



**UPTOWN PLANNERS**  
Uptown Community Planning Group  
FINAL MINUTES  
March 7, 2017

Meeting called to order by Chair Leo Wilson at 6:02.

In attendance: Jennifer Pesqueira, Mat Wahlstrom, Bill Ellig, Amie Hayes, Maya Rosas, Cindy Thorsen, Bob Daniel, Gary Bonner, Tom Mullaney, Jay Newington, Ken Tablang, Leo Wilson, Tim Gahagan

Absent: Michael Brennan, Dana Hook, Soheil Nakhshab, Roy Dahl

Michael Prinz, city planner for Uptown present.

**I. Board Meeting: Parliamentary Items/Reports:**

- A. Introductions by board members;
- B. Adoption of Agenda and Rules of Order: Motion by Wahlstrom to put Letter of Support for 2017 LGBT Pride Parade on Consent Agenda; passed unanimously, with non-voting chair abstaining; unanimous vote to approve agenda;
- C. Approval of Minutes: February 7, 2017—Motion by Daniel, seconded by Wahlstrom, to approve the February 7, 2017 minutes; passed unanimously with non-voting chair abstaining.
- D. Treasurer's Report: No report, treasurer not present.
- E. Chair/CPC Report: Chair reported that the Design Review Subcommittee would discuss the 2810 India Street project; Inquiry made if board members wanted hard copies of the final Uptown Community Plan update, and the final PFFP plan. Twelve members requested copies.  
Chair reported Councilmember Scott Sherman's proposals to streamline the planning process and modify community planning procedures were discussed at the Community Planners Committee. Sherman was present at the meeting; a good dialogue took place;  
Michael Prinz introduced himself as the new planner for Uptown.

**II. Public Communication: Non-Agenda Public**

Barry Hager announced Mission Hills Heritage was hosting a free seminar on Saturday, March 11, 2017 at Francis Parker School to explain the procedures and requirements for establishing historic districts.

Carol Emerick expressed concerns over the city's response to the illegal grading that happened in Florence Canyon in Hillcrest; indicating the process took too long. Emerick also stated she did not believe the City Planning Department and Development Services Department were sufficiently transparent, and did not provide enough information to the community.

Amie Hayes announced a joint fundraiser by the Hillcrest History Guild and SOHO that would take place on March 19, 2017 to raise money for the lawsuit filed by SOHO and Mission Hills Heritage regarding the Uptown Community Plan update.

Leo Wilson announced the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Bankers Hill Arts and Craft Beer Festival would take place on March 31, 2017 at the Abbey on Fifth Avenue.

### **III. Representatives of Elected Officials:**

Brittany Bailey, representing Councilmember Chris Ward: distributed a newsletter from the councilmember's office, and indicated his priority issue is to address the city's homeless crisis. The City Council will discuss possible strategies to deal with homeless issues at a meeting on March 20, 2017. Bailey also announced Ward would be attending a craft beer event at Hess Brewery in North Park on March 21, 2017.

Nick Serrano, representing Assemblymember Todd Gloria, indicated the deadline for introducing new legislation in the State Assembly recently passed. Gloria introduced 24 bills, including a Disaster Resiliency Act, which will help relocate displaced low-income residents on public assistance. Gloria has been appointed chair of the Select Committee on Low Income and Middle Class Housing.

Mark Zambon, representing Congresswoman Susan Davis, stated the Davis had participated in a roundtable with eight school administrators to discuss education issues. She condemned President Trump's executive order affecting transgender students, and also had held a press conference to discuss immigration issues.

Toni Duran, representing State Senator Toni Atkins, who has introduced 17 bills this session, with a focus on addressing affordable housing issues. Three of Atkins bills also concerned human trafficking; and she was working to expand the rights of transgender individuals to obtain state documents, such as adding a non-binary option.

### **IV. Special Guest:** The Honorable Chris Ward, City Councilmember for the Third City Council District, and a former member of Uptown Planners, was special guest speaker.

