

SUNLAND-TUJUNGA NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
LAND-USE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
January 12, 2015

- I. Meeting was called to order at 7:06pm by Committee Chair Dean Sherer
- II. Roll Call
 - a. Present
 - i. Dean Sherer
 - ii. Bill Skiles
 - iii. Cindy Cleghorn
 - iv. Debby Beck
 - v. Nina Royal
 - vi. Chaz VanAalst
 - vii. David Barron
 - viii. Elektra Kruger
 - ix. Arsen Karamians
 - x. John Laue
 - xi. Karen Zimmerman
 - xii. Henry Hubert
- III. Committee Chair Dean S. welcomed the audience to this evening's presentation
- IV. Committee Chair Dean S. welcomed the audience to review the displayed Day St/Pali Villa Nova application file while awaiting a committee quorum
- V. Approval of Minutes of 1-5-15
 - a. **MOTION:** by Karen Zimmerman to approve the Minutes of 1-5-15 as amended 2nd by Henry Hubert Vote: Unanimous approval
- VI. Recommendation of Cathi Comas to the LUC - At the last meeting we withheld action until receiving input from the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment as to the status of Ms. Comas' eligibility as a Sunland-Tujunga Stakeholder. While not residing in Sunland-Tujunga, Ms. Comas would be an eligible stakeholder.
- VII. Committee Member Up-Dates
 - a. Cindy Cleghorn
 - i. Tomorrow there will be a community meeting regarding the proposed high-speed rail at the ANC at 10000 Foothill Bl. 3 alternative rail routes referred to as the East Corridor are being proposed, all of which would effect us. Encouraged all to attend.
 - b. Dean Sherer
 - i. PLUM Committee tomorrow supporting the STA's appeal of the approved Sister Elsie project
 - 1. Encouraged all to either attend the Hearing to testify or to send an E-Mail to CM Fuentes supporting the appeal as well as to members of the PLUM Committee at sharon.gin@lacity.org
 - 2. The main point of the appeal is that by approving the Sister Elsie project, the City would not be honoring its own Baseline Hillside

Ord which regulates residential floor area, structural set-backs, etc

3. Dean has been involved w/negotiations w/the applicant along w/ reps of CM Fuentes' Office. This resulted in some design modifications, but was not substantive enough to withdraw the appeal

VIII. Day St/Pali application – Andrew Novachek, Marta Litwin (this portion of meeting also on video at stnc.org)

- a. The project had been presented before prior to the LUC receiving its copy of the application package. The LUC has requested them to return now that we have more information inclusive of the site plan, TTM and renderings of the homes.
- b. The presenters were requested to provide a thumbnail review of the proposed project.
 - i. It was originally a proposed 15-lot subdivision on Day St with 14 buildable lots plus one 5-acre Open Space lot to offer to the SMMC. Since then the proposal has been reduced to 13 buildable lots, average size 20,000 sq ft.
 - ii. The property is zoned R1 along Day St with RE40 zoning to the rear. There is a request for a lot line zone boundary adjustment so all buildable lots will fall entirely within the R1 zone
 - iii. Grading will be balanced – no soil import/export
- c. Dean S.: Following the first presentation, there was a letter generated by the LUC, approved by the full STNC Board, that was forwarded to the Council Office – a copy of which is available for review on the STNC Web-Site
- d. Q&A
 - i. Debby B. (DB): Are you the owner
 1. Andrew Novacheck (AN): Yes, as an LLC
 - ii. DB: Are you going to be the builder of the houses
 1. AN: Yes
 - iii. Nick Waltier (NW): What is the name of your LLC
 1. AN: Iris and Crown Investments
 - iv. NW: Who is Jung Ah Lee who is listed as the applicant on the application filed with the City
 1. AN: That is a friend of mine
 - v. NW: Marta Litwin, you are listed as the contact person. I was not aware that you could be a notary and have a personal interest in the document you are notarizing
 1. Marta Litwin (ML): I actually don't have any interest in the documents. I have filed the application. The only thing I notarized in this case was that the signatures that were signed belonged to the person that signed them. There is no problem with that.
 - vi. NW: Regarding ownership – who is the deed of ownership assigned to
 1. AN: Iris and Crown
 - vii. Henry Hubert (HH): What is the proposed percentage of paving

