

**GREATER NORTH PARK COMMUNITY PLANNING COMMITTEE
MINUTES
October 19, 2004**

Called to order at 6:33 p.m.

Attendance

Attendance at this meeting

Elaine Boyd, Lan Bubb, Jason DeFay, Peter Dennehy, Vicki Granowitz, Richard Kurylo, John Stewart McGaughy, Judith O'Boyle, Mike Petrogeorge, Michael Powers, Keoni Rosa, Al Smith, Maureen Westfall.

Absent was Michael Branch (excused), James Longley (excused)

Subcommittees, liaisons, and leadership roles since previous meeting

Between the September 21 and October 19 Planning Committee meetings, Planning Committee members attended the following subcommittee and other meetings. Public Relations did not meet during the month.

Elaine Boyd:	Urban Design/Project Review.
Michael Branch:	None reported.
Lan Bubb:	Public Facilities/Parks/Housing, Theatre Plaza Workshop
Jason DeFay:	Bylaws (Co-Chair), Maintenance Assessment District, Altadena Neighborhood Association, Election COW
Peter Dennehy:	Urban Design/Project Review.
Vicki Granowitz:	Urban Design/Project Review, Balboa Park Committee, Clean Needle Exchange Program, Election COW, Vice Chair.
Richard Kurylo:	Theatre Plaza Workshop, North Park Main Street, Secretary.
James Longley:	None reported.
John Stewart McGaughy:	Urban Design/Project Review (Chair), Theatre Plaza Workshop, North Park Main Street, Ray Street Business Owners and Ray Street Mural Meeting.
Judith O'Boyle:	Urban Design/Project Review, Transportation
Mike Petrogeorge:	Urban Design/Project Review, Public Facilities/Parks/Housing (Chair), other meetings (not specified).
Michael Powers:	Urban Design/Project Review, Public Facilities/Parks/Housing, Transportation, Bylaws, Chair.
Keoni Rosa:	Urban Design/Project Review.
Al Smith:	Urban Design/Project Review, Bylaws (Co-Chair), Project Area Committee, Maintenance Assessment District.
Maureen Westfall:	Urban Design/Project Review, Transportation, Bylaws, Theatre Plaza Workshop, Treasurer.

Announcements

- Richard Kurylo announced that North Park Main Street is coordinating a money collection campaign for the North Park Theatre. Approximately 30 collection containers can be found in businesses throughout North Park. All funds collected will be given to the Lyric Opera San Diego for restoration of the Theatre. One container was distributed through the room for those wishing to donate.
- Jay Turner from North Park Main Street handed out their annual report for fiscal year 2003-2004.
- Bertha Klann gave the Law Enforcement report. There will be a meeting next Wednesday at the North Park Rec Center. The new Police Captain for our area will be introduced. There has been an increase in house prowls. Residents need to be cautious.

Approval of Previous Minutes

MOTION: TO APPROVE THE GREATER NORTH PARK COMMUNITY PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 21, 2004.

(McGaughy/Smith). Motion passed 13-0-0.

Treasurer's Report

The cash balance as of August 31, 2004, was \$441.28. The bank credited \$22 to the account for service fees in July and August, but then debited the account \$11 for service fees in September. The cash balance as of September 30, 2004, was

\$452.28. There is an outstanding debt of \$38.00 to Catherine Callen for the post office box. The Board gave authorization to the Executive Board to decide whether to change banks because of the continuing problem with the service charge.

