



# Venice Neighborhood Council



## LUPC APPLICATION

### Contact Information:

Qualifying Stakeholder Address (*Dirección*):

Print Name/ Nombre en letra de molde: <u>SYLVIA AROTH</u>			
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Phone (Day) / Teléfono (día)	Phone (Evening) / Teléfono (tarde)	Fax Number
<u>venicesylvia@gmail.com</u>		
Email / Correo Electrónico (very important)		

Contact Numbers:

I hereby certify, that I wish to serve on the Land Use and Planning Committee of the Venice Neighborhood Council and I am a Stakeholder within the boundaries of the VNC area.

Stakeholder Signature/ Firma [Signature] Date 5-11-11

Note: Stakeholders that did not registered as a VNC Stakeholder in one of the last two elections should register with the Secretary of the VNC at the June 15, 2010, Board of Officers Meeting. Please bring proof of stakeholder status with you to register.

# Venice Neighborhood Council

## +6LUPC APPLICATION

### Answers:

#### Let me answer the most important question first:

6) My vision for Venice is that it remain a “quintessential coastal village where people of all social and economic levels are able to live...” Where “diversity of lifestyle, income and culture typifies the ... community.” A place where progress, innovation and creativity are encouraged and welcomed. As I have the energy and desire, I will attend every meeting of the LUPC in the furtherance of my vision.

1) I have been a resident of Venice for most of the last 40+ years and love it here. Having watched the various transformations of Venice over the years, I would like to have a voice in the future development of my neighborhood/”city”.

My husband and I have owned and renovated over 20 residential and commercial properties, including 10 in Venice, since 1990. I know how the needs of developers, renters, and businesses intersect. We did our own designing and contracting. Prior to working in real estate full time, I was a CPA for over 20 years.

2) I was very involved in my real estate career which I enjoyed tremendously. I felt that my projects always offered added value and a win win for all parties. With the economic debacle late last decade, I had more free time to devote to volunteer opportunities that inspired me. I worked hard to elect Marcy Winograd for congress in 2010 and again in 2011. I have hosted monthly meetings of Westside Progressives at my home and we have been exploring our involvement in various local issues. I have worked on a few successful fundraising events for causes I believe in, including Alcott center for Mental Health Services and Archi’s Acres.

3) I believe the three most pressing planning and land use issues facing the Venice Community are gentrification at the expense of affordability and diversity, homelessness, and the planning of Lincoln Place and its role in the community.

4) I think the “PURPOSES” of the Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan are commendable, particularly F which is “to regulate all development...in order that it be compatible in character with the existing community and to ... consider ...

aesthetics, scenic preservation and enhancement, and to protect environmentally sensitive areas.” I concur with the permitting of exemptions or variances following the guidelines outlined on pages 4 and 5 of this application. I further believe that exceptions could be made to some of the restrictions involving aesthetic considerations, if an acceptable aesthetic alternative is presented.

I have read through both the Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan and the earlier Venice Land Use Plan.

5) In my interactions with developers, I would make every attempt to work out a win win partnership so that the project would enrich the community as well as the developer.

1. Change means progress, but must happen with sensitivity. It is the job of community planners to make sure change happens in a positive direction. As life styles change and technology advances, old rules and regulations should be revised. As our resources dwindle and our population expands, concessions must be made. Environmental sustainability should be a paramount concern. There should also be preservation of significant historical structures whenever possible, as well as renovation, restoration and reuse of existing buildings.
2. I believe the purpose of the LUPC is to hear the positions of all the parties impacted by the project; then to discuss these positions among the members until a decision can be reached. If trade offs can greatly benefit the entire community why not explore them?



# Venice Neighborhood Council



## LUPC APPLICATION

### Contact Information:

Qualifying Stakeholder Address (*Dirección*):

Print Name/ <i>Nombre el letra de Molde</i> : <b>Adam Christian</b>			
<b>245 Main St #311</b> Street address / <i>Dirección</i>	<b>Venice</b> City / <i>Ciudad</i>	<b>CA</b> State / <i>Estado</i>	<b>90291</b> Zip/ <i>Código Postal</i>

Mailing Address (if different):

Street address / <i>Dirección</i>	City / <i>Ciudad</i>	State / <i>Estado</i>	Zip/ <i>Código Postal</i>
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<b>(213) 321-7319</b> Phone (Day) / <i>Teléfono (día)</i>	Phone (Evening) / <i>Teléfono (tardé)</i>	Fax Number
<b>adam.christian@yahoo.com</b> Email / <i>Correo Electrónico</i> (very important)		

I hereby certify, that I wish to serve on the Land Use and Planning Committee of the Venice Neighborhood Council and I am a Stakeholder within the boundaries of the VNC area.

