

Normal Heights Community Planning Group

Normal Heights Community Center at 4649 Hawley Blvd

Tuesday, May 6, 2008 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

A G E N D A

Welcome & Introductions – (though not required, please sign in on our attendance sheet)

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Public Comment (non-agenda items only, limit of 3 minutes per speaker)

Reports from Government Representatives or others may occur:

3rd City Council District Office – Monica Pelaez,

City Planning and Community Investment Dept. – Maxx Stalheim

76th Assembly District Office -- Melanie Cohn

Updates from other Normal Heights or Mid City organizations

Adams Ave. Business Association – Jim Schneider, Director

Adams Ave. Recreation Council –

Friends of Normal Heights Canyons - Creek to Bay Clean Up and the Friends of Normal Heights Canyons River Days event on Saturday, May 17. The next meeting is Wednesday, May 14, 7pm, at Cafe Cabaret - 3739 Adams

Information Items

1. City Council Candidate forum on Mid-City mobility that was held on May 1st, 5:30 p.m. at Metro Career Center, 3910 University Ave.
2. Comment from another Planning Group. It may be that the DSD Department, responding to the Mayor and the CPCI director, has created a climate wherein development applications are assigned to a lowest review level possible. Also, it used to be that applicants had to show that their applications met Land Development Code rules, now they are presumed conformant, unless staff finds a non-conforming feature it can't ignore. This may lead concerned citizens with more responsibility for careful review. An example of what happens when that attitude is cultivated in Development Services is shown in a recent Grand Jury report available at :
http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/grandjury/reports/2007_2008/DSD.pdf a portion of which, provided below, refers to a project we reviewed and recommended disapproval.

CASE STUDY #1: The Pacific Coast Office Building - The application for the Pacific Coast Office Building specified a building that would rise to nearly 200 feet—50 feet i.e., 33% higher than the recommended height limit in the Mission Valley Development Plan. The proposal recently rejected by the City Council would require an intrusion into dedicated open space to ensure a mandated 100-foot brush clearance zone. (Brush clearance zones can exceed 100 feet, but cannot be less.) The building site had been found to be an erosion and landslide hazard zone approximately 15 years ago. The proposal suggested, apparently with DSD approval, that this is not true, but the proposal calls for 160 feet of retaining wall. Various versions of a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) were prepared, but all seemed to contain errors of omission. When the City Council remanded one proposal to the Planning Commission, the Planning Commission merely approved it again; there is no indication that they carried out the rest of the Council's requests. The MND for

the proposal has now been rejected de facto by the City Council. (The City Council did not have enough yes votes at the meeting when the MND appeal was considered.)

Grand Jury recommendations included the following:

Other jurisdictions ensure that their community planning boards have a real role in discussing and approving large projects. The City of San Diego seems to value the contribution of such boards; but the 2004/05 San Diego County Grand Jury noted that the City frequently disregards community planning boards. To give them more clout, the City could require that any proposal opposed by the appropriate planning board be handled through Process Five. This measure should also help to reduce pressure on the DSD.

3. April 2008 Community Planners Committee meeting – Chair did not attend.
4. San Diego Capital Collaborative interview survey meeting between NHCPG Chair and Capital Collaborative CEO, Barry Schultz. Mission of Capital Collaborative “to increase the social and economic viability of San Diego’s urban neighborhoods by establishing a new industry standard for socially responsible investment of private capital in low and moderate income communities.”
5. A listing is provided below of some upcoming training workshops for planning group members. For a complete listing, please access the Development Services Department website at <http://www.sandiego.gov/development-services/news/events.shtml>. For registration call the City Planning & Community Investment Department at **619-235-5200**.

May 17, 2008 - Community Orientation Workshop (COW)

Location: 9192 Topaz Way, Kearny Mesa

Time: 8:00 a.m. - Noon, RSVP required to attend

Attendance by all elected planning group members at a COW session is required by City Council Policy 600-24, “Standard Operating Procedures and Responsibilities of Recognized Community Planning Committees.” It is also a great opportunity to hear dialogue about operations of community planning groups, and the generally required procedures. This is a 4-hour workshop that includes breakout sessions with speakers from a variety of City departments.

June 30, 2008 - Planning Committee Operations Workshop

Location: 9192 Topaz Way, Kearny Mesa

Time: 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m., RSVP required to attend

Each year City staff conducts a training session for community planning group chairs and vice-chairs to maximize meeting effectiveness. Topics of discussion include agendas, running the meetings, Council Policy 600-24 Administration Guidelines, and the Brown Act. The workshop is intended to assist chairs and vice-chairs in maximizing meeting effectiveness techniques. It's also a great opportunity to hear dialogue about generally required procedures, operations of other community planning groups, and to share planning group experiences and information with other chairs and vice-chairs.

