

SUNLAND-TUJUNGA NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
LAND-USE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
November 3, 2014

- I. Meeting was called to order at 7:07pm by Chairperson Dean Sherer
- II. Roll Call
 - a. Present
 - i. Dean Sherer
 - ii. Bill Skiles
 - iii. Cindy Cleghorn
 - iv. Debby Beck
 - v. Nina Royal
 - vi. David Barron
 - vii. Elektra Kruger
 - viii. Arsen Karamians
 - ix. John Laue
 - x. Roberta Konrad
 - xi. Karen Zimmerman
 - b. Absent
 - i. Chaz VanAalst
 - c. Public Representative present
 - i. Wesly Hernandez, Area Director CD7 ☺
- III. Committee Chair acknowledged return of Nina Royal to the committee and her valuable contributions to the committee and the community as a whole ☺
- IV. Approval of 10-20-2014 LUC Minutes
 - a. **MOTION:** by Karen Zimmerman to approve the LUC Minutes of 10-20-2014 as amended 2nd by John Laue Vote: Unanimously approved
- V. Announcements
 - a. The annual American Express Small Business Saturday will be celebrated Saturday November 29 on Commerce Ave from 9am to 2pm. Everyone is invited to support small businesses and to meet the new Board of the Chamber of Commerce.
 - b. The Veteran's Day Parade will be held in Pacoima on November 11 beginning 11am [Month-Day-Time = 11-11-11 ☺]
- VI. Recommendations to fill vacancies on the LUC
 - a. There is 1 recommendation pending – Henry Hubert – awaiting approval by the full STNC Bd. Has been enthusiastically endorsed by the LUC. There is still 1 vacancy. The Chair invited the audience to consider joining and explained the application process
- VII. Status of Sister Elsie appeal
 - a. This is a proposed single family dwelling on a hillside in Tujunga. The applicant wants to build a house approx. twice the size permissible by the Hillside Ordinance. The STA filed an appeal to the ZA approval which was subsequently denied.
 - i. The STA has filed a further appeal to the City Council which would first be reviewed by the City Council's Planning Land-Use and Management Committee (PLUM) which would submit a recommendation to the full Council.
 1. The PLUM Hearing was originally scheduled for Nov 4. Has been postponed to Dec 2 at the request of CD7 in hopes that the applicant will come to the table w/community reps to negotiate a compromise

- VIII. Foothill Projects in progress without Specific Plan Review
 - a. There are a number of sites along Foothill Bl that are either having build-outs, additions to roof-tops, etc. that require Project Permit Compliance Reviews. STNC is no longer receiving application packages from the Planning Department as we used to.
 - i. This needs to be corrected. We do not know what the proposed plans are going to be or even the intended use and these are located in Major Activity Areas and Target Areas
 - 1. Proposed Projects in S.P. Major Activity Areas have add'l layers of regulations that must be adhered to – we have no assurances this is being done – that these Projects are being reviewed against those regs
 - 2. STNC will initiate communication with the Planning Department to ensure future receipt of application packages.
 - b. In addition are receiving determination letters soon after applications are filed, eg Ralphs, undermining the NC's opportunity for input.
 - c. Some addresses of interest:
 - i. 8443 Foothill Bl
 - 1. Permits have been applied for for such things as AC. It is located within the Foothill Bl Corridor Specific Plan area, but there is no Specific Plan Project Permit Compliance Review.
 - 2. Permits were pulled in South LA so the valley may not even be aware this is going on
 - ii. 6249 Foothill Bl
 - 1. Installation of roof dormers without a permit. There is a permit for interior work, but this is a Major Activity Area and the use of materials, additions and signage all require permits
 - iii. 8134 Foothill Bl
 - 1. Outside construction and new signs without permits – the Adult Day Care next to the Arco Station. This came to light because they are asking for grant funding to fund their operations
 - 2. They have used reflective glass not permitted per Specific Plan Design Guidelines
 - iv. 10025 Commerce
 - 1. Auto sales – a use specifically not allowed per the Specific Plan
 - v. Wesly H. will follow-up with planning and will review the addresses of interest listed
- IX. Questions for Nov 12 Special STNC meeting with City Attorney
 - a. STNC will have a special townhall style meeting with City Attorney Mike Fuerer and the new Neighborhood Prosecutor. They have requested questions to be submitted in advance. E-Mail them to Cindy – Dean – Bill
- X. Draft letters to be a part of an agenda package
 - a. Prior to an LUC meeting, copies of draft letters to be taken under consideration should be sent to LUC Members along with the Agenda and Draft Minutes so they may be reviewed prior to date of LUC meeting
- XI. Public Comments
 - a. Request of status of K-Mart property
 - i. Home-Depot still has a long-term lease on the property (10 years) which the property owners are not particularly motivated to release them from as they can get regular lease payments from Home Depot.

