

Normal Heights Community Planning Group

MINUTES

Tuesday January 6, 2009

6:00PM

Normal Heights Community Center
4649 Hawley Blvd.

Call to Order by Chair Jim Baross at 6:01

Members present: Larry Hofreiter, Nancy Wolfing, Dino Serafini, Earlene Thom, Art Harrison, Susan Redelings, Kevin Johnston, Holly Ritter, Morris Dye and Jim Baross

Members absent: Jeff Parsons and Richard Rios

Guests: Officer Dean Thomas, Connie Musser, Bob Keiser, Bank Dawson, Dion Akers, Gary Weber, Vickie White, Skeet Frazee, Rosanna Harrison, Shawnee Barton, Anna Burchardt

Welcome and introductions

Non-Agenda, Public Comments/Information:

Bob Keiser announced the NH Community Dinner being sponsored by the Cultural Council on Wednesday, Feb. 18 at 5:30 in the Community Center. The goal of the dinner is to give the various neighborhood organizations an opportunity to let the community know what they do. Bob invited the NHCPG to send a representative to the dinner.

Approval of the minutes of December 2nd : Kevin moved, Holley seconded; unanimously approved minutes with corrections.

Reports from Government/City Representatives:

Dion Akers, from Councilmember Todd Gloria's office a recent SDSU graduate who worked on Mr. Gloria's campaign, introduced himself and passed out a sheet with the Councilmember's committee and outside responsibilities. Mr. Akers invited calls with any questions, issues and suggestions. Susan asked if Mr. Akers could look into having the By-laws of the planning groups posted.

Vickie White, with the Planning and Community Investment, Resident Planner for Mid-City: vwhite@sandiego.gov, announced the start of a "clean-up" of the Mid-City Community Plan,. There was a hearing on the planning groups' By-laws last month – she will check on posting of the final approved documents. Vickie will be attending the NHCPG meetings at least once per quarter, or whenever an issue or project warrants.

Jim asked that if posting the By-laws proves to be a problem, could we get a hard copy sent out. Also, asked what does "clean-up" mean in reference to the Mid-City

CP? Vickie explained that they would be addressing non-policy items, minor map inconsistencies, typos, formatting and grammatical errors, etc. Jim asked if we could obtain a strikeout/underline draft. Vickie indicated that was probably possible.

Officer Dean Thomas, SDPD introduced himself as the new Community Relations Officer for this portion of Mid-City. Off Thomas has been assigned to the Mid-City Division for 6 years. His goals are to make every NHCPG meeting. Off. Thomas says the new captain is very-much community oriented. There are now 3 CRO's in Mid-City, previously we had one. His area of responsibility is: from El Cajon Blvd. to the rim of Mission Valley, and between I-805 and the eastern city-limits. Please e-mail [dmthomas@pd.sandiego.gov](mailto:donthomas@pd.sandiego.gov) or phone 619-516-3009. He has an office at Division 4310 Landis St., and frequents the station at SDSU, and mentioned that the Normal Heights/Kensington store front at Ward Canyon Neighborhood Park (Mock Building) is in "limbo" as a station due to concerns about leaking roof and mold. He suggested that guest speakers, i.e. unit detectives or the neighborhood prosecutor, could be brought in from time to time, asked for us to think of topics of interest. Susan suggested that our agendas be sent to him as notification of issues that PD would want to advise on, such as liquor licensing. Jim indicated that he would add Off. Thomas' address to the list.

Information Items:

1. Dan McAllister, San Diego County Treasurer/Tax Collector was present to discuss his department, their accomplishments and the status of property taxes and collections in the County. Mr. McAllister passed out the newly re-formatted property tax bill guide. The tax bills are all "green", SD County is only the second county in the county to print on recycled paper and using biodegradable ink. The tax assessor's office issued a record number of bills this year: 975,000 totaling \$4.6 billion in revenue – all an time high, which is remarkable given the current real estate market. The Treasurer/Tax Collector has 125 employees in 5 offices county-wide; they also set up the tax tent on April 15. They've tried very hard to make the system friendlier to the tax-payer. Mr McAllister reported that there are 1% fewer delinquencies and a 4% increase in revenues over last period. Over 80,000 requests for assessment appeals were processed last year. Property owners are allowed two appeals per year. Approximately 12% of properties are in appeal at this time. San Marcos has been the hardest hit by delinquencies. Mr. McAllister provided a list of participants in the Local Banking Initiative - a pilot program with a goal to deposit \$100 million of pooled investment funds with community banks within 5 years for projects benefiting the local economy. The goal was met 40 months early. Susan asked if it was worthwhile to file an appeal after owning a property 30 years or more (since passage of Prop. 13). Mr. McAllister said it couldn't hurt – the property may have been re-appraised due to improvements. He also pointed out that the County is allowed to seek recapture of lost tax revenue due to assessment appeals by accelerating the assessment increase above the normal 2% if the real estate market were to rebound.
2. The Adams Avenue Business Association is doing a Casino Night at the Lafayette Hotel on El Cajon Blvd., Jan. 20.

