

Allied Neighborhoods Association

Wednesday, May 26, 2004
American Red Cross - 2707 State St.

Minutes

Members Present: Lowell Boardman (Bel Air Knolls), Carrie Brown (Foothill Preservation), Dianne Channing (Riviera), Steve Dowty (Bungalow Haven), Brigitte Forsell (Riviera), Paul Hernadi (Hitchcock), Vijaya Jammalamadaka (Eastside Study Group), Jim Kahan (Grove Lane), Joan Livingston (Westside Study Group), Claudia Madsen (Grove Lane), Rob Mager (Samarkand), Carol Marks (East San Roque / La Cumbre, Park), David McKee (Grove Lane), Cheri Rae McKinney (Bungalow Haven), Beatrice Rosales (Eastside Study Group), Eric Schott (Marine Terrace), David Schott (Braemar)

Others Present: Heather Bryden (Calle Crespis), Cathie McCammon (League of Women Voters), Lee Moldaver (Citizens Planning Association), Judy Orias (Hidden Valley), Sally Sphar (Riviera/Citizens Planning Association)

The meeting started at 3:00 pm.

1. BRIAN BARNWELL - PRESENTATION

A. TOPIC: Brian said that since he was not given a topic he would speak about neighborhood preservation.

B. BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE: Brian said that his father and grandfather were builders (contractors) who developed several small projects and he also was a contractor before he became an appraiser. He added that he had taught appraisal courses. He then served on the Planning Commission for seven years before being elected to the City Council.

C. NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION: Brian said that he loves Santa Barbara and Neighborhood Preservation. He asked what is it and how is it done?

1. PEOPLE: He said that it is mostly about people and how they walk, not about cars, about transportation linkages that allow walking, cycling, pushing baby strollers.

2. PARKING: **Parking drives every design of every new building.** The reality is that everybody drives everywhere.

3. BICYCLISTS: Bicyclists don't want biking lanes; they want parked cars because they protect them when drivers are looking out for car doors opening. Parked cars and trees protect pedestrians.

4. LANDSCAPING: Landscaping is a critical element of neighborhoods. Trees give shade and protect pedestrians. Chapala Street is an example of a street without good street trees

5. CALLE LAURELES PROJECT: The Calle Laureles Project was "a defining moment" for him and he said that he was not sure if the Council did the right thing. Neighborhood designations by the City and zoning ordinances define neighborhoods. There should be a buffer area between neighborhoods. I'm not sure it was the right project. There is no

buffer between the 1950's apartments and this new thing. The Calle Laureles project is an example where they did all the things the people at the counter told them to do, but it was hard at this late stage to stop their project. There was affordable housing. There was a conflict between tenants and property rights. The dramatic juxtaposition is quite a shock!

6. BUFFER ZONES: Buffer zones are important, going south on the commercial strip of State Street on the way to La Cumbre, single family homes will be butted up against 2-story commercial buildings. I think we need some buffer—they're not there.

7. PROCESS: How do we reconcile different views as a project moves through the process, Planning and ABR?

8. TELEVISION COVERAGE; On television coverage: ABR meetings used to be collegial meetings between architects, now it's people coming out of the woodwork, people geeing confused, decisions get made there, it goes to Planning Commission, then on to City Council. To be on ABR it takes a lot of knowledge.

9. PLANNING COMMISSION: On Planning Commission, everybody is an expert on land use. They are all policy wonks, pros who are prohibited from discussing projects with individuals. Example: invited to lunch with Bill Levy. All the members of the Planning Commission, I can tell you the truth, they are all free, not so on City Council. They are not staff driven, they talk behind the scenes. I never one time felt after a Planning Commission meeting everybody didn't get their say. Nor did anyone get cut off. The discussion the Planning Commission has is the first time. You have an honest-to-god discussion. I am a strong believer in the Brown Act.

10. CITY COUNCIL: At City Council, it doesn't necessarily happen that way. They don't want to look unpolished; they want to have the silver bullet that gets quoted in the newspaper the next day.

11. CHRISTO, OBTAINING APPROVAL, NO SLOCK: Neighborhood Preservation is all that, but it's not the whole story. One of my favorite artists is Christo, I went to see his Running Fence, 8-10 feet high cloth mounted between stainless steel posts went 40 miles or so, then right into the ocean. "The assembly is easy," said Christo. "Getting the approvals is part of the art." For me, that's kind of a parallel about business in Santa Barbara. We're not about building schlock.