1. The owners would not object to H.D. sub-leasing, but H.D. would like to recover the \$50 mill they spent to put the store in – so they want an up-front payment. Has created a gridlock which would take high-level influence to break
- b. Patti Potter
 - i. The strip mall with the nail shop/99 cent store on Foothill/Commerce across from the Foothill/Commerce Towncenter is under new ownership
 - c. David Barron
 - i. Strongly opposes the City of Los Angeles being engaged in real estate development that would result in sewer/trash/sanitation fees to equal house payments so that you can make _____? _____
- XII. Policy proposal for S/T economic development – Marina Mesropyan/Christine Vahramyan
- a. Christine V. & Marina M. are graduate students at CSUN majoring in Public Administration currently interning for Councilmember Fuentes. They are presenting a policy proposal to the Councilmember regarding economic development in the S/T area
 - i. As part of their research, they are conducting a community survey (see attached)
 1. General comment: wording and definitions are unclear
- XIII. Verdugo Hills Golf Course – Janek Dombrowa
- a. At the October 20 LUC meeting, Dean S. had some closing arguments to which Mr. Dombrowa would like to have the opportunity to respond. There were issues to such things as density, scale etc.
 - i. Janek D. will be meeting with the investors to make an appeal based on the various points that were brought up during the presentation – items related to density, trails, overall size and scale, benefits lost vs benefits gained
 - ii. Requested an opportunity to report back to the LUC at the December 1 meeting. LUC agreed.
 - b. Karen Z. requested that the latest VHGC development proposal be posted on the STNC Web-Site
 - c. The traffic element will be revisited, not as it relates to the original proposal but as it relates to the new proposal. Will not be ready until early next year for public review. (See attached E-Mails)
 - i. Erin Strelch is the City Planner assigned to the VHGC case
- XIV. Presentation by Stop the Canyon Park Development organization – Joe Barrett
- a. Also known as SaveOurCanyon (See attached PowerPoint)
 - b. The Development is on 110 acres of which 78 acres are proposed to be developed with up to 242 houses. It is located in a pristine area at the entrance to the National Forest
 - c. The org has had 3 major meetings so far. Its Mission is to protect Big Tujunga Canyon from big development – to preserve its rural character. Of the City of Los Angeles, it is the only area bordering a vast wilderness – it is our “Gateway to the Nat’l Forest”
 - d. The organization is about 250 members strong and hoping to expand made up of environmentalists, equestrians, the Alpine Village HOA, the Archery Club, Big Tujunga Canyon residents and stakeholders in general
 - e. The developer is Ben Salisbury Development of Calabasis. Primary opposition is to any up-zoning of the area as hope for total abandonment of development might be unreasonable
 - f. SaveTheCanyon has set up a facebook page www.facebook.com/groups/StopCPD. Lawn signs were available for distribution calling for SaveTheCanyon

