



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, December 4, 2013

LOCATION: Oakwood Recreation Center, 767 California Avenue, Venice CA 90291

TIME: 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm (NOTE SPECIAL TIME)

CASES HEARD:

1. 664 E. Sunset Ave
2. 758 E. Sunset Ave
3. Project Backlog Updates/Reviews

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	Robin Rudisill, Secretary	x	
Mehrnoosh Mojallali	x		Steve Traeger	x	
James Murez	x				

2. Approval of Minutes from prior meetings: none available, not done.
3. Approval of Agenda as presented.
4. Chair Updates – none.
 - a. General Updates by Chair, Land Use and Planning Committee
5. Land Use and Planning Committee Current Case Updates.
 - a. Case members provide updates/schedule on their “Pending” cases.
6. Public Comment on non-agenized items related to Land Use and Planning only –

Irv Katz, lives on Market Street, re. the 1414 Main Street project.

The developer has had two chances to present his project, but the Community hasn’t had much more than five minutes to make their comments. Per Mia Herron, at the next meeting the Applicant will first present their changes and then 40-60 minutes will be allocated for Community input. Per Jim Murez, but we need to hear the project in its entirety AND allow the public adequate time to have their voice. Steve Traeger suggested that since the item was continued, they should be given time to present new information, but not to go through the entire project. Jim will talk with Jake about that. Mia Herron said that they could have the presentation posted on Cityhood, and the link to that could be put on the agenda. Then they could tell everyone to download the presentation and tell the Applicant to only talk about things that are new.

7. Active Cases

a. 664 E. Sunset Ave: demo (E) duplex and create a 3-lot small lot subdivision within the RD1.5 zone, with 6 parking spaces per unit (2 per unit)

i. Case numbers: ZA-2012-169-CUB

ii. Background information:

<http://cityhood.org/ReportCaseActivityDetail.cncx?CID=27907&UGP=Anonymous>

iii. Staff: John Reed – Applicant wants to upgrade from beer and wine to a full line of liquor. John wants consistency between all of the restaurants.

iv. Applicant's Representative: Sean Nguyen & Andy Lu – architects for 2 small lot subdivision projects.

6,800 square foot lot, irregularly shaped so trying to take advantage of that.

Knows that small lot subdivision projects are controversial.

1,500 square feet per lot is min and it's under that.

FAR, floor area ratio, is low relative to a RD development.

Complies with the small lot subdivision ordinance

Under density of RD-25 zone and is under the lot coverage allowed

Have made a very genuine effort to create a development that creates the feel of a single-family house.

One of the issues with this is parking.

They have gone to the trouble of using the irregular lot size to create head in/head out, user friendly parking, to avoid taking street spaces (not doing tandem parking).

This is a design that is distinct.

Architecturally we believe that we're in the scale of the street and roofline and that this is not monolithic. Believe that the street is already populated with three-story buildings.

Have horizontal breaks that break up the massing and are set back significantly from the neighbor.

Set back further than the prevailing setback (the average setback from the other buildings on the street).

The ownership group has made a sincere effort to create a project that is not an affront.

That's subjective, but we're really trying.

Re. the context--2-3 blocks south of Rose, 7th is a fairly busy street

[Public side comment: this is what's ruining the place! (Venice)]

There's a cut out between two of the buildings. They're trying to create a situation where each building is architecturally unique and yet part of the whole.

It has balconies facing 7th and head in, head out parking for two of the units.

The third unit is all the way to the edge.

In terms of the setback situation, it's unique – most people go all the way to the edge.

v. Public Comment –

Renee Kraus – have lived here for 32 years. Venice is 108 years old, and the house was built when Venice was 3 years old. This place would be OK in Palmdale. There goes the neighborhood.**Carolyn Rios**: What are those things on top – they look like rockets (things that look like they're flying). That's what makes this a little offensive for us. People

have roof decks but not coverings. If that's the roof and not some covering, then it's too tall.

Joe Clark: Do the other examples include roof access structures (a stairway can't exceed 100 square feet), allowed to exceed the height limit by 10 feet.

The example with the roof access structure would be considered allowable. It's not a habitable space. No storage allowed.

Applicant's rep – garage with 2 levels above is 3 stories

Robert: any building that is otherwise 2 stories and the third story is a roof access structure, it's a 2-story building.

He calls 705 Sunset a 3-story building, but public seemed to think it's a 2-story building.

Applicant: that's the only building where that applies.

