

WISPPA
Women Involved in South Pasadena Political Action
February 6, 2016 Minutes
Cavalry Presbyterian Church

Attendance:

Ron Rosen, Jonathan Primuth, Barbara Sinclair, Ellen Daigle, Gretchen Robinette, Dave Pinto, Don Getman, Lisa Pendleton, Lela Bissner, Camille Levee, Andrew Lippman, Victor Laughoa, Brian Skyers, Deborah Fox, Dave Lubs, Christina Holms, Claire Roslait, Scott Moe, Gary Pia, Kay Mouradian, Clarice Knapp, Harry Knapp, Gloria Kilian, Anda Sullivan, Nancy Wilms, Bianca Richards, Vicky Bartlett, Lisa Boyd, Joe Potts, Waynna Kato, Kris Morrish, Megan Ernst, Suzie Abajian, Colleen Keogh, Dick Helgeson, Judith Harris, Betty Emirhanian, Connie Wardlow, Diana Mahmud, Vic Robinette, Marty Wetzel. Becky Thompson, Frank Farrar, Steve Fjeldsted, Dana Farrar and Kim Hughes

Call to Order:

In the absence of Janet Braun, the meeting was called to order to 9:05 a.m. by Ellen Daigle and Betty Emirhanian. As the meeting had a very important and large agenda, the first topic was called. Superintendent of South Pasadena Unified School District was introduced.

Mission Place Project Presentation

South Pasadena Unified School District Superintendent Dr. Geoffrey Yantz gave a brief overview of some of the wonderful activities being done by the South Pasadena Schools including the Fifth Grade Musical this year, "The Lion King." Dr. Yanez introduced the South Pasadena Unified School Board members, Susie Abajian, Jonathan Primuth and Dave Lubs.

Dr. Yanez presented some background on the project. He shared how in 2008 with the state budget cuts and the economic downturn, the school district started to explore other ways to dispose of excess and not needed properties. One of the properties was the parking lot at 1020 El Centro. In 2009, the school board at that time, accepted the recommendation to look at the sale or development of the parking lot. A "Request for Proposals" was issued. There were key goals presented that included:

- Long term revenue stream
- Retain personnel offices and parking
- Good use of the structure
- Compliance with the City of South Pasadena Mission Street Specific Plan

In 2013 the SP Unified School District selected Legacy Partners develop the parking lot property ultimately deciding to go with a long term lease in lieu of a direct sale.

In 2014, the District and Legacy decided it was best to do a full Environmental Impact Report. An independent company was hired to conduct the a scoping meeting was held in July 2015. The Draft EIR was released in January 2016. A separate parking study was just released. The parking study was not required, but was conducted.

There is a period for public comment on the Draft EIR and the deadline for submitting all comments has been extended to March 4, 2016. The District conducted a public meeting on January 12 to receive comments. Any additional comments need to be submitted in writing to be part of the permanent record.

Dave Lubs shared that the comment period had been extended to accommodate public interest. There have been a number of public meetings on the project, as the District and Legacy Partners met with the PTA, The City of South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce and there will be a public meeting on February 16, 2016.

It was shared that there are two separate tracks, one for the EIR and the other regarding negotiation with the developer. The project EIR will need to be approved by the SP Unified School Board and then the project will go to the city for their review process. Comments during the Draft EIR period should be made in writing. The public spoken comments at this meeting are not being transcribed or recorded and will not be part of the official record.

Legacy Partners

Dave Pinto from Legacy Partners provided a brief overview of the company. They have been in business for 40 years. They are a West Coast based company and have experience in building in California and are familiar with the environmental concerns that are unique to the state. They view their properties as being on the higher class end. They have worked on hundreds of projects and have built 72,000 units. They have experience building and managing properties. They are well respected and have offices in Anaheim, Seattle, Texas and Colorado.

Mission Place Project

The plan for the project is to have 91 rental units made up of 83 1-bedroom units and eight 2-bedroom units. The units have a variety of floor plans that include "loft" styles to a more traditional 1-bedroom style. There will be 7,000 square feet of retail space on the street level. There will be public space area and three levels of underground parking with 228 parking spaces.