1. ML: There will be no dedication, no street paving. Curbs and gutters are already in place and will stay
- viii. Debby Beck (DB): Are you the architect for the houses
 1. AN: No, I have hired an architect for the project. The renderings have been done by a licensed architect
- ix. DB: I recommend he become more familiar with our historical architectural styles and make an effort to incorporate more of our native building materials such as river rock instead of stacked stone
- x. DB: The Community Plan calls for people to build within the character of the surrounding neighborhood – the renderings do not match that
- xi. DB: The houses look massive compared to the neighborhood
- xii. DB: What is the architectural style
 1. AN: Spanish-Mediterranean
- xiii. Elektra Kruger (EK): The definition of a ZV is something that is a non-selfimposed hardship resulting from a lot that has a strange size, shape or topography. It has nothing to do with “a quick construction start”
 1. ML: We are asking permission of the ZA to start construction before the final map is recorded – before the tentative map is finalized
- xiv. EK: That does not fall within the list of findings that must be met for a Zone Variance
 1. ML: We will have to check with planning – they are the ones who are guiding us through the application procedure
- xv. Karen Zimmerman (KZ): Have you done this before - start construction before the map is finalized
 1. AN: Yes
- xvi. KZ: What is the purpose of doing that
 1. AN: Not to wait to get the final map approved. The City allows us to start construction after bonds are posted
- xvii. KZ: It seems as if you are putting the cart before the horse
 1. AN: Not really
- xviii. Bill Skiles (BS): You said that each lot averages 20,000 sq ft. How much square footage is buildable space – the hill to the rear absorbs most of that square footage
 1. AN: 4,000 square foot flat
- xix. BS: Is there a fault line there somewhere
 1. AN: There is, but we have already done seismic studies which have been submitted to the City to prove that we are in a safe zone. We did whatever the City requires. There is no “live” fault
- xx. Arsen Karamians (AK): Was the topographical map originated by surveying the land on-site or just by taking copies of GPS maps
 1. AN: The surveyor went to the site

- xxi. AK: According to the topographical map, much of the land is very steep. How are you going to take care of the soil being removed to create the buildable area
1. AN: Grading will be completely balanced – no import, no export
- xxii. AK: The distance from structures to boundary lines appear to be 7'. Two-story buildings require a minimum of 7.5' side-yard
1. AN: If that is the case, the correction will be implemented by the City at the time of plan approval
- xxiii. AK: Why does the retaining wall (thatched line on map) not continue through the entire area of very steep topography? Water will come down from the hill and create problems
1. AN: We did full hydrology studies directing water to Day St. After Day St. everything is already calculated
- xxiv. AK: So all water collected is being directed to Day St.? Are you saying the curb and gutter will take care of all the water?
1. AN: Yes
- xxv. John Laue (JL): The average sq ft/house is 3,400 sq ft
1. AN: Yes
- xxvi. JL: And the average buildable lot size is 4,000 sq ft
1. AN: The 3,400 sq ft is inclusive of the garages. We don't want to build houses any larger than 3,000 sq ft. We did full calculations of how large the houses can be and these are far below that
- xxvii. JL: What is the average distance from the curb to the house
1. AN: We are proposing 15' from the property line to the front of the house and 20' from the property line to the garage which will improve the aesthetic design of the house
- xxviii. JL: The application states that you intend to remove 15 oak trees
1. AN: I don't think so
- xxix. JL: A problem we see throughout Sunland is that size & density of proposed developments don't match the character of the neighborhood. Your proposed houses are 2X as lg as those of the neighborhood
1. AN: We did a study on both sides of Day St. Actually, our houses are the smallest
- xxx. Cindy Cleghorn (CC): Why are you asking for a zone boundary adjustment for two lots
1. ML: The lower part is an R1 zone, the upper is RE40. We are just pushing the boundary up so all homes can be in the R1 zone
- xxxi. CC: Regarding the Zoning Administrators Adjustment to reduce the front yard set-back to 15' instead of 20' – why is that necessary
1. AN: It will make the houses more architecturally appealing. It will also allow us to keep the retaining walls in the R1 zone
- xxxii. CC: The area over there is extremely environmentally sensitive with wildlife and natural habitat. How will this development effect those? Has a study been done and submitted to the City for that

