



NORMAL HEIGHTS COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUP
4649 Hawley Boulevard San Diego, CA. 92116

Meeting Minutes – November 7th, 2017

Meeting Called to order at 6pm by Chair Jim Baross

Board Attendance (x means “present”):

X	Gary Weber	X	Nancy Lawler	X	Mark Lawler (in at 6:10)
X	Bill Conway (in at 6:15)	X	Ralph Enriquez		Scott Kessler
X	Jim Baross (C)		Ryan Zellers		Joseph Fombon (VC)
X	Caroline McKeown (T)	X	Dan Soderberg	X	Khalisa Bolling
X	Rose Kelly	X	Thomas Lovell	X	Adam Deutsch (S)

C=Chair; VC= Vice Chair; T= Treasurer; S=Secretary

Administration Items

1. **Call to Order:** Board introduced themselves.
2. **Agenda Setting:** Items might (and this month *will*) be taken out of order.
3. **Approval of Last Month’s Minutes:** Adam distributed the minutes from Oct 3rd to the board prior to this meeting, and took feedback via email, shaped the commentary into a new draft, and shared them again prior to tonight. **M/S: Caroline/Thomas. All approved.**
4. **Treasurer Report:** Total at \$1956.73 in our account. We’ll have an additional \$500 operating expenses for 2018, which are not part of this total. As per approval last month, more pint glasses will be ordered, in addition to coffee mugs. **M/S: Thomas/Dan. All approved.**

Communications

5. **Reports from Representatives:**
 - i. Assembly Member Todd Gloria: Later. (We thought he’d come through a bit late, but never arrived).
 - ii. **Brett Weise from Chris Ward’s Office:** The major issues of the day seems to be homeless people in the neighborhood. The CM’s office is thinking of how to improve programming in the parks to deter illicit activities. Housing First, and other initiatives are being used right now to try to mitigate issues and address the population’s needs. There are all

3 large tents holding about 700 people each that have been erected around the city (not in Normal Heights). There are also “safe parking” areas to provide concentrated services to the homeless.

There will be a City Council meeting about short-term rentals on Dec 11th. There’s a possible connection between short-term property rentals making affordable long-term rentals more limited than they might be otherwise.

Some residents asked about specific locations of various services, with Brett provided. Others asked about more bike and foot-patrol police, and due to SDPD staff, it’s difficult to move police from cars to bikes at the moment. He’s discussing it with Jenny Hall. Street bleach-cleaning is also an ongoing service the city will be providing.

There are reports of tents in the canyon along the 15 near Ward Canyon Park. SDPD cannot remove people’s personal items/property (they’ve been sued, and lost, in the past for doing so).

Someone asked about how people are being moved around. There’s definitely some displacement and migrations happening in that community (which is the part of the meeting where community members in the audience start referring to human beings as if they’re various types of animals). Brett elaborated on the fact that some people refuse services that are offered, and/or lack the ability to answer questions pertaining to services.

People asked about county funds and other city pools of money (not to be confused with pools where people swim) for things like affordable housing, and other services.

Someone asked about fire services going up to Orange County, and who is keeping track of funding related to that (but it’s not clear how that’s related to the conversation at hand).

There were also questions about “selective enforcement,” and how Kensington doesn’t seem to have this issue with homelessness, and Brett suggested that it might be because of more robust use and programming at parks in that area, deterring loitering. It might also be because residents in that neighborhood call the police more (and, perhaps it’s because, historically, that neighborhood has residents who are in prominent law enforcement and city positions).

There was a question about using the Chargers training facility, but that’s a complicated logistical process to navigate, but would be good since that building already has things like showers and lockers.

- iii. **Alison Flynn from AABA:** Introduced herself, and gave a summary of the AABA meeting, and information about tree trimming and valet programs in the neighborhood around Adams Ave.. Thomas thanked her for letting dogs in her awesome gaming/comic store, Villainous Liar.
- iv. **Dave Rodger from the Adams Ave. Rec Council:** the city hasn't yet disbanded the Rec Councils. It seems Rec Council staff attended a City Council meeting, and the decision to remove the Rec Councils has been moved to committee. The committee meeting for that is on 12/9, at time TBD.
- v. **NH Urban Arts Council:** Their meeting was last Wednesday at the Rec Center on Adams Avenue (always meeting the First Wednesday of the month!). They're a nonprofit with the goal to bring public art to all of Normal Heights, beyond Adams Ave. They're also working on beautifying the alleys. They have a number of projects in the works, so consider attending their meetings!

