

PPA Land Use Design Guidelines Task Force Minutes, October 6th, 2020 virtual meeting

Present: Dick Gilyard, Jeff Barnhart, Joe Ring, Lynn Von Korff, Ron McCoy, John Kari, David Frank, Laura Preus, Roger Purdy (representing Saint Anthony), Bruce Jacobson (U of MN Design Center, Towerside consultant).

Background: The proposed guidelines are based on guidelines developed 7-9 years ago during development of the green line to use in conversation with developers.

Benefits and Purpose of Guidelines: There was a lengthy discussion of the benefits and purpose of the proposed guidelines, including:

1. **To create and preserve the unique character or features of neighborhoods.** City requirements typically address only one property. The proposed guidelines seek to prevent “silos,” where each building is developed as an independent entity. Using guidelines can enhance the neighborhood character as a whole.
2. **Guidelines, consistently applied, provide a fair and equal playing field across all developers.** Each developer can be asked to address the guidelines. For this to be effective, it’s key for developers to understand how the guidelines will be consistently applied.
3. **Developers benefit by working within the neighborhood process** (e.g. a better project, neighborhood buy-in, strong and concrete neighborhood support). Developers can be at a disadvantage if they ignore the neighborhood process (e.g. opposition, lack of support, and a project that does not serve the community).
4. **The potential advantages of neighborhoods coming together to adopt guidelines.** It can give neighborhoods more influence than otherwise and, in some cases, City planning staff might find guidelines useful when evaluating projects.

It was noted that the city is unlikely to let neighborhood design guidelines supersede their own codes so, even if we come together to jointly approve guidelines, the city is unlikely to adopt them officially. The “teeth” are in increased neighborhood level influence (e.g. neighborhood residents and organizations providing letters of support or standing in opposition, testifying at hearings), not in city enforcement.

5. **Preservation of institutional memory.** Written guidelines, with priorities and processes clearly defined, document decisions made by neighborhood boards and committees. As volunteers change over time, they won’t be forced to “recreate the wheel.”

How do the guidelines protect unique features of each neighborhood?

There are unique features within every neighborhood. Each participating neighborhood should be able to clearly identify these in a preamble so there is no misunderstanding. If neighborhoods do not specify, the city will assume these attributes do not matter. Spelling them out preserves institutional memory. Over the years, for example, Prospect Park Association has repeatedly affirmed its commitment to Glendale Townhomes and the preservation of the

character of the historic district, Tower Hill Park, and the Witches Hat Tower viewshed. Also addressed was the distinction between public housing versus affordable housing.

Implementation ideas/considerations:

1. Many emphasized that to accomplish the outcomes described above, it is necessary to provide guidelines—including a description of how the neighborhood process works, early in the process so developers understand what neighborhoods expect and how the process works.
2. In order to create a fair playing field for developers, the group discussed a proposal to implement a weighted point system or “scorecard.” Neighborhoods could, for example, assign points to each guideline. Developers could be required to accumulate a certain number of points in order to “earn” neighborhood participation or support. Points could be neighborhood specific. Neighborhood support could be contingent on a developer agreeing to participate in the MOU process and preserve the unique features of the specific neighborhood (e.g. preamble).
3. It’s incumbent on the community to be proactive – to ask developers to address each issue with specific responses.

Other issues to be considered: The need to communicate to developers that there are existing neighborhood MOU processes and a better understanding of the context, process, and scope or implications of overlap among participating groups. The guidelines themselves will be addressed in a future meeting. Community silence does not connote consent.

Next steps

1. The task force will meet the week of October 26th. Lynn will send a doodle poll to all participants. The next meeting date/time will take place when the largest number of people can attend.
2. Lynn, Joe and Laura will work on a draft of the unique characteristics of Prospect Park neighborhood—in “preamble” style. Ron will work on draft community design guideline groupings and consider how they might be incorporated into the process.

Minutes submitted by Lynn Von Korff