The target customers for the rentals are young professionals and older “empty nesters.” Legacy understands the sensitivity of the community to development and wants to bring a in a development that fits the City’s Mission Street and overall plan for the city.

South Pasadena Planning History & the Mission Street Specific Plan

Lisa Pendleton presented an overview of the background of the City’s Planning. She explained how 25 years ago, a city residents and businesses task force was developed to look at the future of South Pasadena’s downtown.

The Task Force’s goal was to come with recommendations that would preserve South Pasadena’s historic character while reviving our downtown to bring it into the 21st century. The group studied the Main Street America program along with getting advice from neighboring cities on preservation and adaptive reuse of historic structures. From this research and utilizing some of the ideas from the Main Street Program, the Task Force made recommendations that turned out to be key in the future revitalization of our downtown including recommending a Farmer’s Market for our community.

The City soon became aware that they would have to update the City’s General Plan since it was greatly at odds with keeping South Pasadena’s small town character. The original 1960’s General Plan had a build out population of approx. 60,000 more than double the current City’s size with very dense multi-family designations throughout the City in many areas that were predominantly single family. A new citizens committee called The GPAC (General Plan Advisory Committee) was formed. As a result of the GPAC’s work the dense multi-family designations were removed and areas that were predominantly single family were returned to single family or dual family designations effectively downzoning the City by half. Preservation was encouraged along with a call for relying on specific plans to further define key areas including the Mission Street area.

In 1996 The Mission Street Specific Plan (MSSP) was completed using a similar community based committee The Specific Plan Advisory Committee at its’ helm along with professional consultants and City staff. The MSSP was prepared as a vision to guide the downtown area into the next century. It called for preservation of historic structures while allowing for their adaptive reuse without required parking, set design guidelines for streetscape, building frontages and planning guidelines for new infill buildings to be compatible with the historic small town “main street” character desired. Among calling for preserving and revitalizing it recognized the need for additional economic vitality by allowing new infill mixed-use development on vacant sites along with emphasizing the importance of providing shared parking where possible. The Committee was aware, however, of the pitfalls of being too successful so very few full site development

opportunities were allowed within the plan area, assuring that our downtown would not lose its' small town character.

The MSSP was approved by the Planning Commission and City Council after years of work by the committee, professionals and City staff, including an EIR and numerous public hearings

The City of South Pasadena took the early task force concepts to heart by developing the Farmer's Market and working to have the Gold Line Station built in the heart of the business district, as opposed to having the station in the Ostrich Farm area of the city, which was one of the proposed locations.

Around the country there had been very positive examples of adaptive re-use of buildings and this was part of the plan that the task force developed. One issue that needs to be pointed out, is that traditional historic buildings do not have parking garages or spaces to fit the needs of today. In this regard, location near public transportation along with providing additional parking in new developments can be key.

Lisa shared drawings of Mission St. taken from the Mission Street Specific Plan showing what the City would look like in twenty years based on vision of the plan. She pointed out the District site where the MSSP showed a 3 story mixed use project and she pointed out Mike and Ann's where the plan had envisioned converting what was then a tire store to a restaurant. She mentioned how the plan strove to strike a balance with some two and three story infill development while preserving the existing historic structures including an old one story tire store (Mike and Ann's.)

She also showed historic photos from the MSSP of three story buildings that use to exist in the MSSP area.

Lisa explained now twenty years later we can point to our current successes directly related to the Mission Street Specific Plan and those early recommendations of the Downtown Revitalization Task Force including:

- The completion of numerous successful adaptive reuse of historic structures into first rate restaurants and cafes including Mike and Anne's, Heirloom Bakery, Crossings, Aro, Griffins, Mix and Munch, etc. talk about a variety
- The successful completion of infill development including Mission Meridian, Station Lofts and Pilot Lofts.
- An ongoing thriving weekly "Farmer's Market" that is bringing the community into our downtown

- A new popular downtown making our City an even more desirable place to live, helping to increase property values and tax revenue
- More tax dollars coming to the City due to the creation of new businesses and residences

She said importantly the MSSP clearly defined what was envisioned for the District parking lot site which was designated a bonus site allowing mixed-use residential with pedestrian oriented retail along Mission. The plan clearly shows what that would look like with numerous drawings depicting an appropriately scaled 3 story building on the entire parking site with no required public open space. The Plan is easy to read and filled with drawings and references making it easy to understand. It has been available on the City's website since their site was set up.

