

Normal Heights Community Planning Group

APPROVED MINUTES

October 7, 2014, 6:00 P.M.

Normal Heights Community Center

Board Members present: Jean-Louis Coquereau, Joseph Fombon, John Hartley, Scott Kessler, Joe Kissell, Phil Kramer, Mark Lawler, Nancy Lawler, Suzanne Ledebor, Caroline McKeown, Mark Rowland, Dan Soderberg, Gary Weber, Ryan Zellers

Absent: Marianne Green

Community Members/Guests: John Bartley, Matthew Boomhower, Bill Conway, Judy Elliot, Jeffrey Huard, Katelyn Hailey, Pat Meyer, Mike McGraw (and 15 others who did not identify themselves)

Special Memorial

At 6:00 P.M., a dedication ceremony to honor Judy Moore was held in the side garden, where a bench has been installed with a memorial plaque. Pam Kish (Judy's sister), Suzanne Ledebor, Scott Kessler, and Judy Elliot spoke.

Welcome and Introductions

- The meeting was called to order at 6:15 P.M. by the Chair, Caroline McKeown.

Modifications to Meeting Agenda

- No modifications were proposed.

Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes

- The minutes of the September 2014 NHCPG meeting were distributed prior to the meeting. Mark R. and Suzanne pointed out minor typos. Ryan moved to approve it as corrected, Jean-Louis seconded. Caroline abstained because she was not at the meeting. All the other board members voted to approve the minutes.

Treasurer's Report

- Mark Rowland, Treasurer, stated that we sold \$320 worth of license plate frames at the Adams Avenue Street Fair, leaving us with a balance of \$1,882.94.

Non-agenda Public Comments

- Judy Elliot initiated a discussion about zoning. She expressed concern that the city has changed zoning such that there's no single-family designation in the community. She asks the Planning Group to do research on the matter. We can now have a "guest" or "granny" or "companion" unit (which can't include a kitchen), which are sometimes illegally turned into rentals. She wants to know how the city is allowing these things and what can be done about it. Mark thinks Michael Prinz, city planner, should be invited to talk about the issue next time. Caroline said he's already on our schedule to come next month. Pat Meyer said

that the city's unspoken attitude is that Normal Heights needs to take more density. This rule is hard to enforce, and there's a problem with the unwritten practice. Gary said there's an overriding concern on the state level, a desire to increase density in single-family neighborhoods with granny flats. Pats said that our infrastructure was designed for small, single-family homes. For example, south of Adams, we have no water pressure, so neighborhood needs upgrades if this is what they want to do. Judy disagreed with Gary and believes that with enough effort, we can make changes.

Reports from Government Representatives and Community Groups

- **Katelyn Hailey, from State Senator Marty Block's office:** Legislative session ended at end of August. Out of 12 bills Marty sent to the governor, 11 were signed, including those for Bachelor degrees at community colleges and bills having to do with Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly and whistleblower protections. One more legislative town hall is coming up in Point Loma on Oct. 20.
- **Scott, on the street fair:** The Adams Avenue Street Fair finished successfully. It was safe, with a big crowd.
- **Scott, on the DecoBike bike sharing program:** The city has signed a contract with DecoBike. Originally the plan included no stations in Normal Heights, but after lobbying by AABA, DecoBike agreed to put five stations along Adams Avenue, with the possibility of additional stations in Kensington (at Ponce's), at El Zarape, and at Utah. Scott stated that the cost to install the DecoBike stations is born entirely by the company, and that it's supported by advertising on placards/billboards on the bike stations. He said that the City of San Diego supposedly makes money off of it. Mark R. raised a concern about the size of the billboards and said we needed to know more about it. Caroline said Scott had talked about it that morning at the AABA meeting and that was the first she'd heard about the project going forward in Normal Heights, and then said she felt the DecoBike people should definitely come and talk to us before the bike stations go in. Caroline confirmed that NHCPG had discussed the idea two years ago and had been in general agreement about the concept and the locations proposed at that time. Caroline and Mark R. both stated that we needed to have a presentation about what the impact of the program would be on the community. Scott said that the new DecoBike representative lives in Normal Heights, and that he would ask her to attend our next meeting. Caroline said, "This may be one of those situations where the benefits outweigh the harm, but I think we need to hear the whole story."
- **Nancy, on the Recreation Council:** Still waiting to see if the Mid-City Park & Recreation District approves Little League field use from 6–7 P.M. and VaVi Sports from 7–10, Monday–Friday during Little League season.

Action Items

- **Electric Charging Infrastructure—Vehicle Charging Station Installation:** Jacques Chirazi, City of San Diego Economic Development Dept., spoke. There is a proposed site at Vons, 36th & Adams, for the installation of 4 charging stations, one of

which would be ADA-accessible. The project still needs engineering review. This turned into an information item, and we can't really vote on it until the project has full approval. We'll revisit it at a future meeting.