Stakeholder Signature/*Firma* \_\_\_\_\_ Date **6/13/2011**

Note: Stakeholders that did not registered as a VNC Stakeholder in one of the last two elections should register with the Secretary of the VNC at the **June 21, 2011** Board of Officers Meeting. Please bring proof of stakeholder status with you to register.

Adam Christian

June 13, 2011

## **LUPC Application to the Venice Neighborhood Council**

### **I. Why I wish to serve on the LUPC**

#### **Prior Service**

I have not previously served on the LUPC or any similar committee.

#### **Professional Qualifications / Related Experience**

In June 2009, I received a master's degree in urban planning from Harvard and have practiced for approximately 4 years in the fields of real estate development and infrastructure finance. As an analyst for an Orange County-based real estate advisory firm, I often engaged with planning and zoning issues in relation to economic revitalization projects that had to balance the developer's interests with those of the sponsoring city and local communities.

Presently, I am advising local and regional public-sector agencies on grant and other funding opportunities for major infrastructure projects, including subway and rail, parks, improvements associated with transit-oriented development, and green energy projects. Recent clients include the Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles (CRA/LA) and LA Metro, the regional transportation agency for Los Angeles County, and the California High Speed Rail Authority, among others.

### **2. Community Involvement**

I participate regularly in the Westside Urban Forum, a collaborative of land use, transportation, and real estate professionals who gather monthly to discuss solutions to the growth and mobility issues that most affect Westside communities, including Venice.

I am also a member of Urban Land Institute's Young Leaders Group, which is open to a wide range of professionals under the age of 35 who share a common interest in enhancing the quality of the built environment and the livability of Los Angeles through responsible land use and development practices.

I hope to deepen my involvement in the Venice community through the LUPC.

### **3. Three Most Pressing Planning + Land Use Issues in Venice**

- 1) **Parking.** The issue here is not so much the *quantity* of parking as the *pricing policies* that govern it. For instance, the lack of intercity coordination on Main Street means that on one block, the meters run until 10pm (Santa Monica), and on the next (Venice), only until 6pm, encouraging evening visitors to cruise Venice streets in search of free parking. In a rational universe, the pricing of parking would be responsive to demand and take into account convenience—for example, closer to the beach, parking on public streets and city-owned lots should cost more.

But this is not the case, and the current situation needlessly contributes to traffic congestion, especially on tourist-heavy beachgoing weekends.

- 2) **Affordable Housing.** Even with the recession and decline in real estate values, Venice is still unaffordable to most. Affordability levels are directly related to the lack of new supply. With the arrival of Google and ancillary businesses, there is likely to be even greater demand for housing and increased gentrification pressures. Projects at a variety of scales should be encouraged to integrate new housing into our existing neighborhood while maintaining Venice's low-rise, beachside character.
- 3) **Walkability.** The narrow and poorly maintained sidewalks undermine the overall pedestrian friendliness and cohesiveness of the neighborhood. To the extent that the proper implementation of zoning policies can help address this issue, the LUPC should exploit any opportunities to upgrade the quality of the public realm in tandem with new development.

#### **4. Exceptions/Variations to the VCZSP and VLUP**

- 1) Legalization of converted units. Some owners of single-family homes with detached garages or even some apartment buildings have created additional illegal units to rent out or accommodate additional family members. Under certain circumstances, these units may be justifiably legalized—on the condition that they be made permanently affordable units, for instance.
- 2) Relaxation of residential parking requirements in close proximity to “high-quality” transit corridors, generally defined as bus or rail service with 15-minute headways. Lincoln Boulevard and Main Street, for example. This would help encourage greater agglomerations of housing near transit.
- 3) Setback requirements on infill lots. Venice is known for its small, postage stamp-sized lots. Infill lots generally provide the only opportunities for new housing and other forms of new development. To make these projects financially viable, it may be appropriate to consider granting limited variances related to setback requirements.