1. AN: There is no study or report, but we voluntarily dedicated 5 acres of lot 14 which will save open space to preserve habitat for the wildlife
- xxxiii. CC: What about the sensitivity of the land and how it is way back in the hillside? Will the hillside be weakened by the development? Will all the activity compromise the hillside
 1. AN: The City will require full landscaping of the slopes. We are actually allowed to build 21 houses on this land, but have voluntarily reduced this to 15 lots – 14 buildable and one o.s.
- xxxiv. Samuel Graham – Day St. (SG): This morning while walking my dog on the land, I saw a bobcat. As I look at lot 14, I don't see where you have plans for public service vehicle access eg in case of a fire
 1. AN: There are streets on the back of our property – Sister Elsie
- xxxv. SG: Have you driven on Sister Elsie
 1. AN: Yes
- xxxvi. SG: Can you imagine if we have a fire in the bottom of the canyon – you are going to ask the fire department to take their huge vehicles up Sister Elsie. Do you really know Sister Elsie
 1. AN: I have been there, I know Sister Elsie
- xxxvii. SG: Picture the fire approaching your residential properties – are they going to repel down from Sister Elsie? Are they going to take a helicopter to drop in there. You have no access to the back
 1. AN: There will be a fire clearance requirement of 200' behind the houses and the buffer of Day St. provides another 60', 70' even a 100' clearance
- xxxviii. SG: But your lot 14 – you are going to keep that native, right? So that is not clean – that is the area I am concerned about. How do you propose to protect the community in that particular area
 1. AN: I will have fire clearance around the houses
- xxxix. SG: But you are maintaining the wilderness aspect
 1. AN: That is why I am donating 5 acres to open space
- xl. SG: And that land could burn
 1. AN: Do you want me to cut all the vegetation and oak trees
- xli. SG: No. If this development gets approved, I want a road somewhere down your lot 1 and 2 – there is an obvious little canyon back there. You need access back there. You need to give up one of your houses.
 1. AN: I have already given up 7. It is not feasible and I don't think the City would like that – to put roads along the back of the properties
- xlii. SG: You need access for the fire department
- xliii. Carol Hodel (CH): We had a fire coming over the hillside 2 yrs ago. The only way the hillside betw Lowell & Haines Canyon could be protected was that the fire engines & bull dozers could get to the property
- xliv. CH: What are you proposing for sidewalks

1. AN: There will be a 5' sidewalk along the front of the houses
- xliv. CH: So the sidewalk will run from Pali on the west over to Armenita on the east
 1. AN: Yes. We actually own the property all the way to Lowell
- xlvi. CH: And will you have a greenbelt
 1. AN: There will be a 6' greenbelt and a 5' sidewalk
- xlvii. _____?_____ Collosian (?C) –Day St.: Regarding the retaining walls – what is the height of the highest retaining wall
 1. AN: The City allows 12'. I have 2 10' retaining walls
- xlviii. ?C: Are you going to be planting trees in front of it to hide the walls
 1. AN: The wall will not be visible from the street because they are basically going to be blocked by the houses
- xliv. ?C: How long is the retaining wall
 1. AN: 50' to 70'
 - I. ?C: So we WILL see them between the houses
 1. AN: We are proposing 7' side-yards so, yes, there will be 14'that technically could be seen, but they will probably be covered with landscaping
 - ii. ?C: Do you have the plans with you? Can we review the retaining walls
 1. AN: I have the proposed plans showing the retaining walls, but we are not that far into the process that we have designs yet or exact heights.
 - iii. ?C: When you have it, can we look at it? It matters to us – the ones who live across the street – in the event of a flood for example – especially for the people who will be living there
 1. AN: The plans show a full flood control design already. Between lots 1 and 2 we are proposing an underground water run-off system to Day St. We will be building new drains, new swales
- liii. ?C: How many stories will the houses have
 1. AN: Two
- liv. Andy Collage (AC): When the last fire was coming over the Angeles Crest Mts down into this area, Day St – our str – was the staging area for probably a dozen different municipalities that brought in all the fire equip
- lv. AC: Sister Elsie is above Day St – very narrow, very crooked and really inaccessible. They couldn't get their fire trucks up Sister Elsie Dr. at all
- lvi. AC: How are you going to protect your homes when it is raining. This whole area is a drainage ditch that comes down the mt. There was a berm dam that broke in the 60s w/mud & rocks coming down
- lvii. AC: I was wondering if you have any soils reports and information about the rocks and make-up of that hillside
 1. AN: Before any bldg approval, the fire depart will review the plans and must approve the plans. We have to satisfy them before we will be able to start any work. Have to follow recommendations

- lviii. Nick Waltier (NW): The application calls for the removal of 15 oak trees, but I know that along the front of that property there are no 15 oak trees – in fact they are way up the hillside so why remove them
 - 1. AN: I don't know why the paperwork makes mention of proposed removal of oak trees. I guarantee you I will not be removing 15 oak trees
- lix. NW: Who is the point of contact in the City for this development
 - 1. ML: I do not believe we have an assigned planner yet. I have not yet been contacted about that
- lx. Janie Cress (JC) – Day St/Armenita: These houses are too big for the neighborhood – 3,500 sq ft – that is twice the average of the neighborhood and these are going to stick out like sore thumbs
- lxi. Brandy Horton (BH) – Day St: You are applying to get an early construction permit. How early do you plan to get started on the construction? What is your timeline
 - 1. AN: 1st there will be a cycle of Public Hearings. The project is subject to plan approval, then we have to post bonds to be able to start any construction. At least 6 months, maybe more than a year
- lxii. BH: Your proposed houses are nowhere close to the sizes of the houses across the street
 - 1. AN: My proposed houses are 3,400 sq ft with the garage. That means the houses will be roughly 2,800 sq ft to 3,000 sq ft
- lxiii. Audience (?): Is Sister Elsie going to be effected in any way
 - 1. AN: We will not be doing anything to Sister Elsie
- lxiv. ?: Because there is so much wildlife on the property now, are you eco-friendly? The wildlife matters a lot to all of us here
 - 1. AN: Of course it matters to us and of course we are eco-friendly. We are providing LED lighting (and made references to electrical outlets, etc)
- lxv. Ron Hoffman (RH) – Armenita: I prepared a little hand-out (see attached). Have you addressed all these problems? Two lots are right at the mouth of canyons where most of the water run-off will be – not the hillsides
- lxvi. RH: Nine lots have an average of 50% of their area proposed as easements to the City for flood control. That means people will not be able to use that portion of their lots
- lxvii. RH: The usable area of the large deep lots is about 30% with 70% being too steep to use. The reason for this lot configuration: 25% x lot size = allowable house size. The proposed 3,400 sq ft houses are 3X the neighborhood average of 1,600 sq ft of homes in your radius map
- lxviii. RH: The environmental impact of the project associated with grading will be significant. The cu yds of grading covers 3.8 acres or 36% - over 1/3 – of the site
- lxix. Tom Williams (TW): Regarding lot 14 – who will own it, who will be responsible for fire clearance for the next 100 years

