

Sycamore Square Neighborhood Association February Session Minutes

February 5, 2017

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by President Conrad Starr at 9:10am. Board members present included Mr. Starr, Charla Gardner, Joshua Kirchmer, Steve Senigram, and Sue Horwitz. Neighbors were also present, including Myrna Dwyer, Marcia Henning, Vicki Jenkins. Margaret Taylor, Brad Conroy, Steve Anavin, Eric Needleman, and Jem from the Firestone project. Xxx from BevMo.

Rachel Fridman, Myrna Dwyer, Robert Vecccio, Sarah Cohen,

President Conrad Starr called the meeting to order at 9:07am.

Sue Horwitz joined the meeting at 9:10am.

Ms. Gardner moved to move approval the end of the agenda. The motion was unanimously approved by the board.

Firestone Project Presentation

Margaret Taylor explained that Mr. Conroy had been wanting to transform the historic building for some time. The planning process has been expedited, the hearing for the plan will likely be in May. The application is for the alcohol "beverage" permit, or a restaurant with a secondary microbrewery, limited on-site beer manufacturing. It has to be a bona fide eating place, by that meaning it has to have a kitchen, menu, and beer manufacturing must be secondary. Beer manufacturing and sale is severely limited, and no off-site consumption. No live entertainment, dance-floor, etc. Not a bar application, it must have the restaurant component. Owner of the site is committed to preserving historic portions of the building. Larger grain silo reduces number of refill trips. One restaurant operator, three separate menu concepts. One operator selling beer.

Retail use will reflect the history of the building. The idea is for a neighborhood gathering place, not destination dining. 20 parking spaces from the Church down the street, with an attendant, more can be provided. Valet parking locations will likely be 700-800 feet away, they are planning for that and exploring options. Dedicated rideshare dropoff/pickup, exploring a curb-cut in on 8th Street in order to allow cars to pull over into the space. Targeting deliveries between 7am and 3pm, deliveries along La Brea. Inquired if the board would support deliveries on the La Brea side before 7am. One security guard from 3pm til half an hour after closing to help with compliance and loitering. Roving employee to address trash at frontages.

Board member Fuller asked: Parking, perhaps you'll need more than 20 spots. It is a premium property. Believes it will be a destination, and it will be a great space, but that means traffic. How can you discourage your customers from parking on the neighborhood streets?

Ms. Taylor replied that they're accommodating rideshare as an alternative to valet. Menu items are more affordable, to encourage neighborhood-feel. Independent studies have said that alcohol sale increases use of rideshare. They are being proactive about exploring further parking options.

Ms. Fuller pointed out that the space has been used in the past for other spaces. Mr. Conroy said that no restaurants have used the space for valet for a year. The Firestone project has secured exclusive rights to the valet parking at the Church on La Brea.

Mr. Conroy spoke about developing the project. Explained that it was his intention to develop the site as a partner and to pick people who are experienced and trusted in running the operation of the space.

Ms. Fuller expressed her other concern, which was the 2AM closing, and asked if the Project would consider an earlier closing time. Ms. Taylor said that the project would take this into considering. Ms. Taylor explained that the ABC rule prohibits sale of alcohol after 1:30am.

Ms. Gardner voiced concern for deliveries not being made in accordance with guidelines and asked how enforcement of deliveries will be done. She explained briefly the issues with the loading dock and Essex. Ms. Gardner pointed out the problem with the homeless population possibly camping out on the outside tables. Ms. Gardner inquired about alcohol sales from a single vendor would remain permanent. Ms. Gardner inquired about security of alcohol sales prior to 3pm.

Mr. Starr asked the neighborhood for input. Neighborhood asked about parking at Essex, they are open to parking in the building.

Ms. Fuller asked about the new structure for coffee sales, and the Project.

Mr. Starr asked if alcohol will be served after kitchen is closed. "No", Ms. Taylor replied.

Gases odors from kitchen were brought up as concerns for the neighborhood.

Workers on-site - Mr. Starr would like to ensure number of spaces provided for workers are commensurate and enforced.

Has the valet been hired?, Mr. Starr asked. A few are in consideration, Ms. Taylor replied.

On 8th street, parking displacement is a concern of Mr. Starr's.

Are you talking with Metro about how their project will impact your construction, Mr. Starr asked.

Ms. Taylor said that the projected completion for the project is the end of 2017.

Mr. Starr called a 2 minute recess at 9:55am

Mr. Starr called the meeting to order at 9:59am. Board member Steve Senigram joined the meeting. Upon discussion, approval of minutes from October and November of 2016 were postponed on account of members not able to provide notes on them at this time.

Ms. Fuller moved to approved Jan 2017 minutes as amended. Charla seconded. The motion passed.