Official's Report

- Todd Gloria from U.S. Congressional District 53 (Congresswoman Susan Davis) distributed the October 2004 edition of *The Davis Dispatch* newsletter. Congress is not in session right now. There will be a lot of work to do when they reconvene. On page 3 of the newsletter is the Service Academy Nomination Application procedure.
- Yelena Grossman from State Senate District 39 (State Senator Dede Alpert) announced that Dede Alpert is retiring in the December. The office is closing on November 30 at 5:00 p.m. An elder care directory was given to the Planning Committee. The Franchise Tax Board has created a *2004 Homeowner and Renter Assistance Claim Booklet*. Copies were distributed. The newsletter *Safe Seniors* was distributed. Five important bills authored or co-authored by Alpert were signed into law. A description of these was distributed.
- Robert Young from the Office of the Mayor (Mayor Dick Murphy) said that public safety remains a priority for the Mayor. Recent rain helped minimize the fire risk, but we should still be mindful. A canyon fire safety guide was distributed. Young's phone number is (619) 236-7064.
- Stephen Hill from Council District 3 (Deputy Mayor Toni Atkins) announced that Deputy Mayor Atkins earned an A-plus and was named San Diego's "clean water leader" by the San Diego BayKeeper association. She scored 104 out of 100 points, including extra points. Councilmembers Frye and Zucchet also got A-pluses. The City of San Diego got a B overall. Special park fees set aside for North Park (over \$1 million) are mostly already allocated for projects: \$400,000 for the North Park Community Center in the Renaissance at North Park Project; over \$500,000 for the North Park Community Park; ball field renovation; and basketball court renovation. Approximately \$160,000 is unencumbered. A Community Plan update and preservation of historically "contributing" residences are both on Deputy Mayor Atkins' radar screen. Council District 3 staff met with Gail Goldberg of the Planning Department. Short-term goals include meeting with Development Services to discuss demolition permits, funding the completion of the North Park Historical Resources Survey, and cost recovery when homes are designated historic. The ultimate goal is a Community Plan update. The City's General Plan Update should be completed in 2005. Individual community plans could be updated afterwards. Mr. Hill's direct number is (619) 236-7758.

Reordering of the Agenda

Chair Michael Powers requested a report of the sidewalk survey. Mike Petrogeorge presented the project, which was intended to identify places where flooding occurs. A map of the results was shown. Kimberly Horn & Associates was the consultant. Projects were prioritized as follows:

1. Grim Street between North Park Way and Thorn
2. Collier, Hamilton, Oregon and Adams
3. Florida, Cyprus and Upas
4. Bancroft, Thorn and Palm
5. Ohio, Howard and Lincoln
6. Boundary and Illinois
7. Florida and Alabama

More public comment was requested. John Fankhauser suggested Upas Street between Pershing and Villa Terrace. There's a steep hill there. John Stewart McGaughy suggested 31st Street between North Park Way and Landis. Jason DeFay said that ongoing slurry seal raises the street level over the curb level. Vicki Granowitz suggested Maple between Laurel and Pamo.

Chair Michael Powers moved for postponement of the Lafayette project. He received a letter from the University Heights Urban Design Review Council because the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is not yet available. A motion is needed to override the Chair's decision.

MOTION: TO OVERRIDE THE CHAIR'S DECISION TO TABLE THE LAFAYETTE PROJECT. (Granowitz/McGaughy).

Discussion: Sherm Harmer said that he supports the motion. The EIR is well underway. Initial findings are out and were distributed to the Board for review. There is only one area of concern, and this can be addressed. The project has been in process for 16 months. There will be ample time for additional community input over the next five months, and it would be appreciated if the Planning Committee would hear the project tonight. Chris Milnes from University Heights opposed the motion. Lara Evans said that the EIR is not available for public review yet. Land issues and neighborhood compatibility issues need to be addressed. These items are addressed in the Community Plan. She recommended that the Planning Committee hear the project tonight. The design has been reviewed and altered, and City staff can support the project. City staff will have to respond to comments about the EIR. The project must still go before the Planning Commission and the City

Council. John Stewart McGaughy said that the Urban Design/Project Review Subcommittee was most concerned with preserving the hotel. The developer is saving and restoring the hotel and, in return, is putting a tower in the back part of the parcel that it would normally put on El Cajon Blvd. The subcommittee supported the project 15-1-0. [Note: There was some confusion about this vote, and it was determined in the days following the meeting that the vote was actually 15-2-0]. Susan Lake said that she drove for 2½ hours to hear the item and hopes it can be discussed tonight. Jay Wence of Hampstead Partners spoke in favor of hearing the project. Judith O'Boyle said that the agenda was mailed and was on the website, and there are many people present to hear the item. The role of University Heights' design council was clarified. They review projects in the entire area of University Heights.

VOTE: Motion passed 12-0-1.

Would the Planning Committee hear the item again after the EIR is released? Lara Evans said no, but the public is free to make comments directly to Development Services. John Stewart McGaughy said we are required to have an assessment letter before hearing a project, but not an EIR.

Public Comment

- Mary Wendorf said that the University Heights Design Review Council was formed as an advisory group to the Planning Committee because of lack of representation.
- Corlee Morris was concerned with the number of condominium conversions in the neighborhood.
- Michael Powers said that elections are in March. He invited candidates to express interest.
- Jason DeFay said that anybody could become a member of the subcommittees.

