



NORTH PARK PLANNING COMMITTEE
URBAN DESIGN/ PROJECT REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE
www.northparkplanning.org

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES: Monday, Feb. 6, 2012 – 6 p.m.
North Park Recreational Center/ Adult Center, 2719 Howard Ave.

I. Parliamentary Items

A. Called to order/ Roll call*: Meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m.

Seated Board Members: Robert Barry (Chair), Cheryl Dye (Vice-Chair), Dionne Carlson, Vicki Granowitz, Peter Hill, Lucky Morrison, Rick Pyles

Seated Community Voting Members:**Ernie Bonn, Kitty Callen, Rob Steppke

Non-seated Board Members: NA

B. Modifications & Adoption of Agenda

Motion: Approve the Feb. 6, 2011 agenda. **Granowitz/Carlson 10-0-0**

C. Approval of Previous Minutes

Motion: Approve the Oct 3, 2011 minutes. Granowitz/Bonn **4-0-6 (Dye, Carlson, Morrison, Pyles, Steppke and Callen absent from Oct meeting)**

Motion: Approve Nov. 7, 2011 minutes **Dye/Barry 10-0-0**

D. Announcements:

Bonn announced that a special meeting of the Uptown Planners Group will be held Feb 14 devoted to the Plaza de Panama project

II. Non-agenda Public Comments

Anthony Bernal of Todd Gloria's office announced that street slurry seals and overlays are being installed in District 3 financed by last year's bond offering. Once the streets are overlaid the City will put in markings for bike paths and cross walks. This usually takes 3-4 weeks.

Bonn asked about the status of the parking Pilot Project on Kansas street which installed head-on spaces, increasing total supply by 25 spaces. Dionne noted that the Pilot Project study requires the residents to "live with the spaces" for at least a year before a decision is made as to whether they stay. Mr. Bernal added that the person who has initiated a petition opposing the perpendicular parking indicated to him that he had also been the one to request the parking changes in the first place - in 2008. Further discussion was curtailed as the item was not agendized.

III. Information Items: None

IV. Action Items:

A. AT&T – Boundary St. (Public Right of Way), 4375 1/3 Boundary St, (Project No.

226649)

The AT&T consultant presented the project requesting a CUP and Site Development Permit for a wireless communication facility (Process 4) within the public right of way at Boundary and Mead. It entails construction of a 50 ft tower with enclosed antennas and a separate 250 sf above-ground equipment room. The facility is needed for coverage and capacity. AT&T looked at several sites and provided a site analysis to the City. Sites considered include the gas station at Iowa and Madison which was eliminated due to environmental (contamination) issues; a right-of-way site which was rejected due to overhead power lines and an easement; El Cajon Blvd. and Iowa which was determined to be too far south; a large apartment complex at Monroe Ave. off of I-805 freeway, rejected due to inadequate roof design in which to hide the equipment; and Christ church at 33rd St. which was found to lack antenna space. AT&T also looked at power poles but City restrictions and SDG&E limit the height to 12 ft below the power line.

There was much discussion regarding the City's policy adopted in 2005 which categorizes preferred siting of wireless facilities by zoning: commercial/industrial is most preferred, public right-of-way is second, and residential zoning is least preferred. The AT&T rep indicated no commercial/industrial property was available to meet their criteria. Much discussion followed regarding the lack of latitude that the Subcommittee and the City have as relates to these matters other than siting and design. Chair Barry explained that the FCC regulates wireless communications facilities and that if they comply with established radio frequency standards, radiation concerns cannot be used as basis for denial.

Audience member Martin, who lives 4 blocks from the proposed site, asked where Verizon and Sprint put their facilities. Applicant indicated that similar towers exist around the City; including a Sprint Towner at 39th St. and at Adams Park; and a Verizon tower on University. Engineers determine if a tower is needed based on the area being covered. Martin asked if the former gas station site at 3095 Madison were no longer contaminated would AT&T consider it, and indicated that he has photos showing site excavation (clean-up) has already occurred. Audience members also suggested consideration of a site on 32nd St.

Audience members pointed out that the proposed tower is even higher than surrounding 45 ft telephone polls. The tower is surrounded by residential uses, with a building only 80 feet away. Concerns were expressed regarding poor tower architecture lacking articulation and using cheap materials, and regarding the tower's negative effects on property values. An audience member pointed out that her condo code doesn't allow condo heights to exceed 30 ft., much less than the massive 50 ft tower. An attendee introduced herself as Property Manager for Forbes Realty and a resident of Iowa St. She read a letter from Mike Forbes stating that four design options had been proposed, each with a 50 ft tower. He asks that the tower be camouflaged. The AT&T rep reiterated that a faux pine tree had been submitted originally but was disliked by the City, which requested the tower design. She stated that AT&T is not married to the tower design and is open to working with the community. However, the Rep stated that the size and design of the above-ground equipment box cannot change.

Discussion followed regarding radiation concerns. Applicant explained that FCC regulates these matters and that studies years ago determined federal standards that must be met. The proposed project's emissions fall below the standard. She offered to provide anyone a radio frequency study which identifies the minimum required distance from the source of the radiation. In answer to a question, she noted that fiber optics are used to connect to landlines but cannot replace antennas. An audience member asked why the International Firefighters oppose siting these wireless facilities at the fire stations.

