

Allied Neighborhoods Association

Wednesday, July 28, 2004
American Red Cross
2707 State St. (east of Alamar)

MINUTES

Voting Members Present: Rosanne Boardman (Bel Air Knolls), Wesley Brown (La Cumbre Park Association), Steve Dowty (Bungalow Haven), Jenny Cushnie (Mission Canyon), Joe Guzzardi (Samarkand), Paul Hernadi (Hitchcock Ranch), Vijaya Jammalamadaka (Eastside Study Group), Judy Orias (Hidden Valley), Maeda Palius (Hidden Valley), Tim Steele (Mission Canyon), Mary Whalen (coalition for Sensible Planning), Tom Williams (La Mesa Neighborhood Association)

Others Present: Heather Baker, Kathiann Brown, Lee Moldaver, Bob Myers (Samarkand), Sally Sphar (CPA/Riviera), Cheri Rae (Bungalow Haven), Joe Rution (Bungalow Haven)

Speaker: Council Member Das Williams

Meeting called to Order at 7:05

1. MARINE TERRACE APPEAL ISSUE: There was a discussion about the appeal to City Council that was denied, and sent back to the ABR. The Marine Terrace neighbors were very upset about the process, and there was a belief expressed that the City Council is dysfunctional, and that Das is the only member who “gets it.” (Discussion took place before Das Williams arrived.)
2. MINUTES FROM MAY AND JUNE WERE APPROVED: They were sent to Brian Barnwell for comments, but he never responded. Paul Hernadi added comments.
3. TREASURER’S REPORT: Paul Hernadi reported that Allied now has one single account and there is currently \$1,861.41 in it.
4. NPO UPDATE: There have been outside appropriations requested by Brian Barnwell, but Paul Casey declines, saying it would cause a delay. The design review staff is currently at 50%, resulting in the NPO essentially at a standstill. There was a discussion that if there was a moratorium until the NPO everyone would push to get it done, but right now, the developers are rushing to get in every project they can. Joe Guzzardi has been attending NPO meetings in Claudia Madsen’s place.
5. CHARGE FOR MEETING ROOM: Allied is charged one dollar per person in attendance. The City wanted to charge \$300 for use of the McKenzie Park room, despite the fact that Brian Barnwell was asked to help. Red Cross “performs.”

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6. MISSION STATEMENT: Discussion about developing an Allied Mission Statement and policy papers to help prioritize issues for neighborhoods. And because of the recognition the commonality of interests, and that that neighbors have to look out for each other, heeding the Doug Fell quote, "Body count is everything." Judy Orias (Hidden Valley) offered that we need to look at the broader picture, traffic, water, fire, increased density, and "an overall problem about the Council not listening." Maeda Palius (Hidden Valley) offered that a lot of our issues are impacted by other neighborhoods, and since there's more power in numbers, we need to realize we're not just looking out for our own neighborhood, but all of Santa Barbara.

Volunteers are needed to work on developing issue papers (on such subjects as water, fire), and all interested parties are encouraged to participate by submitting topics by e-mail.

7. DAS WILLIAMS (arrived at 7:20): Has just bought a house in the Oak Park Neighborhood. COMMENTS: There's a great gap between rhetoric of election and current political climate.

"I'm here to bolster your confidence, victory is not right around the corner, but things are changing. I have said neighborhoods will reshape the politics of Santa Barbara. Some people don't get how deep resentments go. They do only every once in a while, when a bunch of "crazies from the neighborhood," it's easy to get disconnected from the dynamics of the neighborhoods.

"When I walked the precincts, I asked for an endorsement from a City Council member who said that I couldn't get elected, that people aren't angry enough. In City hall, it's easy to get out of touch, in neighborhoods there's a belief that developers and builders have primacy.

"For years of downtown redevelopment, we have a vibrant downtown, it's not atrophied; it's the focus of downtown that has produced this effect. What do we need to persuade Planners, Politicians and the Powerful downtown?"

A. We must remind folks that planning is about buildings, roads, not personalities.

Last night, City Council approved something they are uncomfortable with because of sympathy for the applicant. We shouldn't approve or disapprove based on personality, but on good planning. This was not the first time this has happened. A glaring example is Trader Joe's and the Surgery Center. Some very important things were said, including Dr. Secord's comments.

#1. In every project you need a poster child, all of which are important and need compassion, but that's not good planning practice.

