

Minutes for HHWNC PLUM Committee meeting on September 5, 2019

PLUM Committee members Orrin Feldman, Danielle Mead, Luminita Roman, Jeff Straebler, and Barbara Witkin were present. Mary Yarber, HHWNC's Area 6 Chair, was present to participate as a committee member with regard to 3003 N. Runyon Canyon Road. A sufficient number of committee members were present to establish a quorum.

In addition, HHWNC President Anastasia Mann and Area 5 Chair Bob Mansell were present. Ms. Renee Weitzer, CD4's Senior Adviser, was present. Approximately 30 people attended the meeting.

The draft minutes of the committee's prior meeting held on July 11, 2019, were discussed. A motion to approve the draft meeting minutes, was approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

Orrin gave a brief report about:

- (i) how the South Valley Area Planning Commission postponed considering a proposed project for 2649 N. Algodon Court until October 10, 2019;
- (ii) how research undertaken by an Area 9 stakeholder revealed that several homes under construction had not followed requirements for exterior materials, colors, roof designs and the placement of HVAC equipment, and that some corrections were underway following referrals to the City's LADBS, Planning's Mulholland staffers and Council District 4 staff; and
- (iii) how there was a recent controversy with regard to whether the Laurel Canyon Country Store needed to apply for permits to have community banners and other art work there.

1. 3003 N. Runyon Canyon Road — is located in HHWNC's Area 6 and City Council District 4.

Nicole Kulek-Waldman and Chris Parker lead a presentation with regard to (i) Manuel Valencia's proposed new house for the approximately 4.5 acre site at the top of Runyon Canyon's park, (ii) the City's Department of Planning draft environmental impact report (DEIR) on the proposed new house, which was released to the public on August 22, 2019, with a public comment period to end on October 7, 2019.

Manuel Valencia owns the site, which is approximately 4.5 acres of privately owned property inside Runyon Canyon Park. The site includes approximately 3 acres of hillsides and 1.5 acres of a sloped pad.

Ms. Waldman, Mr. Parker and the proposed project's architect tried to explain the proposed project, answer questions, and assured everyone that, as the DEIR concluded, the proposed project would not have any significant environmental impacts which could not be mitigated. They undertook to work with the neighbors and community with regard to where the construction workers would park, how grading would be handled, how construction equipment and material would move into (and out of the site), and how construction would occur.

Committee members and stakeholders were largely concerned about the proposed project's size and possible impact on the park's wildlife and users as well as the surrounding neighborhood. Questions were asked about the proposed grading for the site, the requests for a third re-

taining wall to hold back the graded material, and why the proposed house seemed to be in excess of 24,000 square feet when the Mulholland Design Review Board had recommended a house not be in excess of 5,500 square feet?

Following a lengthy discussion, the PLUM Committee voted (5 to 1) to recommend to the Board that the Board should adopt the following motion:

HHWNC opposes the proposed project for 3003 N. Runyon Canyon Road as being inappropriate for the site under the Mulholland Scenic Parkway Specific Plan and the Mulholland Design and Preservation Guidelines (collectively, the Mulholland Specific Plan).

Under the Mulholland Specific Plan, the proposed project is far larger than what would be appropriate for the site, too tall (even though some of the proposed project would be buried into the hillside site), too massive and incompatible with the neighborhood.

HHWNC believes that:

(i) the City should not grant the applicant's request to treat the existing Headley/Handley House, which is Los Angeles' cultural historic monument #563, as "Accessory Living Quarters" in order to permit the construction of a second house on the site.

(ii) the City should not approve the grading being proposed with this proposed project. The proposed grading involves too much grading to the site, which is a designated prominent ridge under the Mulholland Specific Plan.

(iii) the City should not approve the applicant's request to build a third retaining wall on the site, which would be needed to hold back much of the grading which the applicant is requesting to do on the site because the City should not be able to find, as required under the Mulholland Specific Plan, that the proposed grading should be kept to a minimum, assure that graded slopes have a natural appearance, and preserve the site's natural topography;

(iv) the proposed project is not adequately described in the draft environmental impact report (DEIR) for the Planning Department's case no. ENV-2016-4180-EIR and State Clearinghouse no. 2018041016).

(v) the DEIR doesn't accurately and fairly describe the proposed project, and does not analyze the proposed project's likely environmental impacts under the applicable law(s), including the Mulholland Specific Plan.

The DEIR applies an LA Department of Building and Safety practice to exclude basement space from the proposed project's description of the proposed project's square footage. The LADBS practice ignores the clear language in the Mulholland Specific Plan's proposed "Project" definition. The Project definition includes the space in all structures and any changes in use to land other than interior remodeling. No citation is provided for LADBS efforts in any DEIR to change the applicable laws.

The DEIR ignores the (i) the Mulholland Specific Plan's provision which is more restrictive than (and trumps) the LADBS's application of its understanding of the City's Municipal Code, and (ii) the Mulholland Design Review Board's practice of treating "basement space" which opens to daylight as non-exempt space in proposed projects.

These two errors, which seem intentional, resulted in the DEIR treating over 5,200 square feet of the proposed project's "basement" as exempt when it is not exempt. The proposed project really seems to be a three story house and approximately 42' high.

(vi) the proposed options of no build, build smaller, or build on a different part of the site, do not provide sufficient analysis of the facts in this situation or the applicable law(s). For example, while the DEIR states that the proposed project's impact on views from Mulholland Drive will not be significant, the Mulholland Specific Plan provides that a proposed project's impacts in all directions should be considered, rather than just from Mulholland Drive. This proposed project's likely impacts on Runyon Canyon Park and the surrounding neighborhoods would be significant.

(vii) the City should deny the proposed project also because the applicant ignored the Mulholland Design Review Board's recommendation to come back to that advisory board with a proposed house of 5,500 square feet. The proposed project seems to exceed 24,000 square feet. We believe that the proposed project doesn't not comply with the MDRB's recommendation(s), and would be far too large and otherwise inappropriate for this prominent and historic site.

HHWNC's preference would be for the applicant to sell or donate the property to the City so that the site could be incorporated into the park. The DEIR states that the City declined to purchase the site in 1992. That seems like an error which should be corrected now.

In addition, the City's 1995 decision to deny an application to build a large home on this site seems entirely correct. It was a precedent setting decision which HHWNC asks the City to follow now in 2019 by turning down this proposed project.

2. There were no public comments on non-agendized items.
3. The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:55 p.m.