Committee members explained that the City cannot deny a project that is in compliance with FCC regulations but advised the audience to weigh in regarding the areas over which the City has control, i.e. facility location and design. Committee members suggested that residents recommend site options to city staff, contact their local and federal elected

officials, and exercise their right to appeal to the Planning Commission. The AT&T rep committed to asking the company's engineer how much lower the tower could go. Barry noted that due to UDPR suggestions the proposed expansion of the Plymouth Church tower was reduced from 40 to 50 ft.

It was noted that as the owner of the right-of-way, the City would receive rent for from AT&T. Steppke noted that Boundary St. received redevelopment money for entry improvements/landscaping at this very location and that the 50 ft tower is incompatible with these plans; and that the right-of-way area is part of the MAD but the City is unwilling to pay into the MAD for landscaping. Several committee members reiterated frustration regarding permitting limitations - especially within residential neighborhoods, and the need to revisit the former gas station site which may have been remediated. An audience member stated that if the AT&T proposal is approved there will be a resident law suit.

Motion: To deny the proposed project based on: 1) nonconformance with current community plans, including Redevelopment Project Area and MAD plans, 2) conflict with existing community character, 3) inadequate vetting of alternate locations, and 4) environmental justice principles, i.e. the proliferation of radiation emitting wireless facilities within North Park residential communities. **Granowitz/Barry 10-0-0**

B. Bennett Residence – 2420 Felton St. (Project N. 267043)

The proposal for construction of a retaining wall within a public right of way was presented by Mr. Brad Bennett, owner and architect. The project requires a Neighborhood Development Permit, Process 2, and consists of a retaining wall within the public right-of-way on a vacant lot at the Felton Street dead end. The property was a subdivided lot with no services on site. The property is level but sits 20 ft above Felton St. Between the property line and the unimproved street is 40 ft of right of way, requiring the owner to drive a up 20 ft in a 40 ft distance. The stacked-block retaining wall will line the driveway. Felton is paved but narrow - not a , full street. The City might vacate the street in the future but it could take a long time. There are no visible impacts to people living across the way. The neighbors are supportive.

Motion: To approve the Neighborhood Development Permit as requested **Carlson/Pyles 10-0-0**

C. Verizon - Grace Baptist Church – 3848 Georgia St. (Project No. 237295, Verizon Robinson & Park)

The project proposes a CUP for the installation of a wireless communication facility (Process 3). The Church fronts Georgia and is adjacent to University Ave. and the Georgia Bridge. The Verizon rep explained that three design options were being presented in response to the Subcommittee's previous comments, including: 1) toning down the prominence of the new cross on the church façade; 2) planting trees on University and Georgia Streets, and 3) better integrating the tower expansion design. She explained that in order to step the tower for additional relief, it would have to go up in height. The Committee was generally pleased with the improvements.

Motion: To approve the CUP as proposed in Design Option One (creating a white band around the top of the tower) **Granowitz/Callen 10-0-0**

D. Verizon – 4330 30th St. (Doc. Brown, Project No. 258726)

The project calls for a Neighborhood Use Permit for a wireless communication facility to be located within the existing clock tower of the Renaissance mixed-use development on 30th St and El Cajon Blvd. City staff has determined that the project does not negatively impact historic resources. Many tenants of Renaissance residential units attended and expressed opposition to the proposal. Attendees expressed concern that they were not notified

individually; some had seen a posted notice but no information regarding the location of the subcommittee meeting. Barry explained the review process, i.e. that in this case, staff makes the decision with appeal rights to the Planning Commission (within 10 days of the staff decision). Barry offered the names of staff contacts. A spirited discussion followed regarding the residents' concerns about radiation impacts and related regulations and processing requirements. Barry restated that a proposed project that is in compliance with FCC regulations related to radiation emissions, cannot be denied based upon radiation concerns.

Due to the need to vacate the building at 8:00 p.m., the agenda item was tabled to the next UDPR meeting.

Motion: To table the project until the next UDPR subcommittee meeting, scheduled for March 5, 2012 **Barry/Dye 10-0-0**

E. Plaza de Panama – Balboa Park, Draft Environmental Impact Report (Project No. 233958)

Motion: No action

VI. Unfinished, New Business and Future Agenda Items

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| A. Community Neighborhood Identification Sign Guidelines | No action |
| B. Wireless Communication Facility Projects | No action |
| C. North Park Planning Committee (NPPC) 2012 Goals | No action |

VII. Next scheduled meeting date: March 5, 2012

VIII. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m. **Barry/Dye 10-0-0**

* **Subcommittee Quorum:** Total seated members cannot exceed 13, with a maximum of 7 NPPC Board Members and 6 Community Voting Members. The majority of total seated members must be elected NPPC board members.

** **Community Voting Members:** Community members gain subcommittee voting rights after attending three subcommittee meetings. Elected Board Members have voting rights anytime.

For information about this subcommittee please contact Robert Barry at Robert.Barry@cox.net. The next meeting of the North Park Planning Committee is March 20, 2012, 6:30 pm, at the North Park Christian Fellowship, 2901 North Park Way (at 29th Street).