September 30, 2008 - Development Services Department “What to Know When Reviewing Projects” Workshop - *Advanced Workshop*

Location: 9192 Topaz Way, Kearny Mesa

Time: 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m., RSVP required to attend

Council-recognized community planning groups have a role in the review of discretionary projects in

their community. This advanced development review training session is a follow-up to the basic session given at the 4-hour COW. This session will provide members with a higher level of understanding of the City's review process and additional techniques for providing effective comments to the City for consideration and inclusion with the decision makers' information on the project.

Action Items

1. Project Review –
 - a. 4846 West Mountain View, Map Waiver, PTS: 151733, JO#43-0494. To convert three existing residential units to condominiums on a 0.14 acre site, RS-1-7 zone. Proposing to waive requirements of a tentative map and a waiver for undergrounding overhead utilities. Identified key issues: parking spaces in the front yard setback; tenant 60 day notice; Building Conditions Report; pedestrian access to Unit 1; landscape plan.
 - b. Verizon Wireless project located on Bonnie Court, PTS 136385, to renew their use permit. The City apparently wants them to plant a street tree close to the community sign also initial review and comments that have been provided by community member Bob Forsythe will be provided at the meeting.
2. Planning Group member Jessica Oliver is resigning. A position is available.
3. Review and potentially approve NHCPG letterhead format. Examples to be provided.
4. Community Needs sub-committee to continue the development of Normal Heights Planning Group "wish list" for projects and prioritization. Members and attendees will review previous and new 'brain-storm' listings and discuss a prioritization process as time permits.

Committee Reports (All subcommittee meetings as scheduled are open to the public)

Housing –

1. Housing – (Holly Ritter) --
2. Community Needs – (Morris Dye) discussed above under Action Items
3. Facilities – Community Needs sub-committee reviewed and provided a prioritized items list the Mid-City financing plan. The update is to be submitted to Land, Use & Housing (LU&H) committee in May and heard by the City Council in June. Our priorities may need to be advocated further. City contact person is Cheryl Robinson, Facilities Financing Project Manager, City Planning & Community Investment, Ph (619) 533-3679, Fax (619) 533-3687, crobinson@sandiego.gov
4. Transportation (Morris Dye, Jim Baross) – I-15 Mid-City BRT Working Group continues reviewing potential projects. Next meeting May 13 at Metro Community Center 3910 University Ave.
5. Bylaws (position vacant) –
6. Canyons (Jeff Underwood) –
7. Library –
8. City Heights PAC – (Rudy Burlin)

New Business for the next meeting

Adjournment

Normal Heights Community Planning Group

MINUTES

Tuesday April 1, 2008
6:00PM
NH Community Center
4649 Hawley Blvd

Call to Order by Chair Jim Baross at 6:02

Members present: Nancy Wolfing, Dino Serafini, Earlene Thom, Kevin Johnston, Rudy Burlin, Susan Redelings, Morris Dye, Holly Ritter and Jim Baross

Members absent: Jessica Oliver, Kerry Sheldon, Richard Dias, Jeff Parsons, Jeff Underwood

Guests: Shelley Mandryl, Gary Weber, Jasmine Fox, Jon Derryberry, David Van Pelt, Conni Musser, Larry Hofreiter, Monica Palaez, Art Harrison, Anna Bunchardt, Bob Kaiser

Welcome and introductions

Minutes of March 4th meeting approved

Public Comment (non-agenda items only, limit of 3 minutes per speaker):

What is "Roots Festival"? Annual 2-day music festival on Adams Ave. this year on May 2nd and 3rd

Members Comments:

Jim Baross reported that the process for posting minutes from previous meeting has broken down with the departure of Steve Jareb as secretary. NormalHeights.org has been an invaluable resource in communicating both agendas and minutes and generally keeping the neighborhood informed, but site updates are inconsistent.

Reports from Government Representatives:

3rd City Council District Office – Monica Pelaez

Toni Atkins will be delivering the State of the District address at the Balboa Park War Memorial 6:30 on April 24th

Dedication/Renaming of Ward Canyon Neighborhood Park took place Friday, March 27. The parks' nameplate was unveiled. At the ceremony, Stacy Domenica, of Parks and Recreation Dept., indicated that funds were available to commission a monument sign.

Police Chief Bill Lansdowne will be convening a neighborhood Public Safety Forum at the NH Community Center on April 16 at 6:30 pm. All members and guests in attendance were urged to get the word of this event out to residents.

Critical information and resources material will be provided this is great opportunity to interact with police officers and the Chief.

