

**Minutes Neighborhood Council
District 3 (NC3)
Thursday, February 7, 2013
Multi-Purpose Room
7:00 p.m.**

Call to Order: Lori Fay, Chair Pro-tem, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. John Sturgeon and Johnathan Kenneway were absent. A quorum of Council members was present.

Attendees: Council members: Lori Fay, Kathleen Gessaman, and Ron Gessaman. City officials: Patty Cadwell, Neighborhood and Youth Council Coordinator, Marty Basta, Parks and Recreation Director, Dave Dobbs, City Engineer, and Jim Reardon, Public Works Director. Damon Carroll, a presenter on the agenda. Over eighteen members of the public were also present.

Minutes: Lori F. asked for a motion to accept the minutes of the last meeting. **Ron G. moved to approve the Thursday, January 3, 2013 minutes; Lori F. seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

Unfinished Business: Lori F. said revising the NC3 Bylaws would be delayed because a super majority (four out of the five council members) needed to be present. Also, Patty C. informed the council members before the meeting that the City Attorney must review the proposed changes before the council votes.

Lori next asked if there were any public concerns about the proposed rezoning of the Westgate Mall area now owned by the refinery. Melissa Dascoulias, 3509 5th St NE, asked if Calumet had articulated their plans for why they wanted to rezone the area I-2 (heavy industrial) instead of I-1 (light industrial). Lori said the City Commissioners might have a better chance of getting a reply from the refinery and asked neighbors to attend City Commission meetings and express their opinion on the proposed rezoning. Patty C. asked Ron G. to clarify what the City Commission had done at their Feb. 5th meeting. Ron replied that last Tuesday's meeting was controversial, and the Commissioners remanded the rezoning of just the mall area back to the Planning and Zoning Board to have them attach a PUD (planned unit development) overlay to the Westgate Mall area zoning – the PUD overlay could require negotiated conditions for future development. Ron said the PUD overlay would probably come before the Planning Board sometime in March; the Planning Board would make a recommendation on the PUD, and send that recommendation back to the City Commission. Ron said this series of actions would give the public two more opportunities to speak on this issue – once at the Planning and Zoning Board meeting, which usually meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 3 p.m. and later at a future City Commission meeting. Check the city website at: <http://www.greatfallsmt.net/calendar> under Boards and Commissions to find when the Planning Advisory Board and Zoning Commission is scheduled to meet and click on their name on the City Calendar to see if an agenda has been published listing the Calumet rezoning.

Larry Fulton, 837 36th Ave NE, asked what the refinery planned to do with the property; Ron suggested he ask Mr. Dexter Busby, a refinery representative, directly for an answer. Dexter said the refinery purchased the land because it was landlocked and the property had been available for at least three years before the refinery bought it. Dexter said the refinery presently doesn't have a plan for the property but it takes at least six months to get property rezoned and the refinery wants to be able to act as soon as possible once they decide on a course of action. He also said he would have no further comment.

Committee Reports: Lori F. said Johnathan K. would give a report on City meetings at a later date; minutes of City meetings can be found at <http://www.greatfallsmt.net/meetings>.

Sue Steichen, Chair of the Skyline Park Committee was present to answer questions about issues concerning a proposed parking lot at Skyline Park or any other questions about the park's development. Sue said CTA architects spent a lot of time testing the soil at Skyline looking for the best place for trails and a possible parking lot. Sue said the best spot for parking was along 36th Ave NE because she learned from the owner of a shale plant that many years ago shale had been dumped along 36th Ave NE; and that is why nothing grows very well on the north edge of the park. Sue said one of the main reasons for the off street parking lot was because several people had asked if the park would be wheelchair accessible and this was a possible solution for that problem. It would also make it safer for parents to unload their children. Debbie Hasbrouck, 509 36th Ave NE, said they already have problems getting out of their driveway when people park along 36th Ave NE by the park. Larry Fulton, 837 36th Ave NE, agreed that it is very dangerous backing out on 36th Ave NE with all of the traffic on the street day and night (even at 2 a.m.).

Marty Basta, Director of Parks and Recreation, thanked Sue and her committee for their efforts to improve Skyline Park. Marty stated again that the Park Board has not approved a development plan for the park (including the off-street parking concept) and that high traffic volume on 36th Ave NE would be considered in any approval process. Marty said his department is pleased with the new playground equipment donated by Leadership Great Falls, the new trees donated by CTA, and the efforts Sue's committee have made to raise funds (\$1,100.82 to date) to help fund other amenities at Skyline Park.

Patty C. thanked Sue for her service and asked if her committee needed help. Sue said she has had medical issues and the committee hasn't met since last spring. Sue said the committee has plans for a silent auction and a talent show. There was further discussion of the pros and cons of having restrooms and a parking cutout like the one on the south end of Jaycee Park along the east edge of the park - not on 36th Ave NE - instead of the proposed parking lot and the possibility of vandalism and increased crime due to improvements like these. No one favored restrooms.