1. AN: There is no designated owner yet, but usually the SMMC takes such lots
- lxx. TW: Will there be an HOA to maintain lot 14
 1. AN: There is no HOA
- lxxi. So we do not know who will be responsible for fire clearance or maintenance of lot 14
 1. AN: Whoever the owner is, will be
- lxxii. Nina Royal (NR): Ca is in a severe drought. You will be having driveways. Are you using permeable cement so the H2O can percolate back into the ground. We have a shortage of water, the development will draw from it
 1. We will be using an interlocking paving system which allows for water penetration into the ground
- lxxiii. NR: Will you be using cisterns on the property to collect the water and then allow it to percolate into the soil and eventually to reach the ground water
 1. AN: We are going to use a filtration system to filter all the water from the roofs
- lxxiv. NR: Where will it be going – the water that you are collecting
 1. AN: All the groundwater will be going through the filtration system which is part of the design
- lxxv. Arsen Karamians (AK): Regarding run-off between lot 1 and 2, 3 and 4 and the worst one on lot 7, do you have any design to collect this water and to have level spreaders or this is going to cause big problems
 1. AN: The only thing that I can answer is that there has already been a full feasibility study and our plans/designs will have to satisfy the Bureau of Engineering and the City Planning Department
- lxxvi. AK: Do you have an expeditor
 1. AN: Yes
- lxxvii. Debby Beck (DB): If the project gets approved by the City would you be willing to come back again and bring materials and boards and talk about the architecture
 1. AN: I always did
- e. Applications that are currently being processed by the City = a subdivision map, a ZV, a set-back variance all of which are subject to Public Hearing. Those living within a 300' radius will be notified where to send comments. Those living outside the radius can be asked to be put on the contact list
 - i. Carol Hodel: In the meantime can we as individuals or collectively as a petition send our concerns to the planning department? Dean S.: Yes and you want to be sure those communications go to the assigned planner
- f. Comments/Observations by Chair Dean S.
 - i. Lg deep parcels were created w/significant area while too steep to develop have been used in floor-area ratio calculations to ascertain permitted house sizes under the Baseline Hillside Ord = large houses

- ii. The Zone Boundary Adjustment was purposely done to move lots from the Minimum density General Plan designation to the low density designation to increase the number of buildable lots
- iii. The 20' front-yard set-back could be maintained were the houses reduced in size
- iv. There are a # of inadequacies/inconsistencies in the application eg the request for a ZV to expedite the project – there is no such thing – and the cited code has to do with nuisance abatement in the community = error
- v. Numerous application questions were not answered. It does not bode well for the quality of the development if at the initial start of the project a complete application setting forth proposed parameters is not prepared with care
- vi. Is the City going to require any kind of infrastructure up-grades such as sewer and/or water line up-grades? Will there be street lights? Will they require fire hydrants? Will the homes be sprinklered?
 - 1. Andrew Novachek (AN): We are still waiting for the City comments from the different departments that will come out in the conditions of approval
 - 2. AN: The houses will be sprinklered
 - 3. AN: The fire department requires fire hydrants 150' from the door of each house
 - 4. AN: Sidewalks and greenbelts are a requirement of the City
 - 5. AN: At this point we don't know whether street lights will be part of the conditions
- vii. It is often the case that a developer will make improvements for the benefit of future homeowners & do nothing to improve the general infrastructure in the area to match the impact of the development laying the burden of the needed up-grades on the shoulders of the community and the tax-payers
- viii. From a design perspective, one thing that could be done is not necessarily to reduce the number of lots, but to scale down the project a bit for the sake of neighborhood compatibility

IX. Meeting adjourned at 8:42pm