



# Venice Neighborhood Council

LAND USE AND PLANNING COMMITTEE  
PO Box 550, Venice, CA 90294 / www.VeniceNC.org  
Email: Chair-LUPC@VeniceNC.org



## MINUTES LAND USE AND PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

**DATE:** Wednesday February 5, 2014  
**LOCATION:** Oakwood Recreation Center; 767 California Ave  
**TIME:** 6:45 - 9:00pm

**CASES HEARD:**  
**758 Sunset Ave; Small lot subdivision to 3 homes**

### **DETAILED AGENDA:**

#### **1. Call to Order – Roll Call.**

Name	P	A	Name	P	A
Jake Kaufman, Chair	x		Mia Herron		x
Sarah Dennison, Vice Chair		x	John Reed		x
Robert Aronson	x		Steve Traeger	x	
Mehrnoosh Mojallali	x		Robin Rudisill, Secretary	x	
James Murez	x				

- 2. Approval of Minutes from last meeting(s).**
- 3. Approval of Agenda as presented, or amended.**  
Primitivo being moved to next meeting in 2 weeks.  
Else, agenda approved.  
Cases: need to be cleared up by next meeting. Only 100 days left in our term.
- 4. New Project Review and Staff Assignments and Coding of De Minimis Cases.**  
Review, discussion, and possible action on projects identified in applications filed with the City of Los Angeles Department Of City Planning as reflected on the CNC Reports, to build Agendas for future

meetings. (To review the CNC Reports please go to [www.Planning.LACity.org](http://www.Planning.LACity.org) and click on "Case Information" on the left side, then click on "Bi-Weekly Case Filing" or, visit our internal working site, [www.CityHood.org](http://www.CityHood.org))

5. Land Use and Planning Committee Current Case Updates--Case members provide updates/schedule on their "Pending" cases:

a. 320 Hampton (Jim Murez):

There was a DIR for 320 Hampton. It came on the CNC Public calendar on Monday of last week, and had already gone through its entire cycle in the City 2 weeks earlier.

13,000 sq ft expansion

Need 170 parking spaces

160 bike racks.

68,000 square feet building space.

Mezzanine

Claiming that project is less than 10% (SPP exemption)

Doesn't make sense

Questioning how Google got DIR thru City and de minimus waiver thru Coastal  
Talked to Posner this afternoon.

He made it clear that we could take it off of the de minimus list.

If we want to take it off, only way we can do it is to send a letter, either from the VNC or a few people.

3 of the 12 Commissioners need to agree there's a reason to take it off the de minimus list on the next agenda.

Asking for it to be held open AND to have a CDP hearing.

This was signed off by Greg Shoop.

Issued two weeks earlier than it came out on CNC report (timing seems purposeful)

If you look at the City's Planning website, says no issuance of a DIR.

(how did he find out about it?)

Because no LCP, even coastal exemptions have to go on the CCC's consent calendar.

**RS:**

**Even though the City's website isn't up to date, the DIR's already closed.  
If Google is planning on expanding, they span more than 12 properties.**

**A 2-block radius.**

**There's no bifurcating, no covenants.**

**Just doing what they want to do.**

**Took out the parking lot across the street and reduced the parking.**

**b. 320 Sunset (Jim Murez):**

**Bakery**

**Change of use from office to Bakery.**

**With a retail take out counter.**

**A lot of concern by the neighbors about noise, hours of operation & parking.  
Across the street from where will be 160 bike racks (Google)**

**c. WRAC Hearing (Jim Murez):**

**Jim attended the WRAC hearing as the VNC rep.**

**Person doing speaking on the City's behalf.**

**Same who does the CNC reports.**

**Heidi ???**

**It was very clear that the IT dept. has 0 funding, so we're not likely to get anything out of them that we don't already get.**

**A lot of people would like to see what's happening at B&S.**

**A lot of apt. buildings going up all over town, and no one is hearing about them since they're by right.**

**It wouldn't go through planning if no specific plan (or Coastal)**

**A lot of people would like to know what's happening on those due to their impact on the neighborhoods.**

**The City is required by the State to do an updated infrastructure report every 10 years.**

**The City of L.A. hasn't done one in over 20 years.**

**Dovetailed to the conversation. Or how can you allow higher density to exist if the infrastructure doesn't allow it.**

**Knowing that the State is in violation of another State requirement**

**Transportation corridors are being overtaxed.**

**d. 1421 Abbot Kinney (Jim Murez):**

Conversion from an artist in residence occupancy to offices, a change of use.  
Requested no parking requirements.