12. PATH TO ELECTION TO CITY COUNCIL: Before I became a player, I was one of these faces in the crowd, first I was on the Rental House Mediation Task Force, then the Planning Commission, and then I was lucky enough to get elected to City Council. You are where the next people will come from to fill some of the vacancies that will come up.

D. QUESTION & ANSWER PORTION:

1. Question: Joan Livingston (Westside Study Group): How do you measure Neighborhood Preservation?

Answer: Brian Barnwell (BB) -Some people on Council will pander, depending on who is in the audience. One of the Calle Laureles' mini tenants don't even want a chance...Property owners don't want their future rights impinged. The City Council has to be elected; they're trying to weigh this on a political basis. I don't know if that's the way to figure it.

I have an idea, I've told the Mayor, for a town hall meeting without staff, open it up without an agenda, maybe every quarter we could have one. She says it can't happen until the fall. We can talk about the Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance—actually Single Family Design Guidelines. This city is organized, they really care; they have Santa Barbara in their

hearts.

2. Diane Channing (Riviera)—The review process for the View Ordinance is so productive.

3. Eric Schott (Marine Terrace)—City Council seems not to be taking a stand on size, which would make things more walkable.

BB—To my knowledge, nothing has ever been built more than 2,500 sq. ft.

ES—No, they've approved several others.

BB—I love for them to come for 3,600 and we say its 2,500 sq. ft. It gives me pause, where's the edge effect where it's allowed and where it's not.

ES—on San Nicholas there's a house under construction that's 2,750 sq. ft.

BB—I approve modifications all day long, side yard setbacks. Side yards are a waste of land—they were created for the fire code. Imagine limited windows, a sound wall, 180 sq. ft. and push it over to the usable area of the house.

4. Judy Orias —This high density, first we've seen it downtown, now we see it on the periphery. There is great congestion at the intersection of Las Positas, Modoc, 101, what is anybody doing to solve this problem?

BB—Come to the first town hall meeting. I bet the other Commissioners don't know about it. We have to ask the question: What effect are we having on our community with project after project without a bigger picture? With what I call the Rise of Neighborhoods, there is some Balkanization, there's nothing in the Code that addresses this. Hillside House asked for guidance on the project, Detty Peikart walks on water, I love everything he does, and Bermant does green construction. But are we so happy with dense housing that everything will fly?

JO—In the 5th year of a drought we're building housing after housing after housing.

BB—This needs to be said at a public forum: Lake Cachuma fills up with silt every year, and holds less water every year. The volume of water of Cachuma was measured in '92 and every year there's more silt, less water. But we're planning as if it is really there. It's phantom water.

JO—I think it's up to the Council to do something.

BB—You can't buy your kid a house in Goleta. What are we doing when we say you got to provide housing? Housing and transport are like Siamese twins.

5. Paul Hernadi - I can't think of anything you've said that I don't agree with, but could you point to your votes on the Planning Commission and City Council that reflect the views that you have expressed earlier at this meeting.

BB—I've had my failures, building size not been in scale. I've fought very hard in 7 years of Planning Commission to keep the small town feel. Property rights do exist, though. It's all like a battleship, it doesn't turn very fast. We try to keep housing affordable; we have the inclusionary housing ordinance that builds housing for these people. Ten years ago you could still buy a house for \$250,000, not anymore. We're not solving housing, are we? The density of downtown doesn't work everywhere.

6. Catherine McCammon —One of the Modoc project findings of overriding consideration “Well it's so bad, we'll just add a little more.”

BB—Black letter laws, concepts don't always work. Still, there's a groundswell that we have to create workforce housing for everyone. Extra housing—there's a benefit that outweighs congestion. Is that a concept that you want to carry forth? I don't think it's the silver bullet.

Here's an example: There's a project across from Santa Barbara High School. The code

allows 5 market rate condo units in that location, from 1.2 to 1.4 million. The builder has decided to build 6 studio (1,000 sq. ft.) affordable and 3 workforce—and guess what, the studio units are going for \$700,000. Who thinks \$700,000 is worth it? It will be a pied-a-terre for someone from out of town. “Affordable housing is not the panacea.”

What are we doing? Is it bad to have wealthy people here in Santa Barbara? The wealthy people built this city—they are not bad in and in themselves. We live in one of the finest pieces of Real Estate on the planet. And they’re experiencing problems in Laguna Beach, Newport Beach...

7: David Schott (Braemar)—How do we get back to non-PC, no growth, how do we turnaround?

BB—The idea of limitation at 85,000. That’s part of the thinking process. How many units can work the way around, 400-500, we’re at 38,700; there’s another 1,200 we can build. What do we do when we hit the 40,000 mark? The Planning Commission is talking now about the General Plan Update, there’s discussing of what to do. In modern planning thinking it’s “build yourself crazy within the urban envelope.”

