

7500 Sunset Project Meeting Minutes
Area 7, Transportation, Business, Housing Joint Meeting
July 12, 2016

6:30 pm - Meeting called to order

In Attendance:

- Barbara Witkin (Area 7), Oren Katz (Business), Danielle Mead (Transportation)
- Faring Capital - Developer Team - 5 reps. Jason Illouljian-applicant/developer, Darren Embry-project rep, Dave Rand-attorney with Armbruster, Jerry Overland-traffic engineer for project
- Approximately 62-64 Stakeholders
- Julia Duncan from CD4

Introductory Comments

- Barbara explains process, comments cards are needed
- Barbara tells everyone about upcoming meetings for Area 7 and PLUM
- Question from community about process - Barbara explains it goes Area 7 to PLUM to full Board

Approval of minutes

Barbara motions to approve, Danielle seconds, vote passes unanimously

Presentation by Darren Embry

- Currently in public comment period, deadline is August 1st
- Project has been a long time coming over 4-5 years, has evolved
- Project is two blocks (East and West)
- Originally began as 7 stories MU but economic downturn led to redesigned project, presented to Spaulding Square and HPOZ (was 6-story at that point - 2014), height still an issue for neighbors, also didn't reflect historic architecture and look of neighborhood
- Newest version includes step-backs on 4th and 5th floors, and further so on the corner to make the building looks smaller than it is, more landscaping, trying to bring pedestrian experience
- Height fits with Greystone Manor and Sierra House Apartments which are 5-story
- Feels height is modest and reasonable based on heights of other buildings on Sunset between La Brea and Sunset Strip (showed several illustrations, graphs to make point)
- Concerned there is misunderstanding on parking and whether there is a reduction in exchange for bike parking
- Plans to widen Curson and create a wider sidewalk, widening Sierra Bonita as well (3 ft per side)
- "Renewing a tired section of Sunset"
- Removing billboard, updating neighborhood retail spaces
- Undergrounding utilities
- Bringing additional trees/green
- 24 hour security on site
- Reducing commercial square footage but increasing commercial parking
- Presented list of entitlements being requested
- Question from public about why requesting reduction of open space requirements
 - Answer from developer is due to triangular shape of second site
- Presented timeline of the project review with public and various city departments
- End of presentation at 6:50 pm

Public Questions

1. What is the plan for loading/delivery trucks
 - a. Rep: Will be determined down the road with city
2. How will cars be directed towards Sunset not into neighborhood?
 - a. Traffic engineer: says city requires driveways on side streets, won't allow driveways on Sunset
 - b. Traffic engineer: Curson is collector street but isn't really wide enough, which is why they plan to widen Curson (5 feet total) and Sierra Bonita (3 feet on each side) between project and Sunset
 - c. Traffic engineer: City limitations won't allow them to angle driveways to Sunset
3. Danielle (Transportation Chair) - concerned about loading dock and commercial entry via DOT parking lot behind East building. Also fire department needs access to DOT lot. Is all loading planned via DOT lot since there is no loading dock shown on plans for West building? This wouldn't work since the DOT lot is widely used by local residents and spaces would have to be removed. Trucks also wouldn't be able to make the sharp turn from Gardner (and commercial vehicle traffic making that turn would cause serious traffic jams on Gardner).
 - a. Rep: There will be loading areas on Sunset
4. Stakeholder - zoning has a D, which means 1-story, the project is entitled to 1:1 FAR, about 70k square feet plus 35% density bonus, which is well below what they are requesting
 - a. Rep: By providing affordable housing, they get the 35% density bonus, which allows them to apply for additional FAR of 3:1
5. Stakeholder - parking lot shows commercial entrance plus loading, she spoke with LADOT, they spoke multiple years ago but nothing has been finalized or approved with LADOT
 - a. Rep: "It's all a concept", nothing has been finalized, it seems far along but it is not
6. Stakeholder - It's not too early to be commenting, doesn't live in area but worked on Hollywood Community Plan and therefore is interested in this. City is arbitrarily up-zoning via density bonuses and CUPs. CUP says it must be in conformance with General Plan, Community Plan, etc. Most of the tall buildings project reps showed earlier (as justification for height) were built in 80s which prompted need for Hollywood Community Plan. Requests developers "stop with 3:1 nonsense" and come back to community with something that makes sense.
7. Stakeholder - Question about parking, how are spaces assigned between commercial and residential
8. Stakeholder - What are standard for low income units?
9. Stakeholder - presenter used word "reasonable" 7 times, said design was similar to neighborhood, but it's not. It's not reasonable to have 400+ parking spaces, it's not here to enhance any of our lives. What is compensation for existing retail stores like the Comic Book store.
10. Stakeholder - is there any consideration for traffic lights, possibly traffic light with arrow at Sierra Bonita instead of Curson. DeLongpre will become the new Fountain. No indication of working with DOT for better traffic flow.
 - a. Traffic engineer: There are some negatives to signals because then people will be able to cross over Fountain on residential streets to Sunset
 - b. Traffic engineer: Not enough traffic to qualify for any additional signals
11. Stakeholder - are residential units for sale or lease (Rep: for rent), what is breakdown (Rep: mostly one bedrooms, but people have requested more 2 bedrooms). What is timeline for actually breaking ground (Rep: too far into the future to know). Why do the two buildings look different (Rep: they got multiple types of feedback so incorporated both). We also need to look at benefits, such as they've lowered the number of stories and some of the businesses coming in may allow her to walk more and use her car less.

