



Venice Neighborhood Council

PO Box 550, Venice, CA 90294

www.VeniceNC.org Email: info@VeniceNC.org



Regular Meeting of the Preserving Public Places Committee MINUTES

Location: Venice Abbot Kinney Branch Library, 501 Venice Blvd, Venice, CA 90291

DATE: Thursday, November 7, 2024

TIME: 5:45pm

CALL TO ORDER AND BOARD ROLL CALL

Robin Murez (chair) y	Sonya Reese Greenland y	
Alex Weber y	Tim Rudnick y	
Todd Lorber y		

APPROVAL of PRIOR MINUTES:

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT - Comments were invited throughout the meeting.

Guests: William Attaway, Sarah Mahir, Lydia Ponce +1, Mickey Gallagher, Joseph Eiger, Betsy Goldman (telephonic), Zach Gaidzik (Office of County Supervisor Harvath), Warren Ontivieros (Dept Beaches & Harbors)

COMMITTEE REPORTS: Robin brought clippings & document files from Betsy Goldman. The overwhelming community appreciation and concern for pagodas and art tiles is documented in these files from 1992.

OLD BUSINESS (*Items considered in prior meeting*) Updates on previous motions:

1. Committee Renewal Motion - unanimously passed by VNC Board, including the cranky members. See attached Supporting Document for committee accomplishments summary

2. Pagodas Restoration - shall we submit a motion asking CD11 to have the pagodas designated Historic Cultural Monuments? A petition to preserve the pagodas was recently created by concerned stakeholders including Sarah Mahir on Facebook Venice



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Locals Cali USA Community site. To date, their [change.org](https://chnng.it/V2pTSKrykX) petition has garnered 128 signatures: <https://chnng.it/V2pTSKrykX>

Q: Were the pagodas rebuilt in 1995? As per RAP budget p26 on Coastal Commission Venice Beach Refurbishment Plan Report P12 references 1930's construction considered "landmarks." The pagodas were built in the 1930's as part of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). They include 5 sites (a 6th one no longer exists) along Ocean Front Walk. 32 total umbrellas at \$10,000 each = \$320,000 in RAP budget p26

They are included in the 1968 architectural design and construction documents of the Venice Lifeguard Station, which carries forth the distinctive hexagonal form.

Sarah described recent confusion at VNC Oceanfront Walk committee meeting & VNC Board Meeting. All emphasized importance of the pagodas to Venice and thanked Sarah for raising awareness. Robin: The role of the VNC is to represent stakeholder interests, bringing matters to the attention of, and asking for actions by, the City, RAP et al.

Zac suggested that Supervisor Horvath has a fund that might be available for restoration: <https://lindseyhorvath.lacounty.gov/request-for-funding/>

Motion: The Board of the Venice Neighborhood Council requests that the City Council District 11 Office move to have the unique and historic Venice Pagodas which line Ocean Front Walk, giving it a continuous artistic and distinctive character, be designated Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monuments and, in conjunction with the Department of Recreation and Park, have the pagodas refurbished immediately. Community Impact Statement to be filed.

Description: The pagodas are hexagonal umbrellas, originally designed and built in the 1930 as part of the Works Progress Administration. Architectural drawings of the pagodas are included in the 1969 blueprints of the hexagonal Venice Lifeguard Station. Originally there were 6 sets of pagodas. Five sets, which include 32 wooden umbrellas and seating, were repaired or rebuilt by the Department of Recreation and Parks as part of the 1997 Venice Beach Refurbishment. All pagodas are currently in need of repairs, as was requested by the Venice Neighborhood Council in its April 2022 motion. The pagodas have been referred to as "Landmarks" for decades and are included in Survey LA. Recently, conflicting reports have been given to stakeholders



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indicating that the pagodas may be at risk of demolition. A stakeholder petition to repair the pagodas immediately garnered over 125 signatures: <https://chnng.it/V2pTSKrykX>

Distribution: RAP.Commissioners@LACity.org, Councilmember.Park@LACity.org, Office of Historic Resources: lambert.giessinger@lacity.org, LA Conservancy: lmulcahy@laconservancy.org, Cultural Heritage Commission:

Maker: Tim__ Seconded : Todd__

Vote: (_5_ Yes / _0_ No / _0_ Abstained / _0_ Recused / _0_ Ineligible)

Supporting Documents: VNC Pagoda Repair Motion, April 19, 2022
Pagodas photograph
Pagoda's / Pergola's historic image and notes

Discussion moved to OFW Ceramic Tiles & Fishes (#2 New Business on Agenda) - Attaway described the artwork; Robin shared pictures from Tamie Smith book. Similar art & historic importance as pagodas, beach continuity and with Olympics coming, we need to spruce up Venice.

3. Restoration of Tamie Smith & William Attaway Ceramic Tiles & Fishes on OFW Benches bathroom walls and sculpture.

Motion: The Board of the Venice Neighborhood Council requests that the Department of Recreation and Parks, the Department of Cultural Affairs and City Council District 11 provide funding and permits for the fabrication and installation of replacement and additional new ceramic tiles and fishes originally commissioned in 1997 by the City of Los Angeles within the Venice Beach Refurbishment Project, of artists Tamie Smith and William Attaway, for installation on benches and bathrooms along Ocean Front Walk. Community Impact Statements to be filed.

Description: The ceramic tiles created by Smith, installed on benches along Ocean Front Walk, depict historic scenes. Ceramic fishes and related sea creatures, installed on bathroom walls, were created by Smith, Attaway and together with children in the artists' project. A few tiles need to be replaced. The project fell short of commissioning the artists to complete the tiles and fishes for all of the bathroom walls.