Bill is looking into legality of shipping containers in alleys, per a question from repeatedly self-proclaimed skeptic of the internet, Captain Art Harrison.

- vi. **El Cajon Blvd. Business Improvement Association:** We have had conversations about the development of the land at 40th and El Cajon Blvd for a long time now, and last month made a resolution which we've sent to Civic San Diego, the mayor, and CM Ward's office. Seemingly out of nowhere, The Mayor has directed Civic San Diego to sell the lot at 40th and ECB to the highest bidder.

Ralph read a letter from the ECBBIA, the contents of which you'll find at the end of these Minutes.

Gary gave some history of developing this area, and the current status. There is irony that we're asking for high density, and the city seems to be ignoring our interest. Jim recently sent the letter we resolved in action items last month.

- vii. **Mark Roland from Mid-City Little League:** Gave background on the league (we charge less than other outfits around town, and no kid gets turned away!), and asked the public to support the program with donations, and asked that we donate from our Discussion on this agenda. He presented plaques to the AABA and NHCPG for past donations.

- viii. **Mike Palmer for the Methodist Church:** Talked about *Tony*, a locally produced documentary following a man who lives homeless in San Diego. He gave out fliers to promote a free screening in the park on School Street on 11/19. They are also planning a panel discussion with local officials for after the movie screening.
- ix. **“Safe Neighborhoods” (an elusive abstraction of an organization):** Oscar Padilla (who did not disclose is role) spoke about their efforts in Kensington recently, passing out crime stats (which they get from SDPD). He also advertised crimemapping.com (not a site they operate). Padilla claimed crime isn’t reported and the SDPD doesn’t know where to respond. He also suggested people form neighborhood watches (on their own, not by communicating or organizing via this group). He also gave out tips on how to contact police, which is information that’s readily available from the police.

Jim asked time/location of the next meeting. Apparently just call Oscar at 619-203-1806 and talk to him. He said they meet at coffee shops or people’s homes, and “play it by ear.”

They passed around a petition to have police use the Mock building again, but that seems to overlook the condition of the building, which we have tried to address, without their help, and trying to manage their active hindrance. The petition is misleading, as it makes assumptions that are objectively false about that building, the SDPD, and the park.

- 6. **Communications from Web/Social Media/Other sources:** Same as past months, with complaints about stolen packages, and issues with homeless people in various areas of the neighborhood.
- 7. **Non-agenda Public Comment (may be limited to 2 minutes each):**
 - i. Matt Strabone announced he’s running for County Assessor/Recorder/Country Clerk, and gave out literature.
 - ii. John Hartley talked about getting police back into the Mock Building (they’ve stated, repeatedly, they’re not doing that, and signs have been removed from it. See the Oct. NHCPG Minutes for a comprehensive discussion of the poor condition of that building, and the Sept. NHCPG Minutes for the resolution to move forward with finishing Ward Canyon Park, which includes removing that unsafe and unusable, decrepit and obsolete hollowed husk of a structure).

Discussion Item (Moved up)

- 8. **Update on SANDAG Meade Ave. Bikeway Progress: Danny Veeh** is here (though he wasn’t on the agenda because he confirmed after it was posted). He gave

background on the Georgia-Meade Bikeway thus far, and how it's part of a number of plans, like Vision Zero, the Climate Action Plan, and other regional projects. SANDAG plans to submit plans to the city next month for approval, and they expect a 6 month review time, after which it will be put out for bid, to hopefully start construction in less than a year.

There's one announcement: there's an aesthetic survey that will be posted soon, to get public input on the looks of features in the project. It should be open for responses for about a month, and will allow people to weigh in on things like plants and the aesthetic style of the project.

Caroline asked about changes to the plan, and also about incorporation of art with the Urban Arts Council. He's not sure how that would work with their process. Veeh replied that it was "essentially the same," which means some changes have occurred. When asked if we could see the most recent plan, he did not give a concrete response. Caroline also asked about incorporation of art. He says Norma's committee can contact them for possible collaboration. Ralph asked about crosswalks, and there will be 15 along our route. Gary wants a breakdown on cost of each element, as he distrusts government to design working neighborhoods. The overall budget is about \$8m, but it's not broken down yet. Those funds come from Transnet taxes. Keepsandiegomoving.com has details. It's estimated 9 months to a year of construction.

Someone asked about coordination with other underground projects, and he says SANDAG is trying its best to be coordinated (turns out multiple agencies tend to dig up the roads, and those are separate from the department that actually paves the roads). Marty asked about signage and road resurfacing. There's some concern about sign-pollution.