12. Stakeholder - Hopes owners will take better care of the area. They've owned it for four years yet showed photos of how bad the area currently looks in terms of maintenance of streets. Disappointed that this project is so far along and yet parking/traffic is still not resolved; should have been the first thing address. Not convinced they have addressed enough residential parking even if they have added commercial spaces.
13. Stakeholder - Trying to shoe horn a building in that is too big for the neighborhood. "This neighborhood is not what it was in the 80s". Current buildings are in disrepair (per their representative), but they own the property and they could have restored the existing buildings like The Pikey, 3rd Street etc. Hollywood Plan would have called for 2 story limit on Sunset but they are using bonuses and incentives. Will parking lots be used strictly for commercial and residents of that complex or will it be used for community, valets, other offices, etc.
 - a. Rep: We brought down the height based on community feedback.
 - b. Rep: Not sure on parking, is TBD on usage and could be left up to the community since they know parking is a pain point in the area
14. Stakeholder - This stretch of Sunset is not Coffee Bean, Starbucks, Banana Republic area, they are funky businesses. Russian deli, comic book store, etc. Wants to make sure funky character doesn't become Calabasas pedestrian mall. Concerned about Fire Station on Gardner, which is main north/south artery to the hills for FD.
15. Stakeholder - concerned about noise, demolition, dust of construction. Lives on Curson. She works at night so being woken up at 6:30 am is problematic (already has existing construction project on her street). How long will construction take? Don't forget about the experience of living with construction for multiple years.
 - a. Rep: On another project they paid a premium price to bring down total duration of construction, implied they will do the same for this project to reduce impact on neighbors. Probably less than 2 years.
16. Stakeholder - so many piece of Hollywood have been destroyed, doesn't need this pretty building. We can build charm into our neighborhood. But if it's coming, doesn't want it to be this tall. It's always been five stories, they said they didn't want five stories. La Bonge said nothing taller than the palm trees; people come from all over for the Skyline Palms. Bring something smaller and charming.
17. Stakeholder - She thinks they are playing with the numbers because existing businesses don't generate a lot of traffic compared to what new businesses will attract.
18. Stakeholder - it seems like when people bring up comments, the project reps are being condescending and poo-pooing them. Don't forget we live here and we're passionate about the area.
19. Stakeholder - has been in these meetings since beginning, they haven't complied with many of the suggestions, never saw anything other than 5 stories, seems like they are hiding something, none of the photos show the whole project including surrounding buildings. They are still saying it's very early in the process but that's not true. How can we approve anything if it's always a moving target?
 - a. Rep: The whole reason we're here is because it's a process
 - b. Rep: We started off with many fewer parking spaces
 - c. Rep: We have made changes, parking was the top issue
20. Stakeholder - we should be fighting this because they are using other tall buildings as a justification. So if this goes through, more buildings will cite this project doing the same thing.
21. Stakeholder - feels really strongly about keeping original structures since she grew up in the neighborhood. Have they considered keeping what's there and just refreshing instead of destroying what is there.
22. Stakeholder - what is the cost structure per story; how much money do you lose if you have to cut off a story from the top.

- a. Rep: Parking is the most expensive part of the project. It's not about money, it's about making the best project we can make.

23. Stakeholder - presentation was insincere, changes are made in the smallest possible increments

Motion Made: To reject the project as it has been presented. The buildings are too high and out of character for the neighborhood with too much density. FAR should be reduced. The DOT parking lot cannot be used and a new traffic study needed.

Area 7 Chair amendment: There should be parkways built on the side streets.

Stakeholder amendment: The height should be brought down to match the height of nearby buildings on Sunset.

Final Motion

To reject the project as it has been presented. The buildings are too high and out of character for the neighborhood with too much density. FAR should be reduced. The DOT parking lot cannot be used and a new traffic study needed. There should be parkways built on the side streets. The height should be brought down to match the height of nearby buildings on Sunset.

Stakeholder seconds motion.

Vote

In Favor - 40

Opposed - 0

Motion passes.

Motion to adjourn by Area 7 Chair

Seconded by Business Chair

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm