

Central San Pedro Neighborhood Council Land Use & Public Works Committee Report - January 14, 2014

I. Three new community improvement efforts are in process that we should be aware of as a neighborhood council. We will be asked to utilize our outreach abilities to bring community members to public planning events this year, and we might further coordinate that input and develop positions on project aspects. All of these activities have the potential to enhance our outreach efforts.

- A. An **Urban Greening Committee (UGAC)** was formed by Larry Smith of LA Conservation Corps, funded by a \$250,000 Prop 84 Grant, to prepare a community-based urban greening plan. Their principle community partner in this effort is Steve Kleinjan for Clean San Pedro. Other members of this committee are Ana Dragon (CD15), Augie Bezmalenovich (POLA), Steve Robbins (PBID), Elise Swanson (Hahn), Gordon Teuber (former Hahn aid), Mary Silverstein (Harbor Community Benefits Foundation), Rachel Bruhnke (POLA HS Community Gardens), and neighborhood council members Diana Nave (NW), Gary Buss (NW), Ed Pluemer (Coastal) and Sue Castillo (Central). The goal is the creation of a plan for green nodes and linkages between the downtown community, waterfront attractions, and upland park areas. Eligible improvements include tree planting, landscape improvements, streetscape improvements that encourage pedestrian activity, pocket park creation, projects that clean storm water, bike lane improvements, and public events that raise environmental consciousness. A GIS database layer of such paths and places is a project requirement. Plan elements are to be developed to the “grant application ready” stage. This process is to be based on community interactive planning, including:
- Four design charettes to be held between March – June, 2014
 - Four larger community events between March – Sept, 2014
 - A public opinion survey to be taken between February – April, 2014.

The current schedule shows a final plan adopted by December 2014.

- B. **The Lilyan Fierman Walkway** is to be improved with \$190,000 in funding (amt. approx) provided directly by the Office of Councilperson Busciano. The Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative (LANI) is under contract with LADOT to oversee the design and improvement of this strip of right-of-way adjacent to the Warner Grand Theater, which connects Sixth St with a City parking lot on Fifth Street. LANI will conduct community outreach, and select and manage the professional consultants needed to design and build the improvements. Two community meetings are to be held in Spring 2014. Committee members include Steve Robbins, Liz Schindler-Johnson, Linda Grimes and Sue Castillo.
- C. **The Gaffey Street Conceptual Plan** is to be prepared with funding provided by the Office of Councilperson Busciano (budget unknown). Again, LANI is engaged to lead a planning process that will identify community-vetted improvements that would enhance access to transit, pedestrian and bicycle safety, support existing small businesses, and celebrate our diverse cultural heritage. The final product will include cost estimates for the different aspects of the plan and should help support the formation of Gaffey St BID. Committee members include Steve Kleinjan, Linda Alexander, and Sue Castillo.

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II. Follow-up on complaints received from the community on two properties:

- **1001 S. Palos Verdes Avenue** – On Dec 16, 2013, Linda Alexander and Sue Castillo met with over a dozen neighbors to discuss issues they have with the **Palos Verdes Inn**, a hotel that suffered major damage from a January 22, 2013 fire. Recently, neighbors noted that the building was being prepared for reopening and contacted this neighborhood council. They reported that the Inn was a major nuisance due to noise and criminal activity (drugs, prostitution). Neighbors suspected that the restoration was being carried out without City permits, but we confirmed with CD15 that the work is being carried out under the appropriate permits. Plans are being made to meet with CD15 to discuss the history of complaints for this property, and to determine what can be done to eliminate crime and nuisances in the rebuilt facility.
- **1106 S. Palos Verdes Avenue** – In December, we also received a complaint about the operation of the **Palos Verdes Body Shop**. Complaints are related to a blighted appearance, operations beyond normal business hours, the release of toxic paint fumes and sanding particles, and noise (there are residences immediately adjacent to the shop). Plans are being made to meet with the office of CD15 to discuss these complaints and to determine what can be done to eliminate neighborhood nuisances and any operating violations.

III. Follow up on a development matter previously considered by this neighborhood council:

- A Conditional Use Permit needed for the continued operation of an auto body repair shop at **837 N. Front Street** (the **J & J Body Shop**) will go before the Planning Commission this spring. The original permit application was reviewed by this committee on July 26, 2012; our original position was that all nuisance and illegal activities must be discontinued, attractive code-compliant signage should be installed, and that new fencing should be installed to provide space for vine coverage or other landscaping on the public side. On December 18, 2013, Linda Alexander and Sue Castillo met with Ryan Ferguson, Jacob Haik, and the business owner to discuss these conditions (following that, we made a field visit to personally inspect the site).

We agreed with CD15 staff that relocating the existing fencing would be an unattainable burden on the business owner, due to the high cost of replacement fencing, the loss of square footage at this narrow site, and the fact that no such City requirement would be triggered by development of this scale. The existing fencing appears in generally good condition (unlike the fencing of other businesses along Front Street). We requested the following:

- The fencing should be set back at two locations where street lights/utility poles reduce the available sidewalk width to less than ADA-required passage width. ADD: pave new sidewalk area
- Sidewalk paving to be repaired at the westernmost corner of the site.
- The fencing should be pressure-washed and a clear anti-graffiti coating applied.
- New, attractive signage would replace the existing, unmatched signage (design renderings to be reviewed before finalization of conditions).

The business owner responded positively to these requests; we plan to follow up on condition finalization and implementation.