#2. Incentive to have a bad process, then the applicant can use it as a weapon.

#3. The process, as bad as it is, has been what has protected us in the past.

#4. The relationship between "mansionization" and median cost on the social side is making affordable homes very unaffordable. "Small s good in the environmental quality sense and makes economic sense.

B. We have to live within our means as a city, and this is especially true about water.

The City has not taken much concrete action, looking into groundwater supplies, and doesn't address it. The basic attitude is "We've got it covered." I do not think we do. A

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year and a half ago, we took off the last controls at the Doubletree. Some conservation measures haven't been tried.

#1. gray water--we did that in the last drought, now it's illegal, but there's a way to do it right.

#2. We have to be careful about shared meters, and should built in conservation measures in multi-unit buildings.

#3. I'd like to hear your ideas

#4. State water--now isn't the time the state would take it way, but look at the positions and views of the next incoming assemblymember (Pedro Nave, likely) with an eye on water

C. How do we get this stuff across?

#1. Always out-mobilize. It hurt us yesterday that "we" had fewer people in the room than "they" did. That can happen. The numbers for neighborhood preservation are with us. It makes a difference with the press.

#2. Frame what's our rear guard action. Help coach me. What's Plan B? What's a negotiating, mitigation point? We're not going to win all the battles, but we don't have to lose badly.

#3. Clarify neighborhood issues. There's a grave danger of being co-opted.

#4. Get better at working with staff. They're more aware than people in power. There's a good example in what Eric Schott prepared being used by Jaime Limon. Council likes stuff taken care of elsewhere with Staff, with Planning Commission.

#5. Prove that neighborhood groups are not NIMBYs, which is why Allied is so important in the big picture. Some mechanisms can work; density may work; look at the big picture, and sound city planning.

#6. Hold people accountable and look to the future. Anger is not subsiding in neighborhoods, in the room. We need to provide some guidance about neighborhood protection, provide a litmus test about substantial activism and advocacy for neighborhoods. Guidance and accountability; they must not pay lip service to neighborhoods and you can't get re-elected unless it's back up in deed.

"THE THINKING WILL CHANGE IN CITY HALL OR PEOPLE WILL CHANGE CITY HALL. You're the harbinger of change; you just need to follow that through."

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION:

Judy Orias: I have a concern about pumping groundwater, and if L.A. wants our state water, we'll lose it.

DW: I've raised concerns, including yours. There's the possibility of saltwater intrusion, bacterial pollution. There was a dialog over capacity, the voters spoke, we haven't been able to live to it. We're only supposed to have 85,000; it's closer to 93,000alred. The limits are on units that are supposed to control population. We need, maybe, to revise the number. What can we do to stick to it?

Kathiann Brown: Isn't it supposed to go to a vote?

DW: It would be unconstitutional to limit population, but not units.

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Lee Moldaver: What can we do about time certain? I see the NPO to be 3 years behind. Charter 1507 water supply states the city shall live within its resources.

DW: I advocate a return to time certain. There's an interesting lack of continuity making a to-do-list. My feeling on 1507 is that the city is not cognizant of what it needs. There are many things we need to do. If we're going to add, we need to subtract. What our carrying capacity is, is a very difficult conversation. The longer we avoid it the worse it gets. We can tackle it with incremental steps like greywater.

The NPO is so important to drift to a substantive FAR. If we don't do it, there's a rush to get it through before the rules are established. Very dysfunctional; if we're not changing now, an interim ordinance is needed. We're going to have a solid FAR on the Mesa. 44 is too large, right... Why don't we signal now? Oh, I don't want to second-guess committee before they're finished. Let them know it's okay to drift in that direction. Conflicts will never be allayed until we have numbers adhered to.

Paul Hernadi: What about the cumulative impacts of project at Sandman, Circuit City, La Cumbre...

DW: There is a buzz and conversation. We have to do better than the status quo. The tide is drifting to Upper State as a transportation corridor. We should advocate what it should look like, and not.

- 1) Rise above labels that fly when opposed.
- 2) Big picture needs that State Street is uniquely suited for.

Those with interesting, visionary ideas have to be educated about impacts. There is so much need for case-by-case, not big picture by our Planning Commission. So planning becomes piecemeal in public, but not in conversations.

PH: A conspiracy?

