

Normal Heights Community Planning Group

APPROVED MINUTES

May 7, 2013, 6pm
Normal Heights Community Center

Meeting called to order at 6:02 P.M.

Board members present: Jim Baross, Judy Elliot, Joseph Fombon, Art Harrison, Scott Kessler, Nancy Lawler, Caroline McKeown, Richard Rios, Mark Rowland, Dan Soderberg, Frank Stappenbeck, Earlene Thom, Mark Lawler (appointed at this meeting), Alison Moss (appointed at this meeting).

Members absent: All 12 board members, plus 2 newly appointed board members were present at this meeting.

Community Members/Guests: Bill Conway, Bridget Druken, Adrian Granda, Caitlin Jafoua, Mark Lawler, Peggy Rose Levin, Leo Liffbrig, Anthony Mullen, Alison Moss, Noelle Pederson

Welcome and introductions

Non-agenda Public Comments

- Community member and SDSU/UCSD Graduate Student Bridget Druken commented that she would like to spearhead an effort to install more cross-walks along Adams Avenue, particularly at E. Mountainview, Wilson, Hawley, 34th, and 33rd Streets. This generated lively discussion and was generally agreed upon as a necessary improvement to our neighborhood and important for the safety of children attending the schools at Hawley/Adams. Scott Kessler reported that the AABA requested a traffic study from the City Traffic and Engineering Dept. for stop signs and cross-walks at Adams/34th and Adams/Hawley in Normal Heights, but the preliminary traffic study turned down the request. An informal working group was formed to pursue this issue - volunteer members include Bridget Druken, Frank Stappenbeck, Richard Rios, Art Harrison, Nancy Lawler, and Jim Baross. It was suggested the group talk to the North Park CPG member Diane Carlson, and former Normal Heights CPG member Risa Baron about their experiences getting cross-walks installed.

Modifications to Meeting Agenda

- No modifications to the agenda were requested in May 2013.

Approval of April 2013 Minutes

The draft minutes of the April 2013 meeting were distributed prior to the meeting. Two minor mistakes were found in the minutes – board member Judy Elliot was listed as present when she was in fact not present at the meeting, and the number of Adams Avenue tree grates lost to thieves was 7.5 and not 2 as previously reported. The Board unanimously approved the April 2013 minutes including these changes.

Government Representatives

- Adrian Granda from Council President Todd Gloria's office was present at this meeting. Adrian will be taking over the duties of Dion Aikers as the Normal Heights/Mid-City representative for Council President Gloria. Several community members and board

members asked Adrian questions, in particular about the Plaza de Panama project and the utility undergrounding that was scheduled to be discussed later in the meeting. Adrian informed us that the Plaza de Panama project “is dead” but that Mayor Filner has a new proposal that Council President Gloria supports and it is currently awaiting budget approval by the Parks and Recreation District. Adrian had no comment on the undergrounding project, but promised to look into it and report back to us next month. Adrian can be reached at agranda@sandigo.gov and also at the telephone number previously provided for Dionne.

Action Items:

- **New Board Members:** Jim Baross introduced Alison Moss and Mark Lawler to the NHCPG. Mr. Baross mentioned that he, with the Board’s approval, would like to appoint both of these eligible community members to interim positions on the Board, with their terms eligible for reelection in March 2014. Art Harrison formally motioned to appoint both Alison Moss and Mark Lawler to the Board; Judy Elliot seconded the motion. The Board then unanimously approved the motion to appoint both Alison Moss and Mark Lawler to the Board. Welcome Alison and Mark! Jim Baross informed the newly appointed Board Members that the required Community Orientation Workshop (“COW”) is available both online and in-person on May 18th.
- **Adams Unplugged Fundraising:** Scott Kessler reported on the overwhelming success of the Adams Unplugged event. The T-shirt sale booths were staffed equally by volunteers from both the CPG and the CA, earning each group \$70. It was unanimously decided to add this \$70 to the CPG account; Art Harrison reported that the CPG budget is now at \$730.50. The discussion continued with the AABA report on the Adams Unplugged event. There was some confusion about the content of information that could be distributed at the “T-shirt/Information” booths and in the future the CPG has access to a free information booth of its own at any Adams Ave event, however the t-shirt sales booths cannot have CPG or CA information handouts, fliers, petitions, etc. Scott also informed the group that the AABA is currently negotiating parking contracts with SDUSD and St. Didacus to add 180 parking spaces on Friday and Saturday evenings. This would alleviate the parking burden on the neighborhood. These discussions had no formal action.
- **Community Planners Amendment:** Jim Baross reported on the Community Planners Meeting and the proposed amendment to the decision process for capital improvement projects (CIP). Jim convincingly informed the group that these changes would reduce processing times and costs associated with making decisions on CIPs; community planning groups were asked to vote on whether the community planners should amend their process. Art Harrison moved to approve the changes and Judy Elliot seconded the motion. The board approved this motion with a vote of 12-0-2.
- **Code of Conduct:** There was lively discussion on the proposed Code of Conduct and whether it should be formally added to our by-laws or used as guidelines on how to treat each other. Mark Rowland moved to add the Code of Conduct to our by-laws and Mark Lawler seconded. Art Harrison had problems with the wording of the Code as written and also questioned whether it was in violation of the Brown Act. Dan Soderberg asked if the Encanto Community Planning Group that originally wrote this Code of Conduct had positive results and what the outcome has since been. Caroline McKeown pointed out that any by-law change needs city approval and if we are going to go through the effort, then we should form a group to rework our out-dated and obsolete by-laws in their

