

SUNLAND-TUJUNGA NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
LAND-USE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 18, 2014

- I. Meeting was called to Order at 7:20pm by Vice-Chair Bill Skiles
- II. Introduction of LUC Members
- III. Roll Call
 - a. Present
 - i. Bill Skiles
 - ii. Cindy Cleghorn
 - iii. Debby Beck
 - iv. Elektra Kruger
 - v. Arsen Karamians
 - vi. John Laue
 - vii. William Malouf
 - viii. Roberta Konrad
 - b. Absent
 - i. Dean Sherer
 - ii. Nina Royal
 - iii. David Barron
 - iv. Karen Zimmerman
 - c. Public Representatives Present ☺
 - i. Claudia Rodriguez - Planning Deputy, CD7
- IV. Rules of Conduct for Public Comment
- V. Public Comment
 - a. Marsha Perloff – Program Chair, Little Landers Historical Society
 - i. Invited all to the September 2014 Bolton Hall presentation on Weatherwolde Castle
- VI. Approval of 8-4-14 LUC Meeting Minutes
 - a. **MOTION** by Cindy Cleghorn to approve the LUC Meeting Minutes of 8-4-14 as written
2nd by John Laue Vote: Unanimously approved
- VII. LUC Vacancies
 - a. There are two vacancies on the LUC. All were invited to join. Application process described.
- VIII. Presentation of Proposed Villa Nova Development on Day St/Pali – Andrew Novachek
 - a. Site consists of 3 parcels for a total of 10.4 acres zoned R1 & RE40. Slope analysis allows 19 lots, proposal is for 14 houses + one acre dedicated to Open Space (Lot No. 15). Average range of lot sizes = 15,000 sq ft to 20,000 sq ft with the largest lot = 1 ½ acre
 - b. Average size of surrounding homes = 3,500 sq ft to 4,000 sq ft, proposing to build homes +/- 3,000 sq ft to be consistent with the neighborhood.
 - c. Mr. Novachek presented plot maps and photographs of the surrounding homes to the LUC.
 - d. Application has not yet been submitted to the City. Mr. Novachek requested the opportunity to present the proposal to the community first to get community input prior to filing the application.
 - e. Responses to community questions:
 - i. There are protected trees on the land which are to remain protected.

- ii. The STNC-LUC is Mr. Novachek's first Outreach effort.
- iii. The land is vacant. Mr. Novachek says the whole north side of Day St is completely flat. The front portion of the houses will be on this flat area. From there the hill starts sloping to a plateau after which it is quite steep.
- iv. Soil and hydrology studies have already been done.
- v. The large lot up the hill and behind the last lot to be developed is to be dedicated as Open Space and to compliment the natural terrain behind the Villa Nova owned land.
- vi. Lots appear long and narrow – zoning permits 12 ft between housing structures.
- vii. Nearby Residents expressed concern over increased traffic
 - 1. Day St is 74' wide – the widest street in Sunland-Tujunga for 3 blocks – the length of the subdivision
- viii. Nearby residents expressed concern over impact on existing wildlife
 - 1. Mr. Novachek explained that it was because of the wildlife that he intends to donate Open Space to the SMMC or any agency willing to accept it
 - 2. Another audience member stated that she too loved the wildlife and that the homes would be safer for them serving as a break between the hills and Day St.
- ix. Resident asked whether donated land would be left wild or could it be transformed into a park for neighborhood use since neighborhood has historically used the land for recreational purposes.
 - 1. If the land is donated to the SMMC they will want it to remain as natural habitat for native flora and fauna
 - 2. When asked if the general consensus of the neighborhood were to be for Mr. Novachek to keep the property and develop a park, would he consider that. Mr. Novachek stated that he would however the terrain is very steep and does not believe it to be safe.
- x. When asked about trenches dug years ago "for the Sierra Madre Fault", Mr. Novachek responded that geology studies have been completed and no "live fault" was found on the site
- xi. Mr. Novachek assured he has ownership of the land. An audience member had an assessor profile listing someone else as the owner. When asked whether he had all docs verifying ownership, Mr. Novachek answered in the affirmative
 - 1. Mr. Harry Hazary claims to have sold the land last October, but that it is his name that is still on the Assessor's Profile as the property owner. He asked Mr. Novachek to remove his name from the Assessor profile so he would bear no liability associated with the property.
- xii. Proposed homes will be 2-story +/-3,000 sq ft Spanish/Mediterranean style with a 5' sidewalk and 5' greenway going required 20' to the garage and requesting a variance for a reduced front-yard set-back to 15' for the house frontage to create an "off-set" appearance to the structure.
- xiii. When an audience member requested that Mr. Novachek bring renderings of the proposed homes to a future LUC meeting, he responded that he always presents the final design analysis, colors, materials, etc to the committee.
- xiv. When asked that while land on Day St is flat it soon "steeps" up, how would the homes be oriented, Mr. Novachek explained that he plans to "balance" the lots as much as possible with the highest retaining walls which will only be on 4 lots