History of the South Pasadena Unified School District Parking Lot

Over twenty years ago, about the same time the plans were being done, the South Pasadena Unified School District sent out an RFP for sale of their parking lot site and was negotiating a Senior care and Alzheimer's facility to purchase the lot. The City decided that this type of facility was not in keeping with the City's vision for Mission Street. The District then waited for the completion of the MSSP. Much later the District conducted a study, which again declared the property surplus and another RFP was put out for the El Centro District Property requiring any proposals comply with the Mission Street Specific plan. The District worked with a committee representing a cross section of the community and selected the "Mission Place" proposal. Ultimately they decided on a long-term lease as an option instead of selling the property. A long-term lease would provide a long-term stream of funding that would help to buffer the school district should the State crack down on outside fund raising sources such as SPEF.

GMP Architects-LA Project Architect

The company has been in business for 30 years. Lisa Pendleton and Don Getman, both architects are and the owners of the firm and have also been residents of South Pasadena for decades. Their children have attended the local schools and they have been very active in the community. Legacy Partners partnered with GMP, as they would understand the community and its unique history and architecture.

Don Getman presented plans and renderings of the design of the Mission Place Project, including showing the two separate buildings with a central paseo that runs from Mission Street to the current school district office building. As improvements are made to the District building and/or if it is repurposed in the future, reactivating this central access point is very important.

The renderings show that there is two commercial spaces on the street levels facing Mission, with two levels residences above and 3 level residents behind flanking the paseo and surrounding a resident courtyard. There is a common outdoor dining court between the two buildings adjacent to Mission included in the design. There will be underground parking with some space sectioned off for the residents and some for “bonus” public parking. There will also be parking spaces for the school district and the project’s retail spaces.

The townhouse type units will be on the Diamond side of the development. The entrance to the underground parking for residents will be on Diamond. The commercial, bonus and District parking access will be from Fairview. The parking study shows that the development has adequate parking for even the most popular days for parking. There will be 99 parking spaces for the residents. It was explained that not all residential units will need parking at the same time. They often have unoccupied units at any given time and or residents who only use public transportation. They explained the parking for residents would be on a first come basis.

Don shared that the design fits in with the look of the neighboring buildings and is per the Mission Street Specific Plan and the City’s Zoning code and that there is no special parking reductions or design modifications for this project. The two separate buildings have different looks, so that the overall development does not look too over powering and appears that the two building were independently developed. The third floor facing Mission is designed in such a way, as to be set back, to create a building line that matches the adjacent buildings and to reduce the apparent height of the building.

The layout for the units are designed as to be for single professionals or older residents and not geared for families. The SP Unified School District will owns the land and can monitor the units and if people are trying to have children in the schools who are not living there.

Lisa concluded with the following:

- The gap will be filled as envisioned by the community and the MSSP.
- The District offices and meeting room will remain and have access to their own segregated 60 parking spaces.
- Smaller units geared to young professionals, empty nesters and active seniors will bring residents to patronize the businesses within walking distance enhancing the vitality of the area. They are also more likely to utilize public transit for transportation to get to work and other destinations.

-In addition to the required parking for the project and the existing buildings the project will provide 41 spaces for public use assisting adjacent historic buildings who often have no onsite parking.

-The District will see an annual fee with the amount growing yearly while still retaining ownership of the land and the existing buildings which over the long term will mean millions in financial gains.

Importantly twenty-five years later the City now has the opportunity to see this parcel developed as they envisioned with no expenditure of tax payer dollars and a big gain to the City's school district. Even more importantly 25 years from now the District would have benefitted from an income stream of over 10 million and still own the land and existing buildings along with the income stream for generations to come and our City would have the benefit of a thriving historic downtown.

South Pasadena Mayor Diana Mahmud

Diana shared that a "Request for Proposal" is being developed to go out for a new General Plan for the city and this would look at the entire city, as well as traffic, circulation and commercial development.

