

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
MISSION VALLEY PLANNING GROUP**

August 07, 2013

MEMBERS PRESENT

Marla Bell
Deborah Bossmeyer
Paul Brown
Gina Cord
Bob Cummings
Monica Davis
Perry Dealy
Robert Doherty
Randall Dolph
Alan Grant
John LaRaia
Elizabeth Leventhal
John Nugent
Doris Payne-Camp
Marco Sessa
Dottie Surdi
Josh Weiselberg

MEMBERS ABSENT

Jason Broad
John Carson
Alex Plishner
Brittany Ruggels
Karen Ruggels

GUESTS

Kurt Carlson
Mark Carpenter
Emily Hubbard
Anitha Hughes
Mohty Hughes
Kathleen Ferrier
Rob Hutsel
Kathy Lippitt
Olicia Moya
Rick Wilson

FEDERAL REP'S STAFF

Jonathan Hardy

CITY STAFF

Lx Fangonilo
Brian Schoenfisch
Robin Shifflet

COUNTY STAFF

Katie Judd
Hanna Kite

ASSEMBLY STAFF

President Dottie Surdi called the regular meeting of the Mission Valley Planning Group (MVPG) to order at 12:02 p.m. at the Mission Valley Library Community Room located at 2123 Fenton Parkway.

A. CALL TO ORDER

Verify Quorum – 14 members were present, constituting a quorum.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Deborah Bossmeyer led the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. INTRODUCTIONS / OPENING REMARKS/ AGENDA CHANGE

Dottie Surdi welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded those present to sign the sign in sheets.

Guests introduced themselves.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Doris Payne-Camp moved to approve the minutes of the July 10, 2013 regular meeting. Perry Dealy seconded the motion. Minutes were approved 11 – 0 – 3, with Marla Bell, Bob Cummings, Robert Doherty abstaining.

E. PUBLIC INPUT – NON-AGENDA ITEMS

No items

F. MEMBERSHIP BUSINESS – John Nugent

No business at this time.

G. TREASURER’S REPORT

Bob Doherty reported a balance of \$1,414.43.

H. PUBLIC SAFETY REPORTS

1. Police Department – Officer Holland (Holly) Tafoya
Officer Holly was not present-No report.

2. Fire Department – No report.

I. GOVERNMENTAL STAFF REPORTS

1. Mayor’s Office

No report.

2. State Representatives

a. Senate Member’s Office – Sen. Marty Block from the 39th Senate District 1.
Ralph Dimarucut was not present. No report.

b. Assembly Member’s Office – Shirley Weber from the 79th Assembly District
George Gastil was not present. No report.

3. Federal Representatives

a. Congresswoman Susan Davis’ Office --

Jonathan Hardy distributed the August 2013 “Davis Dispatch” and reviewed Congresswoman Susan Davis sponsorship of an Arts Grant Workshop on Tuesday August 27, 2013. Also on Tuesday August 27, 2013 Congresswoman Susan Davis will host a Marriage Equality Town Hall meeting. Further information can be found at:

www.house.gov/susandavis

b. Congressman Scott Peters' Office – Sarah Czarrecki was not present. No report.

J. NEW BUSINESS

1. Union Tribune Site Pocket Park- Peary Dealy (Action Item)

Perry Dealy introduced Mark Carpenter from KTU+A who reviewed the Union Tribune development project with a focus on the pocket park portion as part of the City of San Diego General Development Plan for Population-Based Parks requirement.

The project will include approximately 250,000 s.f. of office space, 191 residential units, and 1,727 parking stalls.

A majority of the presentation focused on the relationship of the project to the river and the San Diego River Park Master plan, including:

- o Esplanade along the river, including a café.
- o Relationship of pocket park in relation to rest of project, river and river trail.
- o Design features of Public pocket park

After the presentation Doris Payne-Camp offered the report of the MVPG Parks subcommittee regarding the project. The report is:

The Sub-Committee met on August 5, 2013, to review the draft plan for the Union Tribune's new mini park that will be built in conjunction with the development's new residential tower.

