

Venice Neighborhood Council

Post Office Box 550

Venice, CALIFORNIA 90294



Land Use and Planning Committee MINUTES February 25, 2009



1 **1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

2

3 Challis Macpherson called the meeting to order at 6:38 pm. Committee

4 members present: Challis Macpherson, Kelli Li, Jim Murez, John Reed and

5 Arnold Springer.

6 **2. APPROVAL OF THIS AGENDA AS PRESENTED OR AMENDED**

7

8 There being no objection, the Agenda was approved as presented

9

10 **3. APPROVAL OF OUTSTANDING MINUTES**

11

12 **Arnold Springer moved to approve the Minutes for January 14, 2009 and**

13 **January 28, 2009; seconded by**

14 **The January 2009 Minutes were approved by common consent.**

15

16 **4. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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18 Marc Saltzberg provided information about the Town Hall event planned for
19 February 26, 2009, and invited stakeholders to attend.

20

21 Jim Murez reported on the West LA Planning hearing scheduled for Monday,
22 March 2, 2009 regarding a development project at 248 Westminster, at which
23 the developer plans to request a 30 parking space reduction.

24

1 Challis Macpherson read the text of an announcement requesting the
2 formation of a pilot program to review enforcement of existing codes and
3 legislation for fence and hedge height.
4

5 **5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

6
7 Stuart Oscars asked that LUPC reports be presented to the VNC Board to
8 allow more time for review of the issues presented; Arnold Springer pointed
9 out that timeliness of LUPC recommendations depends strongly on the
10 amount of time left before a project is scheduled to be heard and suggested
11 that the VNC Board should address this issue. There was discussion sparked
12 by Mr. Oscars' remark that a recent LUPC recommendation did not address
13 the issue of employee parking for a development project.
14

15 A stakeholder complained that the Agenda was followed, instead of going
16 directly to the issue that he wanted to discuss.
17

18 **6. NEW BUSINESS. DELIBERATION OF FOLLOWING PROJECTS/ISSUES:**

19
20 A. 303-305 OFW, Nathan Ahdoot

21
22 John Reed, LUPC staff member assigned to this project, stated that this issue
23 should be set for discussion at another LUPC meeting. Mr. Reed stated that
24 he had received pertinent material for review earlier that day and went on to
25 describe the CUP being requested. Proposed use for the commercial
26 property is in consistent with current zoning and the local coastal program.

27 The developer is requesting 24 rooms, 20 are provided for in current zoning.

28 Parking is in compliance with the municipal code and with the Venice Coastal
29 Zone Specific Plan; four additional employee parking spaces are provided.

30 Mr. Reed then introduced. Nathan Ahdoot. Challis Macpherson asked about
31 access to parking; Mr. Ahdoot indicated that access from Speedway is

32 planned, and stated that a deed restriction will be recorded that provides for

33 limitations with regard to deliveries.

1

2 Nathan Ahdoot described the change of the proposed use of the property
3 from mixed use to hotel, ascribing the need for the change to market forces,
4 and indicated encouragement received from the Coastal Commission and
5 from the office responsible for the Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan. Mr.
6 Ahdoot reported that stakeholder feedback was positive as well, for the
7 project, which will increase the current FAR and density by approximately
8 30%. There is a provision for a small restaurant. Mr. Ahdoot stated that there
9 would not be an increase in the height of the building requested or in
10 setbacks. The proposed hours of operation for the restaurant will be 7am to
11 9pm in the summer and from 7am to 6pm approximately. Mr. Ahdoot then
12 described plans for the structure's decoration and noted benefits to the
13 community with regard to safety, beautification, and creation of jobs for
14 community members.

15

16 Arnold Springer asked about the car parking elevator, was told about the
17 dimensions of the 800 square foot restaurant. Jim Murez asked for the
18 location of the trash enclosure. Mr. Murez expressed concern about
19 deliveries, handicapped parking, beach impact zone parking, seating area
20 square footage for the restaurant, and asked for specific information about the
21 division of the ground floor space with reference to hotel guest use only. Mr.
22 Murez then referred to the requirement for handicapped parking.

1

2 John Reed noted several code violations not addressed on the drawings
3 presented with regard to the parking elevator, provision of separate mens and
4 womens restrooms for guests and for employees, and stated that Mr. Ahdoot
5 should seek advise from an experienced hotel developer. Jim Murez asked
6 for specifications on the design of the parking structure. Mr. Reed asked if
7 LUPC members considered the proposed use of the property is a good one.
8 In response to Challis Macpherson's question, Nathan Ahdoot stated that the
9 restaurant operation is financially necessary.

10

11 This issue will be discussed again at the second March 2009 LUPC meeting.

12

13

14 B. Sign Ordinance; with a Motion to be forwarded to the Board for sending to
15 the Planning Commission. This week, the Planning Commission delayed
16 consideration of the proposed Ordinance so that NCs and the public can
17 have more time to review it and weigh in. LUPC Staff: Dennis Hathaway

18

19 Sign Ordinance discussion was postponed by common consent until

20

March 11, 2009.

21

22 C. Debate and deliberation on Director's Interpretation of Small Lot
23 Subdivision Ordinance as it pertains to Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan

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25 (Taken out of order) Challis Macpherson referred to a presentation made

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by Shana Bonstin, City Planning Department, at which Ms. Bonstin

27

provide clarification of the Director's Interpretation of the Small Lot

1 Subdivision Ordinance. Arnold Springer stated that comments from
2 stakeholders should be limited to allow all interested parties time to speak.