Beto, 1525 Glendon – there goes the neighborhood. When you kick those families out and destroy those wonderful homes, must the new places be quite that ugly? Everywhere they're putting in houses designed to look like a house should not look.

Jim: We're not a design review board.

Beto: we don't want Venice destroyed by ugly-ass shit.

Yvonne: A hearing was held, the case was held open to give the community an opportunity to review it. The applicant chose not to go through the VNC. The current residents want to know how the applicant is going to work with the current residents who have lived there for 58 years. It is vital that the VSP and the Mello Act be adhered to specifically. Regulates all factors so that it be COMPATIBLE with the existing community,

Venice has a unique character, which is currently disappearing.

Please do not approve something that is not in character with the adjacent properties.

Please deny the small lot subdivisions based on mass & scale that are not aligned with our community.

Sue Kaplan: She appreciates us looking at mass and scale, appreciate the balconies they put in, as it does help. But when she looked at the street map, she sees predominantly 1-story buildings, and the renderings did not show them in context. Because of that and the Mello Act, she is hesitant to say that she supports the project.

Joyce Lieberman: lives at 664 Sunset, has lived there and gardened there for 30 years. She is a little distressed by the project. She has growth trees there to large, mature trees. This project will be all cement. She is disturbed that there will be no green part to this project. Does the commission look at that as part of what's necessary for a project, and whether there is to be some kind of a connection to the earth and that things grow so beautifully in Venice due to our sunlight.....but for here nothing will be able to grow.

James Redmond: obviously it's crucial that the relationship between any new

development and this one do not create hostility with the existing neighbors. This representative is doing his job. We see where the trend of these developments is going.

Just go up the street to Santa Monica to see what can happen.

If protecting the community from this is not enforced,

If the way these developments are exploiting every square inch of the space.

No effort to preserve the native trees.

We consider ourselves an ecologically enlightened community, and this project can better reflect that. It's an eyesore without green space.

Very concerned that the affordable units meet only the minimal standards, which brings some questions about integrity. They should not be able to slide through just on the minimal requirements.

The community should be made very clear on how to put forward any concerns that may arise from the project. Is the plumbing hooked up to the City plumbing? (Applicant's rep says yes)

The City and CCC will jump on them

The transition [differentiation?] between a remodel and a re-construction--the community NEEDS TO ADDRESS THAT TRANSITION [DIFFERENTIATION].

He's working for someone who is trying to exploit that space to the detriment of the neighborhood. It's a beautiful project, but it's not suitable for Venice. The project has made it through every hoop that it's been through so far. This can't be the future for Venice, so we need to change that.

Sarah Dennison joined the meeting.

Tyrus Wilson: 743 Sunset, between Lincoln and 7th. Showed that the change is not like for like. There's a lot of sky now, won't be there any more. Like for like is in the Venice Specific Plan – page 3 of the VSP,

F. says that the Mello Act requires like for like. She appreciates the thoughtfulness in dealing with the varied rooflines, etc. Eventually what's going to happen is that all of them will be 3-story in a few years, and Venice will be different and it will all be concrete.

She is curious where we are in the process of that and to petition this.

Mike Chammis: 232 3rd Street. Being a Newbie, with respect to the Mello Act and a development with affordable housing, how can a project of this type contribute? If this goes in, in what way do low income people benefit.

Jim: the concept is that rather than building on large mansion, having three units makes them more affordable. The small lot division ordinance that was passed City wide, in 2006, by being able to divide large parcels into smaller parcels, makes more affordable. In terms of the Specific Plan, the case that we appealed and were denied at the City Council level, which is applied first, VSP where says can have three lots as long as one is affordable or where dividing up into three lots each lot must stand on its own.

vi. LUPC Discussion –

Robert Aronson-- This is a thoughtful and well-designed project. In his opinion a third unit xxx is a violation of the VSP. Thinks should only be 2 units or 3, with the 3rd one affordable. No guest parking. Is there a housing department determination later? They cannot do this project, as the whole purpose of the Mello act is to squash tearing down. What developers have done is say we'll take care of that but

never get around to developing the affordable units. Have seen the Coastal Commission say you can't kick those tenants out until you have the approval from us. The City won't do that. It has to be new construction, can't take an existing building and make it affordable unit. Robert doesn't think the project has half a chance. Asked how tall the building is where there's a side yard setback. Whoever said this is an ugly project, that's just your opinion and is very subjective. If you want to say it's out of character, that's OK to say.