3. Ward Canyon Neighborhood Park Leash-Free update: Holley believed that the trial leash-free period was a “done deal” upon the vote by the Recreation Council. However, the approval request still needs to be processed through the City, the Police Dept. was never officially notified/contacted apparently.

New Business:

1. No projects on the Agenda
2. Letter of Recommendation/Support for a grant proposal for SANDAG’s TransNet Smart Growth Incentive Program (SGIP) funding for the Mid-City SR-15 CenterLine BRT Station Area Planning Study. Vickie White was present to summarize the proposal and answer questions. This is a competitive matching grant program to encourage and develop transit-oriented community planning and development around transit centers. Maximum grant amount is \$400,000. The City will approach City Heights PAC for the matching portion.

Morris believes that pedestrian connectivity is the most important element to consider when developing a plan to make transit work. Vickie agreed and pointed out that the proposed Study includes a Transit Feasibility Concept Plan that addresses pedestrian access to the stations.

Jim noted that only 10% of Normal Heights is included in the proposed Study Area, leaving out Adams Ave. which would have a transit stop under one of the BRT CenterLine options now under review. Why is Adam Ave. not included?

Vickie indicated that the Study Area was limited to a ¼ mile radius around the Transit Centers on El Cajon Blvd. and University Ave. in compliance with State transit-oriented development criteria (Adams Ave. is about one-half mile north of El Cajon Blvd.).

Jim clarified the CenterLine group’s focus has been the discussion of the four options for the BRT configuration. That group is not looking into the connectivity or transit-oriented design issues that the SGIP program is intended to address.

At this point Art called for a point of order, to Jim’s explanation of the CenterLine study group efforts and its relevancy with the item now before the group.

Bob Keiser suggested that since the proposed Study Area would not encompass the potential Adams Ave. station and such a minor portion of NH is included, the NHCPG should pass on making a recommendation or issuing a letter of support and let the City and the City Heights PCA proceed without us.

Jim asked for a motion

Larry moved that the Group write a letter of support, second by Kevin

Morris asked when will Adams Ave. station ever be included?

Vickie responded that perhaps when the BRT options question is settled.

Art would oppose the motion seeing this proposal as another study to do a plan, similar to the recent Walkability Study that doesn’t accomplish anything.

Nancy pointed out that since the money is allocated and available and would go to another community anyway it makes sense to try and focus attention on opportunities for local improvements.

Morris proposed an addition to the motion: to request that Adams Ave. be included in the next round of grant funding when the BRT option has been selected.

Jim called for the question: In favor of the motion to draft a letter of support for the TransNet SGIP-funded grant application for Mid-City BRT Station Area Study, with the stipulation that a follow-up grant proposal be made in the next cycle to extend the study area to include the proposed Adams Ave. BRT station.; 7; opposed: Art; Jim abstaining; Dino recusing due to potential economic interest in the award of a contract for the proposed study.

3. The Our Lady of Peace development review decision is being appealed. Dion Akers indicated that the Councilman would be meeting with the two sides.

Continuing Business:

1. Representation on the City Heights Project Area Committee – The NHCPG needs to designate a member to represent Normal Heights on the PAC. Art and Larry have indicated interest in serving as our representative. Jim asked both to attend the next PAC meeting and afterward assess their interest in being the representative.

2. Member Nominations/Elections

Jim suggested two approaches to filling 3 open positions:

- 1) Jim could appoint eligible general members to serve as interim until regular elections in March;
- 2) Nominate a full slate of candidates to stand for the regular election

Nancy reminded us of the difficulty we had in identifying a pool of eligible general members.

Art asked if any current board members were in danger of being asked to step down due to absences (3 consecutive absences, or 4 the 12-month period of April through March). Jim asked Secretary to report on member attendance.

Jim appointed Dino to nominating committee, Nancy and Kevin volunteered. Dino will research attendance records for eligible candidates (general member having attended at least 3 of the 12 meetings prior to the February meeting).

Committee Reports:

By-laws – Susan still waiting for the final, official, approved document

Friends of Normal Heights Canyons – Kevin reported on a terrific restoration day at the end of Eugene Ct. – they planted 128 native plants. A video documentation may be viewed on YouTube, type: “Friend of Canyons”.

Next Meeting: February 3, 2009 at the Community Center.

Meeting adjourned at 7:53