Sub-committee members present were Marla Bell, John Nugent, Gina Cord and Doris Payne-Camp. (Elizabeth Leventhal, Alan Grant and Subcommittee Chair Jason Broad were absent) Guests present were Robin Shifflet, City of San Diego Park Designer, Perry Dealy representing the developer, and Mark Carpenter from KTU+A Planning + Landscape Architecture.

While most sub-committee members had attended the two public meetings to gain community input on initial mini park designs, this was the first meeting of the sub-committee with the developer and park designer.

Mark Carpenter presented plans for the .28 acre park adjacent to the new UT development and responded to questions/comments from sub-committee members. This was followed by sub-committee discussion and a vote on a recommendation.

The Sub-Committee noted the following favorable elements:

- Given the park's small size and its proximity to large towers, it will be an area for quiet "passive" activities.
- There will be many deciduous trees in the park, some of them trees retained on the original site and a large specimen (most likely Sycamore) from the property that will be replanted as a focal point in the middle of the park.

- The park has three areas, each a different elevation (3' difference from one to the adjacent area). Terraced concrete seating will join an upper terrace and the central area. The upper terrace area will have fixed and movable seating of various heights which sub-committee members thought important to discourage vagrancy. The sub-committee felt that this terrace's proximity to the café would result in an area that would be well-used by tower residents and employees for eating, drinking, small group conversations, and reading. Classical music piped into this area would attract people to sit and enjoy the terrace and concrete steps going down to the next level. The concrete steps would have under seating lighting that would add to the ambiance of the area.
- Historical and interpretive elements will decorate the central section of the park. This area will include cubes/seating of alternative sizes and heights. The interpretive elements will highlight the history of the newspaper's ownership.
- An area at the entrance to the park could become a site for one of the City's new bike sharing stations. There are three areas for bike racks along the park's edge.

Some concern was expressed by sub-committee members about the following:

- While the park's size limits the uses for the site, one sub-committee member (particularly given discussions that occurred during the public meetings) hoped for a more creative and inspired design for the space that would make the park a greater attraction for those beyond project residents and employees. There are few such opportunities in Mission Valley and it is unfortunate not to take advantage of any of them. Some features that were identified for inclusion at the public meetings, but not included in the design, included a strong place-making focal point, water feature(s), large sculpture/public art, a more unexpected and contemporary design, unusual features/areas that pull pedestrians and bike riders into the space to explore it spontaneously.
- Concrete terraced steps/benches will join the central section of the park to the lower section which will also be used as an amphitheater and to meet the entire project's storm water on-site treatment filtering and storage requirements. Sub-committee members were assured that it is unlikely that this area will be flooded more than a few days a year, but it is not anticipated that it will be a well-manicured low-grass area. It is expected to be used by people walking leashed dogs and as a children's play area. While sub-committee members anticipate that few older children will live in the new UT residences, the joint use of this part of the park by dogs as their "potty" area (with bag stations) and by young children playing in the grass seemed unlikely to promote good health.
- There are no public restrooms in the park. The only restrooms will be in residences or inside retail spaces that abut the park.

A motion was made by Marla Bell to recommend approval of the park plan as presented. Gina Cord seconded the motion. The motion was approved 3-1.

After the subcommittee report, there was further discussion on the creation of a park in Mission Valley rather than a developer paying fees in lieu of developing the park, restrooms in the park, the homeless population, hours of the park, relation to the 100 year flood plain and how the park highlighted the San Diego River and River Park Trail.

Perry Dealy indicated that the design would include a separate or restricted children's play area from that of an on-lease dog area.

Doris Payne-Camp expressed her opposition to the plan based on the preferred plan being largely inconsistent with recommendations from the community meetings and because the plan does not take advantage of the opportunity to create a truly exceptional pocket park for Mission Valley.