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Supporting Documents: examples of two of Smith's bench tiles & Attaway fishes

Maker _Tim_ Secoded _Alex_

Vote: (_5_ Yes / _0_ No / _0_ Abstained / _0_ Recused / _0_ Ineligible)

4. Walking Tour App - update on consolidating the 3 subject tours into one tour. Once consolidated, QR codes to be created, mounted around town and circulated by the VNC.

Alex stated that he would complete the color coding of the three sites this week. Robin invited more help on all aspects, e.g. add interviews, more info... Paul Tanck, Alex, Betsy and Robin have done a lot; more will make it better.

Joseph offered to help. Attaway too has suggestions and contacts.

Lydia asked if it would be multilingual.

Zac again mentioned that Supervisor Horvath's discretionary funds may be available and that his office enabled a language translation app that may be useful to us.

5. Venice Lifeguard Station - update on restoration

Letter to CD11 asking CA Coastal Commission to retract de minimus demolition waiver based upon erroneous material information regarding the ownership and condition of the building - knowingly incorrect meant to deceive and continues risk of causing confusion. No motion required. This is follow up to prior requests

How to get the County Supervisor Lindsay Horvath and Department of Beaches & Harbors to begin repairs? \$1.2 Million intended for demolition will go far toward repairs. (Fran Soloman?)

The Olympics are coming in 4 years. If not used for Lifeguard Services, repurpose the tower portion as a public access venue. 25+ Lifeguards have competed in past Olympics; Lifeguards will compete in the next Olympics. The building will be an excellent venue for crowds visiting Venice Beach. Olympics rings and lighting can decorate the roof and outline the building. (Retired Lifeguard Section Chief Mickey Gallagher)

Discussion:

Zac & Warren asked our committee to broker a meeting with the City. Asked that we not submit motion but instead "call him." Said County needs to know what the City plans to do with the Lifeguard Station. Said County recent building evaluation, in light



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of HCM, would cause greatly increased costs. County intends to continue use of the building but seems to want the City to pay for repairs.

Todd, Mickey and Robin drew on Jt Powers Agreement that County has the duty to maintain the property. Has deferred for years so cost has accrued. Robin requested that CCC Demolition Waiver be rescinded. (Zac did not explain why County would not do so). Todd noted that had a basic rent been paid through the years, it would have amounted to far more than the cost of repairs now. Rusted sprinkler system. Robin mentioned HCM grandfathers variances and updated Building Assessment shows vast majority of repairs are needed in the ground level. City provided access for Choi Associates to update their prior report. Community commissioned the report. Mickey noted deteriorated condition of inside and out of the building; tower served Lifeguards well; move out of tower was political.

Todd suggested a simple bike path beach maintenance improvement - grading sand 6 inches below path would keep the path clear of sand for several days, perhaps until the next sweeping performed.

Zac & Warren excused themselves. Contacts were gathered to share with Zac, for all who might want to walk the beach with Zac.

Committee and visiting stakeholders decided to vote on the proposed motion at this time. If passed, but a commitment is made for repairs, the motion can be withdrawn.

Motion: The Board of the Venice Neighborhood Council requests that the Mayor, City Attorney, City Controller, the Commissioners of the Department of Recreation and Parks, The Cultural Heritage Commission, and Council District 11 contact LA County Supervisor Lindsay Horvath (or all County Supervisors) to ask that repairs of our Historic Cultural Monument: the Venice Lifeguard Station, be undertaken, as per the Joint Powers Agreement, immediately to prevent further deterioration and in preparation for the upcoming 2028 Olympics. Community Impact Statements to be filed.

Maker _Todd_ Seconded _Sonya_

Vote: (_5_ Yes / _0_ No / _0_ Abstained / _0_ Recused / _0_ Ineligible)

NEW BUSINESS:

1.Proposal by Venice Oceanarium to build a pavilion on the end of the Venice Pier



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Motion: The Board of the Venice Neighborhood Council supports the creation of the Venice Oceanarium Pavilion museum, replacing the historic bait & tackle shop, on the end of the Venice Fishing Pier.

Description: The museum will educate and enlighten the public to the wonders of the sea and ecosystems unique to the Southern California coast. The open concept Pavilion, will house specimens, artifacts, interactive exhibits and our integrative programming, which blends Marine Science and Art through experiential learning. Included is an observation hatch with state of the art water sampling equipment, live reef cam viewing and Citizen Scientist opportunities. www.VeniceOceanarium.org/about

Supporting Documents:

Oceanarium Architectural renderings and Flythrough video

[https://www.dropbox.com/s/m970kl25q24cg1g/](https://www.dropbox.com/s/m970kl25q24cg1g/Venice%20Oceanarium%20Flythrough_2023-1119_open%20to%20closed.mp4?dl=0)

[Venice%20Oceanarium%20Flythrough_2023-1119_open%20to%20closed.mp4?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/m970kl25q24cg1g/Venice%20Oceanarium%20Flythrough_2023-1119_open%20to%20closed.mp4?dl=0)

Tim described the project and distributed copies of the Architectural Renderings. Alex noted that the renderings were dated 8 years ago. Tim described the delays by the City. Robin noted that we need to get this done, now! All viewed the Fly through video.

Lydia asked that spiritual / Tongva elements be included.

Robin noted the art / literary / spiritual emphasis of the Oceanarium, as seen on the plaques along the pier, Moby Dick reading et al.

Tim recused from vote.

Maker Alex Seconded Todd

Vote: (4 Yes / 0 No / 0 Abstained / 1 Recused / 0 Ineligible)

Meeting **ADJOURNED at 7:35pm**