

Harbor Gateway North Neighborhood Council
Planning & Land Use Committee
February 6, 2021
Held via Zoom Webinar

Present: John Ward (Chair), Sylwia Jonasen (Secretary), Ivan Cotton, Senita Craigen, Helen Greene, Vanessa Johnson, La Juana Mitchell, Fred Nichols, Rosalie Preston, Janeshia Robinson, Luetta Watson

1) [10:07 AM] John Ward, PLU Chair, welcomed everyone and acknowledged those members of the Committee who joined the meeting early. He also welcomed Daniel Williams and Hatim Fatehi from HCIDLA, and Caitlin Muldoon from CD15. Roll call followed.

2) [10:09 AM] General Public Comment on non-agenda items. There were no comments.

3) [10:10 AM] Approval of the December 5, 2020, Planning and Land Use Committee minutes. Motion to approve the minutes made by Rosalie Preston; seconded by Janeshia Robinson. Motion passed 10-0-0.

4) [10:15 AM] Oversized duplexes options for the community – report from Housing and Community Investment Department (HCIDLA) representatives.

John Ward introduced Daniel Williams, Acting Chief Inspector, HCIDLA, and Hatim Fatehi, Interim Principal Inspector, HCIDLA.

John Ward gave overview of the issues that our stakeholders have been facing regarding the oversized duplexes on R2 parcels. They are built in areas of one-story homes and older duplexes and the issues that have been brought to our attention include: height, air flow, renting them as boarding houses or recovery centers, no tenant rules/no management of the property, and inadequate onsite parking. There are many unrelated families or people in the same unit with a breakdown of following rules and laws of decorum and respect for other neighbors. There is possible misuse v the zoning in the area as the understanding was that the larger duplexes are built to accommodate larger families.

Daniel Williams stated that the LADBS approves plans for these buildings. However, the issues relating to code violations should be documented and then his office can address these.

Hatim Fatehi stated that they are receiving complaints that properties are being used as boarding house or multiple families are using it as renting units. There was a discussion between the LADBS, the Planning Department, City's Attorney Office-Land Use Section, and the HCIDLA Code Enforcement. Newer duplexes as well as those older ones under RSO (Rent Stabilization Order) are leased out with leases longer than 30 days, which does not trigger an audit by the enforcement office. This is an issue for the city and they are planning to meet again as to how to approach this situation based on existing laws and possible changes to the laws.

Rosalie Preston, brought up that the duplexes are supposed to create more affordable housing. Measure should be developed to ensure that they are rented in an affordable manner.

Hatim Fatehi, stated that these decisions are made at the Planning Department. Housing Code Enforcement can only enforce existing code applicable to unapproved uses and occupancy issues for properties with at least two units on the lot with unit being a rental unit. Inspectors can issue citations only if they can enter a unit and observe evidence of a violation. HCIDLA inspects each unit under RSO every four years or when there is a complaint.

As to the number of people living in the rental unit, if during an inspection there is a clear violation (e.g., 30 beds in 3 bedroom house) the inspectors will create a case and document this violation. However, if there are 2 people living in each bedroom, that would not trigger a violation.

Noise should be reported to LAPD for nuisance abatement. Front yard parking violations can be reported to Department of Building and Safety: <https://www.ladbsservices2.lacity.org/OnlineServices/?service=rav>

Caitlin Muldoon asked that the vehicles that are abandoned or have been double-parked on the street to be reported to 1.800.ABANDON (1.800.222.6366). Once it is reported and the department has not addressed the issue, please email Caitlin directly caitlin.muldoon@lacity.org - please send the date it was reported, address of vehicle, license plate #, make and model of vehicle.

David Matthews asked how many of the reported issues related to the duplexes are actually not violations. Daniel Williams stated that they do receive reports that are not violations.

5) [10:48 AM] Discussion of potential experts and consultants to assist PLU Committee with the review of the draft Environmental Impact Report for the Prologis warehouse at 15116-15216 S. Vermont Avenue; 747-861 W. Redondo Beach Blvd. (ENV-2017-1015-EIR), in District 3, with a possible recommendation to the Board

[Rosalie Preston recused herself for the duration of the discussion and vote on this agenda item.]

John Ward summarized the process we took to search for additional candidates and that both are members of the Association of Environmental Professionals and both are within the budget for this project. He gave overview of his experience and opinion on both candidates.

Fred Nichols asked that to the extent we could do business with those located within the City of Los Angeles would be best.

John Ward verified that Crable and Associates is in Altadena and Brian Cornelius is in San Pedro.

Luetta Watson stated that we should choose a candidate that has appropriate credentials. Brian Cornelius' resume doesn't have enough of environmental review experience and feels inadequate.

[10:53 AM Vanessa Johnson joined the meeting]

Janeshia Robinson agrees with Luetta and was more at ease with the breadth of different projects that Crable and Associates presented.

[Public Comment] Erica Payne said her bedroom is within 30 feet from the site. Whoever we hire to do the environmental study they should contact her to understand the full impact.

