

Allied Neighborhoods Association

Tuesday, March 21, 2006 (7:00 p.m.)

American Red Cross

2707 State St. (east of Alamar)

Minutes

1. Meeting called to order at 7:20 pm
2. Attendees: Lloyd Applegate (Riviera), Gil Barry (Braemar), Sylvia Glass (Grove Lane), Jim Kahan (Grove Lane), Cheri Rae McKinney (Bungalow Haven), Laura Rasmussen (La Mesa), Joe Rution (Bungalow Haven), Charlie Stapleton (Samarkand), Scott Wenz (CAB), City Council Member Das Williams
3. Introduction of attendees and neighborhood representatives: general discussion of greatly reduced Veronica Meadows project which was passed by City Council tonight; Das offered his intentions "getting back to roots of slow growth and good planning." Scott Wenz is a 3rd generation Santa Barbaran. Sylvia reminded everyone about how utility taxes help the City financially
4. Minutes: Minutes of February 21, 2006 were approved with no objection
5. Treasurer's Report: in the absence of treasurer, Paul Hernadi, no changes
6. President's Report and Questions
 - A. State Street Lofts Appeal Results: general discussion, belief that the vote indicated a sea change in City policy, with a rejection of categorical exemptions; praise expressed for City Council for rejecting Planning Commission vote; Das Williams indicated the project would have been approved 1 1/2 years ago.
 - B. Annual Report -2006: It was thanks to a coalition of groups that stopped the Lofts project; better planning needed
Das: there is a momentum, that the City has been embracing development until now, but is now rejecting the wrong kinds of development; time to revise and look at every project more stringently for the whole city; need to discern labels from the reality of a project and look at the truth on the ground. It's the same for dual use/demand parking; the need to discriminate between rhetoric and reality; need for comprehensive planning; reducing the footprint of commercial space reduces traffic

General Discussion:

Joe Rution: we got clues from the City Council about right, good development

Gil: Explained how developers and architects often use a method of getting staff to "buy into" a project early to help get a project approved, and discussed how this staff "investment" in a project can be a problem.

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Charlie Stapleton: Said that he was the representative for the Samarkand Neighborhood Association and the lack of policy planning can lead to a lot of woe. Need for agreement of all participants in the general plan; it's not static, it needs changes and updates

Joe: While working for a City Manager, learned that general plans resolve big questions

Charlie: housing is all you ever hear about.

Gil: Discussed how the Council members as generalists should be better planning decision makers than staff who are specialists and always do not see the big picture.

Das: when you ask a staff member value-based questions you get different answers

7. Recent Developments:

A. Report from the Mesa from Laura: in 1929 the Mesa Association was formed; for 25 years they have felt neglected, inferior, not respected. They want undergrounding of poles on Cliff Drive; they're disturbed about the NPO progress; they are getting the most mansionization. Rob Dayton's plan for a traffic circle around Las Positas is a mistake. The plan is destroying the neighborhood, as is the plan to narrow Cliff Drive for transportation. The projects approved on Meigs and Cliff with the dual parking is not working.

Das: there's a long-term issue with traffic, but the NPO is right here. FAR has been weakened, need for strong direction at Planning Commission and City Council; Traffic department went way beyond the City Council on plans--all the meetings were planned on Tuesday nights. There are some good parts of the mobility plan.

B. Traffic Obstructions Impacts upon City and Neighborhoods:
Sylvia: the whole tenor of a city is changed by its traffic patterns

The Santa Barbarans for Safe Streets reported that 77% of residents, 93% of businesses in Oak Park neighborhood voted against implementation of traffic calming measures

C. Discussion of Concerns: Charlie: concern in Samarkand about Old Spanish Days at MacKenzie Park; the screaming rides, giant Ferris wheel, parking, traffic and noise issues.

8. Recent Developments:

A. NPO: Gil: Reported at last meeting, majority of speakers wanted more freedom to build on their private property. The NPO was weakened because they wanted a consensus vote between the three groups

Jim: a small group of real estate agents are organizing a group to oppose FAR; doesn't represent all members of the Board of Realtors

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Das: more people are represented by Allied. Need to be organized, turn out people, the base of support for weakening the NPO and FARs is from “spoiled rich kids” objective standard are being weakened by objections to FARs

9. Amend by-laws:

General discussion about amendment to allow additional membership for Friends of Allied who cannot vote, but who support Allied’s goals. Executive Committee recommends the amendment; there’s a need for additional membership dues to increase Allied’s effectiveness. Joe Rution expressed concern that adding additional members could muddy the waters, and cause some to question Allied’s agenda. He expressed his desire to keep Allied Neighborhoods a standard-bearer with a respected theme. No vote was taken and item was continued.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45

Respectfully submitted by Cheri Rae McKinney