entirety. Art Harrison moved to amend the motion to make the Code of Conduct a “Recommended Decorum”, Judy Elliot seconded the motion, and Mark Rowland and Mark Lawler approved the amended motion. This amended motion was passed with a vote of 10-2-2.

- **Capital Improvement Project Annual Review (CIP):** Jim Baross informed the group that the CIP prioritization process will be underway again this summer/fall and that the CPG will again be responsible for receiving public input and re-prioritizing our list of potential CIP projects for Normal Heights. At this point, Jim introduced John Hartley, former City Council member and Normal Heights resident who gave a speech on how Normal Heights deserves the infrastructure it lacks and how we need to get the community organized and energize. This generated lively discussion on different projects that had been previously listed on our “CIP Wish List”. Judy Elliot commented that we already have all the inventory and surveys on what the neighborhood needs and wants, that we shouldn’t duplicate our efforts but instead we need people to support the existing CIP wish list. Caroline McKeown commented that instead of trying to get general community enthusiasm, we need to pick one project and then try to garner support for that project because people will come out to back a specific project like a dog park or library more than they will just be enthusiastic without focus; this comment garnered significant support. Art Harrison made “a special motion to limit debate to one comment per member,” no one seconded. John Hartley suggested forming an informal working group to bring together the people with history and any new interested, enthusiastic people to come up with a process for generating community support for CIPs. The volunteers were John Hartley, Judy Elliot, Gary Rose Weber, and significant number of community members. It is expected they will have an action item for the CIP process at the June meeting.
- **Summer Haitus:** Historically the NHCPG skips the July meeting due to the proximity to the Independence Day holiday. Mark Rowland moved to “go dark” and not have the CPG meeting on July 2nd, Caroline McKeown seconded. The board unanimously approved this motion.

Other Old and New Business and Informational Items:

- 1) Jim Baross reminded the Board that the Community Orientation Workshop (“COW”) is available both online and in-person on May 18th and that all Board members must take the COW within one year of being seated on the Board.
- 2) A general reminder was issued to the group to be mindful of the provisions of the Brown Act as it pertains to discussions between Board members.
- 3) Interested community members were encouraged to fill out and submit a membership application online, found on our website and on our Facebook page.
- 4) The Normal Heights Community Association Garage Sale was a great success and they are hoping to make it an annual event.
- 5) “Downtown San Diego” Town Hall Sessions are being held throughout the city – the Kensington/Normal Heights meeting is scheduled for May 30th at 5:30 at the Adams Rec Center. This generated some discussion - no one seemed to know what the meeting was about or why it was being held in a venue that only holds 25 people. Many community members are planning to attend.
- 6) Jim Baross reported that the Community Planners Committee has formed a subcommittee on the Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance Proposal. This could directly affect Normal Heights property owners in that the minimum lot size would be reduced, potentially increasing neighborhood density.

Committee Reports:

- **Utility Undergrounding Update:** Mark Rowland provided a committee report on the Overhead Utility Undergrounding Project. Kensington has submitted a moratorium to the City and it is assumed that since Normal Heights was scheduled after Kensington, we could be next in line. There was significant discussion on the undergrounding, many of it that has been said before but repeated for newer and/or uninformed community members. SDGE continues to respond that “every community is different” and it is not clear if they want to work with the communities to get a mutually beneficial outcome. A subcommittee has been formed that is trying to start a dialogue between the community and SDGE – can we partner with them, can the subcommittee meet regularly with SDGE, and can we have an open dialogue? It is not clear if this can happen, and if not we might have to follow in Kensington’s footsteps, but we would rather not have it come to that, and we are willing to work with SDGE if they are willing to work with us. Clearly there will be more news on this subject at future meetings, and likely an action item, particularly if our start date is expedited.

Next meeting: June 4, 2013

Meeting Adjourned at 7:55 P.M.