

**West Washington Park Neighborhood Association
Minutes from the October 2006 General Meeting**

Lincoln Elementary School

Date: October 3, 2006

Time: 5:30 PM – 8:00PM

The October General Meeting was held at Lincoln Elementary School. Over 50 members and guests attended. An open house was held in the school cafeteria. Guests were free to visit various booths that were of interest to them. In addition to obtaining information from WWPNA committees, guests were able to talk to representatives from Denver Recycles, the Washington Park Recreation Center, and the Lincoln Elementary School PTA. Political candidates also provided information.

Two breakout sessions were held from 7:00 – 8:00.

One session focused on **educating our neighborhood children**.

Guest Speakers:

1. Ann Greenfield: Principal of Merrill Middle School. Ann also spent some time representing Grant Middle School.
2. Paula Ortlieb: Member of Lincoln Elementary CSC.
3. Carleen Evanhoff: Citizen liaison to South High School.
4. Cheryl Bezio-Gorham: Director of the South High School Foundation.

Each guest speaker provided a 10-15 minute overview of their school with emphasis on the school's strengths. An open discussion forum followed the school introductions. It was the overwhelming consensus of the speakers that the biggest strength of the neighborhood schools is diversity. For example, 1/3 of Merrill's student population is from other countries. Lincoln Elementary has a very diverse population in terms of both race and economic status. The South High School student body represents 64 different countries and 50 different languages. South High has also organized the South High Foundation. The Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization established to raise money on behalf of South and fund school related projects.

One of the major discussion topics posed to the guest speakers was "What can neighborhood residents do to support or improve your school?" Again, the response was unanimous. Every school needs tutors, volunteers, and mentors. Finally, all schools agreed that they are interested in becoming community partners with WWPNA to improve the Neighborhood schools and build a sense of community around our schools.

Jamin suggested the idea of developing a regular meeting schedule to discuss issues among the schools and create a mission or purpose for the group. Jamin also agreed to look into the possibility of creating a new WWPNA Committee focused on developing partnerships with our neighborhood schools.

The other session focused on **neighborhood character**.

Two members of the city Planning Department attended. Tyler Gibbs is a Manager of Planning. Caryn Wenzare is the city planner for our neighborhood. Jim Jones facilitated a discussion about the future of the 800 square foot house in our neighborhood. Participants were asked to provide opinions on various questions.

When asked if people prefer scrape-offs or rehabilitation (renovation, often increasing the size of the structure), the majority preferred rehabilitation of a structure. Accessory structures, such as carriage houses, were discussed. Some participants are in favor of such structures. Others are concerned over the increase in density and how to monitor the structures to prevent them from becoming rentals. Expansion of the main structure was seen as more desirable, especially if a family has small children. Basements are an easy way to expand and don't add to the footprint of the house or change the view from the street.

The following features are ranked on a three-point scale (***) means most of the participants agreed, ** means about half of the people agreed and * means less than half of the participants agreed).

- ** Maintain streetscape
- ** Preserve backyard open space
- * Maintain the current height of structures
- ** Want a 1500 square foot home
- * Want a 2000 square foot home

People are willing to trade off height to maintain streetscape and open space. The participants acknowledged that you have to allow for new construction and hopefully new construction will be thoughtfully done.

- *** Preserve the side setback

The distance between structures is more important than the actual location on the property. Consensus was not reached on whether new structures should follow the setback of older structures or follow the current zoning code.

** Need flexibility in side setbacks. Need to acknowledge the smaller lots (25 foot frontages are common in our neighborhood).

- * Need to be able to build a full second story

How can we encourage use of basement space? How can we incent homeowners to use off-street parking?

Neighborhood characteristics that the participants felt were important:

- Brick exteriors
- Flagstone sidewalks