#### **5. Opinion of Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan and Venice Land Use Plan**

The emphasis on the existing community character and preservation of coastal resources is thoughtfully articulated in the development and design standards.

That said, there are many, many subareas delineated in the VCZSP and VLUP! Each subarea may indeed be carefully adapted to specific neighborhood conditions, but the number of them also suggests a certain degree of fragmentation in the plans themselves. This may inadvertently compound the “follow-up” issue addressed in Question #6a below: with so many different sets of regulations, compliance may become more difficult to monitor and enforce.

There is also, in my opinion, too much emphasis in the Circulation Element on the identification of potential future parking areas, when these valuable parcels could be better replaced (or shared) with other uses. As noted previously in my answer to Question #3, a more effective management of the existing parking supply is just as important as the provision of new parking!

## 6. Views on Interactions with Developers

There should be nothing “private” or privileged about my interactions with developers who come before the LUPC. As a representative of the LUPC, I see my role as an information-gathering one – to learn as much as possible about the proposed development, and transmit that information back to the committee. If appropriate, I may be in a position to work collaboratively with the developer and advise him/her on how best to approach certain issues to which the committee or the community at large are known to be sensitive.

- a. **Follow Up.** Similar to the “one planner, one project” reform instituted by the Los Angeles City Planning Department, in which a single planner follows a project through the entire cycle of permits and approvals, the only truly effective way to verify the fulfillment of conditions imposed on a project is for the LUPC member most familiar with the project to track the project and report any potential violations to the relevant official Building and Safety. For this not to be an exercise in futility, there needs to be
- b. **Change.** “Change” in a community planning context is by definition a loaded term, because in many respects the planning process is set up to favor the *status quo*. An applicant before the LUPC must establish how a project fits into an established mold (ie. existing zoning and land use requirements). Additionally, the environmental review process posits a “no build” alternative as the baseline condition, challenging a project to demonstrate its lack of impacts. I believe that the LUPC can play a critical role in ensuring that the physical changes that inevitably do occur in our neighborhood improve, rather than detract from, the built environment. In terms of governance change, the LUPC has made the planning process more democratic by ensuring that a broader set of stakeholders are heard on important community issues.
- c. **Entitlements.** Currently, business owners in Los Angeles are required to own a certain number of parking spaces based on the size and type of business they run. These spaces can be “paper” spaces as opposed to real, physical spaces usable by customers. This entitlement system is broken and needs to be reformed. Not only is it a tax on new businesses and entrepreneurship, it doesn’t serve the local residents either. I endorse the approach of the Venice Coastal Parking Impact Trust Fund, which allow businesses to pay an in lieu fee for transportation-related improvements, including the addition of new parking spaces.

## 7. My Vision for Venice

Venice has a unique, distinctive identity as a hub of creativity, artistic innovation, diversity, and Southern California counterculture. The neighborhood has evolved over the past decade but remains fundamentally associated with this enduring set of values. My vision for Venice is to preserve and enhance this identity through an active voice in planning issues. By “enhance,” I am referring to some of the points I’ve highlighted above. Certain changes could make Venice more livable - better sidewalks and parking policies to manage traffic, for example. But for the most part, I want to keep it the way it is!



# Venice Neighborhood Council



## LUPC APPLICATION

### Contact Information:

Qualifying Stakeholder Address (*Dirección*):

Julia Rose Fischer  
219 North Venice Blvd  
Venice, CA 90291

Mailing Address (if different):

As above

Contact Numbers:

Phone (mobile): (914) 980-7570  
Email: ailujfischer@gmail.com

I hereby certify, that I wish to serve on the Land Use and Planning Committee of the Venice Neighborhood Council and I am a Stakeholder within the boundaries of the VNC area.

Stakeholder Signature/*Firma* \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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# Venice Neighborhood Council



**Answer all these questions; please limit your answers to 200 words or less each. Email to [Secretary@VeniceNC.org](mailto:Secretary@VeniceNC.org) and [Chair-LUPC@VeniceNC.org](mailto:Chair-LUPC@VeniceNC.org).**

Questions:

- 1) Please explain why you wish to serve on the LUPC.
  - a) Have you served before on the LUPC or other planning and land use related committee? If so, what committee and when?
  - b) Please state your professional qualifications or related experience relevant to this position.

