

**MINUTES OF GREATER GOLDEN HILL PLANNING COMMITTEE (GGHPC)
SPECIAL MEETING
August 12, 2015**

Present: Ruchell Alvarez (Chair), David Strickland (Vice Chair), Cheryl Brierton, Mike Burkart (Elections), Janice Davis, Sabrina DiMinico, Melissa Serocki, Pastor Thomas Sims, David Swarens

Absent: Richard Santini

Also Present:

- *Bernie Turgeon, Senior Planner**
- *Tait Galloway, Principal Planner**
- *Molly Chase (for City Councilman Todd Gloria)**
- *Members of the Public**

I. Special Meeting called to order by Chair at 6:35 p.m.

The Chair announced that persons seeking to run for vacancies on GGHPC were required to have signed in as attending 2 GGHPC meetings.

II. Action Item-- Community Plan Update Draft, Urban Design & Implementation Elements

ACTIONS TAKEN DURING the course of the meeting:

***Alvarez moved, Diminico seconded. Table Urban Forestry to the September 2015 agenda. Motion carried, unanimous.**

****Strickland moved, Brierton seconded. Table section 3.53 (noise control in residential/commercial zone overlaps) to September. Motion carried, unanimous.**

****Due to time constraints arising during the meeting, the Chair limited all comments to the Urban Design Element only.**

****Alvarez moved, Sims seconded. Continue Urban Design and Implementation Plan Update Elements to August 26, 2015 Special Meeting, 6:30 pm at Golf Course Clubhouse. Motion carried, with Strickland abstaining.**

****The Chair set Special Elections to fill 4 vacancies to be held August 26, 2015 from 5 to 6:15 pm, before the Special Meeting. There were 6 announced candidates: Richard Baldwin, Victoria Curran, John Kroll, Melinda Lee, Matt Settles, & Dr. Andrew Zakarian.**

The Chair further announced that others may also run as write-in candidates if they have met the 2-meeting-attendance requirement.

****The Chair indicated that comments for GGHPC member Brierton, who cannot attend the September meeting, would be provided with the noticed September agenda.**

A. PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Chair first called for comments from the public. The Chair indicated her intent to set up a binder with comments.

***Natalie Massey, who lives on A St/Edgemont, expressed concern about apartments rumored to be built on Edgemont.**

***Mike Grubey commented on the Mobility Element (scheduled to be heard in September)**

--Left turn lane at 30th between Grape and Beech

--Same issue on 31st Street

***Matt Settles raised issue of urban blight.**

***Ben Anderson, owner of 2 properties at 32nd St/Broadway/ C St, commented on the Land Use Element (scheduled to be heard in September). Anderson expressed opposition to proposed down zoning from Medium High to Medium Low.**

***Tershia D'Elgin, residing on C Street near Edgemont, could not attend. The Chair permitted D'Elgin's written comments to be read into the record as follows:**

--PUTTING TEETH TO PLANS

"I am very grateful to all concerned for loving our existing community, for the wisdom and professionalism that led to these thoughtful recommendations, and imbuing Golden Hill's future with such a promising future in the Golden Hill Community Plan Update. So lucky to live with such great people, I found myself getting tearful while reading! I regret that I couldn't help, and I feel "outta line" to have input at the nth moment. Please forgive me. Please accept my profound respect. Good job!

"Throughout the Urban Design element/section, the word "should" appears, conveying a recommendation but not a requirement. My understanding of "policies" is that they are not enforceable either. So I guess, (without knowing) that outcomes will occur based on the Implementation section. Not being a zoning wiz, I don't understand how zoning will make the visions detailed in Urban Design (and elsewhere in the Plan, I assume) happen. What are the Plan Updates' teeth"? And how can I help?

"I am unnerved to see residential infill imposed on the community (such as the development at 29th and C Street, on a wetland) without:

"1) Adequate parkland. There should be a moratorium on residential infill until Golden Hill has parks, not park equivalencies, PARKS.

"2) Basic municipal services, like courteous neighborhood police, street trashcans with pick up, and street-sweeping (with requirements not to park there on certain days). South of A Street (particularly east of 30th) is filthy, unsafe, given to homelessness, fire and crime. To add more people here without these basic municipal services is outrageous.

"3) At least two parking places per unit, and at least one parking place per bedroom,

"4) Strongly enforced setbacks and increased tree canopy,

"5) Graywater reclamation and reuse for landscape, and

"6) Park-development fees imposed on infill developers.

"If the zoning and guidelines in the draft Implementation section do not now lead to these outcomes (e.g. teeth), where and how can I help to make them happen?"

"This rant does not diminish my awe for the tremendous achievement already at hand. Bravo, update committee, and thank you so much."

