Minutes for HHWNC’s PLUM Committee Meeting on November 1, 2018

PLUM Committee members Orrin Feldman, Oren Katz, Danielle Mead, Luminita Roman, and Matt Shichtman attended the meeting. Anastasia Mann, HHWNC’s President, also attended the meeting.

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 October 4, 2018, were discussed. A motion to approve the draft meeting’s minutes, as revised, was approved by a vote of 4 to 0.

1. The City Planning Department’s Proposd Processes and Procedures Ordinance

Emma Howard, City Council District 4’s Senior Planning Deputy, and Tom Rothmann, who is a Principal City Planner in the City’s Planning Department were there to lead a discussion of the City’s Proposed Processes and Procedures Ordinance.

Mr. Rothmann’s presentation emphasized that 114 work flow procedures were to be consolidated, rather than streamlined or changed, to 50 procedures.

The committee members’ and stakeholders’ questions and comment questioned whether the Proposed Ordinance was an attempt to change the roles of the City Council, Planning Department and Mayor so that the City Council would have less decision making authority, and the Planning Department and Mayor would have more.

Hydee Feldstein, Lucille Saunders, Ms. Mann, Casey Maddren and others questioned whether the Proposed Ordinance would shift decision making authority, limit the notices and appeal rights provided to adjacent and nearby property owners, and result in reducing or even shutting out pubic participation.

Ms. Mann questioned whether this proposed ordinance was cutting back on the Charter Reforms of almost 20 years ago, which occurred largely due to various effort to secede from the City of Los Angeles.

Mr. Rothmann denied all of the allegations, and denied that particular provisions in the Proposed Ordinance would have the effects/results which the questioners mentioned. Mr. Rothmann mentioned that the provisions for requiring that notices be provided to neighborhood councils could be taken care of in the Planning Department’s final staff report.

There was a sense that the Proposed Ordinance should be revised and recirculated for additional public comment. There was a sense of outrage that public participation rights should ever be relegated to a Planning Department’s staff report, rather than be provided, as the City Charter already does, in the actual LA Municipal Code.

Ms. Howard undertook to take the substance of the discussion back to Council District 4 for further consideration and discussion.

1. 3077 Cahuenga Boulevard West -

David Moss and Parama Ghosh Roy came back to discuss the Patels’ pending application to demolish an existing building on the site and build a new apartment building there.

Mr. Moss and Ms. Roy presented the revised building, which provided slightly fewer studio units, a few more one bedroom units, and a newly redesigned exterior. The 32 studios’ average size would be 500+ square feet. The 8 one-bedrooms’ average size would be 800+ square feet. The building’s basement level would provide a laundry, gym, home theater, a community area, a recreation room, a meeting room, a business office and outdoor area.

Committee members asked if the building’s apartments still would be fully furnished with a bed, mounted wall tv, and kitchens stocked with china, flatware, and pots and pans. Mr. Moss said that the Patels had not made any decision.

Committee and stakeholder comments were skeptical that the Patels hadn’t made any decision since the developer’s team had told the Committee at a February 8, 2018, meeting, that the Patels planned to do so. Several committee members, as well as Krista Michaels, the Cahuenga Pass Property Owners’ Association’s president, were concerned that the Patels would operate this building as more of an extended stay facility, like The Oakwood Apartments, or a hotel, rather than as an apartment building for long term tenants to reside in the Cahuenga Pass neighborhood. Several comments mentioned that the ground floor amenities made the building seem more like a hotel than an apartment building.

Luminita Roman asked for more units to be allocated to low income residents.

Mr. Moss was disappointed that the Committee’s members and stakeholders present were not more supportive of the revised proposed project. On behalf of his clients, he declined to further revise the proposed project and return again to meet with the Committee.

The committee voted (5 to 0) to recommend to HHWNC’s Board that the Board oppose the proposed project on the basis that the proposed mix of units in the building still didn’t include a sufficient number one and two bedroom units, and that the building still seemed to be more of short term stay, extended stay or hotel operation, rather than an apartment building, which would provide long term residents for the Cahuenga Pass neighborhood.

3. Public Comments on non-agendized items.

There were no public comments on non-agendized items.

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