will be no more than 7'. The houses will be built mostly on the flat area but several will be cut into the hillside.

- xv. When asked whether he had other developments in the area that could be seen to get a feel for the Villa Nova style, Mr. Novachek listed:
 1. 10024 Samoa
 2. Three recently built houses on Hillhaven
 3. 10524 Fernglen
- xvi. An audience member stated that being familiar with some of Mr. Novachek's homes that are "stunning in style" they however appear to be built property line to property line. Asked for assurance that the ONLY variance to be requested will be the reduced to 15' front yard set-back
 1. Mr. Novachek answered in the affirmative
- xvii. Maximum house size allowed runs 3,500 sq ft to 5,000 sq ft so sizes of houses proposed are allowed without variance
- xviii. Two homes are planned going uphill going toward Lowell which will be considered "hillside houses" cut into the plateau with a 7' high retaining wall
- xix. The property had been subdivided years ago by a prior owner, water meters have already been installed, driveways have been installed (denied by audience member claiming to have his name as owner on the Assessor Profile)
- xx. When an audience member expressed concern about fire, Mr. Novachek stated that the houses would actually improve fire safety because the fire department requires 200' brush clearance
 1. Audience member expressed concern that 200' brush clearance would impact wildlife habitat
- xxi. Residents expressed concern about flooding – property/surrounding roads historically have experienced serious flooding and mudslides so property has drainage problems.
 1. Mr. Novachek stated evaluation of this has already been done and that they are already proposing to capture water run-off from the mountains – City requires hydrology studies to direct water to storm drains
- xxii. A member of the audience stated that they were under the impression that the land behind Mr. Novacheks is also privately owned and there could be future development further up the mt – it is not Nat'l Forest as people once thought
 1. Mr. Novachek stated that he does not know whether the property behind him is privately owned or not, but regardless in his experience it would be impossible to build there and there is no access
- xxiii. When asked where the community can see the EIR Mr. Novachek indicated that he will just now be starting to submit information to the City – there is no EIR yet
 1. When questioned about a prior statement that he had "taken care of that" (referring to an EIR) Mr. Novachek responded that they had done the tree reports, hydrology studies, etc. All documents are being prepared to submit to the City. Nothing has been submitted yet.
 2. When expressing concern that the Project might be exempt from an EIR and that the community wants to be part of the Hearing Process, Mr. Novachek reiterated that he is not claiming to be exempt, only that documents have not yet been submitted

- xxiv. When asked whether he could make copies of materials he presented this evening available to the LUC as hard copy or digitally, Mr. Novachek agreed to leave the copies he brought with him this evening with the LUC.
- xxv. When asked whether once the houses are built public access to the canyons behind would be cut off to hikers, Mr. Novachek answered in the affirmative because the public cannot cross private property and that surrounding neighbors have already fenced off their properties = something he has no control over.

