

Third Ward Neighborhood Plan Update

Steering Committee

Meeting #4 NOTES

Monday, August 6, 2018

6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Chippewa Room, L.E. Phillips Memorial Library (Basement)

400 Eau Claire St., Eau Claire, WI 54701

Attendance:

Steering Committee members Peter Hable, Ann Francis, Janet Bethke, Peggy O'Halloran, Susan Miller, Amy Pleski, Kevin Rosenberg, Gloria Song, Steve and Sally Ronstrom; City staff Ned Noel

Agenda

1. Welcome & Updates

Mr. Noel explained the remaining process of completing the neighborhood plan. After drafting the plan, the plan update committee will meet to review it and make any final recommendations. The City's Plan Commission would then review the plan and provide feedback. If needed, the plan could be reviewed again by the plan update committee before the Third Ward Neighborhood Steering Committee makes a recommendation. From there the Plan Commission holds a public hearing and votes on the plan and the City Council hold a second public hearing and decides on whether or not to adopt the plan. The approved plan becomes part of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Members expressed concern to not rush the process and that a quality plan is more important than getting done by the end of the year. Mr. Noel stated the process is not set-in-stone and changes can be made if deemed appropriate.

Mr. Rosenberg stated they hope to flier the neighborhood for the upcoming annual meeting in September.

2. Neighborhood Survey Results & Discussion

Mr. Noel said over 1,372 mailings went out and 263 people took the survey for a response rate of about 20%. Ten people came to the coffee chats at the neighborhood 420 Washington Street internet café. One idea that came from these chats was to make Kappus Park an eco-park with a boardwalk over Little Niagara Creek and some interpretative signage. Members thought the concept is worthy to put into the plan update.

There was some concern that the survey did not address all questions members had. Mr. Noel stated members could formulate new questions and post them on the neighborhood's Facebook page to gauge response.

Mr. Noel went through the responses to the survey. Generally, there was a larger response rate from homeowners (80%) and from those who have lived in the 3rd Ward for over 5 years (90%). There was about a 70% response rate from people from the east middle to south east parts of the neighborhood. These areas have more homeowners and larger areas than the northern and southwest parts.

Members thought it would be good to add personal quotes about the neighborhood from the survey. For example, when asked what do you like about the 3rd Ward, one responder stated it's a "well kept "Americana" neighborhood with a lot of neighborhood pride".

3. Discussion on Solutions

Members used each question and result trends to frame discussion and propose solutions to include in the plan draft. Questions 1, 10 and 11 were demographic questions. Questions 2 and 9 were individual responses related to three things liked most and three things to improve in the neighborhood. These are not included in the notes due to number of responses.

Question #3: Some of the following residential issues may or may not be a problem for you where you live.

The greatest issues were upkeep of properties, too many rentals, conversion of owner-occupied dwellings into rentals, and lack of reinvestment in older housing.

To address these issues, members would like to see in the plan:

- Stronger code enforcement, patrolling and understanding of the enforcement process.
- Strict enforcement on no more than 3 unrelated persons living in an R-1 single family house.
- Information on the Health Department's new Housing inspection Program and housing rules in ordinance chapter 16.08.
- How to leverage the historic tax credit.
- Utilize future funding/resources/programs under Water Street's tax increment financing district.
- Tie incentives, such as no-interest loans, to owner-occupant requirements.
- Do not allow garage-dominate "snout houses" or large out-of-place "McMansion" houses in the traditional styled neighborhood.
- Investigate strategies to limit amount of rentals. Duluth was cited as limiting amount of renters per block around university campuses and providing resident parking passes.

- Restrict large amounts of front yard parking.

Question #4: Some of the following transportation issues may or may not be a problem for where you live.

The greatest issues were unsafe pedestrian street crossings, speeding, on-street parking, and bicycle safety.

To address these issues, members would like to see in the plan:

- Implementation of the City's updated Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.
- Reconstruction of major streets to accommodate all user groups.
- Greater enforcement and speed limit feedback signs.

Question #5: On-street parking demand can be high within the neighborhood near the university. What solutions might you recommend to improve the situation for residents?

The greatest issues were chronic on-street parking problems, safety and quality of life concerns.

To address these, members would like to see in the plan:

- Set a strong precedent with enforcement.
- Ticket cars parked for greater than 24 hours. Some people "store" their cars on streets.
- Look at more 2-hour parking zones.
- The university needs to take greater responsibility in addressing their students and faculty parking within the neighborhood.
- Consider a resident-only parking permit system with possibly extra on-street parking stalls going for rent. Use the revenue to pay for enforcement, etc.
- Encourage greater use of transit and provide shelters.
- Provide better information about on-street parking rules and restricted zones.

Question #6: There are many services and facilities that are provided in the neighborhood by the City and others.

Overall, the greatest issues were snow removal, enforcement of property upkeep, speed limit enforcement, and lack of compost pick-up curbside. Essential services like fire, police and medical services all rated well.

To address these, members would like to see in the plan:

- Using strategies already mentioned in the above notes.
- Rules clearly laid out on snow removal and strict enforcement.
- The City promoting compost pick-up more.
- Upgrade Demmler Park with a nicer playground and make the park usable for all ages.
- For Kappus Park, there was an idea to make it into a "light-on-the-land" eco-park. For example, small improvements like a boardwalk across the creek and interpretive signage along it for environmental education.

Question #7: State Street (from Garfield Ave. to Hamilton Ave.) will be reconstructed in 2019. What features are important to include in the project?

Results from the survey were mixed as to keeping the road as it is presently designed. Yet, the majority was interested in improving access and safety for pedestrians, bicyclists and those with mobility restrictions. Enhancing transit and reducing speeding were listed as high concerns. About 58% favored a roundabout verses 31% not in favor with the remaining having no opinion.

To address State Street's reconstruction, members would like to see in the plan:

- They agreed that Engineering Department led meetings in the Fall of 2018 (walk-audits and design charrettes) would be useful to provide input into the plan.
- To improve transit ridership and access consider bus loading zones (bump-ins) and shelters.

Question #8: What development revitalization strategies are important for the neighborhood?

The survey results showed strong interest in preserving the large areas that are single family houses, to improve the commercial corner at Farwell and Washington streets, to allow mixed use development when the YMCA site redevelops and to limit further university encroachment. Density concerns between downtown and the single family areas were brought up but the group wanted to see what residents of the northern part of the neighborhood thought. Mr. Noel will sort the survey data to see results and pass on the information.

To address these issues, members would like to see in the plan:

- Photos of housing that would be compatible for the various areas of the neighborhood.
- Encourage earth tones for colors and discourage ultra-modern designs that do not fit.
- Develop a set of design criteria to review projects.
- Have the development review process outlined for the neighborhood so as to provide timely recommendations on projects.
- To not allow up-zoning.
- To work with university leadership so the campus does not encroach into the neighborhood, but also work together on parking and building designs (such as with the new visitor and alumni center).
- To improve relations with university students so they take better care of the neighborhood.

4. Next Steps

Mr. Noel will send out the current plan's vision statement for any edits. He will seek to separate survey results by area and tenure occupancy to look at possible down-zonings. He will send later a future meeting Doodle Poll when the draft is near completion.