New Business: Damon Carroll, a developer with an annexation and zoning proposal, spoke about building two three-story 18-unit apartment buildings on the property (2 lots) he owns along the south side of 36th Ave NE just west of the Bootlegger water tower. In his introductory comments, Damon said he is a Great Falls native, plans to use local labor to build quality apartments that will be an asset to the City, and wants to know what the people in the immediate area think about his project. He presented his plans, which would include bringing 14th St NE through to 36th Ave NE. Larry Fulton asked where the parking would be. Damon said there would be 58 parking spots in a lot along 36th Ave NE – the apartment buildings would be located near the back (south) edge of the property. Some of the questions and concerns expressed by neighbors present were: would there be adjustments to the width of 36th Ave NE since it is about 10ft narrower at the water tower than it is west of 9th St NE; would the apartments be subsidized; what will happen to property values of nearby homes; why not build 12-plexes or smaller units; there are no nearby parks for kids; traffic on 36th Ave NE is very congested in the morning and in the evening and is getting steadily worse; the property on the north side of 36th Ave NE is in the County so how will improvements be made to the south side without improving the north side as well; improvements at the intersection of 36th Ave NE and Bootlegger Trail will be needed; where would water run off go since there is a drainage problem in that area presently; what about increased traffic going down 9th Ave NE or down 35th Ave NE from 14th St NE; how would the project affect people filling up at the water tower; and where would people park when the parking lot was full - most people have two cars so 72 parking spaces would likely be needed instead of the proposed 58 parking spaces. Damon patiently tried to answer all the questions and some of his comments were: the apartments would be well built, sound-proof, 1100 square foot 2 & 3 bedroom units with balconies; he uses local labor; rent would be about \$875-925 per month; he would only consider subsidized housing if MAFB closes; he drills piers for the foundation and will have an onsite retention pond to control runoff; the plan he showed is not finalized because of the expense; he would

consider adding overflow parking - maybe 12 stalls on lot 2; lowering the elevation of 36th Ave NE is a possibility; and building 12-plexes or smaller units does not pencil out. Dave Dobbs, City Engineer, also answered some of the drainage questions and questions about upgrading 36th Ave NE.

Patty C. asked if the council members wanted to give the Planning and Zoning Board some idea of how the neighborhood feels. Lori F. asked people to raise their hands if they supported the project and again if they were against the project. There were seven for and seven against leaving the council with no definitive position from attendees. The council decided to provide no recommendation to the Planning Board on the project. The project is scheduled for action at the February 12, 2013 Planning and Zoning meeting at 3 p.m.

A Woith Engineering staffer presented a proposed change to the plans for Northview Addition Phase 10 – a conversion from duplex condos to single family houses. In response to concerns expressed about access to the addition, Dave Dobbs provided a brief history of the Northview Addition. Apparently, the connection of 12th St NE to 36th Ave NE, which would provide a second entrance to and exit from Northview Addition, was held up for several years by land acquisition problems. 12th St NE also cannot be finished until the final elevation and design for improvements to 36th Ave NE are completed. Money, however, has been escrowed for 12th St NE as each successive phase of the addition has been approved; phase 10 is the final phase.

Ron G moved that NC3 recommend the Planning Board accept the changes to the Northview Addition Phase 10; Lori F. seconded the motion. Lori asked if there was any more discussion. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Petitions and Communications: Lori F. asked if there were any other issues of concern to the neighborhood. Blaine Schuler, 229 17th Ave NW (directly across from the CMR bus stop), asked for advice dealing with high school students speeding down 17th Ave NW and endangering his four young children and other children in the area. When Blaine confronted students about speeding this past week, he had his yard vandalized. Blaine said he has talked to police officers, the mayor, and assistant principals at CMR and nothing has changed; he is worried about the safety of his children and his neighbor's hearing impaired child. Blaine said when he lived in Billings there were speed bumps in the streets to slow traffic. Patty C. asked Jim Reardon, City Public Works Director, if more law enforcement or a petition and a speed study like the one done near North Middle School would help resolve the problem. Jim said law enforcement could help but Blaine said police action worked only while officers were present. Ron G. suggested a police operated video cam on the area. Nick Malisani, 101 Riverside 5E, said he was a student at CMR and the speed bumps really work in the parking lot. Ron said he thought the City discouraged speed bumps. Dave Dobbs said speed bumps are a safety hazard and make snow plowing and street cleaning difficult; he noted the City had mixed results when they tried a speed plateau (like the walkway in front of Albertsons). Ron suggested Blaine talk to the CMR Student Congress and obtain their input on the situation. Patty C. said she would try to get some ideas from the police patrolling in the area.

Ron G. moved to adjourn, Kathy G. seconded, and the motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for March 7, 2013 at 7 p.m. at Riverview School.

Respectfully submitted, Kathleen Gessaman, NC3 Secretary. Please note these minutes are not an exact record of what was said.

The NC3 Board would like to thank Riverview School for providing a meeting spot for NC3 at the school.