

Central San Pedro Land Use & Public Works Committee meeting notes regarding the meeting held on July 30, 2014 in the Whale and Ale conference room commencing at 6:30 pm, and reported to the Board and Stakeholders on August 12, 2014.

Agenda Item #1: Introductions. This committee meeting was attended by over 17 persons.

Agenda Item #2: Regarding the Superior Courthouse at 505 S. Centre St, San Pedro, 90731. This property is owned by the State of California, under the jurisdiction of the AOC (Administrative Office of the Courts). Based on state regulations for the disposition of surplus state-owned properties, the County of Los Angeles now has a "right of first refusal" to consider purchasing the property from the state.

Rebekah Kim, from the Office of Don Knabe, reported that:

- The County would have to purchase the site to take advantage of their Right of First Refusal.
- Their pro forma appraisal specified a property value of \$3.4 million (Michael Gatanz requested a copy of this document).
- The County currently has no plan for the use of this building.
- Knabe's office is scheduling a meeting with Councilman Joe Busciano regarding the disposition of this property in August (meeting time and date still undetermined as of July 30th).

Meeting participants agreed on the importance and prominence of this site to downtown San Pedro, due to its location and size. It was also agreed that the public parking on this site that currently supports local business is very important. Participants suggested uses that would enhance our Arts, Culture and Entertainment District, and promote tourism. Retail and entertainment uses were discussed, as well as cultural uses, such as a museum or gallery. The possibility of a boutique hotel was also brought up. A mixed use project that might combine two or more of these use types was suggested and received much enthusiasm. If the reuse included the public parking structure in the center of downtown that has long been desired, even greater benefit could be achieved.

We agreed that a letter be sent to Councilman Buscaino expressing the above.

Draft letter to Busciano

(intro)

Subject: Reuse of the San Pedro Superior Court Property

Beginning in 2010, this neighborhood council has repeatedly expressed its dismay regarding the closing of our downtown San Pedro Superior Courthouse. Our last letter, dated September 10, 2013, addressed to Supervisor Don Knabe, requested that attention be given to a courthouse reuse that retains or increases public parking, and asks that community stakeholders be allowed to participate in the consideration of facility reuse.

On July 30th, the Central San Pedro Neighborhood Council Land Use Committee met with community members to discuss the disposition of this property. Rebekah Kim of Knabe’s office participated in the discussion and shared her perspective on the County’s interest (or lack thereof) in this property. She indicated that they intended to meet with you in August to discuss the matter. Therefore we take this opportunity to share our thoughts on what would be best for the community, and hope that you will work diligently towards finding a beneficial reuse for this property.

The courthouse site is a key location in downtown San Pedro. We hope to see a reuse that supports our mutual goals of increasing the vibrancy of downtown and its attractiveness as a tourist destination. Retail, restaurant, entertainment, hospitality and cultural uses (such as a gallery or museum) are highly recommended. A mixed use project that incorporates two or more of these uses could have an even greater synergistic effect. A social service building or other use that does not contribute to our Arts, Entertainment and Cultural District is not recommended. This reuse also presents an opportunity to achieve a long-time goal of the downtown community - a public parking structure in the center of downtown.

We look forward to seeing this significant property redeveloped for a beneficial new use as soon as possible, as a vacant structure of this size is a blight on our downtown. The landscaping at the front of the building will need regular attention – it is currently an eyesore. Please consider us a community partner in your efforts to find a compatible repurposing of this property.

Sincerely, etc...

Agenda Item #3: Pacific Avenue “road diet” north of Fifteenth Street

The long-term planning for this project was discussed, featuring the projected safety benefits. Although some concerns about bus movements were expressed, this neighborhood council continues to support the proposed restriping work. There is no need for an action item at this time, as LADOT intends to move forward on this within the year.

Agenda Item #4: Gaffey St Conceptual Plan

The new striping diagram for the portion of Gaffey between the freeway offramp and First Street was shared, along with plans for a pop-up event space at the San Pedro Library at 931 S. Gaffey Street. Community members are encouraged to participate in upcoming planning events, and community leaders are encouraged to step up and make a portion of the pop-up event space their own. Many volunteers will be needed. The next public meeting for this project will be on _____ (to be provided).

Agenda Item #5: DAP (Design Advisory Panel) formation

We briefly discussed the history of the previous DAP composed of architectural and design professionals that served the now defunct Redevelopment Agency, and how the Central San Pedro Neighborhood Council has the authority to create one of these on our own, should we choose to do so. The participants were asked to look to their personal networks to identify individuals who might form the nucleus of such a group. To be further discussed at a later date.

Agenda Item#6: Review of new mixed-use development proposed for the northwest corner of Gaffey & Sepulveda

Facts

- Address: 335 N. Gaffey Street
- Developer: Charles Company, 9034 W. Sunset Blvd, West Hollywood, CA (<http://www.charles-company.com>)
- Development Type: Mixed Use with retail/commercial on the ground floor and two stories of residential apartments (not condominiums).
- Total built area of 24,495 square feet – 2,335 square feet of retail/commercial + 20,340 square feet of residential.
- Thirty one- and two-bedroom residential units.
- Parking to be provided meets or exceeds City code requirements, in two levels, each with their own entry on Sepulveda Street.
- Budget: \$1.5 million (rough estimate)
- This project is subject to a 2% for the Arts requirement. Given the estimated budget, this might result in an arts budget of \$30,000.

Participant comments, to be included in a resolution of support, with conditions:

1. This proposal to construct an architecturally significant building at the gateway to San Pedro was looked at as a very positive development, creating an interesting synchronicity with the Gaffey Street Conceptual Plan/Great Streets Initiative.
2. The adjacency of the Welcome Park adds strong value to the project, and the proximity of this project should have a positive effect on the Welcome Park, providing “eyes on the park”. The Bandini Canyon Park would also be within easy walking distance of the new residents.
3. Landscaping is needed (none was proposed by the developer at this early stage). Two feet of additional right-of-way must be dedicated on each street frontage (Gaffey and Sepulveda), and it may be possible to use these strips for narrow building-adjacent plantings. Street trees and other landscaping consistent with the developing Gaffey Street conceptual plan should be incorporated.

4. There was concern that the residential balconies facing Gaffey Street could become an eyesore if allowed to become cluttered with excessive unmatched furnishings and utilitarian storage. Visible satellite dishes should be banned.
5. There was concern that the impact of the tall retaining wall on the west side of the project adjacent to a one-story single-family residence should be mitigated in some fashion (this lot is zoned to allow up to a 2-story apartment building).
6. The use of San Pedro labor to construct the building was put forward. The developer responded that the project would be competitively bid, but that the contractor selected would likely be a regionally-local builder.
7. Mural artwork was suggested, with the Sepulveda Street frontage and the Welcome Park frontage being the opportunities. *(to be attached, if submitted prior to final publishing: a graphic concept by boardmember Grant Hartwell)*
8. There was concern about finding appropriate tenants for the Gaffey-facing storefronts. Conditions should preclude unattractive temporary uses and signage being installed prior to securing appropriate retail/commercial tenants.
9. It may be possible to enrich both the retail/commercial portion of the project and the adjacent Welcome Park by allowing/encouraging café-type usage and patio seating on a portion of the park (which should not preclude public use).

Agenda Item #7: Operating rules for this committee and appointment of Co-Chair

As this meeting marks the beginning of a new board, the committee participants were asked to consider committee management going forward. A motion to retain Sue Castillo as Committee Chair (of the Land Use Committee and the Public Works Committees, typically meeting jointly), and add Alexander Hall as Co-Chair was approved unanimously.