Diana also shared that the city is participating in the "Cool California Challenge" and the city that gets the most public involvement receives funds. The city at this time is #9 out of 22 cities and the enrollment period ends March 31, 2016.

Comments and Questions

Judy Harris wanted to know where the young professional are in regards to being the target, as most of that demographic wants to be in more urban areas, such as downtown LA and do not want to be in South Pasadena. Young people with families will be the ones who will want the apartments and that will impact the enrollment in the schools

Lisa Pendelton responded that USC students would like to live here and that the proximity to the Gold Line would be very attractive.

Mr. Pinto shared that he has not real study, but in looking at supply, the city does not have much supply of 1-bedroom units.

Ellen Daigle shared that the 8 units that are rentals over the Dinosaur Farm, that for one open unit, there were 150 applications. She asked about the current number of parking spaces in the school district parking lot.

Lisa Pendleton responded that there are 128 spaces now. Like with the parking lot now, the school district spots would be available for the library in the evening and for the Farmer's Market.

Gretchen Robinette asked about traffic congestion, as there is traffic congestion now. The EIR says that there is not going to be any impact to traffic and that does not seem possible. What is being considered in regards to the streets? One-way or two-way streets? There should be a great many more public meetings regarding this project. The project will go to the city and the various commissions?

Lisa Pendleton shared that the project will go to the city and that they could ask for conditions, such as signals and such. The developer would need to also pay the building permits and impact fees.

Kay Mouradian asked about the 91 units and questioned if the 1-bedroom units would be rented by couples and as such 99 parking spaces are not enough and cars will end up parking on the streets.

Lisa responded that the parking plan is up to city code and that the 99 spaces are unassigned so that they will circulate. The plan is based on a 95 % occupancy rate and a 5% vacancy, which provides for empty parking spaces.

Judy Harris asked if there might be consideration for the developer to fund a tram that would assist with moving traffic and people throughout the city.

Bianca Richards has some concerns over the overall design in that the pool area seems closed off and can there be more public space; perhaps reduce the number of units?

Lisa Boyd shared that she like the design, but has concerns over the schools already being at full capacity. Is there another way to raise money for the district?

Dana Farrar asked what is the financial cut for the school district? Can we reduce the number of units and still have a win/win?

Superintendent Yantz responded that there are a great number of negotiations that need to be completed and nothing has been decided. The board wants to secure revenue and there will be a rule that there cannot be more than 3 people per unit. The school district will control the units and continually monitors the attendance at the schools. We have attendance go up and down. There has been a reduction in the elementary schools. Last year there were 30 less students compared to the year before. Students come in at all levels.

Steve Fjeldsted has concerns regarding parking for the South Pasadena Library. Can't the development take into consideration parking the businesses in the area? The library is an important city resource and it needs support.

Ron Rosen asked about the public parking and if it is going to cost people for parking? Ron also said that the EIR says that traffic will not be impacted and questions that conclusion.

Mr. Pinto shared that he thought that there would be charges for parking.

Frank Ferrar has concerns over the traffic flow and parking. He questions the likelihood that the need for 1 parking spot for a 1-bedroom unit. What about visiting guests? Where are they going to park? What about a couple in a 1-bedroom unit? What if they have two cars, where are they going to park?

Mr. Pinto said that there are a number of scenarios. He said that his company did not conduct the parking study. There are experts that review parking needs. Most likely, guests and visitors will park on the street

Lisa Pendleton shared that we are in a different era and people no longer are tied to their cars, as young people are comfortable with public transportation and services, such as Uber.

Clarice Knapp has concerns over the aesthetics of the development in the core of our historic district. She also has a concerns that if the EIR is approved that there will be no way to have any adjustments made to the project.

Don Getman said that comments about the project can be part of the EIR comment period and this will help sculpt the project. The proposed project is following the Mission Street Plan guidelines and its scale is in relationship to the existing historic buildings. The EIR is being done by the district and state. The next step is the Cultural Heritage Commission and the Design Review Board.

Ellen Daigle asked about the need for follow-up meetings regarding all of the issues discussed today.