Action Items

9. **Traffic Congestion/Safety Issues at School Drop-Off areas:** Principal McGrade is here, as well as staff from Global Visions Academy. They're aware that parking is an issue, and are working on ways to keep cars moving in areas during drop-off and pick up. Their schedules are staggered to help mitigate congestion.

After a conversation that quickly broadened from traffic to the general relationship between schools and the rest of the neighborhood, Jim explained the joint-use agreements of school land for park use as well. City staff was present to take those questions. This has been going on for years.

Caroline informed the school officials that it was reported at our October meeting that a painted school crosswalk and signage will be installed at Hawley and School Street (link to minutes). And that the site was approved for pedestrian-activated flashing lights, that the city is willing to install if someone else funds them. The cost would be \$5K.

Jim asked for recommendations, the audience responded with several ideas including a children walking and biking to school, a "walking bus" or foot-pool, and the possibility of making Hawley a one-way street. Jim responded that the NHCPG Traffic Calming Committee would investigate the one-way streets idea.

No motion was made.

10. Uphold "moratorium" on adding auto repair businesses on Adams Ave:

This item is about a long-standing family conflict surrounding Smitty's Service Station and another structure that was built long ago on a separate adjacent lot directly behind the service station, which once operated in association with Smitty's, but has since been separated both legally and physically, from Smitty's on Adams Ave. Jim invited both Mike Magers (owner/operator of Smitty's) and Donna Towne (owner of the back lot that is only accessible from the alley) to present their points of view about the use of the land/building behind Smitty's (it does not have an address).

Roger Brumpton (apparently speaking for Towne), spoke against a document Mike Magers wrote about the land. He then proceeded to give his perception of the history of that space, complete with an elaborate history of the original owners and operators, and descriptions of various moments of the families fighting. The stuff of day-time melodrama, including characterization of a multitude of heroes, villains, deathbed signatures, mentions of a variety of unprovided paperwork, and one particular moment involving the brandishing of a 22mm pistol. Jim and Caroline reminded Roger that we're concerned about the land use, and asked to get to the topic at hand. Roger kept giving history.

The practical bits to be gleaned from the unfolded tale was that on March 10th of this year, the building on the alley was vacated and physically separated from the main Smitty's building, and a business has not been in operation there since. A business has not been in operation there since. The building does not have power, and is in need of structural renovations to be inhabitable again, including certain setbacks (10 ft. from the rear and 3 ft on the sides) which haven't been addressed.

At the end of 7 minutes, when asked the nature of the business that Towne planned to install, Brumpton suggested that was yet to be determined, but then (like, immediately) said that they're interested in having it be an auto repair shop, as it had been used for in the past. A former operator, Mike Boon, was also speaking of his interest in returning to the space.

Mike Magers then had 7 minutes to present his point of view: he gave background and history of the lot from his perspective. He explained the function of an auto repair shop according to today's standards. There are major parking issues he thinks are a priority, and his shop pours into the neighborhood too much as it is (especially after losing the additional space of the back ally land/building in question), and is worried

about the lack of space for parking to accommodate another separately operated auto repair shop. He thinks this is the major concern, as a neighbor and business owner.

At this point, Adam, Secretary and deep sea-of-city-documents-diver, shared specifics regarding the *Mid-City Community Plan* and the City's Municipal Code. (#spoileralert, this is going to descend into a planning-nerd rabbit hole rapidly.)

There are two specific provisions of the *Community Plan*:

- The first is from the section about Development Regulations, and zoning, which specifically reads (on page 154) the recommendation "To provide for development more fitting to the character of the commercial streets, restrict future automobile sales establishments on University Avenue, Adams Avenue, 43rd Street, Fairmount Avenue, and Euclid Avenue." It's reasonable to suggest that "automotive sales establishments include places where the primary concerns is how "the character of commercial streets" is diminished by a lot full of cars.
- The second is from a section about the vision for Commercial activity, which specifically reads (on page 102) the recommendation that "The commercial nodes at the I-805 and State Route 15 gateways (University Avenue and El Cajon Boulevard) should accommodate hotels, restaurants, retailers requiring large structures and parcels, and gasoline stations with auto repair," with that last part designating that the proper place for auto repair shops is along University or El Cajon Blvd, and specifically not Adams, as that road is not a node between the two major freeways. As a matter of fact, the gateways to freeways near Adams Ave. are specifically residential housing and Ward Canyon Park, respectively.

From there, Adam turned to the most up-to-date Municipal Code (Enjoy:

<https://www.sandiego.gov/city-clerk/officialdocs/legisdocs/muni>) explaining that the purpose of the code is to provide policies and clear mechanisms to help in advancing the Community Plans across the city.

