

# Normal Heights Community Planning Group

Minutes of Tuesday, September 5, 2023, 6:00 pm until approximately 7:45 pm

Normal Heights Community Center

4649 Hawley Avenue

## Attendance - Board

Allan Harjala

Frances Pritchett

Jim Baross

Scott Kessler

Greg Stone

Taylor Everich

Emily Calwell

Nancy Lawler

## Attendance - Other

Gary Weber

Mark Lawler

Susan Blain

Lawrence Carr

Molly Lorden

Art Harrison

Ben Mendoza

Samantha Burrows

Susan Baldwin (online)

Christopher Gris (online)

## Call to Order

- Introductory remarks by Allan
- Introduction of board members
- Agenda setting/modification - no changes
- Previous meeting minutes approval deferred to next meeting
- Treasurer's report - Frances - no change. Balance of 1332.46.

## Non-Agenda Public Comment

Larry Carr spoke on behalf of Power San Diego, a group working to replace SDG&E with a not-for-profit utility.

## Digital Communications Monitoring

- Scott mentioned coverage of street fair on AABA social media pages
- Allan mentioned regularly seeing social media posts by residents losing their housing and struggling to find housing they can afford

- Scott mentioned that he saw that 2 bedrooms at the Winslow at Park & ECB are going for up to 5400/month.

### **Action/Decision Items**

#### **Adams Ave Streetlight Outages**

- Scott explained that he reported 31 streetlights on Adams being out to the city and the city is getting them taken care of and that there is no need for action by the group.
- A meeting guest asked about whose responsibility maintaining the streetlights on Adams is when some are covered in the AABA's MAD and some are not. Scott explained that for the MAD's acorn lights - the AABA members pay the city a fee and the city is responsible for maintaining the lights.

#### **Street Fair Booth Sign Up**

- Greg will send an email to the group to get the remainder of slots filled.
- Jim will bring canopy, chairs, photo/map poster, and trifold flyers. Scott said the AABA will have tables at Smittys and we could use one if we wanted.

#### **Board training update**

Paul, Allan, Jim, Greg, Taylor, Frances, Emily, and Nancy have all completed the mandatory training.

### **Reports/Updates**

#### **Local and state government**

##### **Ben Mendoza - Council President Elo-Rivera's office**

- The council president is on paternity leave in September
- Ben just returned from vacation and is getting caught up
- Working to get an update from DSD on the DeMille's/Mars project
- The city put up new fencing and fixed lights at the ball field by the Adams rec center.
- The city budget process is getting started. District 9 community survey is live on the D9 website until Sept. 22
- Ben will look into the city's reduced street sweeping and signage issues following question from meeting guest.

##### **Christopher Gris - Assembly member Chris Ward**

- 5 of Chris Ward's bills are going to the Governor - AB 84, 251, 302, 634, & 671.
- Received funding for Fleet Science Center and San Diego River Park Visitor Center.
- The legislature has until Sept. 14 to approve bills or they die, or may possibly get turned into 2-year bills.
- Will start reviewing legislation proposals on Sept. 15.
- Submit bill ideas on the assembly member's website.
- The office will staff a booth at the street fair & the assembly member may be there for a few hours on Sunday.

### **Chair report**

No report.

### **Community group updates**

#### **Adams Avenue Business Association**

##### **Scott**

- All about the street fair. Looking for volunteers to work the street fair. Some volunteers get t-shirts and drink coupons. Others are paid.
- Street fair has expanded 2 blocks further east to 36th Street.
- There is a new cannabis row in Adams Avenue Theatre - educational only - no smoking. It will cost \$5 to enter and is for 21 and older.
- Best booth sale and sponsorship revenue ever.

#### **El Cajon Boulevard Business Improvement District**

##### **Gary Weber**

- There is an art project in the works at the ECB/15 interchange that will identify the neighborhoods bordering it. Our identification was Cherokee Park. Gary convinced them to change it to Normal Heights since that is what we consider our neighborhood to be and the sub-neighborhood name of Cherokee Park never caught on.
- Gary talked about how the ECB bridgedeck over the 15 was designed to hold 2 stories of residential development and the kiosks on either side were meant to house businesses. 20 years later and nothing has gone forward. The urban trail that was supposed to go from the interchange has never happened. The mixed-use village with hundreds of residential units that was envisioned has never happened. ECB between the 805 and the 15 is a wasteland with long-term property owners paying little property tax content to keep it that way.
- Greg asked about the vacant lot at 40th & ECB. Gary mentioned the 10 story building of affordable housing that had been proposed and may still be in the works being sidetracked by high interest rates.

#### **Normal Heights Community Association**

##### **Greg**

There will be a mixer at AC lounge on 30th in two weeks.

#### **Normal Heights Urban Arts**

##### **Scott**

The backing for the butterfly mural on the rec center is up and they are working on getting the installation moving forward.

#### **Adams Avenue Recreation Group**

##### **Nancy**

- The fencing at the ball field looks good. The group needs more members. There have been ongoing and increasing homelessness issues.

- Scott, Nancy, and Ben spoke about the no-camping signs at both Ward Canyon and Adams being posted for cars to see rather than for people to see.

## **Committee Updates**

### **Joint Mid-City Community Plan Update Committee**

**Greg**

Next meeting is next week. No decisions being made. Just updates.

### **Nominating Committee**

**Greg**

Plans to start contacting the possible candidates on the list Paul made soon.

### **Utility Undergrounding/MAD**

**Emily**

City indicated there would be no updates until the fall.

**DEI**

**Scott**

AABA can do more posts. Waiting for direction.

### **Traffic Issues**

**Allan**

- Got the Transportation Dept. unfunded needs list. On list in Normal Heights -
- Over 100 new streetlights, mostly mid-block on north-south streets.
- About 30 streetlight upgrades.
- 3 traffic calming locations - Adams & West Mountain View, 36th, and 34th.
- Modifications to traffic signals at 35th & Adams and 35th and ECB.
- New Stoplight at 32nd & Madison (805 north entrance)
- Curb ramps - may already have been done
- Guest commented on how dark the sidewalks are here. Even streets that have streetlights have dark sidewalks because the lights extend so far into the street. Allan agreed.
- Scott explained that the cobras are intended to light street intersections, not sidewalks - like much of the city's infrastructure they are intended to benefit drivers, not pedestrians.
- Frances asked about possibility of traffic enforcement. Ben explained that the police department continues to be understaffed and is unable to do traffic enforcement.

### **Meeting adjourned.**

Motion - Jim

Second - Allan

All concurred.