It is Venice's unique sense of community that drew me here and has kept me here for the last six years. Who we are is defined by where we live, and where we choose to live says a lot about who we are. Buildings and spaces connect us to our community. A well-crafted neighborhood gives us a reason to get out and enjoy the company of our neighbors, businesses, and spaces and keeps us grounded. I wish to serve on the LUPC because I believe city planning is quite possibly the largest contributing factor to the definition of what makes a great neighborhood. Venice's stores, restaurants, buildings, homes and public spaces, make our neighborhood more than just a place we live. I am excited to be a part of preserving and enhancing our unique community. My professional qualifications include: (at present) Senior Project Manager at DHX/Wildbrain, where I manage the creation of a new transmedia/multi-platform children's intellectual property through a 30 million dollar grant from the Department of Education (I also co-developed and wrote the creative portion of the grant proposal); Project Manager at multiple toy companies, where I managed the creation of award-winning toys; and Founder/Director of the Play Library, a non-profit toy and game loan library for Venice and surrounding communities. I believe LUPC is the place where my creativity and enthusiasm can create positive change.

- 2) Please list your previous and/or current neighborhood or community involvement.

Currently, I am creating a non-profit toy and game loan library called the Play library, for Venice and surrounding communities. The Play Library will, in the future, also serve as a venue/an avenue to bring our neighbors closer together by bridging socio-economic gaps and creating a more wholesome sense of community. In addition to this I support local businesses to the best of my ability. I spend a lot of time on bike and on foot and frequent local merchants. I have attended most 1<sup>st</sup> Fridays on Abbot Kinney and have contributed to the Venice Art Walk and Garden tours (both of which I have also volunteered for). I attended the Bakery event to raise money for the Venice sign (remember that?) and try to give as much to the community as I take (i.e. making donations of furniture, clothing and magazines to non-profits in Venice). I believe good neighborhoods start with good neighbors and my Venice neighbors have become my friends. We keep each other connected and involved in the community.

- 3) Please list the three most pressing planning and land use issues you feel are facing the Venice Community.

1. **An increased number of (clean/safe) public spaces.** Create more playgrounds and parks, and require existing (private) lots (when not in use) to be used as public community spaces. Create spaces that allow individuals, families, and organizations to hold impromptu block parties, encourage neighborhood kids to go outside and play, and get older residents outside to plant gardens!
2. **Greater safety for alternative modes of transportation.** Especially in the summertime, Venice residents have little choice but to employ non-vehicular modes of transportation. Sit outside for one day and you will see skateboards, bikes, scooters, electric scooters, roller blades, roller skates, even unicycles go by. There are not nearly enough safety regulations ("alternative transportation lanes") in place. Aside from having too few bike lanes, skateboarders, scooter-riders and roller-bladers are at risk of serious injury. For a community that encourages and necessitates such alternative modes of transportation, we don't have enough safety measures in place.
3. **Parking.** Venice residents are good about using alternative transportation but life in LA almost requires us to own cars. Parking issues have been debated for years. I have a few ideas for our parking problems. 1. Allow residents to block their own driveways without being at risk for getting ticketed, 2. Give every new Venice resident a \$75 credit towards a bicycle or start a bicycle-sharing program (like the one in DC) and 3. Start a low-cost shuttle program on weekends in the summer-time that encourages non-residents to park east of Lincoln and shuttle to the beaches. This could also increase our revenue and improve the health of residents by the beach.



# Venice Neighborhood Council



- 4) Under what kinds of situations do you feel it to be appropriate to grant exceptions or variances to the Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan or other LA City Planning codes? *(Note the findings regarding these entitlements are listed below)*

Situations pertaining to schools, the safety of residents and historic preservation are situations where it may be appropriate to grant exceptions to the Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan or other planning codes. Situations where variance leads to betterment warrant this consideration.

- 5) Please review the Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan and the Venice Land Use Plan (which was certified by the California Coastal Commission) and comment on your opinion of each of them.

Both documents seem fair and well stated. However, especially the Land Use Plan, they are not user-friendly. The Land Use plan website is difficult to navigate. Residents should have access to both of these documents in a language that is more easily understood and a format that is much simpler to navigate.