Officer Reports

Treasury Report - Mr. Senigram expressed the pushback he was facing with opening a DBA account for the funds for the Board.

Committee Reports

HPOZ - nothing to report

GWNC - Ms. Horwitz is not in attendance, will be asked in March about previous meetings.

Outreach Committee - Mr. Starr, now being on the committee itself, explained that there is a homeless issue and preliminary results from the Homeless Count show a 100% increase in population along the western corridor. CD4 provided tables and chairs for meeting. Wallet cards with services are being produced, Mr. Starr is exploring obtaining these cards so that neighbors can have them at their disposal. Regarding Measure S, there will be a Forum later this month. Mr. Starr will let board know about details so they may be passed on to neighborhood. Disaster Emergency Preparedness meetings, details to come. Los Angeles Congress of Neighborhood Councils will be in September.

Old Business-

Open Board Seat - No new information

Ordinance Traffic Mitigation - Essex - Mr. Starr paraphrased the letter from Councilman Ryu putting Essex on notice about mitigation measures. Mr. Starr explained that no final Traffic Study has been done, though STS has expressed that the Traffic Study will move forward, a conference call to discuss details of the study. Ms. Gardner expressed frustration that things are not moving as quickly as we have had meetings with DOT, CD4, STS. Mr. Starr said that he

would follow-up with CD4 after their conference call this week regarding mitigations. Regarding petition signature verification, Mr. Starr explained that CD4 has been using phone numbers to spot check the signatures ahead of the traffic study.

Ms. Gardner expressed interest in knowing more information about the traffic study, what the cables are doing on the streets. Ms. Gardner also expressed interest in obtaining the number of tickets issued by LAPD in the neighborhood. Ms. Gardner expressed interest in obtaining our own documentation to help with traffic mitigations in the future.

Metro Center Opening - Mr. Starr and Ms. Fuller attended the metro meeting in January. The Center Opening is now scheduled from Feb-Dec 2017. Regarding Business Interruption, some funds have been identified to help businesses that were not covered by the Fund. Mr. Starr said he would ask what improvements would be made in accordance with traffic mitigations. Regarding dust, neighborhood requested to ask Metro if they will be using water to dampen dirt and reduce dust.

Essex - Since Ms. Horwitz is absent from the meeting, no updates were provided.

BevMo! - Mr. Starr explained BevMo's response to our questions: They provided good experiences with neighbors, but no negative experiences. Mr. Starr expressed that if the board wanted to look into the negative issues, someone could scour the internet for such issues. Ms. Gardner volunteered. BevMo would be happy to present to the SSNA in March. BevMo applied for longer hours but stated their usual hours are 9-9. BevMo said they negotiated 6 parking spots for their employees, up from one. No in-store security, but they have video. They seem open to having a line of communication with SSNA and store management.

Land Use/HPOZ - Since new R1 zones will be rolled out to Neighborhoods whose ICOs are expiring in 2017, will we likely not see them until later since our ICO does not expire until March 2017. Ms. Gardner asked to add an agenda item for R1 Zones/BMO.

Walking Tour - Sunday February 12th and the 19th will be walking tours. Sycamore Square on the 12th, Harvard Heights on the 19th.

Mr. Senigram exited the meeting at 11:11am.

Roads- Mr. Starr reported that 8th street repaving has been postponed likely because of ongoing rain. Neighborhood is concerned about how repaving would affect construction as well as exiting from their residence on to 8th, and a revised timeline is needed. Neighborhood expressed issues with white lines and street repairs. Mr. Kirchmer volunteered to email the neighbor to educate him about the MyLA311.

New Business

Proposed bylaw revision - Mr. Star read the amendment to the bylaws regarding board terms.

Ms. Fuller proposed a motion: To replace in section VI.1 "...two-year renewable terms..." with "...renewable terms roughly equivalent to one year." and to insert "and end upon the following year's Officer elections." after "Their term of office shall start upon election."

Original: "Officers will serve two-year renewable terms. Their term of office shall start upon election."

Revised: "Officers will serve renewable terms roughly equivalent to one year. Their term of office shall start upon election and end upon the following year's Officer elections."

Ms. Gardner seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

The board's next meeting was scheduled for Sunday Feb 5th at 9am. Mr. Kirchmer will let all members of the board know the schedule of the next meeting.

CGI Development - 12-story development on NW corner of La Brea and Wilshire. An assortment of Neighborhood groups have been in contact with one another in order to present a united front to the developers.

Ms. Gardner expressed interest to have the SSNA to join the group. Mr. Starr said that no decisions in the group would be made outside the meeting, that it is in a preliminary state at the moment. A call is scheduled for the following week. Mr. Starr agreed to forward the information to Ms. Fuller and Ms. Gardner.