- g. SaveTheCanyon has met with the Council Office which wishes not to take a stand until they can review the plans inclusive of a stand on the concept of up-zoning. No formal applications have yet been filed
- h. Charlene Mason-Gallego – Tujunga Cyn resident, active member of Sunland School PTA
 - i. There are only 2 arteries in & out of the cyn both passing by schools zones – Mt. Gleason Middle School and Sunland Elementary School. Presented video clips of active pedestrian/bicyclist use of Mt Gleason/Big Tujunga with no sidewalks
 - ii. Presented video clips of current traffic status during student drop-off/pick-up times which already massively clogs the two access roads and would be unable to handle the additional am traffic of a 242 home workforce
- i. Loren Chroman – Biologist studying behavior/southern California ecology and habitats
 - i. Coastal Sage Scrub (CSS) is an endangered habitat - sensitive and covering less than 12% of its original range of even just 30 years ago running from Santa Rosa to just south of San Francisco
 - 1. The Coastal Sage Scrub is one of our most fire-adaptive habitats - among the first plants to come back to stabilize the local ecosystem, the local wildlife and the hillsides upon which they grow/live after a fire
 - 2. CSS habitat cuts down on flooding bec its expansive root system may survive underground during a fire. It cuts down passage of water, a feature that would be lost with large-scale development and loss of CSS
 - ii. We also have riparian area which, given the drought and water conditions of the last 3-5 years, are becoming more and more sensitive and species dependent on those habitats are becoming more and more dependent on those habitats
 - iii. The Big Tujunga Canyon Riparian Area has been dedicated a Vital Critical Habitat for a number of threatened and endangered species including the:
 - 1. Least Bells Vireo
 - 2. Santa Ana Sucker
 - 3. Nevin’s Barberry
 - 4. Tread-Leaved Brodiaea
 - 5. Arroyo Toad
 - iv. A full-scale EIR has been requested because this ecosystem – a designated Critical Habitat – with at least 8 critically threatened/endangered species if lost would not just endanger the local population but the species as a whole
- j. Mark Lagassie – researching Planning history of the area
 - i. Previous similar dev. plans were abandoned in 2007 because a General Plan Amendment downzoned the area to Minimum Residential to follow the dictates of the Community Plan and due to limited resource access in a high fire zone
- k. Motion to approve a draft letter/CIS urging a full-scale EIR for the Canyon Parks Dev
 - i. Motion became a four-part Motion:
 - 1. Request a full-scale EIR
 - 2. Support the position that the property not be up-zoned
 - 3. That the letter include a history of how its current zoning came to be and the importance of maintaining it
 - 4. File a CIS expressing the potential impact of the proposed development overall
 - ii. Discussion: This is not natural, undisturbed, virgin land so does not have the full biological value that would be associated with land further up in the National Forest. It was homesteaded and had been used as a movie ranch

- iii. **MOTION:** by Debby Beck to approved the Motion as presented in XIV-k-I 2nd by John Laue Vote: Approved unanimously
- XV. Motion to approve a draft comment letter re the proposed Day St/Pali development by Villa Nova
 - a. No application has yet been filed. Neighbors are encouraging us to request a full EIR. Neighbors have reported excavating activity.
 - b. Dean S.: Recommended that a letter first be drafted and presented to the LUC for review and approval
- XVI. Approve and send a CIS supporting CFI 14-0692 and CFI 14-0692 re changes to City implementation ordinance of SB1818
 - a. These are points that STNC has discussed years ago and should have been implemented long ago – the only thing STNC will do in the CIS is reiterate points made in the Motions themselves
 - i. Friendly amendment by Elektra K.: Call for the respective referral committees to act on the Motions in a timely manner – there has been no action on the Motions since their submission in May.
 - 1. CFI 14-0692 calls for a report in 45 days from time of approval which could have been as early as July, CFI 14-0692-S1 calls for a report in 90 days from time of approval which could have been as early as August.
 - ii. Elektra K.: In addition to the CIS, send a letter to PLUM/Housing respectively to act on these Motions in a timely manner and send a copy of said letters to each member of the respective committees individually at their Office
 - b. **MOTION:** by Cindy Cleghorn to prepare/approve/send said CIS/letters per XVI-a 2nd by Bill Skiles Vote: Unanimously approved
- XVII. Discussion of application for parcel map of Hillhaven
 - a. Elektra K.: Having obtained a copy of the application from Ed Rock just prior to the meeting, have not had a chance to review it in detail but appears to be a case asking for large scale reduction in rear and side yards for the mere purpose of adding a dwelling with no hardship of topography or lot shape.
 - i. Dean S.: Shall continue item to next meeting to allow for distribution of information to all committee members
- XVIII. Meeting adjourned at 8:58pm