I feel that the parking regulations and lack of references and rules regarding environmental considerations ("green" practices) in the document may be a bit outdated given the development that has occurred in the last few years (see parking suggestions above).

- 6) How do you view your role in private interactions with developers who have projects proposed before the Land Use and Planning Committee?

- a) Every community, including Venice, has problems with following up on conditions imposed on a project. How do you think the Venice Neighborhood Council should follow up on our conditioning process to see that conditions are met?
- b) Define "change," and what, if any, community-planning considerations, should govern "change." Include the correlation between built environment change and governance change.
- c) What is your view and VNC/LUPC action recommendation regarding the ability of a proposed commercial or residential development to receive physically nonexistent entitlements (i.e., parking), which will negatively impact surrounding developments?

Building a well designed website, an easy-to-use mobile app and general updates to the technology would greatly improve communication between LUPC and developers. Allowing residents easier access to documents/rules and regulations would lessen the stress on the LUPC.

In order to preserve the unique culture of our community, I think change should be enforced when it means improving the over-all happiness of the greatest number of residents. Built environment change, like more bike lanes, and governance change, like improving access between residents and the council by way of improvements/updates in technology, are considerations that should govern change.

Should a proposed development negatively impact surrounding developments, VNC/LUPC might consider finding a more suitable location for the proposed development or suggest an existing space/building be renovated to suit the needs of the developer. All factors would need to be evaluated before a recommendation could be made.

- 6) What is your Vision for Venice?

I often find myself looking for ways to work "I live in Venice" into a conversation. I am proud to live here because of its residents, its special places (i.e canals), and its businesses. My vision of Venice is not far off from where we are now: preserve our buildings, structures and history, showcase our schools, businesses, homes, and residents and to stay unique, stay creative and stay together.

(On a separate note, I thought it might be neat for "future Venice" to have a few boats/canoes available on the canals for residents to use for free and for tourists to enjoy for a small fee. Just an idea.)

**Access VCZSP at <http://cityplanning.lacity.org/complan/specplan/pdf/VenCoastal.pdf>.**

**Access Venice Land Use Plan at**

**<http://cityplanning.lacity.org/complan/othrplan/OPAREA/VENLUP.HTM>**



# Venice Neighborhood Council



## VARIANCES AND SPECIFIC PLAN EXCEPTIONS

### Sec. 562, Los Angeles City Charter

The Area Planning Commission may permit an exception from a specific plan if it makes all the following findings:

- (a) That the strict application of the regulations of the specific plan to the subject property would result in practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships inconsistent with the general purpose and intent of the specific plan;
  - (b) That there are exceptional circumstances or conditions applicable to the subject property involved or to the intended use or development of the subject property that do not apply generally to other property in the specific plan area;
  - (c) That an exception from the specific plan is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right or use generally possessed by other property within the specific plan area in the same zone and vicinity but which, because of special circumstances and practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships is denied to the property in question;
  - (d) That the granting of an exception will not be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements adjacent to or in the vicinity of the subject property; and
  - (e) That the granting of an exception will be consistent with the principles, intent and goals of the specific plan and any applicable element of the general plan.
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### Los Angeles Municipal Code, (LAMC) Chapter I, General Provisions & Zoning. Article 2, Sec. 12.27, Variances

D. Findings for Approval. The decision of the Zoning Administrator shall be supported by written findings of fact based upon evidence taken, written or oral statements and documents presented, which may include photographs, maps and plans, together with the results of any staff investigations.

Consistent with Charter Section 562, no variance may be granted unless the Zoning Administrator finds all of the following:

1. That the strict application of the provisions of the zoning ordinance would result in practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships inconsistent with the general purposes and intent of the zoning regulations
2. That there are special circumstances applicable to the subject property such as size, shape, topography, location or surroundings that do not apply generally to other property in the same zone and vicinity;
3. That the variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right or use generally possessed by other property in the same zone and vicinity but which, because of the special circumstances and practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships, is denied to the property in question
4. That the granting of the variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare, or injurious to the property or improvements in the same zone or vicinity in which the property is located; and
5. That the granting of the exception is consistent with the principles, intent and goals of the Specific Plan.