Consent Agenda

The only item on the consent agenda, 3555 Florida Street, was pulled from the consent agenda by Jason DeFay.

3555 Florida Street

Johns Stewart McGaughy said that this is a basic item that most Board members have seen. In his opinion, it is a beneficial project. Jason DeFay pulled the item because he wanted to address the issue of condo conversions. He is concerned and knows that some people in the audience are concerned, too. Robert Handen said that condo conversions in his area on Alabama Street have been wonderful.

MOTION: TO APPROVE A TENTATIVE MAP TO CONVERT 9 RESIDENTIAL UNITS TO CONDOMINIUMS AT 3555 FLORIDA STREET WITH THE FOLLOWING FIVE STANDARD SET OF CONDITIONS AS APPLICABLE: HISTORIC SIDEWALK STAMPS AND SCORING BE PRESERVED, FIRST RIGHT OF REFUSAL FOR RENTERS, NEW AND APPROPRIATE LANDSCAPING AS NEEDED, ON-SITE PARKING BE MAXIMIZED, AND OPPOSITION TO THE EXEMPTION TO UNDERGROUND UTILITIES.

(Urban Design/Project Review Subcommittee Recommendation). Motion passed 12-0-1.

Information Items

Update on the North Park Theatre and Parking Structure

Tom Romstad from the Redevelopment Agency made a presentation. There is a lot of activity at the North Park Theatre site. The upper part of the auditorium was leveled off, the orchestra pit excavated, the stage enlarged, an elevator installed, and electrical service is being put in place. The City is in process of acquiring property for the parking garage. The Redevelopment Agency will take the property and compensate the owner within 90 days. Negotiations are ongoing. The project is moving ahead. The agency owns the North Park Mortgage Building site. Two tenants are being assisted (WIC and the Nutrition Center). The building will be partially dismantled now, and then fully dismantled after the tenants are moved. The site will be a parking lot during construction of the parking garage. Lastly, 29th Street is being planned as a community plaza, but the project is not yet funded. A conceptual plan was created through a series of workshops. Funding is being sought. Beth Swersie suggested having holes cut in the wood scaffolding along so that passers-by can see the Theatre construction. An 18-inch-by-18-inch hole with wire mesh is allowed. Long-term plans for the North Park Mortgage Building site are unknown. The Theatre opening date is October 2005. The start date for the garage is December or January.

Action Items

3970 Utah Street

Chris Christiansen presented this condo conversion project. Comments from the Urban Design/Project Review Subcommittee included toning down the color of the building in conformance with the North Park Main Street Design Guidelines. He said that he would be willing to address the Board at a later time regarding condo conversions. This project would contribute positively to the community. John Stewart McGaughy said that this item was not on the consent agenda because two different plans were brought forward – one too plain and one too garish. There is one parking space per unit. McGaughy said that

after this project, there should be one parking space per owner. He suggested that a laundry space be modified to make adequate room for some of the parking. Christensen said that it would be modified to ensure enough space for parking. Lara Evans' concern was that the design was not being shown to the Planning Committee. Christiansen discussed some design elements. There were some questions about accessibility. Christiansen said that "universal design" is strongly suggested to developers. More and more are doing it, but not on this particular project.

MOTION: TO APPROVE A TENTATIVE MAP TO CONVERT 9 EXISTING UNITS TO CONDOMINIUMS AT 3970 UTAH STREET WITH ADEQUATE DEPTH FOR PARKING FOR THE TWO CAR GARAGE AT THE SOUTHWEST REAR CORNER OF THE PARKING LOT AND THE FOLLOWING FIVE STANDARD SET OF CONDITIONS AS APPLICABLE: HISTORIC SIDEWALK STAMPS AND SCORING BE PRESERVED, FIRST RIGHT OF REFUSAL FOR RENTERS, NEW AND APPROPRIATE LANDSCAPING AS NEEDED, ON-SITE PARKING BE MAXIMIZED, AND OPPOSITION TO THE EXEMPTION TO UNDERGROUND UTILITIES.

(McGaughy/Granowitz). Motion passed 10-1-2.