Has been used for 2 months as an Intel store (removed all the parking).

Owner has finally fired to him.

Would like us to ask the VNC Board to send the City of L.A. a letter asking them to reject the case due to lack of cooperation.

Outright deny it due to lack of cooperation.

Will discuss it further at our next meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup>

**e. 18-25<sup>th</sup> Street (Steve Traeger):**

was going to mark at de minimus garage with a rec room above and roof deck.

**f. 835 Milwood (Mehrnoosh Mojallali):**

Did a survey and are 1.25 inches short on side yard.

**g. 803 & 805 Marco Place (Mehrnoosh Mojallali):**

held off on reviewing this project because the client was absent and they were going through the Mello Act determination, but meanwhile they say they've got the Venice Coastal Specific Plan Permit Compliance already.

The architect agreed to come present to us.

Combining 2 lots together and remodeling

Adding 2 accessory dwellings over the garage.

David Hertz project.

SPP

They changed the plans.

The problem was that the descriptions for the CDP included a pool but the determination from City Planning had no pool.

There was no public hearing.

She told Coastal.

Public Question about the project: 1 single family will live on the two lots with 3 different buildings?

There is a ZA case—805 Marco.

There are a lot of cases on this property over time.

DIR: Feb 2014.

He changed his plans.

Architect will come to the next meeting.

It looks like the accessory building is attached to the main building. Per Mehrnoosh it can be attached if you have to go out to go in.

**h. 251 Lincoln (Robert Aronson):**

A new project of interest: demo on corner of Rose & Lincoln.

Same property that Whole Foods is on.

Has an Arco on it

Putting up a gas station and a convenience store, sell beer & wine & stay open 24 hours.

Applicant is someone from West L.A.

He's not that much against the alcohol.

If we can get a good project, we should consider it.

**6. Public Comment on non-agenized items related to Land Use and Planning only--Any new information or questions by Stakeholders:**

**a. Primitivo (Darryl):**

It's a no brainer that it should be exactly the same as Joe's.

Share same parking lot and valet.

Same hours, etc.

RA: But Joe's withdrew their application. One of the major issues was the parking.

Employees and valet parking on the street, restrict it to acoustic music, Primitivo expanded illegally and Greg Shoop signed off on it.

**b. Lydia Ponce:**

Venice resident

Her group is the heart and soul of Venice

Gentrification is ruining Venice

They have relatives that can benefit from plumbing, etc., but are all being done by 818 area codes

Need to find out what happened to those trees that we traded for parking on San Juan

You need to put a moratorium on the destruction of what's happening in Venice.

Keeping tabs on Quimby \$?

Parking \$?

Could create some jobs with shuttle rides for the parking garages that are supposed to be within a 2-mile radius.

Mello Act—not one of us are

Shame on you

Not for it

God forbid there's an earthquake

Every time we do the bonus exemptions for the density, we're ruining someone's quality of life.

Can't even hear the drums from the drum circle.

Do something for the people who were here originally.

**PUT THAT ON THE AGENDA: THE MELLO ACT.**

I know what you guys are doing.

All it is is cashing your exemption....bonuses.

This language is disgusting as none of the language is relative to sustainable development.

Google is ruining her street.

I don't know anyone who is working at Google who looks like us.

Be honorable.

Think outside of the box.

Be creative and innovative.

Jim, I love you and I give love to your daughter.

**Jim Murez: recommendation:**

Discussed at WRAC hearing

Anyone in the state can make a Public Info Request.

It came up due to the rationing right now, as all the SB1818 projects are on the Westside, where they get the developers the most money.

If you want to make a very positive, proactive approach to it.

Garcetti, the Mayor and ??

Ask them for all of their records citywide to do with Affordable Housing.

The Mayor on TV said he has 16 projects for Affordable Housing.

It's a quality of life social justice issue.

**c. Pamela Anderson**

Are you representing all of us?

Jake: what do you mean?

Pamela Anderson: Are you representing ALL of us?

Jake (checking with others on the side): yes.

**d. 251 Lincoln/gas station project (Naomi Nightingale):**

She just wants to make a statement about it.

It's true that Whole Foods sells beer and alcohol. A liquor store right across the street whgich sells.

A number of places on Rose that sell

It's her position that due to density in area another establishment is not necessary.

