Minutes for HHWNC’s PLUM Committee Meeting on October 4, 2018

PLUM Committee members Patty Dryden, Orrin Feldman, Oren Katz, Danielle Mead, and Matt Shichtman attended the meeting. Barbara Witkin, Area 7 Chair, attended the meeting to participate as a PLUM Committee member with regard to the consideration of Domino’s Pizza application to extend the hours of its operation at 7220 West Sunset Boulevard.

There were a sufficient number of committee members present to establish a quorum.

Orrin Feldman called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

Approximately 20 stakeholders were present.

The draft minutes of the committee’s meeting held on September 12, 2018, were discussed. A motion to approve the draft meeting’s minutes, as revised, was approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

1. Electronic Billboards

David Gershwin, who is a consultant for Clear Channel Outdoor, discussed why he believes that neighborhood councils should support additional digital electronic billboards. He argued that a revised signage ordinance allowing for neighborhood councils to ask for electronic billboards’ angles would trigger a take down of the number of other billboards in our community. He also suggested that revenue sharing could provide community benefits.

The committee members’ and stakeholders’ comment were all strongly against Mr. Gershwin’s suggestions. There was widespread opposition to installing any more digital electronic billboards, whether for on-site or off-site advertising, and there was disbelief that billboard companies would work with the community or share revenue in any meaningfully useful way.

Mr. Gershwin’s suggestion that there should be a process similar to conditional use permitting for new digital electronic billboards was met with similar opposition and skepticism.

1. 6523 W. Hollywood Boulevard -

Marc Levun came back to discuss the pending application for a conditional use permit to sell a full line of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption at a Harold’s Chicken Shack restaurant on this site. Jesse Combs, who works with the franchise operator(s). also was a part of the discussion.

Committee and stakeholder comments were positive about the Harold’s Chicken Shack restaurant coming in at this site, but there was widespread concern about the possibility that the restaurant’s patrons could just come in to buy alcoholic beverages without purchasing any food.

The committee voted (5 to 0) to recommend to HHWNC’s Board that the Board support the application for a conditional use permit for the Harold’s Chicken Shack restaurant if customers were required to purchase food in order to purchase alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption at the restaurant.

2. 7220 W. Sunset Boulevard -

Neither Domino’s Pizza’s franchise owner nor any employees came back to continue the discussion about whether there was a certificate of occupancy, what the hours of operations are and should be, and whether the City’s Planning Department should approve Domino’s pending application to extend the hours of operation until midnight on Sundays through Thursdays, and to 1 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.

Orrin explained (i) he had hand delivered a copy of this meeting’s agenda to the Domino’s Pizza restaurant on Saturday, September 29th, and (ii) that the LA Department of Building & Safety certificate of occupancy for the site, which LADBS issued on March 13, 2018, correctly listed the approved hours of operation listed on the certificate for the take-out restaurant, which are from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m.

The committee members and stakeholders expressed widespread opposition to the proposal to extend the hours of operation for the take-out operation because of concern(s) that granting the take-out restaurant’s application would set a bad precedent and encourage other retailers in that mini shopping center and in other Sunset Blvd. mini shopping centers to make similar requests.

The committee voted (6 to 0) to recommend to HHWNC’s Board that HHWNC vote to oppose Domino’s Pizza’s application to extend this site’s hours of operation.

3. 6633 West Hollywood Boulevard -

Lee Rabun and The Escape Hotel’s owners came to discuss their pending application for a conditional use permit to sell a full line of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption in connection with an expanded restaurant operation of approximately 5,000 square feet with 146 seats in the front of the building, which would operate until midnight on Sundays through Wednesdays, and to 2 a.m. on Thursdays through Saturdays. The back half of the 10,500 square foot building are the actual Escape (game) rooms, where food and drink would not be allowed.

Brian White, the Senior Lead Officer and Vice Squad Officer for this area, also participated in the discussion.

There was a spirited discussion with regard to (i) whether alcoholic beverage service should be limited to people with reservations to play the games in The Escape Room, (ii) whether alcoholic beverage service should be limited to restaurant patrons who arrived before any particular time, such as 12:30 a.m. on weekends, and other possible limitations.

The discussion also considered whether a 2 a.m. closing time would be appropriate. Several committee members expressed concerns concern about the high number of facilities already serving alcoholic beverages on this portion of Hollywood Boulevard.

This matter will be discussed further at an upcoming HHWNC Area 3 Committee meeting, and will come back for further discussion at an upcoming PLUM Committee meeting.

4. Public Comments on non-agendized items.

Doug Haines asked HHWNC to take up his concerns about the City’s Building & Safety Department having allowed demolitions to occur before various appeals, including CEQA appeals, were resolved at the Planning Department at a future committee meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m.