

SUNLAND-TUJUNGA NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL  
LAND-USE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
November 17, 2014

---

- I. Meeting called to order at 7:05pm by Committee Chair Dean Sherer
- II. Attendance:
  - i. Dean Sherer
  - ii. Bill Skiles
  - iii. Cindy Cleghorn
  - iv. Debby Beck
  - v. Nina Royal
  - vi. Chaz VanAalst
  - vii. Roberta Konrad
  - viii. David Barron
  - ix. Elektra Kruger
  - x. Arsen Karamians
  - xi. John Laue
  - xii. Henry Hubert
  - xiii. Karen Zimmerman
  - xiv. Claudia Rodriguez – CD7 Planning Deputy
- III. Dean S. welcomed Henry Hubert to the LUC. Mr. Hubert was recently appointed by the STNC Board after recommendation by the LUC and will serve as an alternate on the LUC.
- IV. Approval of 11-3-14 STNC-LUC Meeting Minutes
  - a. The Minutes required a statement clarification by David Barron at XI-c-i. Mr. Barron had not yet arrived. Approval of minutes was not readdressed upon his arrival. Item tabled.
- V. CD7 Updates regarding status reports at 8443 Foothill, 8134 Foothill, 10025 Commerce – Claudia will check on status of these locations with Building and Safety and Planning.
- VI. Vacancy on the STNC-LUC
  - a. There is still one alternate position vacant on the LUC. Dean S. described qualifications to become a member of the LUC and invited audience members to consider applying.
  - b. Kathy C (audience) has been unable to contact the LUC via e-mail on the STNC website. Got an application form to serve on LUC from the STNC Office.
- VII. Communications/actions by LUC
  - a. Two letters relative to preservation of Equine Land was approved by the Full STNC Board in October 2014 and have been sent to Councilmember Fuentes (See attached)
  - b. Still need to follow “paper-trail” of the LUC-approved letter re amendment of the LAMC to require neighbor notification of Project Permit Compliance Review applications for Specific Plan Projects to assure there has been full Board approval.
  - c. Letter re the Canyon Park Development has already been approved by the full Board and forwarded to Councilmember Fuentes (see attached)
- VIII. 6249 Foothill Bl. next to in-and-out burger to become a Big 5 Store
- IX. Former Al Reads to become a new restaurant
  - a. Information appeared on Facebook. Audience member spoke to the owner. It is in escrow, but no final papers have yet been signed. The gentleman with interest in the Al Reads site has a pizza parlor in the valley
  - b. Intent is believed to retain the existing footprint
- X. 11-5-14 Solar Workshop in Lake View Terrace
  - a. Well attended by stakeholders of the Foothill Trails District Neighborhood Council. In addition board members from STNC and stakeholders also attended. Claudia said that

the DWP has a variety of solar incentive programs many of which are commercial generating facilities one of which is the FiT (Feed in Tariff) program.

- i. The reason the Workshop was held in LVT was because there had been a proposal for 3,500 ground-mounted solar panels in between residences and equine keeping properties located across the street from All Nations Church. Community opposed such a facility in SFR neighborhood and an appeal was filed by the neighbor. The Project was part of the Department's FiT Program and intended to be a commercial facility. The City is currently in litigation because the appeal was upheld. Lawsuit claims property rights having been unrightfully stripped away.
    - ii. City Planning did issue a letter stating that these FiT projects will in the future require a full Conditional Use process to allow for public input which will allow for noticing and hearing before approval or denial. Claudia noted that CUP hearings will not necessarily stop all FiT Projects, but at least offers public input rather than someone waking up one morning with 3,500 solar panels on what was once adjacent vacant land.
    - iii. Until now approval was ministerial w/over-the-counter permits outside of Specific Plan areas and limited impact of Specific Plan regulations within Specific Plan areas because FiT facilities were not conceived of at the time of drafting Specific Plans.
  - b. The workshop was designed to inform residents about solar incentive programs available and to sell the idea of using/accepting these large solar incentive programs.
    - i. Issues brought up by the community included why the DWP did / does not put greater effort to encourage commercial structural rooftop projects as opposed to utilizing vacant land?
  - c. Claudia also noted that most FiT projects in the DWP's program are in CD7 from Sylmar to Tujunga because there is a lot of inexpensive vacant land. Zoning is not an issue because there is no construction involved.
- XI. Reminder: 11-12-14 STNC meeting will feature City Attorney Town Hall meeting
  - a. Meeting was great – well attended by the community.
  - b. Gail Carlson, STNC Board Member, stated she got some resolution as to animal rights issues. City Attorney Mike Feurer recently closed down three animal abuse locations in the City of Los Angeles. They are now pending litigation
    - i. There are hundreds of animal abuse situations in the City and Mr. Feurer has gotten the ball rolling to get that taken care of
  - c. Discussed speeding issues on Foothill Bl.
  - d. Discussed challenges of Medical Marijuana locations/issues.
- XII. Meeting with Mayor's staff regarding business/economic development – Cindy Cleghorn
  - a. Mayor staff is working with small business organizations such as the chamber and hopes to encourage more businesses to open. They have set up centers – program is still in its infancy, but the door is open for more conversation. Mayor's emphasis revolves around encouraging people to open businesses, not so much about specific sites such as we have here and why they stay vacant due to property ownership, building and safety and planning issues.
- XIII. Cindy presented a copy (attached) of the PlanCheckNC Matrix that contains a list of Citywide cases and their latest status. This matrix is updated often and available through PlanCheckNC. The matrix includes the latest on the Sign Ordinance Revision, Sidewalk Repair Program and Master Planned Development Ordinance.
- XIV. Cindy encouraged the LUC members to participate in the December 11, 2014 6pm-9pm Valley Alliance of Neighborhood Councils (VANC) hosted Planning Forum. Guest speaker will

be Councilmember Fuentes, Chair of the Energy & Environment Committee on the City Council. The topics will cover land-use basics as well as specific topics eg small-lot subdivisions and Conditional Use Permits for Alcohol (CUB).

#### Public Comments

- A. Wanda Holsavis
  - a. thought there was an Ordinance on overbuilding of property and a moratorium on construction of apartment buildings. Three blocks away there used to be a large lot with one house that now has three large skinny apartment buildings
  - b. Two houses put in on Tujunga Cyn Bl by Marcus are only three feet apart – are there not rules and regulations that the footprint of a building has to be a certain distance from property lines – did these expire or fade away?
- B. Not only are we seeing the large developments like VHGC and Canyon Parks, there are now apartments being put up where once there were single family houses – 15 families live where there used to be 1 – 60 people in the same space as 4.
- C. It just seems that the community at large doesn't see or understand what is going on – they only hear about the big developments – they are not taking into account the effects of the infills
- D. Patti Potter
  - a. It would be nice if there were a Web-Site one could go to where one could go to report possible violations
- E. La Crescenta resident
  - a. Experiencing similar issues w/mansionisation, but there is a conflict of interest bec for the Planning Depart, the bigger the Project the greater the revenue for the City. Despite protections in rules/regulations Projects are allowed.
  - b. Peter Moen
    - i. At the last LUC meeting, the issue came up about receiving early notification information about pending Projects. Wesly Hernandez from Councilmember Fuentes' office said he would look into those issues. Has not been addressed

#### Committee Comments:

1. Dean S.: This defines what we refer to as McMansionization. They may be built in conformance with regulations that were meant to control overbuilding, but these regulations have not been effective.
2. Dean S.: There are so many exceptions to requirements of the floor-area ratios granted that we still end up with houses too large for the lots on which they are located.
3. Nina R.: When Joel Wachs was in office there WAS a moratorium in Tujunga because of the infrastructure and over time it DID just fade away
4. Cindy C.: Actually it has not faded away – there is an RFA Ordinance in place, but we also have some very small lots and the Ordinance allows for construction of a 2,000 sq ft house on the smallest lots.
5. Debby B.: I testified at the Planning Commission when the RFA Ordinance was being drafted and I showed them the atrocious-sized thing that could still be built. They did not hear/understand.
6. Dean S.: Builders know the regulations and know what they are permitted to build and it is shocking to see the end result of what application of the regulations can still engender.
7. Dean S.: Overbuilding is not just happening here, it is happening Citywide and the City has called for a moratorium on construction of SFD in certain areas pending a review of – and fix of – the Ordinance
8. Dean S.: These moratoriums are not being applied up here or other areas of the valley, so the question arises – shouldn't we have the same moratorium because we are witnessing the same effect

9. STNC has drafted a CIS supporting Councilmember Koretz's Motion to revisit the Baseline Mansionization Ordinance as well as for an ICO for a moratorium on construction pending the revisit (see attached)
10. The CIS, however, does not specifically reference S/T as being included in the ICO. The CIS needs to be broadened to do so w/ reasons/examples for inclusion of S/T. Tabled pending redraft.
11. Nina R.: The Mayor has an agenda to bring 100,000 more homes to the City of Los Angeles by 2020, so where will all those families go – it will require multi-family units throughout the City
12. Debby B.: Those may be by-right. What appears as 1 house on a lg lot may actually be eg on six legal lots and the owner can demolish the one house and legally build a separate house on each of the individual lots.
13. Cindy C.: On the LADBS.org website there is a "report a violation" menu
14. Dean S.: Current laws as they are written do not effectively address the issues so something legislatively has to be done to correct that. That is what City Council will be looking at & that this STNC will support in a CIS
15. Dean S.: There is no moratorium on multifamily buildings and no moratorium on building of SFR, detached or not, but there are codes and plans in place intended to address issues of overbuilding

F. Artisyn Gallery and Café – Marcy Ferro

- i. Has a 5-yr lease with a 6-yr extension option on a 2,100 sq ft unit along Commerce in the Foothill-Commerce Town Center – Plans to be there long-term. If all goes well, plans to open in February. She is first to successfully negotiate and sign a lease at the Town Center
- ii. Basically will be a café with a gallery as well – to be geared toward artists – with lessons in music, art, etc. To be a community pleasure, to coordinate with local businesses in providing a venue for various events
  - i. Has contacted a number of local businesses that may have similar interests eg the Backdoor Bakery – see how they can help one another
  - ii. Art styles = mixed media, photography, jewelry, oils, watercolor, etc
- iii. Café will offer coffee, tea, sandwiches, salads and bakery items. In the future may have a more extensive menu, but does not have the resources to do it right off the bat. Does envision doing something like "dinner nights" in the future – or brunches
  - i. Food preparation for sandwiches/salads will be on-site. Initially will be out-sourcing baked goods. Spoke with Backdoor Bakery and an organic bakery in Sherman Oaks that offers gluten-free options, etc
- iv. Has a lot of work to do to prepare the inside of the space – set up the kitchen, the café seating area, wall space, etc.
  - i. Cindy C.: There are several city requirements to meet. Need any assistance, let the LUC know. If the Café becomes well established there it may act as a catalyst for the Center so that it can finally become what it was meant to be after construction
- v. Just rec'd signage specifications from the realtor. LUC brought to her attention that the site is located within the FBCSP Design Guidelines area which has required signage specifications in addition to the Citywide Sign regulations. The LUC presented Marci F. with a copy of the FBCSP and Design Guidelines. A overall sign plan for the site is needed and needs to be communicated / approved.

- i. Cindy C.: Purpose of signage rules is to avoid a hodgepodge of signage like what is at 6500 Foothill Bl. A beautiful Spanish-style building with a hodgepodge of differing sized signs, some of which have even been cited.
          - 1. If an illegal sign is unknowingly erected, may have to go through cost of removing/replacing it and fees.
        - ii. Debby B. checked the Building and Safety Web-Site and determined that there was no signage plan approved for the center as a whole – only an individual permit for signage for the Descanso Spa. This should not have happened.
      - a. According to the realtor, the plan is to rent out most of the units at which point they will be re-doing the landscaping – this within the next few months.
        - i. The Spa plans to re-open in a couple of months. There are signed leases with a yogurt shop and an Urgent Care Clinic. These are currently signed leases, others are in the works
      - b. Happy to have all the community support
- G. Bike path proposal down Verdugo Wash (through the VHGC) to the LA River – Paul Rabinov
  - a. (See attached hard-copy power-point presentation)
  - b. Paul and Desiree Rabinov have formed an ad hoc committee called the Arroyo Verdugos Trails Committee whose function it is to advocate for a pedestrian/bike trail along the Verdugo Wash.
    - i. Have outreached to Glendale homeowners & the Glendale City Council to get a feasibility study approved. Decided to expand the outreach because Projects are more likely to get funding when supported by multiple entities.
      - 1. Letters of support from various entities would be very powerful in obtaining funding for the a feasibility study
      - 2. Outreached to LA County & Mayor Garcetti’s staff. Have rec’d support fr Supervisor Mike Antonovich. Staff of Mayor Garcetti recommended outreaching to CD7 and Councilmember Fuentes’ – a cyclist advocate.
      - 3. Councilmember Fuentes is interested in Projects related to water infiltration – Glendale is putting in a park w/a water infiltration system. Common ground for common support
      - 4. David B.: Councilmember Fuentes very likely would be in favor of this. See renderings of development that will come with this – be careful what you support
      - 5. Karen Z.: One of the nice things about having different cities involved is that there is strength in numbers. Expressed appreciation for the work already done so the proposal can be brought to our doorstep
  - c. Making a presentation to the STNC-LUC for 2 reasons – 1.) To request a letter of support for the Project and 2.) Present how this Project could be of significance/recreational opportunity for the S/T community
  - d. The Verdugo Wash runs through or adjacent to 9 parks and within ½ mile of 17 public and private schools
  - e. In 2012, Glendale and LA County up-dated their Bicycle Master Plans. In both there is a bike path along the Verdugo Wash. It constitutes a 9.3 mile long path commencing from Crescenta Valley Park down to the LA River and Griffith Park
  - f. Serving as the model for the proposal is the Cherry Creek Trail in Denver, Colorado which is a 40-mile long channelized Wash that was channelized for flood control
  - g. As a cyclist, the most logical access fr Foothill to Honolulu is along Tujunga Cyn Bl which is very dangerous to ride on and too tenuous to ride uphill. These issues could be avoided by creating a bike path along the Verdugo Wash away from the Tujunga Cyn Bl traffic

