

Normal Heights Community Planning Group
Draft
MINUTES

August 3, 2010

6:00 PM

Normal Heights Community Center

Call to Order by Jim Baross at 6:01

Members present: Nancy Wolfing, Jim Baross, Dino Serafini, Art Harrison, Nancy Lawler, Joseph Fombon, Mark Rowland, Richard Rios, Aaron Allen, Rick Neuffer, Allan Acevedo, Earlene Thom

Members absent: Kevin Johnston and Susan Redelings

Community Members/Guests: Gordon Bordson, Mark Lawler, Suzanne Ledeboer, Judy Moore, Pete Evaristo, Dion Akers, Ted Ewing, Lora Williams, Mark Williams, Rebecca Tabatzky, Gary Weber, Bob Keyser, Conni Musser, Derek Murchison

Welcome and introductions

Modifications to Agenda: None

Approval of August, 2010 Minutes

Mark moved to approve, Earlene and Allan abstained, due to absence, otherwise approved unanimously.

Non-Agenda Public Comments/Information from Community Members:

Conni Musser questioned city's practice of continually funding new studies, sometimes repeating the same subject matter with apparently no results forthcoming. The costs of the studies are outrageous. Art expressed his agreement, particularly with spending on such studies, which could be done in-house, while police and fire protection services are cut.

Reports from Representatives of Elective Officials:

3rd City Council District: Dion Akers, representing Todd Gloria, passed out latest District 3 Dialogue. Tonight is "National Night Out" events including block parties and flashlight walks scheduled in Talmadge, University Heights, North Park. The Council is close to summer legislative recess but debate over sales tax ballot measure is delaying the recess. The Council will go dark for three weeks.

Jim: would someone from the Councilman Gloria's office be available to discuss the proposed sales tax measure prior to the November election?

Mark: Has there been any further discussion regarding the scheduling of utility undergrounding projects in Normal Heights? Has NH actually been moved up in the schedule?

Dion: the undergrounding master plan currently shows NH following Kensington in the order, but nothing will be final until City Council action. Several factors go into

determining the schedule. The City's Engineering Capital Projects division is believed to be recommending that NH be moved ahead of Kensington and we would be next in line.

Non-Agenda Information/Presentation

Jim asked if the Group would entertain a ten minute presentation by Risa Baron, of SDG&E, with information on the "Smart Meter" installation program.

The smart meters (for gas and electric service) are designed to accommodate more extensive use of renewable energy sources. The meters are necessary to complete the upgrade of electrical power distribution infrastructure, enable two-way communications between the utility and customers, including real-time power usage information. SDG&E customers may access hourly power consumption data by signing up for Google's "PowerMeter" monitoring application through their online accounts. The smart meter network is expected to encourage energy conservation and reduce the need to build future energy production capacity. Smart meter installation has already begun and is expected to be completed in south SD County by Spring 2011.

Jim: will the smart meters allow variable (time-of-use) rates?

Time of use rate schedules are by agreement and strictly optional for residential customers. Peak-day conservation rebates will be offered next summer.

Conni: are there any comparisons available to indicate what typical usage should be expected for a given type of customer?

The redesigned bill format will be make the kilowatt-hour and cubic yard (gas) "tiers" easier to understand and perhaps better correlate with an individual's monthly usage.

Mark: could SDG&E unilaterally cut power if a customer's usage reached an inordinate level?

Not for residential; for non-residential customers, and only if there is an agreement in place, power may be cut or reduced during peak periods if power demand reaches a certain percentage of available supply. The agreement provides for lower peak period rates than would otherwise be the case under a normal non-reduction service scenario.

Note: 1,000 home charging units are available for electric vehicles through a program with Nissan.

Suzanne: reports of failures of several tens of thousands of smart meters in the north County and Tierrasanta?

Those were 1st generation meters, which have since been replaced with the latest technology that have not had the same problems.

Information Items per Agenda

Action Items:

1) Adam Elementary School Fence Issue

Derek Murchison, principal of Adams Elementary, gave the background leading to the alleged proposal to increase the height of the fence enclosing the joint-use area adjacent to School Street. The fence issue has its roots in the District's budget problems, which caused the reassignment of the school's security officer to another campus. The 10-foot fence idea was thought to be a way to preserve security of the joint-use area during school hours, during which only school children may use the area. Mr. Murchison did not know when or by whom the actual decision by the District was made to replace the current 40 inch high fence. Although Mr. Murchison understood that the construction of the fence has been delayed pending a thorough discussion with the City Parks and Recreation Department and the community over other potential solutions.

Ted Ewing, representing the Adam Avenue Recreation Council, indicated that the fence had been discussed at the Rec. Council meeting and that there was generally a lack of favor with the idea of a 10-foot fence.

