

WeCAN General Membership Meeting
Minutes
December 10, 2013
Prepared by Leah Rounds

AGENDA

- 6:00 Call to order
- Police Officer Report
- Board Elections
- Presentation by UC-Denver urban planning students on their latest project: "Next Steps for West Colfax"
- Adjourn

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 6:05pm by Chad Reischl

Announcements

- **WeCAN's Board Meeting:** Due to the holidays there is no board meeting this month
- **WeCAN has just become one of Denver's first sustainable neighborhoods!** This year Denver started a Sustainable Neighborhood Program. WeCAN applied and was selected as one of two neighborhoods participating this year. As such next year will be dedicated to greening West Colfax with projects, speakers and programs that pertain to sustainability.
- **The Mayor is coming to WeCAN's next General Meeting:** on Jan 14 at 6:00 pm. This will be a pot luck meeting with a presentation from the mayor from 6:30-7:00
- **Celebrate West Colfax 2014** Neighborhood (post-holiday) Party: Friday Jan 17th 4-7pm Join WeCAN, the West Colfax BID and Sloans Lake Citizens Group in ringing in the new year on the 17th floor of Metro Manor – appetizers, beer, wine and live music will be provided.
- **Vertical Developer Open House regarding the former St Anthony's site:** On Jan 22nd from 6-8pm come see drawings and plans for and meet the developers of some of the new buildings planned for the old hospital site. Open house is here at confluence ministries
- **Lake International School is looking for an additional refrigerator.** If you or someone you know has one they're looking to replace contact Chad at 720-297-4481

Denver Police Department update by Officer Sloan

- "Puffers" are being watched. DPD gave 17 warnings last weekend. The weather is colder and there is a temptation to leave cars running, but this makes them more prone to auto theft.

- Scam in the neighborhood during cold weather, someone will ask to shovel your driveway, and if you're not home they will sneak in the back and break in. Be aware and call in any suspicious behavior
- Officer Sloan will be at training for the next 6 months. Officer Reiner will take over as our neighborhood officer during that time. His contact is 720-633-4516

Council Woman Susan Shepherd of District 1 in NW Denver

- Two main areas of focus recently have been on the St. Anthony's redevelopment and the marijuana law.
- Recreational marijuana shops will be open January 1, 2014 in the city and county of Denver. Shop hours will be 8am – 7pm
- Rules regarding open/public consumption – can not consume on city streets, roadways, 16th street mall, parks, 1000ft buffer around schools
- Consumption is okay on all parts of private property, similar to alcohol, but reminder to be respectful of neighbors
- There is a 6 plant per person limit, 12 plant maximum for a 2 person household. Must be kept in an enclosed structure (not the backyard)
- Q&A
 - Consumption okay on personal property that is close to schools? Cannot consume within 1000ft. of a school on city property, but that does not apply to personal property. Please exercise discretion and respect for neighbors when consuming.
 - Can landlord set limits of consumption on their properties? Yes. The owners can set rules and ask tenants not to use marijuana. This needs to be in the lease and verbally explained
 - What is an enclosed structure mean? Shed, garage, basement, anything with permanent walls. Not just a temporary greenhouse or tarp covering.
 - Is there a central website explaining the different rules of each city and county statewide? This is not set up, but is a good suggestion to put through
- There will be a public education program. Tourism is expected and out-of-towners will need to be educated as well. Marijuana cannot cross state lines.

Board Elections – There was a motion to approve all candidates for board position, it was seconded, and all voted in favor of electing the following board for the 2014 year:

Officers:

President Emeritus: Barbara Baker

Co-President: Chad Reischl

Co-President: Art Marek

Vice President: Alan Burch

Treasurer: Cindy Gallard

Secretary: Leah Rounds

Members at large:

Bill Baker

Amy Burgan

Shane Burgan

Natalie James

Suellen Mack

Ben Stetler

Brittney Vernon

Presentation by UC-Denver urban planning students on their latest project: "Next Steps for West Colfax"

- Focused on the impacts from the St. Anthony's redevelopment
- Phase 1 included analyzing past planning efforts, and coming up with 5 planning goals. Phase 2 looked at planning alternatives. Phase 3 (tonight's presentation) is coming up with next steps and recommendations for 5 areas
 1. Branding
 - Goal is to create a sense of community, to bring people and money in, and sustain that identity
 - 3 components of branding from the West Colfax neighborhood: sustainability, diversity, and livability
 - Case studies/Examples – RiNo, Fort Collins, Lower East Side
 - The vision for West Colfax – the best brands are made in-house (someone in the community), reflects the 3 core components, combines efforts, and using the brand everywhere (examples: street banners, business logos, public art)
 2. Economic Development
 - Focus on retail reinvestment – putting money and community support into existing retail spaces, preserve iconic buildings
 - Benefits of reinvestment – preserve character, facades, signage to attract new retail and increase the variety of services
 - After looking at neighborhood surveys, demographics, and local market analysis, came up with recommendations – track real estate opportunities and market the West Colfax corridor
 3. Complete Streets
 - Goals – enhance character, connectivity, leverage existing resources, target growth strategically, and improve neighborhood economics
 - What are "complete streets"? Accommodates all people (walkers, bikers, cars, buses, young, disabled, etc. They are pedestrian oriented and create a safe and inviting space

- Components include curb extensions, medians and islands, bikes lanes and racks
- Recommendations to West Colfax – Add curb extensions, marked crosswalks, sidewalk planters, street trees. For Perry Street specifically – raised sidewalks, planters, consistent sidewalks
- 4. Community Resource Center (CRC)
 - Benefits of a CRC - provides a gathering place for the community, encourages community involvement, promotes more collaboration and innovation, an event venue (such as a food bank or storage area), and helps to build networks
 - Examples include the 1871 and Gangplank in Chicago
 - There are various management and funding options for a CRC
- 5. Affordable Housing
 - Looked at the Westridge Homes (between 13th and 14th, Newton and Knox) as an opportunity to redevelop
 - Challenges of this location – displacement of current residents, budget, complex financing, opposition of density
 - Opportunities for this location – Already have public housing there, have an existing street structure, there are community resources in the area
 - For this to be a success there needs to be community involvement, core principles in place, a mix of income levels, various funding sources, and an attention to design
 - Strategies to make this happen – sell the land, intersperse mix market rate housing, offer affordable housing for sale, allows for mix uses (medical services, childcare, etc.)

Q&A

- Is the CRC similar to the Horse Barn downtown? This model was looked at, but the Horse Barn has a primarily international focus rather than local community
- What does the term “area of change” mean? It is an area marked that will see great change. (West Colfax has the new light-rail and St. Anthony redevelopment). The city saw an opportunity for change and it becomes an area for future planning.
- To what extent is Denver using “Blue Print Denver”? It continues to be the guiding planning document for Denver. It is meant to be a guideline, not a plan. Zoning is a complex process and some residents feel unheard.
- When does West Colfax get a cute nickname (RiNo, etc)? This group didn’t come up with one, nicknames are better when they are developed in-house

Copies of the presentation will be available for everyone online. The extended studies and posters are available to browse after the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10pm

Respectfully submitted,

Leah Rounds
Secretary
West Colfax Association of Neighbors (WeCAN)