

Venice Neighborhood Council

Parking Subcommittee Report 2009-2010 (4/20)

Chair: James Murez ( murez@venice.net )

Meetings Conducted: Mercedes Bar and Grill, 14 Washington Bl., @ 3:00 PM

**Recommendations:** The Parking Committee should continue so long as individuals want to help make progress in this area. A lot of what is required at present has to do with compiling data that can be turned over to the City to act on.

Additionally, the creation of an Abbot Kinney parking lot will allow the City the leeway to enforce the present violators and offer a solution that will not require putting anyone out of business for lack of parking. This is going to be a major political battle if the VNC wants to have the City enforce the rules without having a viable solution such as this one. At the same time, creating a parking option of this type for property owners will result in a significant property value increase as all commercial uses along this corridor are allowed to buy into an offsite solution.

### Issues Reviewed

**1976 Vs. Present Inventory:** One of the great mysteries of parking in Venice is what existed when the LAMC created the requirement to provide on-site parking. In the following year, the California Coastal Act became empowered and the requirement ratio in coastal zones increased. This point in time is what sets the standards for "Grandfather Rights" because anything that did not comply was allowed to continue to exist so long as there was no change of use which caused an intensification of use.

On the flip side, newly created spaces since this point in time that are not required by a new project are considered unrestricted and may be used to offset other requirements. Many of these parking spaces exist as a result of the BIZ (Beach Impact Zone) requirement in the Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan. Assuming an inventory of these spaces can be created with the help of the City, a preferential parking zone could be created at a one-to-one ratio to those which were identified as above the requirement.

**Red curbs:** There are many painted red curbs that create restrictions that don't appear to make any sense of the street uses that exist today. These restrictions, after surveying several of the sites in question, will require the Dept. of Trans. to correct.

**Sightseeing Bus Zones:** There are several of these special zones in the Windward Ave. and Pacific Ave. region of Venice. These zones are very space consuming and the restrictions are posted 24/7. Several residents and business owners in the areas of these zones feel it is unfair for these zones to remove the street parking in front of their properties. This is especially bad in the early evening and overnight, when people coming home from work have no place to park even though the sightseeing buses have already gone because Ocean Front Walk is closed. In addition, I heard several

complaints about these buses leaving their engines idling because they need to keep the interior air conditioners running so the customers return to a cool bus – but what they don't seem to understand is that they are idling outside of someone's window and the exhaust from the diesel engines is very unpleasant. (Existing signage reminding bus drivers, nor asking them nicely, to stop their engines does not seem help solve this ongoing problem.)

**Diagonal Parking Streets:** Several of the original Venice Cannels which are now streets are wide enough to be used in a different configuration that might include creating a median strip with parallel parking, perpendicular parking, diagonal parking or some combination of these. These street alterations could create as many as 1000 additional parking spaces in the area East of Main Street on the west and West of Abbot Kinney on the east and North of Venice Blvd. including Rivera, Market, Windward, San Juan and Grand. However, the residents on these streets are very concerned with changing their neighborhoods and making them into a visitor parking lot or, worse yet, making up the shortcoming in the Abbot Kinney business district. However, these concerns might be addressed by creating a preferential parking zone. In early conversations with the Coastal Commission, under these conditions where new stalls would be created, such a zone change would be allowed at a one-to-one ratio.

### **Abbot Kinney District**

**Parking Structure:** About a year ago, I proposed the construction of a parking structure at Westminster Elementary School and, since then, the Council Office has held a few preliminary meetings to test the water with LAUSD. The lot is proposed to be constructed on the northern end of the campus and early estimates suggest the lot size might create as many as 500 new parking stalls. In one of the early meetings, LAUSD made it clear something might be possible along these lines of a joint project with the City to create and operate the lot. However, the local school must buy into any project and they have several reservations about keeping the funds generated by the lot at their school. Later this month, I plan to meet with these folks at the school to get a first hand understanding of their concerns and see if their needs can be addressed.

**Code Enforcement:** This is the single biggest issue affecting this business district. Several of the meetings this committee held were focused on this topic. Between the buildings that have been built in recent years as Artist-In-Residences but which are being used as full retail without appropriate parking and all the old houses that have been converted into retail stores again without parking, an already horrible condition has turned into an even worse one.

**Valets:** Another condition that is causing the parking conditions to be so bad are valets. When these guys start coning off public spaces on the street and rotating their cars into and out of them, no one that wants to visit can do so without paying their

hefty fees. In this case, there are two legal Valet Zones on AK, one in front of Hal's and the other in front of Joe's restaurant. Although they are not creating more cars, these services are taking away public parking by parking the cars on the street and not in off street private lots. Enforcement here might include LAPD requiring the valet services to remove their cones from the street, as clearly this is a violation.

**Restricted Access:** A few of the buildings on AK have parking lots that were intended to serve the retail portion of the building. However, they are kept locked and not available to the general public. In addition, some of the businesses on AK are required to provide parking as a condition of their permit and, for whatever reason, they don't. It should be easy for the City to correct both of these conditions, and it is clear that without their involvement, the property owners will not do it on their own.

### **Stakeholder Participation**

Daytime meetings seem hard for most residents and business owners to participate in. Nights meetings, although easier to attend, don't allow site visits where issues can be reviewed first hand between the group members. Parking issues are very site specific in many cases, and everyone seems to have a special set of conditions that need to be addressed.

**My Maps:** The Certified Neighborhood Council Tracking system allows Stakeholders to create a personal profile. Once created, they can go to the My Maps tab and enter a push pin on a map of the area. The push pin will describe a parking condition they feel needs further investigation by the VNC Parking Committee. These maps will then be compiled and turned over to the Council Office and LA City Department of Transportation for their review.

**StakeholderParking.com:** This website was developed as a possible solution for landlords who have an extra parking space or more and want to rent them out to individuals in the community. The system allows individuals to create an account, look up a parking lot, and purchase a parking pass that they can then print and hang in their car window.

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