**e. 621 Mildred (Charlotte Perie)**

Did you ever figure out who approved 621 Mildred 3-story single-family dwelling.

A database online.

10 people who have passwords to get onto the system.

There's no way to go back and look it up.

Mehrmoosh was assigned, but doesn't remember it.

Had a hearing on Jan 23<sup>rd</sup> in West L.A.

Jim Murez spoke with the Applicant.

He was going to provide us drawings but has not.

Linda Lucks has sent the ZA a letter to hold the case open.

The ZA, Lourdes Green, will hold it open for 2 weeks.

Lourdes.green@lacity.org

Jake suggests that the residents write to Lourdes Green as a neighbor.

Get on her mailing list.

Ask her to send you a copy of the case file.

Once we have that, we're happy to help.

The case is tied to a CDP.

It may take her 2-3 months to write the determination.

The date that the Coastal Commission RECEIVES it starts a 20-day appeal process.

Jake: will be meeting with Sarah to assign cases, but there was a time when cases were assigned and people weren't told, so maybe Mehrnoosh didn't know.

Charlotte: how can it be approved then?

**Jake: just because it was approved doesn't mean that anything was approved for it at LUPC.**

**Jake: this is a VSO anyway.**

**Sue Kaplan: if there are variances they can approve them without a hearing.**

**Jake: wants to see a VSO that has a variance.**

**f. 251 Lincoln project on Whole Foods property (Nick Anichello):**

**Regarding tearing the two buildings down,  
is the developer required to inspect the tanks even though they're just going to have another gas station?**

**Jim: It's a very tightly regulated set of permits.**

**g. Jim D.**

**JM repeat the 3 points**

**B&S, Housing Dept.**

**Public Info Request**

**Be very clear and precise about what you want and what you ask for, as it could be very, very expensive.**

**Where are all of the units that have been created that would be considered under the Mello Act (Affordable Housing act)?**

**The City is required by the State to do it.**

**h. 2 developments going on on Brooks (Ivonne Guzman):**

**Neither have gone through the VNC.**

**One is a remodel,**

**Other is a completely new construction.**

**The cumulative effect of such rogue construction is having a very detrimental effect, including not adhering to the affordable housing requirements.**

**She has called 311 on these things and has not been happy with the results.**

**They don't understand the specific requirements of the Coastal Zone.**

**Jake suggests that she goes to the Council Office.**

**Jim Murez says to go online and file a complaint and get a complaint**

**Click in City Planning to report violations.**

**Can even attach photos.**

**Organized by email addy & it will tell you online what the status is.**

**Her concern is the cumulative effect.**



**i. 609 Rose (Jim Murez):**

Was asked by some of the stakeholders in the neighborhood to verify whether 50% of the walls remained.

The 2 inspectors that were there before had both come to the conclusion that he did, which is that more than 50% of the original walls were still there.

Was originally going to produce 8 parking spaces.

A lot of neighborhood outcry about the loading zone, and then CP made them eliminate two spaces to act as the loading zone.

**7. CASES:**

**758 Sunset Ave;** Small lot subdivision to 3 homes.

Staff: Merhnoosh Mojallali

Background Info:

<http://cityhood.org/ReportCaseActivityDetail.cncx?CID=31994&UGP=Anonymous>

**Case Presentation:**

**Mehrnoosh:**

Applicant has already been in front of ZA.

Waiting for us to hear.

12 people showed up at the public hearing.

Concerned about light, mass, subdivision, construction timing etc.

According to the regs the side yards meet the req.

Asking for some adjustments on the balconies.

Architect says that that was resolved.

For the balconies allowed a 30" projection, 20" on the side.

Applicant to explain the size issue on the 3 lot subdivision

2800 sq ft

building a total of 3406 sq ft

1<sup>st</sup> unit 3BR

3 BR, 2.5 BA

3 BR, 3.5 BA

Add up to .94 FAR ratio

3' dedication in the back.