IX. 12400 Big Tujunga Canyon, Canyon Park Homes, owner = Ben Salisbury

- a. Representative speaking on behalf of Ben Salisbury = Brad Rosenheim
- b. The total acreage is 110 acres, 78 of which have been segregated by lot line adjustment to be developed into single family homes with the remaining 32 acres to the south and northeast to be preserved as Open Space
- c. The portion to be developed runs south of the probation camp, north of the archery range and little league field and east of Big Tujunga Canyon Rd.
- d. An EIR will be required. This week the intent is to file the first paperwork related to the environmental process – the environmental assessment form. This is very early in the overall process.
 - i. The environmental assessment form will provide the basic Project description from which the City will provide a Notice of Preparation for the EIR. Within the next 30 days, the City will hold a scoping meeting to which the community, public agencies and others are invited to comment on what the scope of the EIR should entail.
 - 1. The NC and others in the community will be engaged to assist making all aware of the process and letting the community know when and where the meetings will take place
 - 2. Based on input from the Scoping Meeting, the City will initiate a DEIR which will take anywhere from 6 to 12 months and involves preparation of all technical documentation needed for the DEIR which calls for a number of studies and analyses
 - 3. Upon release of the DEIR, there will be a 30-45 day public comment period. The City will review the comments to determine whether further analyses are required or whether they merely need to respond to the comments based on existing information.
 - 4. At that point the City begins preparation of the FEIR which constitutes the DEIR + comments + responses and any additional analyses that may be required. That will take +/- one year from now.
 - 5. Thereafter the Public Hearing Process will begin with a minimum of 4 Public Hearings – the Hearing Examiner to approve the subdivision, the City Planning Commission and PLUM which will make recommendations to the full City Council.
- e. Canyon Park Homes began outreach by sending a letter to the surrounding community, plan to send another and now are reaching out to the NC. Intend to interact with the community as much as possible as the process moves forward
- f. The Project will include:
 - i. A vesting tentative tract map for subdivision of the 78 acres
 - ii. A GPA from a land use designation of minimum residential to low residential II
 - iii. A Zone Change from the current A1 to RE9

- iv. A site plan review
 - v. A Project Permit Compliance for the Specific Plan
 - vi. The Environmental Assessment will list requested discretionary actions
 - vii. These requests are not “a line in the sand” but a start point from which Canyon Park Homes intends to work w/the community in a “collaborative and transparent spirit” to develop a Project the community “can accept and be proud of”
- g. If requested changes are granted, the 78 acres would allow 260 homes, the proposal is for 242 with a range of lot sizes from 9,000 sq ft to 19,000 sq ft with an average of 11,000 sq ft

When asked how many homes would be permitted under the current Community Plan, Mr. Rosenheim responded in the 70s or 80s.

Responses to questions/comments presented:

- i. When asked whether they would be willing to make major improvements to a narrow, recently resurfaced road, Mr. Rosenheim responded that they would be willing to consider it but cannot commit to that
- ii. The purpose of the lot line adjustment was to segregate the development onto the flatter portions of the land. Any grading will be on-site with no hauling in or out
- iii. The response “that will be part of the analysis” was given to the following questions/comments:
 - 1. Adding traffic of 200+ homes to roads along schools – how will that be mitigated
 - 2. How will the boundaries effect the archery range and the DWP Catch Basin
 - 3. How can you accommodate 500+ more cars – the roads cannot be widened – there are houses there and you can’t straighten them – there is a 90 degree turn
 - 4. Can the local schools absorb the children from the families of a 242 home development
 - 5. Adequate water supply, access to electricity
 - 6. There may not be a sewer line on Big Tujunga Canyon Rd. If the 200+ homes are going to be using leach fields or cisterns they are going to be injecting a lot of contamination to the water table and environment
- iv. They have an architect though no details of architecture has yet been reviewed
- v. Yes, Mr. Salisbury will be willing to work with the community if the Project moves forward
- vi. Comment: Generally, homes in developments like this are all the same design and that is objectionable – a variety of architectural styles would be more acceptable
- vii. Comment: Concerned about traffic/safety. There are only 2 rds in & out – Oro Vista & Mt. Gleason each w/many stop signs, winding, passing by 2 schools and churches resulting in major congestion. Perhaps Stop lights should be installed
- viii. Intend to work with the Archery Range and Little League
 - 1. When informed that the Archery Range did not receive the out-reach letter, Mr. Rosenheim assured them that they will get on the contact list