DW: The intent, no, but a by-product of the way our Planning Commission works. There's a balance between the preservation of neighborhoods and the units needed. If you do densification right, you could actually insulate neighborhoods from intrusion. If it's done wrong, it won't. Talk to each and every Planning Commissioner; there are some very smart people. But they can't let units override neighborhoods.

Jim Kahan: My first question is about transparency in government. There are technical details being discussed during a lunch with Planning Commissioners. And secondly, plans are not provided in a timely way, yet people are trying to organize thoughts in order to make a presentation.

DW: Make me work. Talk to Courtney Weaver, my staff assistant. She can write a letter, they have difficulty saying "no" to a Council Member.

JK: They don't want to give plans because flaws are found. We're concerned about secrecy in government.

DW: If there's a mechanism in place I'll be happy to support it.

JK: If every has to go through this hassle...

Wes Brown: Big Picture involves water for the whole area, transportation what is the

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city doing about regional needs?

DW: Increasing, but insufficient at this time. Finance Committee approved a regional framework for some issues. Traditionally, that's a regional problem, which means do nothing about it. One way is to offer matching funds, we did that for the School Board due to increased gang activities in 12- to 13-year-olds. Regional planning, everyone agrees it's a good idea, but nothing happens.

Kathiann Brown: Comprehensive planning for growth is needed.

DW: 93110 is a big sphere of influence.

Mary Whalen: The artificial boundary of State Street where it becomes Hollister, 33 projects are planned there. If this happens, it will be a traffic nightmare. A great problem to me with the city proposing high density and the County proposing it two blocks away.

DW: Transportation loads are occurring in places like Storke and Hollister. There's a rush to fulfill state mandates that is not necessary. Mechanisms at state level, if there's progress, the city doesn't have anything to fear. 93110 is not 93103. I like, however, east side neighborhood living.

Joe Guzzardi: There's a need for an up-to-date Land Use Plan.

DW: Absolutely. Flexible General Plans are good and bad. Land use elements should be very specific to minimize numbers. A solid FAR is not subjective.

Judy Orias: we're drawing 6" a year from Lake Cachuma, which is at 60 percent capacity. Why aren't we dredging? Put it on your list and find out!

DW: Taking notes!

Kathyann Brown: I'm in support of workforce housing and very much support neighborhoods and their uniqueness, but everything changes. Affordable housing doesn't stay affordable giving away setbacks, getting rid of trees. And for what? If it's no longer affordable, we've given it all away. Why aren't we counting units?

DW: If a need is not met by City Council, people will find a way. We don't have capacity to restrict illegal dwellings. What do we do in that case? Do we build this amount to fulfill the demand?

Jim Kahan: Heather Baker is here about the NPO. Would hiring somebody outside the city slow it down? When asked, Paul Casey said yes.

DW: So much necessary work. The idea is that we hire about a half-million dollars worth of planners and pay for it with higher development fees. To really meet the planning needs of the city, we can't do it at the numerical number of planning now. Call Roger Horton and Dan Secord to help get this.

Heather Baker: Four individuals have left recently. Interviewing is being done (she passed out a revised schedule for the NPO). There's a FAR meeting August 30 at 5:30 p.m., and they're hoping for adoption of the new FAR in November '05.

Lee Moldaver; Regarding yesterday's appeal, please tell your boss that when a

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crappy project has been kicking around for more than a year...

HB: we don't make decisions based on nice people or not. ABR has been inconsistent; the make-up of the original board had positive comments.

Jim Kahan: ABR at every meeting had a problem with it, but people have learned if they are just bullheaded and want to go along and don't want to change, the city feels sorry for them.

**Kathy Ann Brown: Since this is going on longer, what about an interim ordinance:
HB: the time to write an interim ordinance would significantly delay the ordinance.**

8. Transparency in Government: Jim Kahan wants to write a letter, do something about the level of distrust in the process, pointed out plans for Sandman, plans for the Alta Vista project, the Calle Laureles project--none of them were supplied to neighbors for examination. In Vista del Monte, they had to be subpoenaed. "They should post the plans on the web. They may be the greatest projects in the world, but if we can't see them, there's a level of mistrust. **Move for letter seconded and approved.**

9. Discussion of interim ordinance, FAR: Joe Guzzardi wants a specific FAR that works and is applied everywhere to all houses, "Here's the percentage that works for the city, we need to have that number." Tom Williams said, "Telling people to move out of town is not acceptable."

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Cheri Rae McKinney