



Minutes for Tuesday, March 5, 2024

Normal Heights Community Center/Zoom
4649 Hawley Avenue

Attendees:

X = in attendance

X	Paul Coogan (C)	X	Jim Baross	X	Scott Kessler (AABA)
X	Allan Harjala (VC)	X	Dan Soderberg	X	Emily Colwell
	Open (S)	X	Greg Stone	X	Sami Burrows
X	Frances Prichett (T)	X	Nancy Lawler		

6:00 Call to order

- Opening “reflection” and introductions.
- Board members introduced themselves and shared their favorite movies.

Agenda Modifications

- None

February meeting minutes.

- MOTION to approve by Jim. Second by Scott. PASSED unanimously.

Treasurer’s Report

- Frances gave treasurer’s report. Previously approved donation of \$1000 to the butterfly mural project was made. Current balance of \$332.46.

Non-Agenda Public Comment

- Jacob Koopman asked the community for assistance with a petition and letter to encourage the smoke shop on Adams next to SoCal Sushi to stop selling meth pipes.

Digital Communications

- Paul announced that Sami had updated the group's website to improve functionality.

Action/Decision Items

Election Committee

- **MOTION** to form an election committee to publicize, nominate candidates for, and run board election prior to April meeting. Allan moved. Jim seconded. **PASSED** unanimously.

Discussion – Jim discussed the procedure used for nominating candidates in the past and mentioned that only people who had attended 2 prior meetings could be nominated. Allan asked whether the group would continue to enforce this requirement now that the new council policy does not allow prior meeting attendance to be a requirement. Jim indicated that the group should continue to enforce the requirement because it is in the by-laws.

Jim and Greg volunteered to serve as the election committee. Paul appointed Jim and Greg.

Alex Wong from RideSD

Alex Wong presentation regarding airport transit delayed until later in the meeting.

Review of Land Development Code Update

Paul summarized the LDC update process and mentioned the inclusion of an item that could be relevant for Normal Heights related to front yard setbacks for ADUs, though he also mentioned that it might not impact NH because very few if any properties in NH have front yards large enough to accommodate ADUs. Paul indicated he would provide a more detailed presentation on the LDC update in April.

Reports/Updates

Presumably due to the primary election, only one government official had a rep attending.

Toni Duran from State Senator Toni Atkins' office via Zoom reintroduced herself to the group and provided an update, highlighting the Senator's prioritization of a program for 1st time homebuyer down payment and closing cost assistance, and California's Earned Income Tax Credit for working families.

Chair Report on Community Planners Committee

Paul – The CPC continues to work on a request to the San Diego County Grand Jury to investigate inconsistencies in the city's Development Services Division. The next meeting is March 12. They have drafted a narrative for the request and are in the process of collecting evidence that supports the narrative.

Community Group Updates

Adams Ave. Business Association

Scott – Adams Ave. Unplugged will be April 27. There will be a film about one of the Unplugged founders on April 26.

The AABA is working with UCSD on an Alleys in Action program intended to revive alleys to serve more purposes than just as motor vehicle and trash truck thoroughfares. Normal Heights has one of the highest percentage of alleys in the city. They have written a grant application and are hoping for a positive response. There will be a public demonstration on May 18 in the alley between Hawley and Mansfield south of Adams by Adams Elementary, Normal Heights United, Adams park, and the charter school, where they will be soliciting input from the community.

El Cajon Blvd. Business Improvement Association

Gary Weber via Zoom mentioned that the ECBBIA will be doing another developers' tour of the Boulevard soon – possibly in May – where they show developers development opportunities along the Blvd. Gary encouraged the planning group to get connected with the BIA and developers to get in on the conversation and find out why our stretch of ECB is not seeing the development that is happening to both the east and west.

Normal Heights Community Association

Greg – The 2nd Annual Eggstravaganza will be held in Ward Canyon Park on March 23 from 10am to noon with Easter-themed activities for children.

Adams Recreation Group

Nancy – Next meeting on March 29. There will be a Spring Fling Easter Egg Hunt in Adams Park on March 29 from 4:00 – 6:00 pm. The Rec Center has lots of activities coming up – after school art classes, youth ceramics, youth soccer, and more. The butterfly mural is almost ready to go up. Jim encouraged anyone who likes to play to join the group – they need members. They meet the 4th Tuesday of the month at 6:00pm in the Adams Rec Center. Scott mentioned that the butterfly mural will be installed in March – likely on either March 14 or March 19 – and the AABA will send out a press release.