- ix. When informed that there is a ton of debris that needs to be removed, Mr. Rosenheim stated that tons of debris has already been removed upon change of ownership but will look into further debris removal
 - 1. When asked whether they were aware that in the past construction and concrete debris had been repeatedly discarded on the property and buried, Mr. Rosenheim responded in the negative stating that “now they are aware”
- x. Comment: Oro Vista/Foothill is very narrow and floods when it rains. The impact of that many cars on top of Foothill’s traffic, kids walking to school, parents dropping kids off at the schools – all is already dangerous.
- xi. When asked what the “visual” of the development would be from Big Tujunga Canyon since these homes will be erected at the entry to, the Gateway to, the Angeles National Forest, Mr. Rosenheim responded that the homes will be “separated from” the roadway though he could not specify a proposed set-back
- xii. When reminded that communities to the west are equestrian in nature and the statement was made that the development would be similar to the surrounding neighborhood and that current zoning is for horse-keeping has any consideration been given to subdividing into massive 5 acre estates to keep the horse-keeping capability intact getting the investment back based on the size of the individual lots and leaving most of the land open, Mr. Rosenheim responded that as the process moves forward changes are possible
- xiii. When asked how existing deer, bobcats and protected wildlife would be protected there was no response
- xiv. When asked whether access to trails will be shut off, Mr. Rosenheim responded that Canyon Park Homes will work with the community to understand how trail access can be maintained
- xv. Comment from a realtor that lives in Alpine Village: It is not fair to not allow others to have a chance to develop, we are there
- xvi. When asked what will be done to maintain watershed protection from run-off from the development, run-off from the road, 200+ cesspools, Mr. Rosenheim responded that there are significant standards related to watershed protection among which is returning as much water as possible to the ground water table
- xvii. Comment: Contaminated run-off will enter the stream in the canyon, go to Hansen Dam from which it passes on to the Tujunga Spreading Grounds which feeds the San Fernando basin aquifer – a major source of LA drinking water
- xviii. Comment: the property has been subject to “gully-washers” in the past, the road washes out leaving no access, no way to get out – are there any plans to assure exit in the event of fire, flood, etc
- xix. Comment: There is critical wildlife habitat across from the baseball field that needs to be protected
- xx. Comment: The property is in the middle of a flood plain, how will you be assured the houses will be above the flood plain. There are a lot of requirements for pollution prevention by storm water especially for properties adjacent to a river in a sensitive environment
 - 1. An adjacent neighbor has wells on their property from which the family gets water for drinking, etc. They were concerned about the possible impact to the ground water
- xxi. Rezoning will only be for the 78 acres