DS—What can help this no-growth process?

BB—No growth won’t happen. Slow growth can. Come to the Town Hall meeting. There are density issues. We cut zoning in half 20 years ago. Then it was everybody’s pain all at one time. It’s management; how do you manage it? The largest single factor in building is the availability of money. That’s what’s driving everything. The money is driving these guys to build this. The war in Iraq will have an effect; they will clamp down and to stop that, rates will go up. Since 1996, it’s the money.

8. Rob Mager—Change where needs of people residents come second, we’re looking for it to go back the other way. There’s been talk about getting rid of the SD2 zone—what’s going to replace it?

BB—We’re changing parking, with measure E, the mixed use has taken the commercial property and opened the floodgates. Housing is the great predator of land use. Pyramidal zoning—We never believed Chapala Street would be driven by condos above it. Building condos on top is an international product. They will sell in Tokyo. It’s International “Funny money,” just like Californians bringing “Funny money” to Washington State. I don’t know what you do about that.

RM—What about Upper State Street issues?

BB—Measure E was passed to get a grip on the job/housing imbalance, businesses with no housing. We got rid of the Housing Mitigation Ordinance. We thought it was having a negative effect.

My turning point was Jeff Shelton’s condos on Laguna Street, \$800,000 to 1.1 million in prime downtown. All the other builders looked and said, “I’m building condos.”

9. Sally Sphar (Riviera/CPA)—What about the 2 bedroom condos on Olive that are listed on the market for \$1,675,000 to \$1,795,000. With this housing frenzy going on, there are hundreds of units in the pipeline and I am concerned what is happening before we get to the end of the General Plan update process 2007-2009. What are your comments?

BB—I question hundreds and hundreds, what do we do during the interim? A moratorium?

10. Joan Livingston (Westside Study Group)—What’s already in the pipeline matters.

BB—in 1989, there were 4,200 in the pipeline; 600 of them eventually got built.

Attorneys back way back from moratoriums. What do we want Santa Barbara to look like in 50 years? Every place zoned C-2 is also zoned R-1. Truth is however, units don't get built. There were 3,000 proposed in 1990, we built 1,900. What do we do about that?

How do we all feel about this? I think this is the most important issue we have: housing and transportation. The City Council gets regular updates, and the City just finished drilling a well in San Roque and there may be one at the high school.

11. Judy Orias—About this town meeting, move it up and start responding now.

12. Heather Bryden—545 people signed the petition about Calle Laureles, every business except one felt it was going to cause problems.

BB—That was a turning point for me. Between the tenant rights and property owners and allowing downtown density outside of downtown, cutting slack on parking. Dealing with the dreaded Samarkand and San Roque neighborhoods where you have many knowledgeable residents, many with Ph.D.'s, who are well-spoken, who read the papers are property owners and know what's going on.

HB: Most owners were concerned about the character of the neighborhood.

13. Paul Hernadi: If the Calle Laureles Project was a turning point for you, why didn't you vote against it?

BB—I would have, but they were willing to cut those 2 parking spaces, they cut them. We can't do too much like this. But those guys were meeting the rules. My esteemed colleague, Mr. Williams, threw in an affordable housing unit. That's the mantra.

14. Dianne Channing—Expressed concern about modifications and disrespect for the zoning laws.

BB—I sympathize, but suggest there's no absolute law. There's a process, try to solve it at the counter. The Planning Commission costs "beaucoup" bucks.

14. Eric Schott—Modifications set precedents for the whole area. There are 13-foot setbacks approved when it's supposed to be 20 feet.

BB—The process should get them not to do that.

15. Lowell Boardman—There's a belief that mixed use yields affordable housing, but in experience it doesn't. The market drives the price, we need to be accurate in our discussion, from mixed use, let's just call it high-density.

BB—We are at the crossroads NOW! What do we do? This group and others, the NPO, the Bungalow district wants an overlay, Marine Terrace might be next. The price of liberty is eternal vigilance. The people on the Planning Commission and City Council are devoting huge amounts of time, but there's only a limited number who want to do it. Get knowledge, get a bigger picture then come in. The crash is in slow motion.

D. Conclusion: Brian then left at 4:50, having stayed much longer than he had planned.

2. INTERIM SECRETARY: Vijaya is not longer able to be secretary; Cheri Rae McKinney will be filling in on an interim basis.