John Nugent moved to approve the Union Tribune Pocket Park as part of the City of San Diego General Development Plan for Population-Based Parks requirement Marla Bell seconded the motion. The motion was approved 14 – 1 –2 with Doris Payne-Camp voting against and Deborah Bossmeyer and Perry Dealy abstaining.

K. OLD BUSINESS

1. Mission Valley Post Office Closure- Josh Weiselberg (Action Item)

Josh Weiselberg reviewed the United States Postal Service notice of 6/19/2013 regarding the proposal to close the Mission Valley Postal Store.

Josh Weiselberg reviewed the activities and community hearings this past month on the proposal to close the Mission Valley Postal Store and referred to the Union Tribune article of 8/7/2013 on the potential closure.

Josh indicated that any action taken by the MVPG would be largely symbolic as this is a Federal government issue but discussed his recommendations that a letter be drafted requesting that, at a minimum, accessible PO Box services continue to be conveniently located in Mission Valley and not redirected out of the community and that funds from the overfunded Postal Employee Retirement Account be redeployed for operational expense use, especially for keeping communities' storefront postal service outlets open.

There was discussion regarding the moving of the PO Boxes to Linda Vista, the finances of the US Postal Service, the importance of a Post Office as part of a community asset and the possibility that a decision has already been made to close the Mission Valley location.

Josh Weiselberg moved to send a letter to Ken Snavelly, the Postmaster, and Congresswoman Susan Davis requesting that an accessible location for PO Box services be retained in San Diego Mission Valley, at the very minimum. Gina Cord seconded the motion. The motion was approved 15 – 2 –0.

Josh Weiselberg moved that the MVPG send a letter to Congresswoman Susan Davis requesting her support and work on Congressional legislation to utilize the overfunded Postal Employee Retirement Account for operational expense use, especially for keeping communities' storefront postal service outlets open, like the one slated for closure in Mission Valley. Marla Bell seconded the motion.

After discussion regarding the appropriateness of the motion within the scope of the MVPG the motion was withdrawn.

2. City Planning Update

Brian Schoenfisch reported on the reorganized planning department with the new name of "The Planning and Neighborhood Restoration Department". The new director, Bill Fulton, is scheduled to attend, and speak, at the September 2013 MVPG meeting.

There was an inquiry regarding the Hazard Center Drive and bike/pedestrian path extensions. Brian reported that the bike/pedestrian path is scheduled for November 2013 while the road extension project is still working on drainage issues.

3. Council Office-District 7- Councilmember Scott Sherman

Lx Fangonilo introduced himself as the new representative due to Jack Straw's health issues.

4. Subcommittee Reports

- a. Design Advisory Board
Randall Dolph-No report

- b. Stadium Committee
Randall Dolph- No report

- c. San Diego River Coalition
Alan Grant reported that the July meeting included a presentation on the draft 2013 San Diego Integrated Regional Water Management Plan, with a special focus on the San Diego River Watershed.

The agenda for the August 16, 2013 meeting includes a midyear review of the Coalition's work plan.

- d. Community Planners Committee (CPC)
Dottie Surdi reported that she had attended the latest meeting and will distribute minutes when available
- e. Parks Subcommittee
See report as part of the Union Tribune project.
- f. Uptown Regional Bike Corridor Advisory Group
Brittany Ruggels was not present-No report.

g. Public Health, Safety and Welfare

Elizabeth Leventhal reported that Labor Ready project is still accepting donations of hard hats and gloves. <http://www.laborready.com/Worker-Stories>:

Elizabeth reported that the Commissioner to End Chronic Homelessness-Jennifer LeSar will speak at a future MVPG meeting.

5. Miscellaneous Mail

Mail, in the form of plans, was received from the Mission Valley Resort and was distributed to the Design Advisory Board subcommittee.

L. ADJOURNMENT – There being no further business to be brought before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 1:13 p.m. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, September 04, 2013 at 12:00 p.m. at the Mission Valley Library, Community Room.

John Nugent, Secretary