John Ward clarified that we are hiring a consultant to review the draft EIR report and help prepare the HGNNC response. There will be a public comment option to voice her concerns.

La Juana Mitchell: the reason we need the consultant is so that our response to the City on the draft EIR contains a technical aspect and language.

[Public Comment] Dr. Tom Williams, stated that the central issue with the consultant choice is scoping session, which closes on February 15, 2021, so that the community's voice of what the alternatives should be for this project area. His suggestion is to go with Crable and Associates.

Fred Nichols asked if we should present both candidates to the HGNNC Board and allow them to choose.

John Ward said that the PLU Committee should make a recommendation to the Board.

Luetta Watson moved to vote on selecting either Brian Cornelius or Crable and Associates as the consultant to review the draft EIR; seconded by Sylwia Jonasen. Motion passed 8-0-2 (Greene, Ward) with Crable and Associates receiving 8 votes.

John Ward asked if he should communicate to Crable and Associates the selection pending the HGNNC Board's vote.

Fred Nichols stated that we do not communicate with either consultant until the Board votes. Luetta Watson supported Fred's statement.

[Rosalie Preston returned to the meeting at 11:20 a.m.]

6) [11:21 AM] Discussion on proposed 84 unit, transit-oriented community apartment building with 20 low-income units, 11630 S. Main Street (ZA-2020-7786-TOC-ZAI-SPR-HCA; ENV-2020-7787-EAF), in District 7

John Ward gave a summary of his call with the developer of the building, a non-profit organization that is the largest section 8 housing developer in the City of LA, and which has the support of Council District 15 and Department of City Planning. The developer chose not to participate at this time in our meeting and told John that their project is “by right” and that no public hearing will be required.

Luetta Watson said that the developer’s attitude showed a lack of respect and wanted to bring up that the developer proposes to designate Main Street as the front yard of the building, which is an affront to the community and racist and in negation to the Equity Day presentation (January 21, 2021). Asked that the PLU Committee writes a letter to the Department of City Planning Equity Office and Councilman Buscaino voicing our objection to the project since it’s not aligning with the statements presented on Equity Day.

La Juana Mitchell visited the solaimpact.com website to look at the project. It looks different from the rendering on the proposal submitted to the city. Also, based on the Google street view all the buildings in the area are single-family homes. This 6-story building does not seem to provide transition in height on the east side and will create the issues of airflow, shade, and parking issues (proposed 42 parking spaces for 84 units) that the Committee has discussed in the past in relation to other developments.

Vanessa Johnson stated that according to the Southeast LA Community Plan, Main Street was limited to 3 stories. However, the other project on Main Street (Dahlia Apartments) was allowed to build 5 stories. Now this project has 6 stories. Her concern is builder’s attitude of not wanting to talk to the PLU Committee.

Rosalie Preston suggested a more detailed conversation at the next meeting with the project applicant in attendance. Her main concern is the proposed flat façade of the building on the Main Street side, which makes it look like a parking garage and this particular proposed look is not as attractive as other projects that SoLA has built elsewhere in South LA according to their website. The attitude towards the community is disrespectful. The project needs to have more landscaping on Main Street and underground the power lines.

Janeshia Robinson agrees with other members and wants to see the project better designed. The proposed look is not attractive and does not look like an apartment building. She doesn’t want to start a trend that this is going to be the new look of Main Street.

Luetta Watson brought up that our area is constantly designated as Tier 3 per the Transit Oriented Communities (TOC) Guidelines.

Rosalie Preston stated that it would be useful to have an item on the agenda for the next meeting to have a discussion on TOC and maybe have someone from the Department of City Planning to attend and clarify those guidelines.

Fred Nichols recommended that the CEO of the company listens to our meeting.

John Ward said that he will try to convince them to come to our next meeting.

7) [12: 08 PM] Reports:

- a. Harbor LA Community Plans - StoryMap Comment Deadline Extended to February 26.
Rosalie Preston encouraged everyone living in Districts 1 through 5 to comment on the StoryMap.
- b. Proposed Prologis warehouse draft EIR release for public comment.
John Ward gave an update that the draft EIR is delayed and he will keep the PLU Committee updated on release date.
- c. City Planning Commission Equity Day on January 21 - public comment still possible.
Rosalie Preston stated that the email regarding the Equity Day had link for the comments on issues where equity is involved.

[Public Comment] Dr. Tom Williams: Metro and Port LA in Long Beach decided that based on equity they would not pursue anymore rail because it would impact equity because the truck drivers are more community-based than railroad personnel. There will be more trucks on the road and that will impact the air quality in the area.

8) [12:13 PM] Announcements.

Rosalie Preston, brought up a demolition notice has been received for 156 E 119th Street.

9) Next meeting: Saturday, March 6, 2021 @ 10 AM

Meeting adjourned: 12:15 PM

Minutes taken by Sylwia Jonasen, PLU Committee Secretary

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