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**Harbor Gateway North Neighborhood Council
Planning & Land Use Committee
Held via Zoom Webinar
May 1, 2021**

Present: John Ward (Chair), Laurel Casey, Senita Craigen, Helen Greene, Vanessa Johnson, La Juana Mitchell, Rosalie Preston, Rey Quiroz, Janeshia Robinson, Luetta Watson

- 1) [10:08 AM] Welcome/introductions: John Ward, PLU Chair, called the meeting to order followed by the pledge of allegiance, a moment of silence, and roll call.
- 2) [10:13 AM] General Comments – NONE
- 3) [10:17 AM] Approval of April 3, 2021 Planning & Land Use Committee meeting minutes. Motion was made by La Juana Mitchell to approve the minutes; motion was seconded by Rosalie Preston. **Motion passed 10-0-0.**
- 4) [10:20 AM] PowerPoint presentation by Blair Smith, Planner with the citywide housing policy team of the Department of City Planning, regarding the Transit Oriented Communities (TOC) guidelines.

John Ward introduced Blair Smith and explained that the purpose of the presentation was for the PLU Committee to obtain a better understanding of how the TOC guidelines are applied to projects and impact apartment density, parking, open space, etc. so that the Committee can make informed recommendations to the HGNNC Board. Rosalie Preston commented that the TOC guidelines impacted the 84-unit project proposed at 11630 S. Main Street which is currently under discussion by the PLU Committee. The TOC guidelines allow for increased housing density for new apartment buildings located near bus routes and train transit stations.

Ms. Smith is **not** the planner assigned to the Main Street project; however, she provided general information on how the TOC guidelines were developed and are implemented. The TOC guidelines were developed to comply with Measure JJJ and California's density bonus program. More than 450,000 housing units are needed to accommodate anticipated future regional population growth. Incentives such as the density bonus and TOC program account for about 40% of all of the affordable units permitted in the city. The TOC has a 4-tier system of developer incentives that are based on the proximity of a project to different types of transit and the number of units set aside for very low income and low income residents. The presentation was approximately 35 minutes followed by Q&A.

Discussion and Q&A:

John Ward: How much consideration does the Department of Planning give to the supply versus demand for housing? How does the increased production of non-affordable unit play into that calculation? How do the levels of affordable housing impact market rents overall to become more affordable?

A: They [non-affordable units] could eventually assist with more affordable units because the market becomes saturated with units that either freeze rents or make them go down over time.

John Ward: [Comment] Main Street project is seeking a setback exception that allows the center of the street in front of building to count as the part of the project's "front yard". Is this a normal type of request?

A: The developer is asking for an interpretation of the zoning setback requirements by the zoning administrator ("ZA") assigned to the project. The ZA acts as a judge who determines how zoning is

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applied when the developer's project doesn't conform with the zoning requirements. The zoning interpretation is an issue that is separate from the TOC program incentives.

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Vanessa Johnson: At-will ["by-right"] building project and impact of TOC contribute to the conversion of R-2 lots from single family homes to duplexes with a large number of bedrooms that being rented individually making it more like a rooming house. Developer purchases of single family homes for cash impacts the market value of other homes in the neighborhood. Property values in Harbor Gateway North and specifically Districts 7 and 8 and other areas are not experiencing the same level of increasing property values as homes in other areas of Los Angeles.

A: TOC incentives are not eligible for properties zoned R-2. Increasing levels of occupancy are being addressed by Department of City Planning but single family home conversions are not part of the TOC policy. Increasing property values in other areas may be the result of those areas not having a sufficient level of available or affordable housing units.

Rosalie Preston: The Main Street project is located on a commercial site and shouldn't it comply with LA City landscaping requirements that are trying to encourage better design and landscaping, including trees?

A: TOC policies don't supersede LA City landscaping requirements

Luetta Watson: There are issues with the project in addition to the requested zoning administration's interpretation of Main Street as part of the project's front year. The developer is applying for the proposed project to be classified as Tier 3 with a proposed height of 5-6 stories. The project is also located adjacent to the 105 Freeway and in a methane buffer zone.

A: Yes, the project developer is proposing a Tier 3 classification making the project eligible for a TOC height incentive of two additional stories up to 22 additional feet. The project would also have to conform with the City's Zoning Information (Z.I.) NO. 2427 Freeway Adjacent Advisory Notice for Sensitive Uses.

