LNA Housing Committee Hello and Update—

Good Afternoon, committee members and interested neighbors. My name is Sarah Linnes-Robinson, and I am working with the Lyndale Neighborhood Association as the Acting Director for the rest of 2021. If you weren’t aware, Brad took another position and started mid-March, at which time I began a job-sharing arrangement with LNA. I have worked with the Kingfield Neighborhood Association for the past two decades and have officed out of the Lyndale office space, now called the South Nicollet Action Center, for the past year. It is likely I have not met you yet, however, as the entire year has been the COVID-shutdown, but I do look forward to putting a face to your names in the coming year.

My duties with LNA are to support the Board of Directors and assist them with planning and visioning for the future, and to support the committees involved with Housing, Safety, and the Environment. Erin Cary, who I am sure you all know, is serving as the Associate Program Director and will be responsible for implementing the programs and projects, whereas I am working more at the planning level.

With this background, and related to Housing, I wanted to update you on two things:

1. There will not be a committee meeting in April. I have discussed this with Ed and he agreed that since no decisions are required on projects there was not a need to meet. That being said if you REALLY want to talk housing, Ed is willing to hold the space online and talk with you but it is not an official committee meeting and I cannot be there to attend.

2. You might have noticed that Wells Fargo has been razed. Since starting with LNA I have been in three meetings related to the development of this site. This has been both unexpected by me as I did not know this project was on the immediate horizon (or more literally in the port!), and also an exciting time for me to be working with you in Lyndale on this project. The meetings to date have been a bit circular, but I assure you that a community engagement process is being put into place that will start this summer and carry on for a number of months. I can tell you that Wells Fargo has selected a developer (PPL) and is selling the land to them. The development will include at least 200 units of affordable housing and commercial space, including a branch bank of Wells Fargo. There is a community engagement team that is working with PPL to design a broad process focused on designing this site (and the broader area) into a vibrant, integrated cultural and economic area that offer opportunities for residents to shop, learn, engage, build skills, build wealth, and build connections in community.

Right now we are picturing a core team of residents from the 5 surrounding neighborhoods working together to help communicate to their communities about this vision and the project. I will be putting together two things related to this: a list of stakeholder groups that should be involved and invited to this process (your help on gathering this information for groups and also potential individuals would be really helpful!), and also an application for these stakeholders to apply for this position to represent LNA. Some of you might be interested in applying for this volunteer leadership role.

We will have more clarity about the roles and responsibilities later this week. I will stay in touch with you as I learn more but for now you can expect that this will be one of the subjects at the April 26 LNA General Membership meeting which begins at 6:30 PM.

The South Nicollet Action Center remains closed at this time due to COVID and at this time we do not anticipate a change to that status for multiple months. Although I office from here, if you want to reach me the best way is contact me by my cell phone which is 612-791-7081; text or voicemails are fine on this personal device.

Sarah