Connie Wardlow wanted to know about the rentals. Do you they have to register their cars?

Mr. Pinto said that residents will need to register their car license plates as part of their rental agreements.

Bill Glauz asked about the rental costs?

Mr. Pinto said that the 600 square foot units would be about \$1,700 a month.

Dana asked about the cost of construction.

Mr. Pinto said that the costs were varied and not nailed down, but about \$300 a square foot.

Dick Helgeson asked if the school district approves the project; can the Cultural Heritage and Planning Commissions make changes? He has concerns that if approved, the various commissions will not be able to make recommendations or request changes.

Betty thanked everyone for the informative presentation and discussion, but that the item had already run longer than planned.

Women in Politics Campaign Workshop

Betty reported that the workshop was successful with 12 people attending.

South Pasadena Development Task Force Report

Judy Harris reported that the group had held a meeting to refine their mission. They felt that their key objectives were to research projects and to provide information. They would take no particular stand on a project. They felt it is important to make sure that information gets out and that people are kept informed. The group is going to make sure that they understand the General Plan, as well as the city's rules and such.

South Pasadena Education Committee Report

There will be an update at the next meeting

South Pasadena Public Safety Commission Report

Ellen Daigle shared that there is a new CERT class and the program has become very popular. The SP Police Dept. is doing a great job and that there are new officers. There is a new SP Fire Dept./TriCities Battalion Chief.

South Pasadena Arts and Cultural Committee Report

The group wants to support and expand the arts in the city. At the next Eclectic Arts Crawl, WISSPA would like to find ways to support the arts. The group is looking at some options.

South Pasadena City Council Report

Nancy Wilms provided an overview of the recent meetings. At the February 2, 2016 meeting, the council looked at the UUT petition and the initiative will be

placed on the November 2017 city ballot. A report was presented by City Manager Sergio Gonzalez about the impact of losing the UUT. We would need to cut the police by a third.

There is a discussion to make the South Pasadena Finance Committee a more formal commission.

South Pasadena Natural Resources and Environmental Commission Report

Nancy Wilms also presented a report that shared that Mr. Bill Kelly has joined the commission and might be elected chair. There is a concern over the funds allocated in the budget for trees, as it looks like it might only be \$17,000. The plan to ban Styrofoam is also moving forward.

WISPPA Membership Report

Dollie Chapman was absent, so a report will be presented at the next meeting.

South Pasadena Legislative Affairs and Upcoming Events Report

Betty Emirhanian shared that the city has rain barrels available. There are concerns with Southern California Edison with recent outages. The AQMD is offering rebates on EV chargers.

Announcements

Barbara Sinclair shared that she is on the California Senior Legislature. Many people do not know that this state organization exists that assists in developing legislation with the focus on seniors. Members need to be 60 years old or older. The group meets in Sacramento. The group is supported by donations. Barbara wanted to encourage donations and membership. Donations can be made on your state tax form.

South Pasadena Renewable Energy Committee Report

Kim Hughes reported that the committee made a site visit to the Wilson and Garfield reservoirs to explore the installation of solar energy at the sites.

Awards & Recognition Committee

There was discussion of the WISPPA organization developing an Awards Committee. The group would look at a way to help select candidates that could be nominated for awards or recognition. The group is often approached for candidates for awards and such. The volunteers for the group include: Gretchen Robinette, Lela Bissner, Barbara Sinclair and Kim Hughes.

Steve Fjeldsted volunteered the South Pasadena Library for another public meeting regarding the Mission Place Project.

Ellen Daigle suggested that there perhaps be a sub-committee developed regarding the school district project. There was then some discussion about that there already is a development task force.

Next Meetings

The March meeting will be on Saturday, March 19, 2016 and the April meeting will be Saturday, April 9, 2016.

Cocktail Party Update

The concept is to honor and recognize 2 or 3 women instead of having a single speaker. It is hard to get a committed speaker.

Format of WISPPA Meetings

There was a thought that it might make sense to have a speaker every other meeting, so regular business does not get crunched.

Betty thanked Ellen and Gretchen for the food and for the next meeting, Dana and Lela will provide the refreshments.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:07 a.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kim Hughes