Blair Smith provided her email address Blair.Smith@lacity.org and the email address of the planner assigned to the Main Street project: Connie.Chauv@lacity.org

5) [11:13 AM] PLU Committee's position on the application for a retail commercial cannabis license for a store located at 13222 S. Estrella Avenue in HGNNC District 4 for recommendation to the HGNNC Board. Chair John Ward stated that comments would be limited to 1 minute per speaker and should state the conditions that should be included in the Committee's position letter for the HGNNC Board

Discussion:

- SOTM-SOTM Thomas (District 4) [Comment]: Neighborhood property values are adversely impacted by the cannabis shop. The proposed shop is close to schools and will have a negative impact on the family-oriented environment of the neighborhood.
- Teacakes (Dr. Briggs) [Comments]: The 1-minute speaker comment period is not enough and represents an indifference to the neighborhood's concerns. She will be attending a Zoom call with Councilman Buscaino next week. Additionally, Dr. Briggs had questions regarding:
 - how many committee members had visited the location;
 - how many cannabis locations were in the area
 - how many cannabis locations were located within CD-15
 - more information needed regarding the health effects of cannabis and its responsible use

She commented further that the PLU Committee had done a poor job in its review the license application.

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- Luetta Watson [Comment]: The license application includes factual inaccuracies that should be noted in the position letter. The location is not adjacent to a freeway exit and will increase the level of traffic passing through the neighborhood streets.
- Rosalie Preston [Comment]: Nineteen residents submitted a petition in opposition to the license application. The petition should be included with the Committee’s recommendation to the Board. Additionally, the company was already approved to grow cannabis at the location. The application is to add a retail location at the same location.
- Arvee Powell [Comment]: There should be more transparency in the licensing process

After the Committee discussion, a straw vote was taken to determine the Committee’s position on the licensing application for recommendation to the HGNNC Board - Support, Oppose or Neutral. **The vote was Support - 0; Oppose - 7; Neutral – 2**

Rosalie Preston had drafted a letter to which the following conditions were proposed:

- Luetta Watson – add numbers to the conditions listed in the letter; also state that the location is not near freeway access and traffic will impact the local neighborhood. Additionally, Ms. Watson stated that the notification for community comment was too short and LAPD Southwest Division was not aware of the pending application and, therefore, couldn’t respond in a timely manner.
- La Juana Mitchell – add that the license applicant needs to comply with LAMC Section 104.03 which states that the applicant must obtain written input from key stakeholders which include the Neighbor Council and Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). LAPD needs to provide the City Council with crime data in the area and a letter stating their position on the applicant’s request.
- Vanessa Johnson – agreed with comments from Ms. Watson and Ms. Mitchell

Rosalie Preston made a motion to vote on the PLU Committee’s position letter with the proposed conditions for presentation and approval by the HGNNC Board - Support, Oppose or Neutral. Motion seconded by Vanessa Johnson. **Motion passed: Support – 8; Opposed – 0; Abstain - 1**

6) [11:50 AM] Discussion on proposed 84-unit TOC apartment building located at 11630 S Main Street in District 7 with possible recommendation to the HGNNC Board.

Due to time constraints, a draft of the HGNNC letter to the Dept. of LA City Planning could not be completed during the meeting. John Ward, Chair, suggested and Luetta Watson concurred that attendees briefly discuss in the time remaining their considerations and concerns regarding the project. Rosalie Preston suggested to table recommendation to the HGNNC until the next PLU meeting or hold a special PLU committee meeting to make the deadline for comment.

Discussion:

- Janeshia Robinson [Comment]: expressed concerns that the projects to provide low-income housing, cannabis projects are all concentrated in HGN area and what is the correct stance for the PLU Committee to take in regards to quality of life issues in the neighborhood impacted by these projects; what is the overall plan for the area?
- La Juana Mitchell [Comment]: how does Department of City Planning achieve an equitable distribution of affordable housing units throughout the city since it appears that projects are concentrated in certain areas of the city like HGN.
- Vanessa Johnson [Comment]: agreed with La Juana’s concern

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- Rosalie Preston [Comment]: expressed the following specific issues with the project – no setback from the sidewalk; proximity to the 105 Freeway; the number of low-income units included in the project; lack of participation by the developer with the neighborhood council

7) [12:01 PM] Announcements

Rosalie Preston: approval of oil and gas drilling to be phased out in city of LA instead of just the 2,500-foot setback from sensitive use areas.

8) Next meeting: Saturday, June 5, 2021 @ 10am

Meeting adjourned: 12:04 PM

Minutes taken by La Juana Mitchell, PLU Committee Member

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