3. MINUTES: The minutes for the last meeting on March 24, 2004 were approved as revised.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT:

Checking \$1,514.91 as of May 5, 2004

Savings \$ 342.34 as of March 31, 2004

Treasurer Paul Hernadi said these long-standing accounts could be consolidated into one when the designation is updated to Allied Neighborhood Association provided that the lack of a savings account doesn't result in monthly or transaction charges for the checking account. Jim Kahan remarked that the consolidation of the two accounts at SBB&T should present no such problem. The officers suggested that this be done and the members agreed.

5. PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

A. CALLE LAURELES: Calle Laureles appeal was denied, No environmental analysis because the Planning Department held it was categorically exempt from CEQA review stated that it was an urban infill project which was consistent with zoning regulations due to the modifications granted. Naomi Kovacs also shocked.

B. NECESSITY FOR NEIGHBORHOOD UNITY: Divided we fall, united we stand.

C. PARKING: At last meeting we voted to support mixed use, offered concerns about parking and to support the appeal. Vijaya was the only negative vote. We did have a quorum.

D. COUNCIL PAY INCREASE: Jim Kahan: "I was asked if Allied will support pay increase; I polled several member and got some negative comments. It will be placed on the ballot in November. We have time to address this issue and shouldn't rush into it. I urge that Allied not oppose it."

6. TRACK VOTING RECORDS ON NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES: Dianne Channing: We could be valuable if we could track voting records and residents could check on them, and keep a record of how the Council is doing on neighborhood issues.

7. ABR MEMBERSHIP: The City Council is considering a charter amendment to allow non residents of the City to be members of the ABR. Sally Sphar said that some of the members of the Historic Landmarks Commission can be non-residents. On the Neighborhood Preservation Update Steering Committee, 6 of 10 people are architects. It was mentioned that there are neighborhoods that the ABR does not know how to address.

8 MEMBERSHIP: Hidden Valley wants to join Allied.

9. OFFICERS: Jim Kahan stated that there was an ambiguity in the by-laws about terms of the officers. He asked for volunteers to serve as officers for the next election. He said that anybody who is interested in serving as an officer should submit an e-mail to him or Vijaya by the fifteenth of next month which expresses their interest in serving. He also asked for volunteers to serve on a committee to update the by-laws.

10. NPO: Discussion on the NPO as reported by Dianne Channing:

Last meeting in February: What are the rules and guidelines for ABR for single family houses.

Issues:

--FARS—32% on smallest lots

--neighborhood associations should have initial review

--views and privacy

--Staff: more over-the-counter approvals (modification hearing officer); Bill Mahan is opposed,

there should be appealable modifications
--neighborhood compatibility
--rebuilding after a fire: guidelines should be in place before disaster
--limit hillside development, limit grading

11. ALLIED CONCERNS: A general discussion followed, with an around the room with representatives from each neighborhood offering their biggest concern. Jim Kahan asked: Do we want to write a letter? He said that his major concerns were about rampant modifications; bringing sunlight into the process, since they won't release plans; and noticing by multiple means (mail, posting on-site display, e-mail, website). He then asked for attendees to express their concerns.

A. Steve Dowty (Bungalow Haven): Notice also should be on website, but it's not current, you can't find it.

B. Dianne Channing: story poles are an important aspect of noticing. They should be place 30 days before the first public hearing; there should be absolute findings about modifications.

C. Brigette Forsell (Riviera): notification and story poles

D. Judy Orias (Hidden Valley): there should be a sign in front of the house, as in other cities; neighborhood compatibility and privacy issues

E. Joan Livingston (Westside Study Group): preserving setbacks, holding to findings, design review for smaller houses, re-think parking,--how it's used, letting it drive design.

F. Carole Marks (La Cumbre Park, E. San Roque): in East San Roque, adding front porches, adding outdoor space—should think about neighborhoods, not just the lot

G. Jim Kahan: I would rather someone go into the rear yard than put in a second story—how important is a required rear yard?

H. Joan Livingston: front yard belongs to all of us, important to support that and protect front yard setback.

J. Jim Kahan: porches are a concern of ours, there's lousy enforcement

I. Sally Sphar (Riviera/CPA): privacy, side yard setbacks, I'm concerned about blowing out both sides of it

K. Eric Schott (Marine Terrace): FAR guidelines will solve 90%--concern about second story decks and windows

L. David McKee (Grove Lane): ignore interface, emphasize transition space between zoning and study it—traffic, houses, landscaping, people who live there, vegetation

M. Eric Schott: Marine Terrace has sent out 500 postcards concerning an appeal and his group wants to ask City Council for 40% FAR for their neighborhood

Meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Cheri Rae McKinney, Acting Secretary