The 2nd (April 1) and 3rd (April 29) City Council meetings are scheduled to take public testimony regarding the potential expansion of the Adams Ave. Business Improvement District (AABID) to include the Kensington-Talmadge commercial area. This expansion would add the area one block north and south of Adams Ave. (including 4600 and 4700 blocks of the adjoining side streets) between I-15 and 4248 Adams Ave. The ordinance to expand AABID would be introduced at the April 29th Council meeting.

Invitation to participate in a Mid-City Council candidates Mobility Forum on May 1, 6 pm to 8pm at the Metro Career Center 3910 University Ave (at the I-15).

Question from guest: Will Toni Atkins retain her membership on the San Diego River Conservancy committee after leaving office? Monica was not sure of the qualifications for representation (whether Toni's membership is due to her elective office)

76th Assembly District Office – No representatives in attendance

City Planning and Community Investment Dept.- No representatives t in attendance

Information Items

1. Item covered by Monica; WCNP was officially renamed (even though a half-dozen or more signs still indicate “39th Street Park”)
2. Reminder of Toni Atkins' State of District Address
3. Community Planners Council (CPC) March meeting:

Susan, who covered the meeting, reported that progress on various issues proceed slowly at the CPC. The City's report on traffic improvement projects (I-5/I-805) meet with general skepticism by the members who expressed frustration with the city's approach.

Marianne Greene, of City Attorney's office is working on dispute resolution areas relative to CPG meetings: balloting, public votes, proper method for recording votes, etc..

Committee discussed the CPC bylaws

A report was presented from the city's Historical Resources Board. The Board representative asked the CPC what they thought about adding (or increasing?) application/review fees for historical designation. The addition of fees was generally viewed by CPC as a disincentive to homeowners to enter into a Mills Act contract, offsetting the tax savings from the program.

4. Stop signs on 33rd Place and Monroe were approved
5. Auto waste event took place

6. Jim Baross attended the April 8th BRT Working Group meeting. Next meeting will take place at the Metro. Community Center to review proposals such as reconfiguration of University & El Cajon Blvd. interchanges to allow transit boarding improvements and a new transit stop on Adams Avenue. Some alternatives that were previously discussed will be dropped.
7. Draft General Plan Update: Jim welcomed the Group's comments on the draft. Morris could be contacted to facilitate directing comments to the right place. Jim questioned that if we wished to respond as a group whether we would then need to convene a separately noticed sub-committee meeting to formulate comments, since the comments are due on May 1, before the next NHCPG meeting. There was no further discussion on GPU comments.

Action Items –

1. 34th Street Project:

Jasmine Fox and Jon Derryberry of Townspeople recapped and continued their presentation from last month about the project at 4617 34th St

Since the Item was not noticed in time for the March meeting it was discussed in March as an Information Item (not an Action Item).

[Townspeople is a not-for-profit Community Housing Development Corp. specializing in development and operation of permanent supportive low-income housing. They plan to acquire the 34-unit apartment complex, complete substantial renovation and then rent to the low-income HIV/AIDS community].

The rehab. effort represents a \$7.5 million investment, in addition to cost of acquisition. One requirement for funding approval is notification/presentation to local community groups. No conditional use permit is required for the project. There is no general notification requirement (i.e. 300' radius mailing)

Next step in the financing process is to obtain a letter of intent from lender and approval of an allocation of Low-Income Housing Tax Credit bonds from the State. In order to proceed with the funding process, Townspeople needs the minutes of this meeting, a letter from the Group, or both.

It is expected that 12-14 of the 34 units will be immediately vacated prior to the renovation. Some occupants are anticipated to qualify as low-income and therefore eligible to remain as tenants. All new tenants going forward, however, would need to be of the HIV/AIDS community.

Question from the Group as to whether similar projects have met with negative reaction from neighbors: There haven't been any complaints to-date (Townspeople has recently completed, and is operating a similar project on 51st Street). Their clients typically don't drive, units have fewer

occupants (overall less traffic is expected). The project is encumbered by a 55 year affordability covenant and a maintenance reserve is built into the proforma.

Chair: Call for motion to provide a letter of support to Townspeople for the 34th Street Project; Ruby so moved, Holly seconded; motion unanimously approve

2. Officer Elections

There are three positions open: Chair, Co-Chair and Secretary. Jim and Susan (co-chair) are each eligible to serve another term and were therefore nominated for re-election. Dino agreed to serve as Secretary.

Jim called for additional nominations from the floor; none were offered.

Jim called for motion to elect the slate: himself as Chair, Susan, Co-Chair and Dino, Secretary; Rudy so moved, _____ seconded; slate unanimously elected by show of hands.

3. Selection of Representative to the CPC:

Chair of NHCPG is representative and Co-Chair is first alternative, no nominees/selection of a second alternate.