Board Comments

Ms. Fuller said that Firestone will be presenting to the Land Use Committee and that SSNA should have something ready to tell the Land Use Committee regarding our position on the project. Ms. Gardner agreed to attend the Land Use Committee and email a statement ahead of time explaining the concerns of the SSNA. Mr. Starr and Ms. Gardner will meet and draft a statement that will be disseminated to the board.

Ms. Gardner moved that the SSNA report to the Land Use Committed that the SSNA does not support the project at the Firestone building as it is currently presented. Ms. Fuller seconded the motion.

Ms. Gardner is hesitant to presentation a position of "no position" because that may allow Land Use to adopt a position and limit our own input in the future.

Ms. Fuller proposed an amended motion: She moves that we applaud the developers for their efforts in creating an attractive neighborhood serving use that preserves and enhances this historic neighborhood property, but that we currently oppose the project as currently presented because we have concerns about parking, seating, hours, and other elements which have not yet been fully addressed by the development.

Ms Gardner added “noise, security” to the motion.

The motion now reads:

She moves that we applaud the developers for their efforts in creating an attractive neighborhood serving use that preserves and enhances this historic neighborhood property, but that we oppose the project as currently presented because we have concerns about parking, seating, hours, noise, security and other elements which have not yet been fully addressed by the development.

Ms. Gardner seconded the amended motion and withdrew her prior motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Fuller expressed interest in having a special meeting ahead of the Land Use Committee Meeting to discuss further development.

Mr. Starr commented regarding information about comments made from Mr. Senigram about squatters located at the Brooks residence at 835. S. Orange. Mr. Starr will draft an email to the owners of the property to address security.

Mr. Starr recognized the developments in the neighborhood that could improve the lives of those in the neighborhood and looks forward to proposing motions in the future to encourage continued proactive measures from the Board.

Public Comments

Myrna commented that the board is doing a good job dealing with the issues. She is concerned about 835 South Orange’s homeless issue. She expressed wanting to increase outreach to the neighborhood

Vicki complimented the board on their dedication the the neighborhood.

Marsh commented that there is excessive noise from Essex trucks around the building that she owns on the 700 block of Sycamore.

Scheduling of Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for Sunday March 5th at 9am. Mr. Kirchmer will communicate the scheduling to the board members not present.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:17pm.

February 23, 2016

Sycamore Square Neighborhood Association Special Meeting

Call To Order

Called to order at 6:33pm by President Conrad Starr.

Board members Sue Horwitz, Steve Senigram, and Joshua Kirchmer are in attendance.

Neighbors Joanna Dejourni Stan Genser are in attendance.

Mr. Starr presented a brief summary of events regarding the Metro Center Opening and Traffic mitigations in Sycamore Square. Communications from CD4 and STS were presented.

Board Comments

Ms. Horwitz expressed concern that we would not get the mitigations.

Public Comments

If the Center Opening is already moving forward, why should we support it for "Brownie points" if there's nothing to gain. Stan expressed concern that the traffic study would be insufficient and there's no guarantee that the DOT would say that any mitigations

Joanna noted that It doesn't seem that we can stop this train, our response should be in good faith and worded appropriately. Stan agreed.

We should be specific as to what we want regarding mitigations.

Mr. Starr explained the mitigations that were laid out in the ordinance.

Steve - the bottom line is that they're going to open it, and that it will expedite the work. Great, let them open it up and get out of here, we still want to proceed with applying pressure regarding the mitigations.

Sue - Be specific about our wants. We want to see the study and the opportunity to challenge the findings, and point to the mitigations we've been consistent about and we've that into our

response. That the players in this will continue to support the application of these mitigations in our neighborhood.

Mr. Starr explained that the Board could empower him to write a letter to CD4 and STS within the scope of the topics discussed.

Ms. Horwitz made a motion to write a letter to CD4 stating that we support the CO with conditions that refer to the letter dated Feb 9 and details the mitigations that Sycamore Square has been working on getting completed with the Council Office.

Mr. Starr moved to amend the motion by striking “that Sycamore Square has been working on getting completed with the Council Office.” and inserting in it’s place “referred to in the Ordinance with 5200 Wilshire”.

The other board members expressed agreement to the amendment.

The amended motion now reads: we write a letter to CD4 stating that we support the CO with conditions that refer to the letter dated Feb 9 and details the mitigations referred to in the Ordinance with 5200 Wilshire.”

The board voted unanimously on the amendment.

Mr. Starr moved to amend the motion by striking “we” and replacing it with “SSNA Board President”.

The amended motion now reads: “SSNA Board President write a letter to CD4 stating that we support the CO with conditions that refer to the letter dated Feb 9 and details the mitigations referred to in the Ordinance with 5200 Wilshire.”

Unanimous approval was given from the Board.

The motion passed.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:04pm