Lafayette Hotel Project

Sherm Harmer from Urban Housing Partners made a presentation. A presentation booklet was distributed. The developers have approached all community groups with interest in the project. The hotel is a gem in the community. Tearing down the hotel is the wrong solution. The project as proposed would add about \$1 million to the park fund. It would add \$1.2 million to the tax increment funds, which could be bonded to \$10 million. Chris Foster from Hamstead Partners described the project. The historic portion of the hotel would be preserved through a \$4 million rehabilitation. Included in the rehab are the Red Fox Restaurant, Mississippi Ballroom, rebuilt pool, and other improvements. The back half of the hotel would be demolished. There would be parking for the hotel, valet service, and one space per bedroom. It is "overparked" according to City standards. The mid-rise, 17-story tower was redesigned. The Historic Site Board and City asked that the tower be set back. It was an expensive redesign, and they now have fewer top-floor units. The tower as previously designed was desirable for extra revenue and lesser construction costs. Opposition to the project is because of the height. Project benefits are that it saves the hotel and other amenities. They want to be a good neighbor and have supported the University Heights concerts in the past. This would be a cornerstone project. It implements the Community Plan, raises property values, and reduces parking congestion. Owners of the two buildings to the east, the only ones with shading issues, have supported the project. The Redevelopment Agency, El Cajon Boulevard Business Improvement Association, and Urban Design/Project Review Subcommittee have all supported the project.

Comments followed the presentation. Mary Wendorf said that the project was presented to University Heights in January 2004. They feel that the 17-story tower is inappropriate for the location. They cannot support it at its present height. The Save Our Heritage Organisation also feels that the project is too tall. Sherm Harmer confirmed that the developers are not presently seeking redevelopment funds. Ron Johnston said that there would have been a 10-story height limitation had the Planned District Ordinance update been completed several years ago. He said that sewer capabilities are inadequate for this project. Lara Evans confirmed that the project would be required to upgrade the sewer lines to meet the capacity. Susan Lake supported the project. The hotel would attract special events that would add to the arts and culture on El Cajon Boulevard. Martin Bloxham, a visitor, loves the hotel. He has hosted events there and supports its restoration. Corlee Morris distributed a map showing high rises in San Diego. A comparison of the height of the historic hotel and the proposed tower was shown. She said that the project would be too tall. The water tower is only five stories tall. Marilyn Deaz from the Lafayette Hotel said that no money has been spent on the hotel since 1946. It can't compete with other hotels. It needs serious investment. Amy Perez said that Sherm Harmer (1) has put forward much effort to come before the community, (2) has increased proposed investment in the hotel from \$1 million to \$4 million, and (3) need to remove the tree from the design rendering. Jon Powell, the developer of a proposed project across the street on El Cajon Boulevard spoke in favor of the project. Jimmy Long spoke in favor of the project. It would result in increased business, increased tourism, and increased awareness of San Diego. Preservation of the hotel is important. High-rise development is desirable. Josh Randall spoke in support of the project. We need a cornerstone project in North Park. The tower is dramatic. Beth Swersie spoke in favor of the project and the Lafayette restoration. Norm Royner spoke in opposition to the project because of lack of infrastructure for increased traffic. Conni Musser spoke in favor of the project. We can't keep the Lafayette hotel without this project. Robert Bartholomew spoke in favor of the project. He lives next to the project and thinks the proposal looks great. Pete Rose spoke in favor of the project. It is a catalyst project and is needed for restoration of the hotel. Chris Milnes said that we should wait for the EIR. University Heights has two alternatives: two 7-story towers or one 8-to-10-story tower. Robert Hamden spoke in favor of the hotel restoration, but felt that a 17-story tower was much too tall. Parking would be terrible. Shirley Fenile supported the project. New development is needed. John Demas, owner of the Red Fox Restaurant, supported the project. Jacob Schwartz of Urban Housing Partners supported the project. He said that the height would not be noticeable from the pedestrian standpoint. Jim Green, General Manager of the Lafayette, explained all of the problems with the hotel. He spoke in favor of the project. Michael Powers said that he received several phone calls about the project. Davoit MaKonnen, owner

of Harav Ethiopian Restaurant, his wife and a coin shop owner all supported the project. Jay Wence felt that this project offers a creative solution to the hotel restoration. It would be a catalyst to redevelopment. Forty-two homes would be affordable.