Ward indicated a major issue of concern was addressing the issue of homelessness in the City of San Diego. Ward stated that progress was being made, and recent homeless counts had shown a reduction in the number of homeless in Downtown. The City Council would be discussing various strategies to address homelessness at its meeting on March 20, 2017, and Ward would be proposing several initiatives. Recently, Ward was appointed the vice chair of the Regional Task Force for the Homelessness.

Ward also spoke regarding the affordable housing crisis, indicating that the Smart Growth & Land Use Committee of the City Council has begun to discuss ways of providing more housing. Regarding public facilities, Ward stated the construction of the Hillcrest Fire Station is on track; and the Mission Hills Library would likely begin construction in April. Pedestrian and sidewalk improvements along El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue were also planned as part of the implementation of the Vision Zero Plan.

Ward introduced a new city ordinance that provides for equal pay for women. Presently, women make approximately 72% of the pay that men do for city contract work. Although California has one of the strongest equal pay ordinance based on gender in the nation, it has not been effectively enforced. The City enters into contract worth about \$6.5 million dollars, and at present city contractors self-certify when they bid that they do not discriminate in their wages based on gender. The city is able to audit the financial records of city contractors to assure they are compliant.

Responses to Public and Board Comments (name of questioner in brackets)

Regarding the Community Planning Group Reforms proposed by Councilmember Sherman: Ward does not support them, as they do not improve efficiency, and would limit the input from the community regarding development. Ward is opposed to consolidating community planning groups into a fewer regional planning groups. (Wilson)

Ward indicated all potential options to address housing issues are on the table; including providing expanded access to short-term housing and services to get the homeless off the street. A lot of lessons have been learned from the approach to the issue taken in Salt Lake City and Houston. (Epley)

In response to an inquiry about the quiet zone along the railroad track on the west side of Uptown, Ward stated he is looking for additional funding to study the issue further. The Mayor's Office is being approached as a possible source. (Daniel)

Ward supports full connectivity along the route of the SANDAG Fourth Avenue and Fifth Avenue bicycle corridor project; the possibility of using Third Avenue as a possible alternative route through Hillcrest has been raised, and may be studied. However, the final outcome will be the route along the corridor will be fully connected. (Rosas)

Comments were made regarding the problem of litter and transients at the future Mission Hills Library site. (Tablang); and concerns were raised over the reason for Elizabeth Hannon's departure from the Uptown Parking District. (Wilson)

In response to an inquiry why University Heights had not been united into one planning group, Ward responded that it had not been done as part of the community plan update, and it was difficult for him to now reopen the issue, since the update was completed in 2016, prior to Ward assuming office. Ward indicated the issue of unifying University Heights would need to be addressed creatively in the future. (Wahlstrom)

A concern was expressed over the amount of incentives being provided developers for a relatively small amount of affordable housing. Ward responded that the existing state and local ordinances dictate the amount of affordable housing that must be included in return for the incentives. He indicated community input on the issue was important, and that Uptown Planners should continue to work with developers to attempt to reach compromises that provide additional affordable housing, as well as preserve community character. (Gahagan)

Ward indicated he opposed the placement of a stop sign at the intersection of India Street at Redwood Street because city traffic engineering stated it would create a public safety hazard. Instead, as an alternative Ward supported a traffic calming measure that involved the removal of a traffic lane on India Street; that would be replaced by a bicycle lane. On-street parking would be preserved. Ward indicated the city is also looking at installing either a traffic signal or RRFB at the intersection in question. In addition, Ward is seeing if airport rental car traffic can be redirected from Hawthorne Street to Pacific Highway by changing signage, which would reduce traffic at India Street and Sassafras Street. (Pesqueira)

**Consent Agenda:** Motion by Tom Mullaney to approve the consent agenda; seconded by Mat Wahlstrom. Passes 10-0-1, non-voting chair abstaining.

**LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR SAN DIEGO 2017 LGBT PRIDE PARADE – Hillcrest & Bankers Hill/Park West** – Event will take place on July 14th through July 16<sup>th</sup>; with the parade taking place on July 15th in Hillcrest, and two-day festival taking place in Balboa Park on July 15 and July 16th.

