and perhaps help sway the developers.

Mark hopes to have more information for us at our January meeting.

Update on housing renovations (Tom, Mark, Lindsay)

***Current work:**

29 Douglas Still moving along.

280 Forbes Still moving along.

***Future work:**

284, 286 and 288 Forbes Lindsay reports that these have been purchased by the Federation, or will be shortly. She circulated pictures and floor plans of the houses. These are being prepped for renovation, with the goal of selling them to single-family owner-occupants.

Future future work: 301 Sturgis, 326 Harrison and 457 Smith. The City owns these, but when the Federation is ready to begin construction, they'll buy these houses from the City. This will be phase 5 of the Federation's plan for our neighborhood.

Update on Dorothy Day Expansion. (Sharon and Marit) There has been some concern that more housing will lead to more people in the area. The first phase, "Higher Ground St. Paul," is underway at 411 West Seventh street. This phase includes some emergency housing. The second phase, the "Connection Center," will include some onsite medical and care facilities. This phase begins with buying more property, and it's on hold because Catholic Charities doesn't yet have the funding needed to buy it. These phases are labeled 'option 1' and 'option 2' on the Dorothy Day Center expansion plan that was circulated at the meeting. The stated focus is to help clients with acute conditions, turning them over and helping them move out of poverty and homelessness. The goal is *not* to attract more people suffering from chronic homelessness and associated problems.

Marit adds that Catholic Charities was receptive to thoughtful neighborhood feedback, such as was shared at the meeting Sharon and Marit attended recently. Dorothy Day takes a lot of heat because of problems their clientele sometimes cause for surrounding neighborhoods. Some of this blame is wrongly placed, due to misunderstandings of what Dorothy Day is and is not responsible for providing. There are many overlapping social service organizations, both private and public (county and city), and none of them have all the funding they need. It would significantly increase the effectiveness of these disparate groups if they could partner to share information and responsibilities—Minneapolis has taken on this coordination, with its goal of ending homelessness. St. Paul has no such program, and officially, no such goal.

Give to the Max Day: Thursday November 13. LBNA is one of the organizations to which you can donate. Our fundraising goal is \$500. Check the Facebook page for more information. You can schedule your donation in advance!

December Social Event, 12/4: We can't reserve a section at Mancini's, but we can go and use our elbows to create some space. After some discussion, we agreed that Mark will call Glockenspiel and look into a 6:00 to 8:00 PM gathering there. The fallback will be the same time at DeGidio's.

Problem Properties/Safety Concerns Lindsay reports a nun looking to rent a two-bedroom home in our neighborhood. If you have any suggestions, please let her know. Jennifer mentions that the Day By Day Café owner's home is for rent right now.

Remember to call 266-8989, and report nuisance properties to the City!

The next LBNA business meeting will be in January 2015. Watch for an announcement once the date and location are determined. Send agenda ideas to info@littlebohemiaspaul.org

If you find glaring errors in these notes, please send corrections to sisk@macalester.edu