- xxii. An audience member asked the room “if in fact larger sewer lines were put in, parklets were placed in and around the development, who would be in favor of this Project?” (One hand raised – a realtor).
 - xxiii. Comment: You are dealing with a property that is going to drain into the Wash. In addition to the EIR you are going to be mandated to do an EIS because you are impacting federal property
- X. 6723 Foothill Bl., Caesars Banquet Hall – Lee Ambers = representative
- a. The facility has been operating more than three years. Filing for continued use as it currently exists with no changes except to add adult day care when the facility is dormant
 - i. After lengthy discussions about the description/requirements of day care services, licensing that may be required, etc John Blue stepped in to clarify the application
 - 1. Caesars already has an entitlement to operate as a banquet facility. One of the conditions required filing for a Plan Approval after three years. That is what the current application is about.
 - 2. Another entitlement was that the facility could be used for social clubs 8am to 5pm M-Th. As part of Plan Approval asking to extend daytime use to include Fri and to clarify whether “social” Adult Day Care is permitted under existing entitlement
 - 3. The owner will not be running the Day Care – they wish to rent the facility to a Day Care Program with its own personnel and licenses but need the facility to be available M-F to do so
 - 4. Cindy C.: Because the Hearing is this coming Friday, we should submit our comments based on what we have heard this evening while taking no stand on approval/denial. Recommendation accepted by consent
- XI. 6477 Foothill Bl. – Indoor/Outdoor Playground – Armen Bahadourian
- a. A “Mom & Pop” business named ParkPlace Cali that specializes in family entertainment especially kid-based entertainment with activities of a playground nature similar to what one may see in a jungle gym.
 - b. To date have been working in temp locations for example Farmer’s Markets. Have been seeking a permanent location. Found corner of Foothill/Tujunga Canyon Pl., site of old Bonner’s Equipment Rentals and more recent Patchwork Penguin and a body shop that attempted to operate. Now vacant for at least a year and available for lease. It is next to and owned by Public Storage.
 - i. In negotiation with Public Storage. Public Storage must assure them that the site is environmentally safe given that auto-related type uses took place there. Need to determine whether hydraulic auto lift tanks are still in the ground
 - 1. Want to determine if there has been any leakage and if so whether a Phase One has been done
 - c. There is one bldg just under 4,000 sq ft on a 20,000 sq ft site = bldg + parking area. One ingress/egress next to the bldg, one ingress/egress closer to Foothill. Serves needs well w/lg building for indoor play facility, lounge area for adults, parking lot for outdoor inflatable attractions
 - i. The larger jumpers on the parking lot will be stationary, others can be moved around
 - ii. There will be a “drop-off center” for kids. This is not a Day Care Facility so licensing is not an issue. Are cognizant of the need for close supervision. Armen

stated that Day Care is an enrollment program – drop-off centers are located for example in supermarkets

- d. Have met with Building and Safety, Planning, FBCSP representatives, records department in Van Nuys – all pertinent departments and have a pretty good idea about what is acceptable in this location
 - e. Fees to be in the form of club memberships, partial access use, full access use serving kids age 1 to 9/10 open til 8pm weekdays and possibly later on weekends
 - f. Consulting with architect designers, engineers and contractors to determine the most feasible way to convert the facility – add the best form of air conditioning, improve the look of the doors so it will not look like an auto repair shop
 - i. Plan on re-habbing the building. One bathroom is in very bad shape, a second needs to be converted to ADA compliant. Currently there is no kitchen – a basic kitchen area will be installed
 - 1. Will not be selling their own food – hope to partner with restaurants, food trucks, etc.
 - g. Discussed failure of the Miniature Golf Course and whether this operation may be subject to the same fate
- XII. Item 10, 11 and 12 moved to future meeting.
- XIII. 6340-6346 Sister Elsie – Paolina Milana gave update
- a. Proposed SFD is on a very steep slope. Lot size + BHO allows for 1,200 sq ft home. Applying for, and has been approved for, a 2,500 sq ft home by Variance at the APC level.
 - i. With the assistance of STA and STNC, the neighbors went through an appeal process to the APC. A final appeal will be filed with the full City Council. Not trying to stop the Project, only to get the sq footage within BHO standards
- XIV. CD7 Staff Up-Dates – Claudia Rodriguez
- a. The High Speed Rail Authority (HSR) will hold its last presentation tomorrow at Union Station, 5:30pm to 7:30pm. Last day to submit comments = Aug 31. HSR is considering alternate routes through different parts of CD7. Entirety of CD7 would be impacted
- XV. Meeting adjourned 10:17pm