**V. Projects: Action Items:** None

**VI. Letters of Support: Action Items:**

**ROCK “N” ROLL SAN DIEGO MARATHON AND HALF MARATHON** -- Presentation by Natalia Mendez, Competitor Group Community Relations coordinator; about: 1) race day information and review of route and any changes 2) overview of road closures and alternate routes 3) and request for a letter of support; the event will be held on June 4, 2017.

Motion to continue item by Wahlstrom; second by Bonner; motion passed by 12-0-1 vote non-voting chair abstaining.

**VII. Information Items: Projects: None**

**VIII. Planning Staff/Subcommittee Reports – Potential Action Items**

1. **Historic Preservation Subcommittee:** The subcommittee met on February 27, 2017: subcommittee members Hayes (Chair), Newington, Wahlstrom, and Mullaney were in attendance. The subcommittee considered whether buildings located at the former Rees-Stealy Medical Clinic, at 2001 Fourth Avenue, should be historically designated. The City of San Diego’s Historic Resources Board was scheduled to hold a second hearing on the issue on March 23, 2017 (*subsequent to the meeting the HRB hearing was continued until April*).

Subcommittee Chair Hayes introduced the item: The Rees-Stealy building was designed by two master architects. The project was nominated under several criteria for historic designation. The Sections A & B of the buildings was recommended for designation under four separate criteria, and planning staff recommended preserving the whole site. Any sections of the site designed could be adaptively reused. There was a question if the site should be considered for historic preservation as a whole, as city historic staff is recommending, or whether each section of the project, A, B & C should be considered separately.

John LaRaia made the presentation on behalf of H.G. Fenton, the potential buyer of the property from Sharp Health Care. LaRaia indicated there were no current plans to develop the site; as there was an initial need to determine what sections of the site could be developed. Fenton was opposed to any of the site being historically designated, as significant alterations had taken place since the original construction, which compromised their historic integrity. Fenton was looking at rehabilitating and preserving the character of Sections A and B. as part of a any new development. LaRaia did not believe Section C, which had no windows and plain walls, could be adaptively reused.

Sarah Steinhoffer from Sharp Health Care indicated as the existing owner they would prefer the site not be designated. Sharp Health Care could then use the proceeds from the sale of the site to provide additional health care services in San Diego. A historic wall featuring the history of the site could be incorporated into the project.

During board comment, Daniel and Gahagan opposed any involuntary designation of buildings at the site. Mullaney and Bonner spoke in favor of historic designation. Wahlstrom, Ellig, Hayes and Thorsen indicated they supported the subcommittee recommendation, and are particularly concerned over preserving Sections A and B. (Wilson abstained because Sharp Medical Center is represented on the board of directors of an organization he is involved with)

Hayes moved each of the subcommittee recommendations as separate motions:

- 1.) Support the historic consideration of Section C as separate from Sections A and B. Motion passed by a 9-3-1 vote; voting in favor, Newington, Wahlstrom, Mullaney, Bonner,

Tablang, Hayes, Ellig, Thorsen, Gahagan; voting against Pesqueira, Daniel, Rosas; Chair Wilson abstaining.

2.) Recommend historical designation of Sections A & B under Criteria A, B, C & D  
Motion passed by a 8-4-1 vote; voting in favor, Newington, Wahlstrom, Mullaney, Bonner, Tablang, Hayes, Ellig, Thorsen; voting against Pesqueira, Daniel, Gahagan, Rosas; Chair Wilson abstaining.

3.) Recommends historical designation of Section C under Criteria A & B; Motion failed by a 6-6-1 vote; voting in favor, Newington, Wahlstrom, Mullaney, Tablang, Hayes, Thorsen, voting against Pesqueira, Daniel, Gahagan, Bonner, Rosas; Ellig; Chair Wilson abstaining from voting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Minutes transcribed by Maya Rosas; finalized by Leo Wilson