Normal Heights for Smart Growth

Paul – Caroline McKeown will be putting together a report on the results from the community survey/poll that NHFSG has been working on. There will be a presentation in April.

Alex Wong from Ride SD presented via Zoom – “People Mover to the Airport – Normal Height’s Best Bet”

Alex summarized the 2 leading concepts SANDAG is considering for improving transit to the airport – a new trolley line/extension and an automated people mover – and explained why RideSD is in support of the Automated People Mover. Highlights –

- A new trolley line would share pre-existing tracks with the blue and green lines before diverging onto new elevated track from Hawthorne to the airport.
- The automated people mover (APM) would run on new elevated track from downtown to the airport.
- APM viaducts are less impactful than trolley viaducts because they are smaller and do not require overhead power lines.
- APMs are mostly seen within airports, but can also work well outside of airports and do in some locations like Tokyo, Seoul, and Vancouver.
- A new APM could operate with 2 minute interval frequencies, while a trolley line would operate at 15 minute frequencies.
- Unless a new trolley line used a tunnel to bypass sharing existing track, which would be extremely costly, adding a third line on existing track would eliminate the possibility of increased frequencies better than 15 minutes on the green line.

Alex asked for support from the group.

Comments/Questions –

Paul Jameson (online) thanked Alex for the presentation and expressed support for a better transit connection to the airport regardless of what it ends up being.

Jim asked about cost comparisons between the trolley and APM concepts. Alex indicated that though the up-front estimated cost of the APM would be slightly higher than that of the trolley – ongoing operating costs would be much lower and if the trolley were to tunnel to avoid the congestion/bottleneck issues with the green & blue lines the trolley costs would be higher. Jim asked follow-up as to per mile costs of APM and trolley. Alex indicated APM at roughly \$500M/mile and trolley at \$700M/mile.

Greg asked about the number of proposed stops for the APM. Alex – 3.

Emilie mentioned that she had taken the APM in Tokyo and was impressed. She expressed optimism that an APM could do well in terms of farebox recovery.

Paul asked about who were supporters and opponents of APM. Alex indicated that Sean Elo-Rivera, a number of folks at SANDAG, and the Airport Authority were supportive while Steven Whitburn, MTS, and some downtown residents were skeptical.

MOTION

Jim made motion to write letter in support of APM concept. I missed the second. I think it might have been Emilie.

Ayes – Everyone except Frances and Scott.

Nays – Frances

Abstain - Scott

Frances indicated that she did not have enough information at this point and asked if the group was foreclosing itself from possibly also considering endorsing the trolley concept. Paul indicated that if a trolley to the airport proponent wanted to make their case, the group would welcome it and be free to endorse their plan as well.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Community Plan Update Committee

Greg – The group is disbanding as the purpose was met. Going forward there will be a city-appointed commission and the group has a seat that we can fill.

Jim suggested Paul for the group's seat on the commission. Paul deflected and suggested Emilie. Emilie indicated that she had applied as a citizen and the members chosen from the applicants had not yet been announced and indicated she could serve as the group's rep. Paul appointed Emilie as our rep to the city's commission for the community plan update.

Historical Property Review

Dan mentioned that someone had referred to him as the Normal Heights historian, but that is not the case. He mentioned Suzanne as a better choice for that title and would send Paul the link to her website about the history of Normal Heights to share on the website.

Utility Undergrounding

Emilie – The first block – 3BB – in the far northeastern corner of the neighborhood - is getting going, so now is the time to start forming a MAD. Emilie and Frances are working with the city to get the details of MAD formation process. They had considered the possibility of a larger MAD to

include the many areas north of Adams, but it makes more sense to have separate little MADs for each section as they get going.

The purpose of the MAD is to pay for decorative acorn street lights. Property owners within the MAD will vote as to whether to form the MAD to pay for the enhanced streetlights. If the vote succeeds, a MAD charge will be added onto their property tax bills.

Community Garden

Paul sent letters to the owners of the two parcels to ask that they vacate the public right of way so the city can do what it needs to do so a community garden can be established in the parkway.

Tree Replacement

Greg – no update

Traffic Safety

Allan – no update. Paul mentioned that he had heard the crosswalk improvement had gotten onto the CIP and he would follow up with the council rep about that.

Community Engagement

Paul – The city has forms that need to be filled out and the intent is to do that after the poll results are obtained.

MOTION to adjourn made by Jim. Seconded by Greg. Approved unanimously.