**Seward Neighborhood Group - Community Development Committee (CDC)**

**February 13, 2024 | 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. | @ Redesign office & via Zoom**

**Meeting Notes: 2/15/24**

**Committee members present:** Sheldon Mains, Winston Calvert, Carissa Hansen, Michael Sedki, Philipp Muessig (acting chair; minutes).

**Others present**: Ella Quainton (SNG staff); Abby Romero (Redesign staff); neighbor Pat Rosaves.

**CDC MEMBERSHIP — *recommendation***

Pat Rosaves volunteered to serve as the CDC’s 10th member. She has lived 45 years in Seward, working as a realtor, recently as the SNG’s Garden Tour party organizer/host, and previously served on the CDC. Sheldon moved, Winston seconded, and the CDC unanimously approved the motion:

***That the SNG Board approve Pat Rosaves as a CDC member.***

**SNG REPRESENTATION ON THE SEWARD TOWERS CORPORATION BOARD**

It is CDC’s understanding that SNG Board member Ron Schlatter is currently serving on the Towers Board and that he is interested in and needs to be reappointed.

***The CDC would like to have a discussion of this and the Towers at the March CDC meeting.***

**RE-THINKING I-94: COMMUNITY LEADERS’ GROUP — *recommendation***

MnDOT as been convening (now quarterly) this group to inform neighborhoods about the I-94 rebuild. Sheldon has been attending for SNG since helping lead the Reconnecting Neighborhoods Project (a joint project of SNG and Redesign from 2017 to 2020: <https://redesigninc.org/portfolio/reconnecting-neighborhoods/> ). Andy Hestness from Redesign also attends meetings. Sheldon moved, Philipp seconded, and the CDC unanimously moved:

***That the SNG Board formerly designate Sheldon Mains as Seward’s Community Leader Contact for MnDOT regarding the Re-Thinking I-94 project.***

**RE-THINKING I-94: CONCURRING PARTY IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION — *recommendation***

MnDOT is developing alternatives to address transportation I-94 problems between the downtowns. Part of this project is an Historic Preservation Study along I-94 and out two blocks on either side of I-94. An example of issues to be raised would be the 22nd Ave. pedestrian bridge over I-94 and the desirability of any bus/rail line stopping at/near Riverside Ave. Also, involvement of SNG’s History Committee would be valuable.

MnDOT invited SNG to be a Concurring Party to the study. Sara Weiner of the CDC and Sheldon attended a MnDOT presentation on this. Sheldon moved, Carissa seconded and the CDC unanimously recommended:

***That the SNG Board accept MnDOT’s offer for SNG to be a Concurring Party in the Section 106 Historic Preservation Study for MnDOT”s Rethinking I-94 project and that the contacts are Sara Rothholz Weiner and Sheldon Mains.***

**MPRB ISSUES**

Sara Weiner met with Park Board Commissioner Deb Alper about the need for Matthews Park shading, Brackett Park sledding hill preservation, and restoring lighting along W. River Road. Park staff reported a new $30,000 shading budget from which Matthews may benefit, and a future resident engagement effort before any Brackett landscaping is done. No information on lighting, which is maintained by the City, not MPRB; CDC noted that very cheap aluminum wiring might be a solution to the thieving of current copper wiring.

**SEWARD’S SOUTHERN BOUNDARY — *recommendation***

Currently 3 organizations use 3 different physical features for this boundary:

1. the City uses the old “27th St. rail line,” which curves northwest after crossing 26th Ave. and slices through the new 3rd Precinct site;
2. Longfellow Community Council uses the new 27th St. rail line, which curves southwest after crossing 26th Ave., and after crossing Minnehaha Ave. places the Restore and the Xcel sub-station into the the Seward South industrial park;
3. SNG uses the Greenway, which parallels the present 27th St. rail line but then diverges north and then west again at Minnehaha Ave., slicing off the Restore & substation (to the south) into neighborhood limbo.

Census districts and City Ward lines are not co-terminus with any of these 3 boundaries. Philipp moved, Sheldon seconded and the CDC unanimously recommended:

***That the SNG Board change its bylaw definition of Seward to conform to the boundary used by the Longfellow Community Council in its bylaws, and that the City also conform its boundary definition to that used by LCC.***

**SEWARD BIKE / WALK / ROLL SAFETY PLAN**

In 2019 the SNG Board approved a 9-page document establishing guiding principles and listing specific transportation safety recommendations for numerous streets in Seward. The Plan was updated in 2021. It has facilitated rapid implementation by the City and the County of, for example, bike lanes on Franklin and 26th Ave.

***In March or April the CDC will review a summary of, and discuss, the Plan’s recommendations.***

**NEW 3RD PRECINCT:** Sara Weiner discovered little citizen engagement planned for space programming/usage.

***CDC members want a March/April discussion of this topic, to explore, for example, whether to advocate for a strong crime prevention office in the building and whether non-police groups might use meeting space in the building.***

UPDATES

**BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH:** The current owner, Augsburg College, has a potential buyer who has raised planning money to rebuild the site and who seeks to raise bonding money at the 2024 State Legislature. A spring/summer public meeting is anticipated.

**WADAAG COMMONS**: Redesign anticipates this 39-unit (50% of which are 3-4 bedrooms), 6-story affordable rental building at 2115 Snelling Ave. will break ground in late spring 2024. The CDC applauded Abby for her shepherding this complex financial project to ground-breaking and anticipated opening in late 2025.

**AGRA**: 2025 opening anticipated on this affordable high-rise apartment that has broken ground on the old Perkins site.

**OLD TACO BELL SITE**: Redesign owns, is exploring 2 possible developments, and anticipates an interim use.

**COLOSSEUM BUILDING**: A Juneteenth move-party anticipated for this renovated building at 27th & Lake, which will have space for events, offices, and food.

**36TH ART**: The group is helping the Hiawatha High School apply for funds to continue artistic improvements to the Greenway bridge, and is meeting with the Design Center at the Univ. of MN to enlist their help in studying traffic calming interventions.

**26TH AVE. WORK GROUP: *An update scheduled for May***.

**FEB. 17TH COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS CONFERENCE**: SNG and Redesign will exhibit at this all-city event.

**NEXT MEETING**: March 12; the CDC’s steering committee meeting (open to all) meets Tuesday(s) March 5, 10:00 a.m. at Cafe Racer.

END OF NOTES