Mehrnoosh Mojallali-- her major concern is the replacement of the affordable units and that they haven't taken a step forward to say how they'll do that.

Sarah Dennison-- what are the prevailing setbacks on 7th for three blocks? Answer 1'8". Do you have any drawings that show contextually what's next to the building next door as well as a view of down the street?

Jim Murez-- one of the first things he looked at on the plans was the setbacks, as one of the things that happens with small lot subdivisions is the side yards and how a developer can take advantage of that. In looking at Sunset Ave, he brought up the ZIMAS map and looked at what the setbacks are on Sunset and what he's proposing. Also found a separate drawing that shows the existing house on a plot plan that shows what they're proposing to do as well-- on the 3rd page. A1.2 is showing what they're proposing. 660 was demolished and . Question he has is whether 660 is maintaining the same front yard setbacks. So this project and how it's being located on this property, it sticks out just a little further. He doesn't have a problem with the setback on Sunset. It's called a reverse key lot (it could be considered the side yard of their project, and are
If they have the doorway on 7th and they claim that the side yard was on Sunset, then they could push the side yard further out. So they're conforming to what they should do there, they're maintaining the setbacks. He looked at the setbacks along 7th and they're maintaining more of a setback than the other houses are now. 7th is really all of these people's side yards. So, is comfortable with the setbacks.
As far as the shadow that will go on other people's properties, they won't be casting a shadow on others, except for in the morning, and most of the sun is going to be coming from the 660 side.

The driveway sets the massing really far back.

The one comment he has on the project that he particularly dislikes, is the impact of the trash cans on the alley. There are three small squares on the outside of each unit, but the reality is that the trash cans will be pushed out into the Sunset Court. He doesn't think that people will push them back through the court yard each week. He would like to have seen them arranged in the alley.

Appreciates that not putting rooftop structures on there, and appreciate that doing something architecturally diverse.

From the standpoint of size, mass and scale, given what we're allowed to do, would have preferred two units with open garden space. But allowed to do it so can't say it can't happen.

In terms of Mello, we need to get some clarification on what's going to happen there. It's not OK that people who have been there for a number of years are being displaced in their older age.

Steve Traeger: confirmed that not requesting any variance.

Has worked with this architect before but don't think it's presenting any conflict. Would have preferred two units.

Concerned that there is no landscaping.
 In terms of mass and scale, as it's a corner I have less concerned and also as the property next door is now under developed.
 Would love to see lead certification.
 Landscaping could mitigate concerns and soften it a bit.
 The one 26-foot wall is pretty flat and tall.
 I do have concerns about the loss of affordable units.
 He believes they should be replaced on site.
 This was part of the settlement between the Venice Town Council and the State of California.
 Do we know if the two affordable units currently on the lot are conforming.
 Answer: A single-family house and a guesthouse and a garage. It's not an illegally converted garage. Needs to be in the Venice Coastal Zone, Venice Planning area.

Robin Rudisill--

Motion to VNC Board Motion to VNC Board:

- vii. The Venice Neighborhood Council approves this small lot subdivision project, as presented, with the following conditions:
 1. The City's approval of the project shall include a condition that the affordable units shall be replaced one-for-one, within the Venice Planning Area, and that no tenant shall be evicted until the Certificate of Occupancy has been issued for the new replacement affordable units, and that the current tenants shall be given the right of first refusal to rent a new replacement affordable unit similar to the one they currently occupy.
 2. The City's approval of the project shall include a condition that the landscaping opportunities shall be fully maximized for the project.

LUPC Motion made by Mehrnoosh Mojallali, seconded by Jim Murez
 APPROVED BY LUPC 4-2-1 December 4, 2013.

- b. 758 E Sunset Ave: demo of an existing single family residence with accessory structures and the development of 3 single-family residences (small lot subdivision)
 - i. Case No: ENV-2013-1084-EAF
 - ii. Background information:
<http://cityhood.org/ReportCaseActivityDetail.cncx?CID=31995&UGP=Anonymous>
 - iii. Staff: Mehrnoosh Mojallali
 - iv. Applicant
 - v. Public Comment
 - vi. LUPC Discussion
 - vii. Motion for Board consideration – none.

8. PROJECT BACKLOG:

a. New Project Review and Staff Assignments and Coding of De Minimis Cases – deferred.

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 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)

9. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 9:56 p.m.

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, Venice Public Library, 501 Venice Blvd., at our website by clicking on the following link: 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 or the Committee at LUPC@venicenc.org.

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