

HLU Committee Meeting Summary
January 24, 2024

Attendees: Art Punyko, Jack Fei, Gene Johnson, Cathy Plessner, Colin Fesser, Dave Pasiuk, Regina Purins, Elizabeth Wefel, Cameron Cole, Nora Ptacek, Meg Grove, Mike Moore (Chair)

Guests: Tom Moss

Staff: Alexa Golemo

MINUTES

November regular meeting and December special meeting summaries approval: Nora Ptacek moved approval, Art Punyko seconded. Motion approved 8-0, with 2 abstentions.

1. Rough draft of 2024 HLU Committee workplan.

The committee briefly reviewed four ideas for the workplan that were submitted prior to the 1/11/24 Macalester Groveland Community Council Board/Committee retreat, along with [ideas generated at the retreat](#). Meeting attendees comments about the workplan fell into several categories:

- a. *Focus on bringing more low/moderate income housing to Macalester Groveland.*
HLU Committee members agree that part of having a healthy, vibrant neighborhood is having a range of housing options, especially for families and individuals who have low/moderate incomes. The 2024 HLU Committee workplan should have this focus.
 - o *Get the facts first.* Before generating ideas and recommendations, it makes sense for the HLU Committee to first get the facts, issues, concerns about development of low/moderate income housing. It will help Committee discussions if members have a shared baseline of facts. Possible avenues of inquiry for the Committee: How do developers choose where to build units? What are some successful models of such housing? What it would take to attract developers of this kind of housing to Macalester Groveland.
 - o *Approach local experts.* Group members have contacts among developers/operators of low/moderate income housing. Hearing from them would be a good way for the HLU Committee to begin its education on issues/concerns around development of low/moderate income units.
 - o *Action steps:*
 - Should a small working group take on this issue and bring recommendations back to the whole Committee?
 - Art Punkyo and Tom Moss will approach their contacts (Punkyo – Aeon, Moss – Project for Pride in Living – PPL) to see whether they would be willing to sit down with the HLU Committee.
 - HLU Committee members should contact Alexa with their ideas about possible resources for the affordable housing discussion.

- b. *Focus on how St. Paul's rent control ordinance is operating.* Possible avenues of inquiry for the HLU Committee:
- *Get direct input from renters even if it is only anecdotal.* Their experiences are important.
 - *Find out how/whether landlords are complying with the ordinance.* Be aware, though, that the ordinance is still so new that there probably isn't enough data from which to draw conclusions.
 - *What is the role of non-resident landlords, especially those from out of state?*
 - *Watch for miscommunication and conflicting claims.* For example, some say the current slow pace of housing development is tied to the rent control ordinance. Other evidence points instead to the cost of financing such projects. If we take on this issue, we need facts, not opinions.
 - *Consider adding standard questions for developers when they come to the HLU Committee, including the number of low income units their projects will have.*
 - *There are downsides to taking on the rent control ordinance topic.* Among the concerns: the HLU Committee spent a lot of time on this issue before the ordinance was adopted; already too many players involved (including the state legislature which will take up discussion about out of state landlords); it may be too early to draw conclusions from data because the rent control ordinance is so new; not clear that HLU Committee could add anything to the discussion.
 - *Action steps:*
- c. *10 Year Community Plan update.* This [Plan](#) is Macalester Groveland's addendum to Saint Paul's Comprehensive Plan. The Community Plan expires in 2026, though the date is flexible, and there are no sanctions if it isn't updated by then. Considerations as the HLU Committee determines how to update the Community Plan:
- *How does Macalester Groveland look/operate now as compared to the plan (last updated 2016)? Is the plan consistent with HLU Committee mission? Keep in mind that HLU is not just to react to things brought before it, but to think ahead, to plan.*
 - *What sections of the plan need updating? Which sections are best addressed by the HLU Committee, and which should be in the purview of other committees?*
 - *How will the plan address equity and inclusion issues?*
 - *Should a small working group take a first crack at revising the Community Plan, then present its draft to the whole HLU Committee?*
 - *How can the HLU Committee be certain its work doesn't contradict the City's Comprehensive Plan? (Alexa said Planning and Economic Development (PED) staff does a preliminary review.) On the other hand, perhaps the HLU Committee shouldn't be limited by City staff opinions.*

Sometimes district/community councils' ideas influence City staff and officials.

- *How can the HLU Committee include council persons from Wards 3 and 4 in its plan update discussions?*
- *Action steps:*
 - HLU Committee members should get familiar with the current 10 Year Community Plan, and come with questions, ideas for a future meeting. Consider, for example, what has worked, what hasn't?
 - Alexa will provide a flow chart showing the steps in updating, approving, and acting on the 10 Year Community Plan.
 - Alexa will find out whether/how PED can support the HLU Committee's plan update work.

Advice from HLU Committee members who have been through the Plan update process: prioritize! Some parts of the plan do not need to be revised. Some parts are best addressed by other Macalester Groveland Community Council committees.

2. Announcements:

- Frost Fest, which was to be held on 1/27/24, was cancelled because of site conditions.
- The next Macalester Groveland Board meeting will be on 2/15/24.
- Home Improvement Workshop Day will be in March. Alexa will send out a call for volunteers.
- The best strategy for contact Councilperson Jalali is to email her aide Doua.Yang@ci.stpaul.mn.us .

Meeting adjourned.