Information Items

- **Metropolitan Transit System—Rapid Bus Route 215:** Denis Desmond, Senior Transportation Planner for MTS, talked about the new Mid-City Rapid route starting Sunday. Planning started at SANDAG about 12 years ago. New route is 215, along El Cajon. “Rapid” means new stations, more frequent services (every 10 minutes during peak, every 15 otherwise), new articulated buses with greater capacity, earlier and later service. Same fare, \$2.25. Replaces route 15. Route 235 started in June. A third route, 237, will be for weekday rush hour only and starts on Monday. Another route they're starting on Monday, during weekday peak hours only, is 170, an express route, which starts at University & I-15, goes up to Adams, to Park, and eventually to downtown. Much faster to downtown than route 11. \$2.50 fare each way.
- **Reinstatement of the City-wide 75/25 Sidewalk Program:** For homeowners, there used to be a 50/50 program where the city pays 50% of sidewalk repair fees, but now the 75/25 program has been reinstated city-wide. The total amount is limited, and then it goes back to 50/50.
- **School Construction Meetings—Adams Elementary and San Diego Global Vision Academies:** Caroline was unable to attend the meetings, but several other community and board members (Gary, Jean-Louis, Scott, and Phil) attended. These were preliminary meetings. The construction meeting for Adams Elementary was on 10/2. Jean-Louis reviewed what was discussed at the meeting. During Q&A, the AABA expressed concern about a new building that will take up about a third of the playground space, and a new fence that will separate the hardscape from the field, plus circulation and parking issues. Caroline has invited the chief of Facilities Planning & Construction to come to our next meeting and give a formal presentation. He wanted us to know this was the first design task force meeting for community dialog and stakeholder input and that future meetings will be scheduled for stakeholders. Phil stated that his only concern was about logistics—how would the new building work with the street fair, church parking on Sundays, etc. Gary said that with new money comes new opportunity. We need to find a way to get the site larger in order to accommodate the actual number of students. Caroline said we could form an ad hoc school committee. The Global Vision meeting is on November 7 at 6:30 at the front office of Global Vision. Next Adams Elementary meeting is on November 13. There seems to be lots of confusion about the dates. The relevant parties will send Caroline the definitive list of dates.
- **Parks Discussion—Strategy to advocate for more park space in Normal Heights:** Gary said we are deficient in parks, and the only way to get more is to tear down houses or cover up streets/freeways. What to do? By the book, Normal Heights should have 40–50 acres of parks, but we have only 5–10. Do we care about this deficiency? If so, we should figure out how to do something about it. Gary has talked to various politicians

about it, but the problem is finding the money. We could vote to raise property taxes to pay for new park space, but it's difficult even to get something like that on a ballot. Caroline said Toni Atkins has an interest in getting more park space for the neighborhood, and opined that this should become a working group or ad hoc committee. Mark R. said we should start by focusing on Ward Canyon, since it's already approved.

Committee Reports

- **Community Planners Committee:** Caroline and Mark R. didn't go to the meeting. Marianne isn't present. Therefore, we have no information to present. Scott noted that November 5 is the deadline for comments on land development.
- **Projects Review Committee:** The October project submitted for review is 3453 Cromwell Place. Dan says that the Cromwell Place house is historic, English Tudor style, possibly from a kit, and the owners are noteworthy.
- **Ad Hoc Bylaws Subcommittee:** The subcommittee is going to wait and see what the new shell looks like before continuing with bylaw revisions.
- **Utility Undergrounding Working Group:** Mark R. passed out meeting minutes and reviewed what the working group discussed at their last meeting, including a desire to get city staff to come to our NHCPG meetings as soon as possible; the proposed hiking trail down to Mission Valley and how the high-voltage line that runs along 33rd might be undergrounded at the same time; and how street lighting will be affected by the loss of telephone poles. They meet the fourth Monday evening of each month.
- **Transportation/Traffic Calming Working Group:** The working group did not meet in the last month. However, SANDAG contacted Ryan regarding the Meade Ave. bike boulevard and invited him and Everett Hauser to attend a meeting with the project manager on October 20. He will also speak with Gary Pence about lights for uncontrolled crosswalks on Adams at 34th St. and Hawley.
- **Library Branch Working Group:** John is having some physical problems and would like to make a change so that Jean-Louis is chair of the working group. But John will remain on the committee.
- **City Infrastructure Committee:** Suzanne said we got the report from Transportation & Storm Water on sidewalks. Scott said the AABA has identified numerous trip and fall hazards on Adams Avenue and has ground many of them down.

New Business/Future Agenda Items

- No new business or future agenda items were presented.

Adjournment

- Joseph moved to adjourn, Ryan seconded the motion. Passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:11 P.M.

Next meeting: November 4, 2014