Are complying

Understand is a controversial topic

Presented it once before the holidays  
 They think it's a positive development project  
 For this project are observing the ht limits and all VSP req  
 Providing 2 parking spots for each unit  
 4 of the spots are completely covered  
 The other 2 spots are half covered  
 All off of the alley, in tandem  
 Believe is in the character of the neighborhood  
 He'll show us the multi story  
 Units 1 & 2 are three stories, Unit 3 is 3 stories & back structure  
 15 feet back, prevailing on the street is 10'  
 Are 15' from the centerline of the alley  
 Fairly articulated façade—sloping rooflines, balconies  
 Canopy projections does not exceed 30" allowed  
 Within the zoning envelope  
 No variances, not asking for any adjustments  
 Comment from previous meeting that didn't have enough plants  
 Almond trees (very common in Venice)  
 Their objective is to create as much greenery as can  
 Existing building a 1-story

Diagram showing 2 and 3-story buildings on Sunset.  
 There are 3 3-story buildings  
 12 2-story buildings  
 19 single family residences.

Jake Kaufman: case recommendation: While we recognize that CP has  
 approved projects under the SLO, we believe that the VSP should take  
 precedence  
 2 lots with one affordable unit (?)  
 Including guest parking  
 1 replacement affordable  
 We do not believe that 3 homes meets the character of the Specific Plan,  
 unless one is affordable.

**Public Comment:**

**Clarification: 3 lot**

**These are 3 completely separate 1-family dwellings.**

If it's sold to a low-income person  
 A 30-year deed restriction  
 If a renter, must be rented by a low-income person.

**BUT he's not applying for one to be affordable!!!**

**Pamela Anderson:**

There's a difference between affordable and low income.  
 Per RA: it's the same thing

Motion has to do with the Specific Plan, the land use plan.  
 When subdivision to 3 lots, the 3<sup>rd</sup> unit has to be replacement affordable.  
 30% of 60% of the area median income.

**Our motion:**

**2 homes or 3 with one replacement affordable, with guest spaces.**

**Brett Rotunski**

Live 2 doors down

Language from the VSP seems like it would need 5,500 square feet

It's at 4,800 square feet

Why would we give a variance to someone from outside our community?

Asking about clarification on this point

It seems from the language that RD2 would need an addition

In this case would need an additional 1500

RA answer: If the lot is over 4,000 sq feet in RD1.5

When divide the sq ft of the lot by 1,500 sq ft

If it's 3 times 1,500 = 4,500 or more can do

Provided one unit is a replacement affordable unit

JM: we've been told by the CA that we have to have Findings.

Why according to the NEXUS doesn't fit.

RA: But this is RD1.5 zone.

**Sue Kaplan:**

[couldn't hear, ASK SUE WHAT HER QUESTION WAS]

**Nick Anichello:**

When he looks at the structure—appears that the back unit will be an additional unit. (there are lots of illegal uses in Venice).

Member of Public: but those other illegal uses aren't ruining the character of the neighborhood!!

Shouldn't there be a setback between the houses?

Per Jake, there's no need to be any separation.

Olive trees: ??

Yvonne Guzman:

Question of the applicant

Has Mr. Rupesh ever lived on the property?

Answer from Applicant's rep: He did briefly.

Will the mature palm currently in front of the property be knocked down?

Yes, as it's within the building footprint.

Paloma V.

Lives at 762 Sunset, east of the building in question

Is the fence he's talking about going to replace hers or will they just put it next to hers?

Answer: The intent is to have a fence between the two properties.

JK: neighbors should be in contact now.

If there is a fence or light issue,

Name ??

Lives on 607

The real aspect of it is that they own the house & live here. The developers come from nowhere and during construction he gets inches of sawdust every week.

The building goes on and on and on.

The noise goes on for a year.

Then have to look at a wall forever.

And you get no sunshine.

Who wants to live behind this wall.

So those people want to sell.

Then it happens again.

Charlotte:

All of these builders know the VSP.

But they do these plans asking for violations.  
SLS is currently

**Kristen Shomer:**

The concept of character is the important thing.  
It seems obvious to her that almost every new building that comes in does not fit the character.

A street in Mexico all with beautiful doors.

It seems like the soul of Venice. Is...

These are so different and so boxy....

It seems like the architect world is not interested in fitting into character.

They want to sneak them in so that they can say “that guy did it” and can keep doing it.

JK: have created a subcommittee to study mass, scale and character.

His idea of character means that the houses DO NOT look the same, as he likes the diversity. Thus is the complex nature of character.

JM: CA has told us that if we can provide quantifiable information we can make an argument.

In a two block area, 74 properties.

5, or 6%, were of the 3-story characteristic

Of the 2-story characteristic

17, or 22%

single-story—52, or 70%

Add all three = 98%

Does not meet the compatibility policies of the Venice LUP.

Because 70% of the homes in the surrounding 4 blocks are single story.