The developers said that a variance is needed only because it is slightly off of El Cajon Boulevard, which was necessary for saving the hotel. The Community Plan calls for such density on the Boulevard. The tower is only as tall as needed to pay for and maintain the property. There is no significant impact to traffic. There would be 707 parking spaces including 500 subterranean self-parking spaces and 150 subterranean valet spaces. The remainder of the spaces are around the site. Senior housing has been replaced with affordable housing.

Board members commented on the project. Elaine Boyd asked Mary Wendorf what she felt she would discover in the EIR. Wendorf the Planning Committee to the letter from University Heights, which says, "The EIR most likely will contain information that is important in determining whether to approve the project, and under what conditions. For example, it may recommend mitigation measures that should be put in place should the project be approved." John Stewart McGaughy supported the project. He said that a 10-story building all around – an alternative to the tower – would look like a penitentiary. He has a concern regarding the \$4 million restoration. He wants assurance that the developers would put into the building whatever it needs. Richard Kurylo supported the old design over the new design. He said that the old design was reminiscent of historic towers in San Diego such as the Gaslamp Plaza Suites. It also had architectural enhancements like a pitched roof. The community worked extensively on the first design. Mike Petrogeorge supported the project. It would provide green space. He said the mass of the tower is broken up, although he preferred the old design. University Heights voted unanimously for smaller tower(s), but they hadn't voted on the new design. Vicki Granowitz preferred the new design over the old design.

MOTION: TO SUPPORT THE LAFAYETTE HOTEL PROJECT, BUT THE FIRST DESIGN VERSUS THE SECOND DESIGN.

(Kurylo/Smith).

Discussion: Jason DeFay supported the second design. John Stewart McGaughy also supported the second design. He felt that the first design would not be approved by the City. Lara Evans said that the decision of the Historic Resources Board Design Subcommittee would have weight with the full Historic Resources Board. The developer supported the second design.

Vote: Motion failed 2-10-1.

MOTION: TO SUPPORT THE LAFAYETTE HOTEL PLAN AS PROPOSED.

(Granowitz/DeFay).

Discussion: The EIR is there to address the issues. The City would not allow the project without addressing the issues in the EIR. Vicki Granowitz and Jason DeFay were not willing to change the motion to lower the height by a couple of floors.

Vote: Motion passed 11-1-1. Kurylo opposed.

Subcommittee Reports/Liaisons

Urban Design/Project Review Subcommittee

- The University Avenue Mobility Study is the only item on the December agenda, tentatively.

Public Facilities/Parks/Housing Subcommittee

- The property at Landis & Boundary is on the agenda.
- The sewer project for the Burlingame area is on the agenda.

Transportation Subcommittee

- There will be four action items on the next agenda including two stop signs and two traffic calming projects.
- The University Avenue Mobility Plan is tentatively scheduled for December 2.

Public Relations

- The last meeting was cancelled due to a conflicting meeting.

Bylaws Subcommittee

- Election handbooks are available.

- We got kudos from the City with regards to the Planning Committee's distribution of agendas and minutes.
- A motion will be coming forward in November about standing rules for subcommittees, including a uniform sign-in sheet. Having voting rules for subcommittees is important. Bylaw changes may be necessary.

Community Planners Committee (CPC)

- The CPC is going to review the Big Box Ordinance.

North Park Redevelopment Project Area Committee (PAC)

- Roger Lewis reported.
- The PAC has a permanent meeting place at the North Park LIONS Club on Utah Street on the second Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.
- There is a vacancy on the PAC Board for a residential tenant.
- There is a 180-day Exclusive Negotiating Agreement for The Boulevard project.

North Park Library Task Force

- No report.

Balboa Park Committee

- No report

Clean Needle Exchange Program

- Vicki Granowitz will attend a meeting in two days. She will forward information to Board members.

New Business

- Should we combine the Bylaws, Public Relations, and Public Facilities/Parks/Housing subcommittees be combined? Peter Dennehy liked the idea. Maureen Westfall said that Bylaws and Public Relations go well together, but Public Facilities/Parks/Housing doesn't fit. Mike Petrogeorge explained why this would be helpful. Jason DeFay supported Bylaws and Public Relations. Nobody objected to combining them all as an experiment. A combined agenda would be produced. This would take place in January.

Future Agenda Items

The University Avenue Mobility Plan will come before the Planning Committee as an information item in November. The Boulevard project is a future agenda item as well.

Meeting adjourned at 9:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Richard Kurylo
Secretary