# Venice Neighborhood Council



## LUPC APPLICATION

### Contact Information:

Qualifying Stakeholder Address (*Dirección*):

<u>Print Name/Nombre el letra de Molde :</u>			
Steve Traeger	Venice	CA	90291
Street address / Dirección	City / Ciudad	State / Estado	Zip/ Código Postal

Mailing Address (if different):

Same as Above			
Street address / Dirección	City / Ciudad	State / Estado	Zip/ Código Postal

Contact Numbers:

(310) 458-8341	(310) 709-8322	N/A
<u>Phone (Day) / Teléfono (día)</u>	<u>Phone (Evening) / Teléfono (tardé)</u>	<u>Fax Number</u>
Traeger@gmail.com		
<b>Email / Correo Electrónico</b> (very important)		

I hereby certify, that I wish to serve on the Land Use and Planning Committee of the Venice Neighborhood Council and I am a Stakeholder within the boundaries of the VNC area.

Stakeholder Signature/*Firma* \_\_\_\_\_ Date June 13, 2011

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# Venice Neighborhood Council



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Questions:

1. Please explain why you wish to serve on the LUPC.

As a planning professional working for the City of Santa Monica, I found myself spending an inordinate amount of time and energy working on Santa Monica specific issues related to design review, code compliance and policy goals and objectives. As a stakeholder, living in Venice, I would very much like to get involved and make a positive contribution to the community in which I reside.

a) Have you served before on the LUPC or other planning and land use related committee? If so, what committee and when?

No, I have not had the opportunity to serve on the LUPC or any other Venice planning and land use related committee.

b) Please state your professional qualifications or related experience relevant to this position.

I have a Master of Architecture Degree, worked in a Pritzker Architectural Prize winning architect's office for approximately seven years, and have worked for the last five years as the Principal Urban Designer for the City of Santa Monica. In my professional work, I work closely with architects, designer, and developers to help "raise" the design bar and navigate the often complex and contentious City entitlement process. Current responsibilities include:

- i. Overseeing the daily activities of the Urban Design section of the City Planning Division related to development review, historic preservation, and implementation of the City's urban design goals and guidelines.
- ii. Directing the design review of new construction and infill projects to ensure adherence to urban design goals and policies as specified in the elements of the City's established General Plan, Specific Plans, Local Coastal Plan, zoning ordinances, and environmental review processes.
- iii. Providing leadership in the development and refinement of new and existing urban design goals and policies.



# Venice Neighborhood Council



2. Please list your previous and/or current neighborhood or community involvement.

Although I am currently not active within the Venice community, I am very involved in the Santa Monica community. On average, I attend three to four public meetings (City Council, Planning Commission, Landmarks Commission, and Architectural Review Board) per month and attend almost all Developer Agreement community meetings and Planning workshops. I am very interested in the opportunity to serve on the LUPC to involve myself with local neighborhood and community issues to help shape and guide the Venice of the future. Community involvement often helps identify areas of agreement thereby establishing a nexus between stakeholders that helps build community consensus.

3. Please list the three most pressing planning and land use issues you feel are facing the Venice Community.

- i. Circulation (traffic, parking, bicycles)
- ii. Homelessness
- iii. Balanced Development / Affordable Housing
- iv. Sustainability

4. Under what kinds of situations do you feel it to be appropriate to grant exceptions or variances to the Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan or other LA City Planning codes? *(Note the findings regarding these entitlements are listed below)*

Projects, in general, should be consistent with applicable rules, codes, and guidelines until such time as they no longer work. When this is the case, they should be revised to reflect changing community values or a variance granted. This is not to say, that the granting of a variance should be taken lightly. Where appropriate, when the findings can be made in the affirmative, a variance should be granted when minor relief is required to benefit the project and community as a whole. That is, due to some special circumstance or condition not applicable to other properties in the vicinity minor relief should be granted provided that it does not constitute a special privilege or preferential treatment and does not adversely impact the surrounding community. If minor relief truly and genuinely significantly improves a project thereby benefiting property owners and/or the community, it may be appropriate for a variance to be granted. As neither the Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan nor the LA City Planning codes can anticipate every circumstance or condition, decision makers and stakeholders should be reasonable and flexible in an effort to remedy the issue(s) on a case by case basis.

5. Please review the Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan and the Venice Land Use Plan (which was certified by the California Coastal Commission) and comment on your opinion of each of them.