4. Solicitation of Ideas for Enhanced Public/Community Information

Jim described the events taking place at the March meeting of Ken.-Tal. CPG, which he attended, concerning the voting for new members of the group and the circumstances surrounding the approval of the Kensington Terrace project that affected the election:

At the March K-T CPG meeting, where current members were standing for re-election, about 150 K-T residents attended. Ballots with an alternative slate were distributed at the door by residents ostensibly opposed to the current members of K-T CPG who had voted in favor of the Kensington Terrace project.

Over the course of several years, Ken.-Tal. CPG had worked with the Kensington Terrace project applicants, much as NHCPG has done, to effect modifications, make suggestions, suggest conditions of approval and generally, as our group would, seek to improve the project for the benefit of the community.

At the March meeting, Jim observed that many of the ballots pre-marked with the alternative slate, which were passed out before the meeting began, were immediately deposited in a ballot box at the door by residents who then left, having never actually entered the meeting and had an opportunity to hear the candidates speak.

The result was that most of the standing members were voted out. Jim observed that these members had participated in K-T CPG and been involved community members for many years and collectively possessed a great deal of corporate knowledge of their communities which was

subsequently lost, and probably the continued public service of the discarded members as well.

Jim is concerned that the events that transpired in K-T are perhaps an indication of what could happen if information about what our Group reviews and the decisions it makes, is not effectively communicated to the community and the community not given the opportunity to comment and make their positions known. Jim questioned how much outreach are we obligated to undertake before we reach a decision.

Holly expressed how she is concerned about the meager attempt on the part of the City to notify affected residents (the minimum 300-ft. legal noticing).

Jim asked if developers could be required by the Group to extend noticing radius

Morris explained the noticing procedures, for which the City is responsible to assure compliance:

- Noticing in newspaper (typically SD Daily Transcript);
- Posting of site;
- Notice of Decision & Appeal

Did the K-T CPG somehow fail their communities by not being more open to their constituents, or was that which happened in K-T simply a reaction to the member's judgment about this one controversial project?

Is it incumbent on our Group to reach out to other community groups; let them know what we're doing?

Can we more effectively utilize our current resources better? Such as the Adams Ave. Herald, NormalHeights.org, (it was suggested that we seek to get access to the site from Robert Rael to make updates to the NHCPG page) and Adams Ave. Business Asso.

Nancy volunteered to assume the role of liaison with the other groups, do press releases, run agendas and minutes by the other organizations.

It was suggested that we conduct an informal survey of the community to elicit viewpoints about issues, controversial or otherwise.

The situation in K-T points out that there are pressures to redevelop in every community and how do we, as a community, get ahead of the issues that are bound to come up. The feeling is that we need to more effectively engage the neighborhoods and let them have a chance to make their positions known.

Jim recapped the discussion: Let's involve the other organizations; work on a way to update the webpage; maintain an on-going presence in the Herald. If we take these initiatives we are making a positive step towards bringing NH together.

Rudy moved that Nancy be named as Community liaison and that the Group approach Robert Rael about access to the NHCPG webpage; Susan seconded; Jim

called for discussion. Discussion followed regarding the liaison's role and responsibilities; Jim called for the vote on the question: 8 approvals, 1 abstention (Morris).

5. Historical Resources Guidelines

Jim requested that Holly contact Vicki Burgess with the City to get more details on what is required of the NHCPG member who would be identified as "familiar with historic resources" and asked whether Holly would be interested in being the historical resources point person for NH.

6. Assigning Community Needs Sub-Committee to review Needs List

Jim assigned the Sub-Committee to review the list of needs; pull together the qualifying projects and prioritize them for submittal to the city by the due date of April 30 for inclusion in the Mid-City financing plan.

Morris set a date for the meeting: April 10, 4:30 at the NH Starbucks and invited all to attend.

Jim requested that the draft list be e-mailed to the members for one final review before submittal to city.

Susan moved; Rudy seconded to deputize Morris and the Sub-Committee to provide a draft list of needs; approved unanimously.

Jim set April 18 as a deadline for members to submit remaining issues regarding the draft list.

7. Affirming Community Needs Sub-Committee to review Needs List and recommend continuing the development of said list. Convene committee to review the Mid-City financing plan prior to its presentation to the City Council in June.

Item continued

Committee Reports:

1. Housing – Holly reiterated that the 300 ft. notification is not adequate
2. Community Needs – covered in Action Item #6
3. Facilities – nothing to report
4. Transportation – I-15/BRT Corridor meetings on-going
5. Bylaws – need a chairperson
6. Canyons – April 26th Creek to Bay Cleanup meet at 3110 Camino Del Rio South; May 17th River Days at Fenton Marketplace; Wednesday, April 9th Friends of the Canyon meeting at Café Cabaret
7. City Heights PAC – nothing to report

Adjourned at 8:00