--TERSZIA D'ELGIN RE URBAN TREES

--"Parkways for trees should be 4 ft or more; some existing parkways are fewer than 4 ft. The City's main street tree list (from which I'm assuming GH's was culled) attributes certain-sized trees to designated parkway widths.

--"higher trees should be discussed with SDGE; Not so much "negotiated." The City's main street tree list corresponds to height limitations worked out with SDGE, but because SDGE is undergrounding overhead wires, higher growing trees (like the peppermint) would be great. These "lollipop trees" like crepe myrtle and the orchid tree are annoying, but with overhead wires, the choices are fewer. Maybe revisit the list after the undergrounding is completed. Don't know the list-makers' determination vis a vis undergrounding.

--"peppermint trees are OK in 4-foot rights of way (like C Street);

--"sycamores should not be planted in parkways; If we had seven-foot parkways at the bottom of hills, with swales or curb cuts so stormwater water could flow into them, sycamores would be great. Those trees on the Cabrillo Hwy (163) going through Balboa Park, are sycamores. A great place for sycamores would be down at the mouth of 34th St Canyon (Juniper Cyn) if it ever had sidewalks with swales and curbcuts.

--"the community plan already has native coast live oak, but it needs to be added on the Forest Advisory Board list; The GH plan only has coast live oak for unimproved areas. It would work great for sidewalks with swales along C Street, and along Delevan (along I-15-94 intersection)"

B. COMMENTS BY SENIOR CITY PLANNER BERNIE TURGEON

--The Urban Design Element was first drafted by a consultant. Turgeon added numerous changes based on community input (e.g., Public Views, Canyons, Open Space, Hillsides, Urban Trees, Green), plus photos/images.

--Turgeon provided hard copies of the latest version of the Draft

Community Plan for GGHPC members, with extra copies for public reference at the meeting. Turgeon also provided handouts (Summary of topics; Project review thresholds, Planned Development Ordinance, Recommendations).

--Turgeon introduced his new boss, City Principal Planner Tait Galloway. Galloway noted that a new Senior Urban Forester is due to start on Monday. In response to later questions, Galloway indicated he was not inclined to allow any extensions of the November 12 deadline for community input.

C. COMMENTS BY GGHPC MEMBERS

1. MIKE BURKART-COMMENTS

Page 50. Bungalow courts – 29-22 units/acre? – this is higher than apartments (on page 51)

Page 55. Policies – Neighborhood Gateways – include w. Broadway (across I5) for lights and signs

Page 56. Fig 4.1 – View corridor also north-south? I recommend 25th Street (among others)

Page 64 UD-2.49 Plant trees on 25th st

2. DAVID SWARENS-COMMENTS

*** Introduction.**

Page 46, column 2, para 3

"---new development in GH is not expected to duplicate--established scale."

I question why not?

Since that scale is a distinguishing and character defining feature of our community, and is called out repeatedly in the Plan, including on the next page, where it states, as a Plan Goal : "New development that contributes to, and is compatible with existing fine grained development patterns--- that gives the community its--charm" (page 47, column 1 (in box), bullet point 5)

*** Page 49, sec 4.1**

Question conclusion re "long alley blocks" impacting walkability; as most of these are narrow as well as long.

I have always found (some of) these areas to be eminently "walkable", e.g. along "A" street and south, going E and W.

***Page 53. UD-2.4, A**

Review lot consolidation policy and conclusions.

Lot consolidations are almost always destructive of the fine grain scale and community character development patterns, whether mid block or "bookending" at corners.

While there may be locations where consolidation is appropriate, and it can (theoretically) be done well (enough), lot consolidations should not be encouraged, and should always, if permitted, be subject to a higher level of review (discretionary).

Consolidations, in addition to affecting character and scale (of development patterns), also encourage the removal of existing development, which is often the vintage or historic structures which contribute so to our community character.

*** Page 54, UD-2.5**

Reconsider recommendation re "build up prominent street corners".

Section is illustrated with an image of the Quartermass/Wilde house, an historic site with substantial setback, and oriented to its corner site.

This is not the type of development this policy would encourage, and could prove quite harmful to community character.

*** Page 55, column 1, UD-2.10**

Concur with conclusion "Gateways should be generally focused in predominately commercial area--"

While there may be other appropriate locations (see UD-2.12), gateways characterize public, rather than domestic (residential) zones, and send the wrong message about development, community, and appropriate activity in an area.

*** Page 56. Figure 4-1: Urban Design Concept Map.**

I have general misgivings about the "City of Villages" program, and the ability (often stated) for communities to define for themselves "what a Village means"

But I have very specific concerns about the use of "Village" identifier for the area bounded by Beech St., Fern Street, Cedar St (inclusive) and the 30th St corridor (plus some).

This area is a true "village", and is comprised of generally well kept, mostly single family, homes and successful businesses.

