

PLUM Committee meeting on April 6, 2017

Minutes

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

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

Barbara Witkin was present, and she participated as a PLUM Committee member when the proposed projects for 7445 Sunset Boulevard and 7219-7225 Sunset Boulevard were considered.

Approximately 40 stakeholders were present.

The draft minutes presented for the March 7, 2017 PLUM Committee meeting were approved.

1. 7445 Sunset Boulevard - proposed Gelson's grocery store and additional retail stores

Ira Handelman and Michael Gonzales, Esq. lead the presentation on behalf of Cadence Capital, which has applied to the City for permission to demolish the existing buildings on the site and construct a two story building with two floors of subterranean parking below the building.

The Committee's members and the stakeholders asked numerous questions and criticized various aspects of the proposed plan and its draft mitigated negative declaration. The questions and criticism centered on (i) whether the possible traffic impacts of the proposed project had been adequately measured, (ii) whether the proposed traffic improvements would be sufficient to mitigate the proposed project's traffic impacts, and (iii) other impacts on the adjacent Gardner Elementary School. Those other impacts included the shadows the building would cast on the open space at the school, which includes recreational areas and a vegetable garden, and air pollution from construction and operating the building.

Someone even asked if the site was for sale inasmuch as she had seen the site advertised by a broker. The applicant and his team said that the site was not for sale, and that they could not control what brokers might claim to be representing.

After public comments and the committee's deliberations, the PLUM Committee voted (6-0) to recommend to the Board that it consider approving the following and submit it as a community impact statement to the City's Planning Department, the City's Planning Commission and Council District 4.

The PLUM Committee and HHWNC's Area 7 Committee have considered the proposed project over the last year or longer at many committee meetings.

The proposed project is largely a "by right" project. However, the applicant also has asked for a conditional use permit to sell alcohol for off-site consumption, a site plan review, and a change in the hours of operation otherwise permitted at this commercial corner in order to start operating

at 6 a.m. The discretionary entitlement requests are why this proposed project is being considered at HHWNC.

Opposition to the proposed project has come largely from (i) many local residents, and (ii) Gardner Elementary School parents and the principal. They are concerned about the increased traffic on Sunset, Gardner and Hawthorne, and the possible effects on the school students safety when he students are being dropped off and picked up.

They also are concerned bout traffic on Sunset backing up at the site both was trucks load in and as shoppers arrive to shop at the store. They are concerned about Gardner's narrowness. They, and almost everyone else, are concerned about the ability of LAFD 41's vehicles to go quickly north on Gardner when the fire house receives a call for service. Gardner is their lead and best street to reach the areas north of Sunset Blvd. Gardner serves as the route for most calls for service for the area, including many hillside areas.

Most people are skeptical of the proposed project's traffic study's results. It reports that the proposed project would generate approx. 2,300 additional trips daily, but wouldn't significantly impact traffic. The consensus view is that there will be some, and maybe many, significant impacts. Whether those traffic impacts could, in fact, be mitigated to an insignificant level is a valid concern notwithstanding that the traffic study didn't find significant impacts.

The applicant has been responsive to the community's concerns about school safety and air quality. New sidewalks, a crossing guard and an air scrubber in the garage have been among the applicant's good responses to those concerns.

The MND doesn't sufficiently address the open issues or assess the potential impacts on our community well enough. There are too many open issues and unanswered questions.

2. 7219 -7225 Sunset Boulevard - proposed Chaplin Hotel.

Laurie Goldman, Scott Campbell and Michael Gonzales, Esq. made a presentation on behalf of Adolfo Suaya, who has applied to the City's Planning Department to demolish buildings at the site and build a new hotel there.

A straw vote of the PLUM Committee members and the stakeholders present showed near unanimity that the proposal to build an 11 story hotel was too tall for the site and neighborhood.

Many of the PLUM Committee members and the stakeholders present expressed opinions that the proposed use was too intense for the site, that its proximity to the Ralph's grocery store's parking lot might well turn into a major traffic problem, and that the proposed project needed to be revised to be significantly smaller.

Ms. Goldman thanked everyone for the feedback, and assured us that she would convey those views to the applicant.

3. 1717 N. Wilcox - proposed Whiskey Hotel.

Laurie Goldman and Mr. Gonzales led the presentation. He mentioned that the City Planning Commission would consider the proposed project at a May 11th meeting.

Mr. Gonzales explained that, since the committee last considered the proposed project, that a side yard on the north side of the project would be included. He said that the Planning Dept. wouldn't require a side yard on the south side of the project because the building would be an all commercial building, and that the cement foundation would slow any fire from spreading to adjacent buildings.

A new landscaping plan was presented.

And, Mr. Gonzales said that a clear glass sound panels would surround the rooftop bar deck to mitigate some of the expected noise level(s) there. He also mentioned that the bar would close by midnight, but that he was going to have further discussions with Mr. Suaya, the owner, about cutting back on that time inasmuch as the PLUM Committee asked for a 10 p.m. closing time to coincide with the City's noise regulations which don't permit as much noise after 10 p.m.

After public comments and the committee's deliberations, the PLUM Committee approved the following motion as a recommendation to HHWNC's Board:

Motion: Consider approving the following and submit as a community impact statement to the City's Planning Dept., the City's Planning Commission and Council District 13.

The PLUM Committee and HHWNC's area 3 committee have considered the proposed project over the last year or so at many committee meetings.

Both committees have been concerned that the proposed open roof top bar will be a noise nuisance for the Wilcox residents and for people living within several blocks the proposed project's site. the applicant's attorney expressed a willingness to have the bar close at midnight, but the City's noise ordinance's stricter requirement kick in at 10 p.m. We believe 10 p.m. would be a more appropriate closing time for the open roof top bar.

the glass wall being added to the proposed open roof top bar is a first step in minimizing the noise which would inevitably come from having an open roof top bar. It may be appropriate to impose additional conditions and restrictions on the open roof top bar's operations.

The PLUM Committee voted (5 to 0) to recommend that the Board vote to support the proposed project if the bar is closed as of 10 p.m. and additional sound mitigation measures are added.

4. There was one public comment on a non-agendized item.

Michael Leonard asked the committee to support an LAX modernization program. The committee suggested that Mr. Leonard make a presentation at the next Board meeting.

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