Specific areas of interest include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Chapter 15, Table 155-02E, outlines Parking Ratios required by businesses, including Commercial Services and Mixed-Use Development, requiring at least 2.1 to 2.5 spaces per 1,000 square feet of floor area of the business. We did not learn the square footage of the building in question, but we did learn that it has 5 spaces on site.
- Chapter 15 also outlines types of businesses allowed in certain Zones. Adam explained that we're looking at a space in Zone CUPD-3-3, which, per Land Development Code Section 131.0112, does not allow for Commercial Vehicle Repair & Maintenance or Personal Vehicle Repair & Maintenance businesses.

At that point, advocates for the off-alley potential business grumbled "It's grandfathered in," to which Adam replied, "Which brings us to Chapter 12, Article 7, Division 1, which outlines the regulations regarding 'previously conforming premises and uses,' and includes details about how the 'burden of proof' is on 'the property owner or person asserting previously conforming rights,' and that 'sale or transfer of the property or change of ownership does not terminate rights to the previously conforming premises,' but *also emphasized* that any permit for current use is 'subject

to special regulations and conditions, unless the previously conforming premises or uses adversely impact public health, safety, or welfare,' which is relevant considering this location's proximity to residences and a school."

Speaking to the idea of "grandfathering," Caroline asked again if the place was in current use or has not been in use, and it was confirmed that nothing has operated out of that space since March of 2017, which challenges the idea of the place being "grandfathered," as it hasn't been in continuous use. Caroline pointed out that since there's been a gap in business operations on that site, this is a conversation about a new business.

Adam then read the Motion unanimously approved by the AABA at their General Meeting earlier in the day: "The AABA specifically rejects the idea of a new auto repair business opening behind 3441 Adams Ave in the alley, in accordance with the Community Plan. When the automobile repair business is submitted for review/approval at that location, this motion should come before the project tracking system (PTS) manager and they need to know that we feel that this specific site is not appropriate for an auto repair business."

Ralph suggested that the zoning and policies exist to mitigate this, and we can make a motion.

M/S:Bill/Caroline: The NHCPG supports the approved motion from the AABA, and upholding our *Community Plan*.

Discussion: Alyson mentioned that if any other business like Smitty's or Corillo's were to leave, and try to come back, the AABA would oppose that on the ground that Adams Ave. is not the appropriate place for automotive service businesses. Brumpton says that the reason the older business were removed under false pretenses. The family tried to explain more history and family conflicts, to which Caroline reminded that we were there to consider the use of the land today, rather than in decades past. Pete Evaristo chimed in to remind the impassioned advocates for the off-ally auto shop that the NHCPG is a land use advisory entity, and that we weren't in a court of law; also of note is that nobody directly involved in this situation seems to have experience in law. **Vote: unanimously in favor of the motion.**

11. **How Shall We Use NHCPG Funds:**

One idea is that we make a donation to the Mid-City Little League. Ralph would like us to support the NH Urban Arts Council. Dave Rodgers would like us to sponsor an event at the Mason Lodge. Ralph would like us to get renderings of a Library for the neighborhood. Thomas is interested in doggie waste bag dispensers like they have downtown. Caroline mentions solar powered trash compactors, which run about \$1500 each, with Parks & Rec maintaining it.

No Motion was made at this time.

Information/Discussion Items

12. Normal Heights Elementary School gates have been Locked to Joint-Use Access:

We smashed through this earlier in conversation about traffic.

Committee and Ad Hoc Group Reports

Because it was super late, we skipped these, except the following:

13. NH Canyons Group:

14. NH Library: Subcommittee meeting on 11/18 9am Lestat's.

Meeting ended 8:27 pm

Anticipated/Requested Future Agenda Items

Agenda order and timing are approximate and subject to change. This information is available in alternative formats (sign language, oral interpreter, and/or Assistive Listening Device). To request an alternative format, call 619-533-3650 at least five (5) working days prior to the meeting. If you have questions concerning the NHCPG, please express them at the meeting or contact the NHCPG Chair, Jim Baross, at jimbaross@cox.net or 619-280-6908, or the City of San Diego Associate Planner, Naomi Siodmok at NSiodmok@sandiego.gov or 619-446-5064.

Past Agendas and Minutes are available at

<http://www.sandiego.gov/planning/community/profiles/normalheights/agendas.shtml>

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Elaboration from Communications 5.vi:

To: Mayor Kevin Faulconer, Councilmember Georgette Gómez and Councilmember Chris Ward

Date: October 11, 2017



Subject: SR15 Parcels

Dear Mayor and Councilmembers,

In line with a rejuvenated climate around economic development on The Boulevard, the El Cajon Boulevard BIA would like to echo the community's longtime desire to catalyze transit oriented development at the SR15 CenterLine Transit Hub.

Starting in 1983, Caltrans started to move forward on a plan to extend the 15 freeway through Mid-City. Since then, residents and stakeholders have been negotiating to mitigate the displacement of 4,000 residents; local businesses; and the negative effects of having a highway divide their community. The goal has always been to create amenities to minimize the division of the community; make the new freeway a regional asset; and have it serve as a catalyst for neighborhood reinvestment.

Many design amenities have resulted from this community effort, including construction of the freeway below-grade; creation of a four acre park over the freeway; enhanced pedestrian linkages across the freeway; and integration of the CenterLine Bus Rapid Transit into the median of the freeway, supported by expanded overcrossings to serve as transit plazas at the interchanges of SR-15 at University Avenue and El Cajon Boulevard.

Since the opening of the freeway in 2000, parcels on the northwest and northeast corners of El Cajon Boulevard and the SR15 have sat vacant. Rather than having the parcels sold off to become another gas

station, fast food restaurant or convenience store, the community has been focused on creating a dense Transit Oriented Development (TOD) that supports the community's needs.

In 2004, the parcels were included as part of a project which was designated as one of five Pilot Village properties by the City of San Diego. The Boulevard Marketplace, which was a culmination of years of planning work by The Mid-City Transit Interchanges Project, a community and government partnership, resulted in a mixed-use project with 366 units of housing and 37,00 feet of commercial space. With a lack of commitment from the city, a recession, crash in the housing market, and the demise of redevelopment, the plan went unrealized. The SR-15 Mid-City Station Area Planning Study and Economic Feasibility Analysis Report in 2013 also recommended a dense mixed-use project for the transit node.

In January of 2016, the Urban Land Institute ("ULI") San Diego-Tijuana District Council participated in a Technical Assistance Panel ("TAP") to provide land use recommendations for the parcels. They pointed out that despite recent infrastructure investments in a new Bus Rapid Transit line which connects the neighborhood to downtown and SDSU and the now under construction CenterLine station on the SR15, significant Transit Oriented Development (TOD) projects had yet to materialize. They suggested acquiring additional land to add to the two parcels currently owned by Civic San Diego to create a larger mixed-use project. To support the use of The Boulevard's BRT station, they recommended the city owned lot should be developed as a mobility hub that supports mixed-use, transit-oriented development. This could include an array of multi-modal transportation services, amenities, and urban design enhancements that bridge the distance between transit and where people, live, work, and gather.

Recent talks with the City of San Diego and Civic San Diego has led to the possibility of releasing simultaneous Request for Proposals (RFPs) for the three parcels. The intent is to capitalize on any synergies which can be created through a joint or complementary development of the parcels. As with all previous efforts, community input on desired uses was sought to inform the RFP process.

In August, a survey was developed through The ECBBIA Economic Development Committee, which is made up of community stakeholders including; residents, partner non-profit organizations, government entities, community planning group members and local business owners. The survey received 107 responses. A large majority of respondents were Local Residents (64%) and (27%) were Property Owners. Overall, Civic/Community was voted as the single best use (40%), with Commercial coming in second (30%). Housing was the third highest (12%). A rendering showing a mixed-use development with housing above community or commercial uses was seen as a good or really good fit by a majority (54%) of the respondents. An open air event space with commercial tenants was also seen as a positive use, with (60%) declaring it a good fit.

Now, with construction nearing completion on the \$65 million SR-15 Mid-City CenterLine Transit Stations, the motivation to capitalize on the public investment is greater than ever. These parcels are the last remnants of the construction which divided Mid-City. Over the past three decades, community visioning; planning study after planning study; and now a community survey have all pointed to the same conclusion. The opportunity has finally come to create a vibrant mixed-use transit-oriented project which incorporates the mix of commercial, housing and public space that the community has been waiting for.

Sincerely,

Tootie Thomas, President

El Cajon Boulevard Business Improvement Association

CC:

Reese A. Jarrett, President, Civic San Diego

Michael Lengyel, Assistant Vice President, Economic Development, Civic San Diego

Mary Carlson, Asset Manager, City of San Diego

Don Taylor, Chair, Kensington-Talmadge Planning Group

Jim Barros, Chair, Normal Heights Community Planning Group