It is also entirely within the proposed "South Park Historic District", and most of the homes and businesses are in buildings which will be district contributors.

It is an area that grew organically, with a symbiotic relationship between residences, businesses and transit (street car), and does not require large scale intervention to be successful. And any such intervention would be profoundly destructive of an area already defined by historic structures and community (and visitor) activity.

*** Page 66-71**

Urban Forest/Street Trees.

Please add a more explicit cultural heritage thread to this part of the UD element;

Especially, but not limited to, Historic Districts and proposed future Districts (Golden Hill, South Park, C&T).

Large parts of our community were developed prior to 1930, and are characterized, as noted elsewhere in the draft Community Plan, in the Urban Design element and in other elements, by a historic built and designed environment,

This context includes landscape as well as structures, and the plan should serve these resources also.

Existing mature street trees should be identified (as a plan goal, if not by actual survey) and preserved.

Some may qualify as "heritage trees" or even for historic designation, but in general they should be recognized as a resource.

And a "Historical/Cultural" planting palate should be developed to enhance and interpret historic areas.

Plant choices vary by fashion over the decades, with periods of popularity, and even availability/introduction.

(I provided City staff with a spread sheet of the City street tree list, expanded to include citations for many species; these document the availability or popularity of a number of trees, and not necessarily the date of their introduction. I also provided other related material to staff)

Such a palate would add additional depth to the interpretation and appreciation of our most historic areas, and the existing trees show evidence of true "sustainability" having weathered decades, sometimes a century or more, of neglect, abuse, and drought, in our very own micro-climate.

The years of (greater) Golden Hill's development represent a period of expansive growth of our horticultural heritage, so this would not be a limited list, rather a more focused one.

3. PASTOR THOMAS SIMS

No comments

4. DAVID STRICKLAND--COMMENTS (FROM MY NOTES ONLY--CAN SUBSTITUTE DAVE'S SUMMARY UPON RECEIPT)

--Plan Update has good attention to Golden Hill/South Park Character;
--Notes shared content with North Park and Uptown Community Plans;
--Short tree heights (under 25 ft) should be revisited in light of undergrounding;
--Views (page 57)-include public views to Mexico;
--Utility vaults/transformers should be moved underground. [Turgeon responded that this is addressed in the Mobility Element, but Turgeon will add more context in the Introduction.]
--Typos (e.g., pine genus)
--24th Street-trees differ on one side from the other. Move line to unify both sides of corridor streets, add more trees to neighborhood list.

5. CHERYL BRIERTON--COMMENTS

1. LIST OF GREATER GOLDEN HILL PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS (NOT Greater Golden Hill Planners Committee).

Should include all who have participated in Community Plan Update over the past few years, and alphabetized to eliminate duplications.

[Ruchell Alvarez, Richard Baldwin, Susan Bugbee, Michael Burkart, Maureen Burke, Ashley Christiansen, Carole Coffey, Janice Davis, Sabrina DiMinico, John Kroll, Kelly Sanderson, Richard Santini, Melissa Serocki, Pat Shields, Pastor Thomas Sims, David Skillman, Marie Skillman, David Strickland, David Swarens, Matt Thomas, Angela Vasconcellos.] Are there others who should be on this list?)

(Comment by Turgeon: Scott Glazebrook has been moved to Community Plan Update Committee.)

2. URBAN DESIGN

Note: My recommendations primarily relate to emphasizing Greater Golden Hill's small scale, canyon and view protections, avoiding fire hazards in light of climate change, and safeguarding sidewalk and street mobility.

P. 46 *Introduction. Include key/summary aspects relating to the community's small scale (even if appearing elsewhere):

--Total population 15,845 in 7,284 dwelling units; estimated future population of 22,085 (by when?)

--Numerous single family and low density multi-family lots with front/side setbacks (see also, page 50, Lot Patterns)

--Height limitations

***Clarify: views are to ocean and bay, Balboa Park, Mexico (see also, page 56, 59)**

P. 47, Table 4-1. Add: Climate Change; Multiple Species Conservation: Historic Districts; Airport Compatibility; Very High Fire Severity Zones

P. 52, 4-2.

*** Add: Protection of canyons, hillsides, open space, views (ocean as well as bay);**

***Eliminate: Reference to building a pedestrian bridge across protected open space in 32nd Street Canyon. GGHPC has instead supported a pedestrian bridge from Golden Hill to Balboa Park.**

***Add: reference to improving parking in commercial lots (see also page 54, UD 2.8);**

***Add: trash pickup at trailheads of protected canyons/open space**

P.55

***UD 2.10-Gateways. Add 26th Street/Golf Course Drive, and Golf Course Drive/28th Street (signage already in place);**

***UD 2.10.E Specify that any increase in building height for corner lots shall not exceed 3 stories;**

***UD 2.13 Not sure about gateway element at shift in streets at Grape & 30th/Fern. Is this consistent with GGHPC traffic concerns at intersection?**

***UD 2.14 Add: Restaurants/cafes may not appropriate all sidewalk space or impair disabled mobility/access--railings and planters are required. (Cross-reference p. 63/add policy);**

P.56, Figure 4-1.