Only 22% are 2-story

Less than 7% would be similar in size of this project.

If the character, mass & scale committee would make such calcs a standard requirement, that would be very helpful.

**Applicant’s Response:**

**Applicant's rep: his sincere feeling**

**He understands these projects are controversial and people are worried about parking.**

**These are affordable, mass, scale, character issues.**

**But here's the thing: it behooves everyone to consider that we live in the real world.**

**The speed limit is 35. Just because 70% of the people go 55.....**

**Maybe the problem is not so much with the project.**

**If we have a problem with the way the zoning laws are set up.**

**Otherwise, it's a legal question.**

**Others have built 3-story big buildings and how cannot allow them?**

**When you say these things are ugly and I don't like them.**

**That comment speaks for itself**

**He's a Venice resident too.**

**That doesn't give you a right to legislate it.**

**As much as you might try to quantify beauty and character, you can't.**

**The other point is that even just if I take a really pragmatic view, if you're really against this project.**

**If you do everything you can to kill this project.**

**It's your right.**

**What's the alternative?**

**He can tell us that.**

**He showed it in his zoning envelope,**

**He thinks that a 3-lot subdivision is an opportunity to provide more articulation with more of the character of a single-family house than a giant box that goes from front to back.**

**To be honest, that's the alternative.**

**A small-lot subdivision is 3 hours, sell for \$1 million each.**

**Have to make each one look like a house, not a condo.**

**If forced to keep on one lot, you've seen what is done to maximize the square footage.**

**Look around.....in some ways for him it's a pragmatic question.**

**His project does make an effort to fit into the scale, character &**

**They look different, and are not a homogeneous xxx.**

**You do need to look at what the large single-family homes look like, not only with density but with articulation.**

**And affordable units.**

**MOTION:**

Jake read the motion

JM: strengthen by making it clear that we're talking about the density of the NH as specified by the VSP.

We're increasing the density by increasing the # of market rate units and taking out of proportion the number of non-affordable.

This project will increase the density of affordable units in the Oakwood area. If this map is accurate, the lot coverage of this project is close to 100%, in comparison to the single story houses.

{another number for the committee)

He says that 38.2% parcel A

69% for parcel B

40% for parcel C

combined?

Less than 50% OF TOTAL LOT COVERAGE per Jake

If was a single home, would be closer to 65-70% of lot coverage.

Make a very strong statement.

The parking in this area is already very difficult.

Make it clear that by allowing a project that doesn't allow guest parking are only worsening the parking shortage in the MH.

This level of density, as specified by the VSP shall provide guest parking.

Steve Traeger—abstaining as he has worked with the architect in the past.

**MOTION:**

(to deny the project)

While we recognize City Planning has approved projects under the SLSO (Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance), the Venice Neighborhood Council feels that the Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan should trump or take precedent (meaning 2 homes or 3 with 1 being a replacement affordable).

Further, we request that no variance, exceptions or adjustments be accepted on completely new developments.

Finally, we do not feel that this project meets the unique character intent of the Venice Specific Plan because:

- 1) 70% homes in surrounding 4 blocks are single story and 22% are 2 story and less than 7% are similar in size;
- 2) this project decreases the density (%) of affordable units in the area.
- 3) the lot coverage is beyond that which Venice would like to see.
- 4) this level of density as specified by the Venice Specific Plan shall require providing guest parking.

LUPC Motion made by Jake Kaufman, seconded by Jim Murez;

APPROVED (to deny the project): 4-0-2  
Robert Aronson & Robin Rudisill voted "no"

Will be heard at the VNC in 2 weeks.  
Welcomed to the public to come there as well.

8. **Adjournment**-- Jake announced that he will move Item C forward to have a separate meeting on SLS.  
Next meeting is in 2 weeks.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm

*In compliance with Government Code section 54957.5, non-exempt writings that are distributed to a majority or all of the LUPC members in advance of a meeting may be viewed at [www.CityHood.org](http://www.CityHood.org), Venice Public Library, 501 Venice Blvd., at our website by clicking on the following link: [www.VeniceNC.org/LUPC](http://www.VeniceNC.org/LUPC), or at the scheduled meeting. In addition, if you would like a copy of any record related to an item on the agenda, please contact the LUPC Chair at [Chair-LUPC@venicenc.org](mailto:Chair-LUPC@venicenc.org) or the Committee at [LUPC@venicenc.org](mailto:LUPC@venicenc.org).*