**Seward Neighborhood Group – Community Development Committee**

**July 9, 2024 | 7:00 - 8:45pm (Second Tuesdays)**

**In-person at Redesign, Inc.: 2619 East Franklin Avenue**

**Attendees:**

* **CDC members**: Winston Calvert, Sheldon Mains, Steve McCauley (SNG Board), Philipp Muessig (notes), Sara Rothholz Weiner (Chair), Michael Sedki.
* **Neighbors**: Tom and Diane Brady-Leighton.

**Meeting notes:**

1. **MOTION**: ***(1) that the CDC write directly to the City (before the SNG board meeting) in support of the City Zoning Administrator’s determination that Superior Fence’s use of the property at 2647-2653 37th Ave. S (even with a building enclosure on the parcel’s north side) is substantially similar to a contractor’s yard, and that (2) City Council and City staff move to quick resolution on the zoning issue here and on the regulatory / enforcement issues.***
   1. Adjacent neighbors Tom and Diane reported that over the past year they and other nearby neighbors have experienced serious safety and livability issues that have been reported dozens of times to the City: semi-trucks parking overnight; forklift use across the street between two semi-trucks; semi-trucks not taking the shortest route back to a truck route; storage of roofing materials in the street overnight; noisy work that begins as early as 4:30 a.m.
   2. In response, the building renter, Superior Fence, proposes to enclose its storage space. City Zoning however has ruled that Superior is a contractor’s yard - not a storage/warehouse usage - and requires a CUP (conditional use permit) to which reasonable operations’ conditions (proposed by neighbors) could be attached. Superior is challenging the ruling at a July 11 Zoning Board of Adjustment meeting.
   3. Superior is to date unsuccessfully trying to break its lease (ending May 2025) and move.
   4. The Ward 2 office is proposing a meeting in late July/early August with neighbors.
   5. In past years, when SNG could depend on steadier financial support from the City and others, SNG staff would gather all stakeholders - the land/building owner, the business operator, neighbors, and City staff - together to try and resolve these neighborhood safety and livability issues.
   6. Motion passed unanimously (M/S: Shelton/Steve).
2. **Neighborhood Leadership Development “Mingle”**
   1. One poorly planned/attended block club leaders meeting and one planned and cancelled block leaders meeting happened within the past 9 months.
   2. The new Darling owners were interested in hosting a block leaders meeting this summer and the SNG board agreed to contribute $200.
   3. The SNG environment committee recent reach-out to block leaders (about I-94: see update below) and the upcoming National Night Out and a previous CDC discussion of supporting/developing leaders led to a discussion of a future “mingle” event that would invite more than just block leaders.
   4. The goals of such an event - at Darling, or Cafe Racer, or Matthews Center - to which would be invited block club contacts, garage sellers, SNG board and committee members, and others interested in the neighborhood/SNG - would be: (1) block club leaders learning from each other; (2) everyone learning about SNG board/committee roles and project roles like the garden tour & garage sale days in which they might be interested.
   5. CDC asks the board to discuss this concept of an event.
3. **Market-Rate Housing**
   1. In listening to recent Redesign affordable housing successes - Wadaag ground breaking @ Cedar & 22nd St. (Mayor Frey & Rep. Omar attended), Agra going up @ 27th Ave. & Franklin - discussion touched on the wealth-generating benefits of owner-occupant housing to meet the strong demand to live in Seward, and one housing type that might free-up larger multi-bedroom homes in Seward: attached or detached small footage, one level condo/co-op units, especially suited for active seniors who want to remain in Seward.
4. **Updates / Announcements:** 
   1. **ReThinking I-94**: The SNG Environment Committee is hosting a July 25th discussion with MnDOT at Matthews Center, 6:45 p.m.
   2. **Pedestrian Bridge over I-94:** In the June meeting to discuss replacement, MnDOT was aware of the Redesign/SNG study options.
   3. **RISE Health Care Event:** This event done last year at Brackett Park may happen again; Matthews Park was suggested as a venue.
   4. **Seward Boundary Refined:** The City is working on this, will be for some months. Phil is tracking progress.
   5. **Draft Midtown Greenway Master Plan**: Online comments due Aug. 5, public meeting July 11. The Plan needs to be done by the City Park Board so that the Greenway can be part of the regional trail system and eligible for significant funding. Sheldon and others looked over the plan, noted issues, but felt people should send in individual comments.
   6. **Little Free Library:** One SNG-funded library is looking for a home; Cedars 94 was suggested.
   7. **Next meeting**: September 10th (no August meeting scheduled).

END