The VCZSP and the Venice Land Use Plan appear guide development and take reasonable measures to preserve neighborhood character, scale, and mass without being overly prescriptive. Based on land use designations, development parameters are defined to establish maximum allowable heights, density, use, and setbacks (curiously, FAR and step backs requirements do not appear to be referenced). Within the defined building envelope, the VCZSP provides architects, designers, and developers with the flexibility to design creative and innovative architecture.

6. How do you view your role in private interactions with developers who have projects proposed before the Land Use and Planning Committee?

Interactions with applicants and developers who have projects proposed before the LUPC should be conducted in a manner that is consistent with the Brown Act. Discussions should aim to gain a clear understanding of the proposed project and feedback should focus on raising the design bar so that proposed projects, if approved, improve the built environment and add value to the community in a meaningful and sensitive manner.

- a) Every community, including Venice, has problems with following up on conditions imposed on a project. How do you think the Venice Neighborhood Council should follow up on our conditioning process to see that conditions are met?

Conditions of approval should be logged and tracked by LA City Planning staff. The VNC, LUPC and LA City Planning staff should then discuss and develop a monitoring program base on community input and priorities.

- b) Define "change," and what, if any, community planning considerations, should govern "change." Include the correlation between built environment change and governance change.

Change is often difficult but generally healthy and positive in the long run. While conserving neighborhood character and preserving specified historic resources has positive impacts, neighborhoods should evolve and be permitted to change over time. Policy goals and objectives should strive to maintain neighborhood scale and character while allowing for neighborhoods to transition and change for the better.



# Venice Neighborhood Council



- c) What is your view and VNC/LUPC action recommendation regarding the ability of a proposed commercial or residential development to receive physically nonexistent entitlements (i.e., parking), which will negatively impact surrounding developments?

Any development that receives physically nonexistent entitlements that negatively impact surrounding developments should, where possible, give back and mitigate the impact in the form of a “public benefit”. If the project is “legal non-conforming”, however, the project impacts should be “grandfathered”. If and when the project loses its legal status, the project should then be required to comply with current codes, rules, and regulations.

## 7. What is your Vision for Venice?

A place of beauty, creativity, and individuality.

Access VCZSP at <http://cityplanning.lacity.org/complan/specplan/pdf/VenCoastal.pdf>.

Access Venice Land Use Plan at <http://cityplanning.lacity.org/complan/othrplan/OPAREA/VENLUP.HTM>

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- (a) That the strict application of the regulations of the specific plan to the subject property would result in practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships inconsistent with the general purpose and intent of the specific plan;
  - (b) That there are exceptional circumstances or conditions applicable to the subject property involved or to the intended use or development of the subject property that do not apply generally to other property in the specific plan area;
  - (c) That an exception from the specific plan is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right or use generally possessed by other property within the specific plan area in the same zone and vicinity but which, because of special circumstances and practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships is denied to the property in question;
  - (d) That the granting of an exception will not be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements adjacent to or in the vicinity of the subject property; and
  - (e) That the granting of an exception will be consistent with the principles, intent and goals of the specific plan and any applicable element of the general plan.
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Los Angeles Municipal Code, (LAMC)  
Chapter 1, General Provisions & Zoning.  
Article 2, Sec. 12.27, Variances



# Venice Neighborhood Council



D. Findings for Approval. The decision of the Zoning Administrator shall be supported by written findings of fact based upon evidence taken, written or oral statements and documents presented, which may include photographs, maps and plans, together with the results of any staff investigations.

Consistent with Charter Section 562, no variance may be granted unless the Zoning Administrator finds all of the following:

1. That the strict application of the provisions of the zoning ordinance would result in practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships inconsistent with the general purposes and intent of the zoning regulations
2. That there are special circumstances applicable to the subject property such as size, shape, topography, location or surroundings that do not apply generally to other property in the same zone and vicinity;
3. That the variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right or use generally possessed by other property in the same zone and vicinity but which, because of the special circumstances and practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships, is denied to the property in question
4. That the granting of the variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare, or injurious to the property or improvements in the same zone or vicinity in which the property is located; and
5. That the granting of the exception is consistent with the principles, intent and goals of the Specific Plan.