***Add north/south view corridors: 25 Street Bay-Park link; 32nd Street Canyon; 34th Street Canyon; (See also page 46, 57)**

***Commercial node on 30th & C. I don't believe GGHPC supported this, due to traffic issues. Semi trucks are already barely able to make turns.**

***Clarify: What are letters A thru O?**

P. 57, Public Views.

***UD 2.18. Add: 32nd Street Canyon, 34th Street Canyon, 25th Street Bay/Park (see also, page 46 & 56);**

***Add: Views to Pacific Ocean, Balboa Park (see also, page 46, 59)**

***Isn't Switzer Park in North Park only? If so, should be eliminated**

P.58,

***UD 2.22: Add: Development should maintain and enhance public vistas into the canyons**

***UD 2.23 Add: Need for fire resistant landscaping and building**

materials (e.g., fire-retardant treated wooden decks, fences, defensible space)

***UD 2.24: Add: Development should minimize fire hazards in Very High Fire Severity Zones**

P.60,

***Operations Yard (20th & B) : Isn't this where GGHPC would like a pedestrian bridge from Golden Hill to Balboa Park? (see also, page 166)**

Page 61

***Add reference to historic district**

Page 65, Streetscape

***This section needs to address/cross reference the parking problems and traffic backups, especially getting on/off freeways (I-94, I-5)**

Page 66, Urban Forest.

***Emphasize need for tree planting programs to focus on native trees that are fire and drought resistant, with root systems least likely to crack adjacent sidewalks, impair mobility, and result in high water and trimming costs to avoid impairing public views**

***The chart on pages 69-70 should add a reference indicating which listed trees meet the above criteria**

***P. 68, UD 2.54 should add the need to consider costs of water and trimming**

***Is there not a program to designate certain trees as historic. Could this be referenced?**

P.72, Policies

***Ensure that designs/setbacks are appropriate for Very High Fire Severity Zones**

Page 73,

***UD 3.6. Trees to be drought resistant, not fire hazards, not impairing public views**

***UD 3.12 Add: Roofs must avoid creating fire hazards to own and adjacent properties**

***UD 3.15: Add: and appropriate for Very High Fire Severity Zones**

P. 74,

***UD 3.17: Add: drought resistant, fire resistant**

***Add: trees from one property not allowed to impinge on neighboring properties or impose costs (such as trimming, roots intrusion) without written permission from adjacent property owner;**

Page 75,

***UD 3.18.B Rain barrels: These must be covered to prevent breeding/spread of mosquito-borne illnesses (West Nile, Dengue, Chikungunya), especially given climate change**

Page 84

***UD 3.53 [Ask Geri if noise from commercial/residential overlap addresses her concerns]**

Page 87, UD 3.61.

***Chain fencing should not be completely prohibited. May be best option to prevent fire hazard near canyons/open space. (Not sure about cyclone fencing.)**

***Specify that where vegetation is used as property marker, must be kept well watered to avoid fire hazard.**

Page 89:

***Add Policy to promote designs with indoor/outdoor living areas.**

***UD 3.69. Change: signs must be visible for vehicles as well as pedestrians, for safety reasons.**

6. MELISSA SEROCKI--COMMENTS (based on my notes only--can substitute her summary upon receipt)

***Would like to revisit/keep open adherence to strict timelines for discussion of Elements**

***P. 48, Clarify designation of canyon blocks at Hawthorn/Ivy/Alley**

***P. 53, Lot consolidations go against fine grain; 50 max linear feet street frontage? (vs 2 lots 100 ft). (Swarens: make consolidation subject to discretionary review?)**

***P. 56, Clarify Open Space overlap with homes; letters need to be**

corrected. [Turgeon: These originally corresponded to list on page 52.]

***P. 70, Why 20-ft limit for awnings?**

***30th Street should also be a north/south view corridor.**

7. SABRINA DIMINICO--COMMENTS (based on my notes only--can substitute her summary upon receipt)

***P. 52, Clarified lid park over freeway.**

***P. 55, Gateway at Gala Foods site? Not defined--Commercial, landscaping, fine grain? Conflict with traffic concerns? Strickland suggested it is more a community focal point (like 30th & Beech, others). Discussion: Should there be focal points with design restrictions? Swarens commented that the whole City of Village concept is unclear.**

***The view corridor down Fern to the clock at Grape is a key community asset.**

8. JANICE DAVIS

No comments