

PLUM Committee meeting on June 23, 2016

Minutes

The meeting began at approximately 6:05 p.m.

PLUM Committee members Patty Dryden, Orrin Feldman, Samantha Foley, JoAnn Koplin and Danielle Mead were present. A sufficient number of committee members were there to establish a quorum.

Approximately 30 stakeholders were present.

Orrin, as the PLUM committee's chair, explained the meeting's agenda, and how some public comments would be taken out of the agenda's order to let other people get to The Greek Theater to use their concert tickets for an event there. The other committee members introduced themselves.

Orrin announced that the PLUM committee's future meetings in 2016 were scheduled, tentatively, for July 13, September 8, October 13, November 10, and December 8, 2016 at The Durant Library from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

The draft minutes of the committee's June 8, 2016 meeting were approved unanimously (5-0).

The committee's members (again) decided to postpone considering electing a new vice chair of the committee until a future meeting. JoAnn suggested that HHWNC's new bylaws made the 2nd vice president also the committee's vice chair. The committee decided to refer this issue to the full HHWNC board for consideration and guidance.

1. 2048 and 2052 Curson Avenue:

Renee Schillaci and Robert Nebolon, the architect, made the presentation for the owner, DFI Properties. A DFI principal also was present. They explained the site's history, its 140 foot high retaining wall at the back of the site, and the two proposed 3-story single family houses. 2048 Curson would be approximately 2,300 square feet, and 2052 Curson would be approximately, 2,000 square feet, Both homes include first floor garages and basement spaces.

They explained the variances and other discretionary entitlements being sought, and the rationale for the owner's request.

The board discussed the request. The board approved the proposed motion unanimously (5-0), which recommended that the HHWNC board vote to support the proposed projects, including the request for the discretionary entitlements.

2. 2864 Cahuenga East:

Athena Novak, representing owner Behzad Farat, was present. Athena spoke about Mr. Farat's offer to provide significant open space to the City if he is allowed to develop the site, and for widening Cahuenga East through a land dedication. She also mentioned that there is toxic soil on the site.

Athena later mentioned that the site had been owned previously by Betty Ford, either individually or through her nonprofit, presumably for the possibility of proposing a recovery center there

Daniel Savage, HHWNC's area 1 chair, was there. As the site's representative on the HHWNC board, he also sits on the PLUM committee for this matter.

Orrin, Athena and Daniel explained the prior history of Mr. Farat's previously proposed project for the site. Orrin explained that the new proposal was for a concept of putting 250+ apartments on the site, and that all of the apartments would be affordable housing. However, Athena explained that was not what Mr. Farat was proposing, and that he was proposing now to build 250+ apartments there with (an unspecified) portion of the units to be for affordable housing.

Athena also explained that she would like to return with her team, including attorney Fred Gaines and a traffic expert, to make a detailed presentation. Orrin said that the September 8, 2016, PLUM committee meeting seemed to be the date when the committee might have time to do so.

There were numerous public comments. Each public comment opposed the proposed project. Many of the public comments suggested using all of a part of the site as a park or open space. Several spoke of the value of the area for wildlife. Many spoke of the existing traffic congestion along Cahuenga East, and how difficult it was to leave the Lakeridge and Hollywood Estates areas.

Since there was no actual application which had been filed, the people making public comments were doing so as individuals, rather than on behalf of the organizations with which they are associated.

Marion Dodge, who is the chairman of The Hillside Federations spoke about the site as good open space providing connectivity for animals trying to connect back to the rest of the Santa Monica Mountains. She mentioned mountain lion P-22's nearby sighting, and the lack of any Metro stop nearby.

Gerry Hans, the chair of Friends of Griffith Park, also spoke about wildlife connectivity and P-22's sighting on a ridge line above The Ford Theater.

Daniel Savage, who also is the president of the Lakeridge, Hollywood Manor and Hollywood Knolls' association, asked what is the compelling reason to change the zoning from R40 to any high density residential type of zoning? He mentioned that the original Farat proposal called for 250 apartments, 70+ town homes and a parking structure which would hold 600 vehicles. He asked if those were still included in the new proposal concept?

Alan Kishbaugh, who is on the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy's advisory committee, and chairs the Mulholland Design Review Board, observed that the highest and best use of the R40 zoned parcel might well be by keeping the land as rural as possible, whether as open space or parkland. Alan thought that the shard goal was to avoid creeping urbanization in or up through the Mulholland corridor, which is where the site is located.

Herbert Munoz spoke about the evils of ad hoc zoning, and said that this was the wrong project at the wrong time and place.

Herman Churchwell suggested that the site had too many problems relating to traffic, ingress and egress, and that it would be more appropriate to build some custom luxury homes there on large lots, rather than an apartment complex.

D.M. Osborne, James Gichaman, Tom Otero and Don Underworld, all of whom are residents, made similar comments about traffic, ingress and egress and fire safety. There were cautious notes about the difficulties which LAFD Fire House 76 would have getting to the site if it were developed with 250 apartments, and how a fire easily could go up the hill and into Griffith Park.

The committee also received a petition with an additional six residents objecting to the proposed development for the site, and in favor of retaining the current RE 40-1-H zoning.

After all the public comments were taken, there were no comments on non-agenda items.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:45 p.m.