Pete Evaristo, Normal Heights Cultural Council, provided background on development of the joint-use area and the community's involvement in the design of the area and continuing interest in matters pertaining to it. The area is integral to the community including the Street Fair and Roots Festival, which would be negatively impacted by a 10-foot fence. The time reserved for public usage is not posted, suggesting that adequate signage should be tried before erecting a higher fence.

Gordon Bordson, City Parks and Recreation Dept., indicated that the Dept. would support any measures to provide adequate security to the area acceptable to both the District and the community.

Judy Moore, Adams Ave. Business Association, word first came to her about the fence proposal and alerted the Rec. Council. Judy had also heard that a work order had been issued; which apparently turned out not to be the case, or had been rescinded pending the discussions now underway.

Gary Weber: the current fencing of the campus buildings had been installed for liability reasons but they have not prevented children and others from climbing over them. The fencing/security needs of the school should be addressed comprehensively arriving at a community consensus.

Jim: Asked if the Group wanted to go on record as being in opposition to the new fence.

Allan moved that the Group go on record against replacing the current fence or raising the height of the fence and suggests enhanced signage that posts the restricted hours of public use; second by Earlene.

Approved unanimously

Gary: it was discussed at NH Cultural Council that the unused bungalows on the school site--no longer needed for classroom space--should be removed and the parking spaces/play areas restored and trees replaced.

Jim: could there be a presentation on what the Cultural Council was considering, possibly at the next meeting?

Mark: asked if the District could unilaterally make improvements to the joint-use area?

Pete indicated that the Joint-Use Agreement may contain language which specifies the rights and responsibilities of the District and the City regarding use of the area.

2) Undergrounding in Normal Heights-continued discussion

The question from last June was whether the Group wanted to get involved with Kensington in an effort to limit or control placement of aboveground utility cabinets installed in conjunction with utility undergrounding projects soon to begin in Kensington and Normal Heights. As indicated previously in these minutes, Normal Heights has possibly been promoted in the order of neighborhoods where undergrounding is scheduled to commence.

Suzanne: conducted a drive-by on Meade Ave., where undergrounding had recently been completed (almost) and noted graffiti on the cabinets and a general lack of maintenance in parkways where cabinets were located.

Bob: suggested we request SDG&E send a representative to discuss options, make a presentation.

Conni: would prefer the current utility poles to the results after undergrounding.

Art: called for a privileged motion--does the chair typically call on members of the audience before the Board gets a chance to comment?

Jim: yes

Gary: we should make an effort to do undergrounding right, but not simply pass the project opening to another neighborhood.

Suzanne: noted that SDG&E Capital Projects division is in charge of the projects.

Richard: could several homes be served by one large vault; SDG&E would need to advise.

Mark: recommend that the board members visit SDG&E website--very interesting, explains much of the process. But a crucial piece of information is

where the above ground vaults are located. Mark recommends forming a subcommittee to work with the other community groups.

Nancy L: reported that new boxes have already been hit with graffiti.

Art: cautioned that we may be turning our backs on an opportunity to take advantage of a net improvement in the neighborhood, noted that poles themselves become eyesores and can be dangerous if not maintained.

Earlene: doesn't think the overall quality of life in the neighborhood is defined by the underground vs. overhead utility lines.

Jim summarized the discussion: we generally want undergrounding to go forward but want to have input into the location and placement of cabinets, vaults, etc., and asked Mark to form a subcommittee to coordinate with other community groups scheduled to be undergrounded.

3) Jim asked for a volunteer to step in as recording secretary and a new board member to take the seat vacated by Dino. Allan agreed to serve out the unexpired term (until April 2011). Art asked for a vote. Jim called for a vote which was unanimous.

4) Art asked for a continuance on the commercial trucks on 36th Street issue.

5) Jim called for a continuance on the multi-family moratorium question.

Committee Reports

Housing Nancy reported that two 45-year reviews were in process in the neighborhood and would report back with findings.

Community Needs Art was still in possession of City planning documents--if anyone was looking for them.

Community Planners Committee Greenhouse gas targets have been adopted by the State Air Resources Board for major urban areas of the state.

Friends of the Canyons: Event at Blind Lady Ale House on July 18 raised \$515 from the native plant sale and 15% of all food and drink sales that day. The money will go to canyon preservation. Coastal clean-up event is scheduled for Sept. 25, at the end of Eugene Place. Kevin@s.dcanonlands.org.

Website: No response from Robert Rael. Group should consider setting up its own separate page on the Adams Ave. Business Association website. Allan volunteered to create the page. Website subcommittee formed: Allan, Mark, Nancy W.

Membership: Larry Hofreiter will be asked to officially resign due to absences. General member eligibility will be reviewed for potential nominees to serve the remainder of Larry's term. A replacement is also needed for NHCPG's representative to the City Heights PAC

New Business for future meeting:

- Adams Elementary School access and security issues and ideas.
- Coordination with Kensington on future utility undergrounding projects

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- Invite Kenmore Terrace street vacation applicant to discuss proposal

Meeting Adjourned at 7:55