- i. There would still be some significant obstacles as the Wash runs under the Fwy. The parallel service roads disappear. The path may have to be reconfigured to run in the Wash itself under the Fwy.
        - 1. The parallel service roads are either County rights-of-way or may be owned by the County outright – inclusive of the section of Wash passing through the VHGC. No portion of the Project will run on private land
        - 2. The proposed VHGC has plans for a park at the upper end of a planned loop trail. One could walk or ride to that park along the Verdugo Wash path from Foothill totally away from the Tujunga Cyn Bl traffic
        - 3. Given the association between the Verdugo Wash and the VHGC, the LUC recommended Paul R. attend the Dec 1 LUC meeting at which the VHGC architect will present his most recent plans. An opportunity to meet
    - h. Cindy C.: This is a great opportunity to explore. What would be some of the next steps to move forward? You are fr Glendale & LA County – that is not LA City. What could/should/needs to be done given the feasibility study has been accepted though not commenced
      - i. Paul R.: I picture some form of collaborative effort between the City of LA, the City of Glendale and the County in the funding/preparation of the feasibility study
    - i. Cindy C.: Recommended preparing renderings of what the Project might look like and a listing of what some of the features and benefits might be.
    - j. In terms of the competitive nature of Projects that are specifically going on along the LA River at this point, it is the feasibility study that we want to see happen at this point.
      - i. If it is determined that it can be done in a manner that is safe and attractive and could provide economic benefit, then it is a matter of how much it is going to cost and where that money is going to come from.
        - 1. Yes, there is only a finite amount of money that could be made available from a number of pots and there are many Projects that are being considered that would like to tap into that
        - 2. Cindy C.: This Project would require a pretty hefty amount of money – another community with a similar Project got a grant. Desiree R.: Could look into Prop A and C or TEAR funding.
        - 3. Dean S.: A great example is the Santa Ana River Trail System which expands many jurisdictions and is very successful. People involved with that could provide pointers on where/how they identified funding
        - 4. Dean S.: Once the trail is put in – that is not the end of it – someone has to take over responsibility for the costs of maintaining the trail. This is a “feel-good” Project, but the devil is in the details.
- H. Discussion/action of draft letter regarding Day St/Pali (two versions attached) – Dean Sherer
- a. After hearing about the proposed development and hearing from the neighbors there was some sentiment that the developer should be required to do a full EIR. This was initially so drafted. Believing that the LUC does not have sufficient background information, a second draft is being presented that, while still encouraging environmental review, does not call for a full EIR.
  - b. Project proposes 15 lots (14 homes + one vacant) on what is now, currently 3 lots with dual zoning at R-1-1 on the Day St side and RE40 on the upper side. Properties are not yet subdivided. Developer has not made contact with the Council Office in the last few months

- c. Karen Z.: Distributed an E-Mail sent to her by a Day/Pali neighbor asking if there had ever been homes on the property before that had been washed out in a flood. No one, including long-time residents, had any recollection of homes ever being on the site.
    - d. Motion to accept the new draft letter tabled pending further review/information.
  - I. Discussion as to whether the LUC should submit a CIS re Blue Curbs, CFI 14-1529 (see attached) – Elektra Kruger
    - a. Dean S.: If we write CISs for every issue that comes before the LUC, they will cease to carry any weight.
    - b. Cindy C.: Recommends monitoring the Motion as it passes through the system.
    - c. Elektra K.: The Motion has been referred to the City Council’s Transportation Committee
  - J. Up-Date on the Big Tujunga Canyon Sediment Removal Project - None
  - K. 6723 Foothill Bl., Caesar Banquet Hall hearing – Claudia said Letter of determination has been issued – application has been approved. STNC has not received a copy and may not since no comments were provided regarding this project.
  - L. Discussion/Action of Parcel Map of Hillhaven – tabled
  - M. Meeting adjourned at 9:02 pm