3
4 Stewart Oscars stated that the Small Lot Subdivision ordinance will
5 increase density and reduce available, voiced his opposition, and
6 suggested that implementation of the ordinance in Venice should be
7 stopped.

8
9 Jim Murez discussed the application of the Small Lot Subdivision
10 ordinance with reference to current zoning.

11
12 John Reed pointed out that the Small Lot Subdivision ordinance was
13 adopted in 2004 and clarified that the issue at hand is the Planning
14 Director's Interpretation of the ordinance as applied in the Venice Coastal
15 Zone.

16
17 Marie Cowan objected to parking as defined by the ordinance. Jed
18 Pauker asked for clarification.

19
20 Steve Friedman voiced his regret that he did not hear Shana Bonstin's
21 presentation and stated his concern that application of the Small Lot
22 Subdivision ordinance on the small and substandard lots will have a
23 negative impact, especially on parking in the Venice area. Challis
24 Macpherson asked Mr. Friedman's permission to quote his words in her
25 appeal.

1
2 Frank Murphy asked for clarification of the reason for today's meeting.

3 Jim Murez referred to Shana Bonstin's presentation; Mr. Murphy stated
4 that he had seen the presentation.

5
6 Rita asked if an environmental impact report (EIR) had been done; Jim
7 Murez explained why an EIR was not required for the ordinance, because
8 density will not increase.

9
10 Responding to Darrel Dufey's question, Jim Murez discussed the issue
11 raised by LUPC regarding the requirement of an affordable unit when the
12 Small Lot Subdivision is applied to a development. Mr. Murez then
13 discussed lot consolidation and creation of additional units. Mr. Dufey
14 asked if a tally has been made of land that the Small Lot Subdivision
15 Ordinance could be applied. Arnold Springer stated that he has asked for
16 a similar list, voiced his concerns and stated that there is need for further
17 study of the issue and further discussion.

18
19 Mark Cassell stated that semantics are what are being discussed.

20
21 Jed Pauker stated that the intent of the Small Lot Subdivision ordinance is
22 to allow more affordable housing, raised the question of why it will impact
23 density in Venice before other, less dense Los Angeles areas and referred
24 to how the ordinance can be applied given the Venice Coastal Zone
25 Specific Plan.

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2 Responding to Susan’s question, Jim Murez stated that Mayor Villaraigosa
3 was the driving force behind the Small Lot Subdivision ordinance.

4
5 Bruce Birch clarified that the Small Lot Subdivision ordinance can be
6 applied on properties zoned appropriately; Challis Macpherson stated that
7 it applied to property zoned RD1.5 or above.

8 Steve Friedman rebutted a comment made by Mark and stated that
9 application of the ordinance could result in increased density, and
10 encourage speculation and more redevelopment that would have
11 otherwise occurred.

12
13 Rita asked what effect changing the rules will have on the economy.

14 Arnold Springer commented on the state of the economy and stated that
15 more time to study the issue should be given.

16
17 Frank Murphy advised that all RD1.5 zoned property is clearly marked on
18 the zoning maps, stated that the ordinance applies to everywhere in Los
19 Angeles, and reiterated that the ordinance has been in effect since 2004.

20 Arnold Springer restated his belief that more time and study of this issue
21 are required.

22
23 Jed Pauker asked about the effect of the Small Lot Subdivision ordinance,
24 and questioned if it will create affordable housing.

25

1 Marie read from information provided, and questioned the effect the
2 appeal filed by Challis Macpherson will have. Ms. Macpherson restated
3 the reason the appeal was filed.

4
5 Jim Murez stated that intent of the ordinance is to create small lots,
6 discussed the ordinance's requirement for side yard open space and
7 referred to that benefit to the community created by the ordinance. Mr.
8 Murez then noted how the ordinance deals with separation of individual
9 houses.

10
11 A stakeholder discussed height requirement and how the "system
12 operates."

13 Challis Macpherson discussed the concept of "workforce housing."
14
15 A stakeholder expressed concern about changes in the community,
16 changes initiated by developers and warned about elimination of green
17 space.

18
19 Arnold Springer suggested that a series of workshops should be offered
20 by the Planning Department on this issue. Challis Macpherson explained
21 why she had filed an appeal of the Director's Interpretation of the Small
22 Lot Subdivision ordinance as it pertains to the Venice Coastal Zone
23 Specific Plan. Ms. Macpherson reported that her request for support from
24 the Board of Governors of the Venice Neighborhood Council will be
25 considered shortly before the City hearing. The discussion that followed

1 clarified actions that can be taken by stakeholders, LUPC and the VNC
2 Board on this issue. Frank Murphy was asked by a stakeholder to discuss
3 the Small Lot Subdivision ordinance from the perspective of a developer.
4 Both Mr. Murphy and John Reed listed the advantages of the ordinance.

5
6 Jed Pauker suggested that one more discussion of this issue take place prior
7 to an action being taken by LUPC regarding a recommendation to the Board.

8
9 John Reed asked for a straw poll of stakeholders present, asking for opinions
10 regarding a requirement that one unit of a three-unit development be
11 workforce affordable. Six stakeholders indicated they are in favor of this
12 option. One stakeholder indicated that three market rate units were preferred.
13 Twelve stakeholders expressed interest in acquiring more information. This
14 issue will be discussed again at the March 11, 2009 LUPC meeting.

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16 Jed Pauker moved to schedule this issue for discussion at two additional
17 LUPC meetings. There was unanimous consent.

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7. PUBLIC COMMENT

Use and Planning only.

10. ADJOURN