



**UNITED NEIGHBORHOODS
OF THE HISTORIC ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, WEST ADAMS AND
JEFFERSON PARK COMMUNITIES NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL**

Our Voice • Our City • of Neighbors • by Neighbors • for Neighbors



UNNC Executive Committee Meeting

Tuesday, February 16, 2010
7:00 pm
Council District 10 Field Office
1819 S. Western Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90006

MINUTES

(approved March 16, 2010)

President Stevie Stern opened the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

Members present: Stevie Stern, Norman Gilmore.

Members absent: Wesley Todd, Billie Green

Other UNNC Board members present for at least part of the meeting: Laura Meyers, Evangela Anderson

Agenda:

MOTION: Norman Gilmore moved to approve the agenda with the following amendments: (i) Table Item A Benny Potter materials funding request until next month, (ii) replacing it with West Adams Avenues Neighbors regarding Frederick Douglas ICEF/Pacific Charter Schools; (iii) Table Item C, Standing Rules, (iv) Table Item D, Governing Board Absences, (v) adding Youth Committee Leadership Empowerment Workshop marketing materials discussion.

Stevie Stern seconded.

Vote: Approved unanimously.

Public comments:

Stevie informed us of the sad news that former UNNC Board Member Josephine Spearman has passed away.

Norman Gilmore passed out UNNC flyers.



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Executive Committee Business:

- A. Derek Japha, Donna Jones, Evangela Anderson, Jeff Camp and Linda Marais of West Adams Avenues Neighbors asked UNNC to reconsider a previous UNNC endorsement of a proposed plan to expand the permitted number of students attending Frederick Douglass Middle School. The UNNC Governing Board previously voted on August 6th, 2009 to support a plan regarding the expansion of Frederick Douglas Middle school, with approximately 17 conditions attached, including “6. Work with LADOT to establish no parking (including buses) along Adams frontage.” The address is 3200 West Adams Blvd and relates to case nos. ZA-93-0592(CUZ)(PA1), ZA-2009-1475(ZV), ENV-2009-1474-MND.

In August, the Governing Board was told by school representatives that the increase in enrollment would be from 550 students to 700 students. Although actual enrollment is the correct basis for evaluating net traffic impacts, the school was in violation of its permitted occupancy which was not disclosed. At the time of the application, the school was permitted 300 students, and their current entitlement is 360 students. It was stated that the school applicant is allowing pick up and drop off on Adams, and school parking is occurring in the neighborhood. Previously the Senior Lead Officer was monitoring and policing street vendors. Today four unpermitted street vendors were observed.

Neighbors are very concerned about the lack of safety enforcement regarding street crossings by students. Since two other schools are adjacent to Frederick Douglas school, it is not immediately apparent which school's students and parents are causing traffic and safety issues.

Laura Meyers discussed the history of this school. Originally the Apostolic church was permitted to open a church school about 20 years ago. Later the church sold the property to Pacifica, a school property management firm. The LA City Council passed a motion a few years ago streamlining the approval of charter schools. Building & Safety was made the lead agency on charter approval (and not the Planning Department). Building and Safety granted increased occupancy permits which they were not authorized to do. West Adams Heritage and LA Conservancy discussed with ICEF/Pacifica that the church itself was a historic resource. This reduced the scope of the plan they brought to the Planning Department last year for a Conditional Use Permit. The Planning Department specified a Plan Approval process, although the Planning Department later realized it should have been a Conditional Use Permit. The net result is that this matter is coming up before the Planning Commission in a couple weeks.

Extensive discussion of the history of this case ensued for about 80 minutes.

The West Adams Avenues Neighbors resolved to document the violations of the Conditional Use Permit conditions and to raise these violations to the Planning Commission.

- B. Planning & Zoning – Washington Square Draft Environmental Impact Report

MOTION: Norman Gilmore moved that we approve the letter presented by Laura Meyers on behalf of the Washington Square Draft Environmental Impact Report Ad Hoc Committee, to be signed by Stevie Stern and sent as a cover letter to stakeholders' letters to the Planning Department:

Seconded by Stevie Stern



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Vote: Approved unanimously.

- C. Johanna Chase and the Executive Committee discussed graphic standards for the flyer for the upcoming youth leadership and empowerment program.

Treasurer's Report:

Stevie Stern presented for Wesley Todd.
The audit was submitted to DONE. The city debit card does not permit petty cash withdrawals.
Wesley is working the event for Sunday.

Committee Updates.

None.

New Business:

Minutes:

Approval of the January 19th, 2010 Executive Committee Minutes was deferred until next month.

Announcements:

None

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:03 pm.
Respectfully submitted,
Norman Gilmore
UNNC Secretary
February 17, 2010

Attachment: [Washington Square Draft EIR Cover Letter](#)

February 22, 2010

David Somers, Assistant Planner, Environmental Review Coordinator
Los Angeles City Planning Department / Environmental Review Section
City Hall / Room 750
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012
David.somers@lacity.org

cc: PCR Services Corporation
233 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 130
Santa Monica, California 90401

RE: Washington Square Mixed-Use Development Project
ENV-2007-5046-EIR
Project address: 4020-4060 Washington Blvd., Los Angeles 90018
West Adams-Baldwin Hills-Leimert Community Plan

Dear Mr. Somers,

This letter is written on behalf of the United Neighborhoods of the Historic Arlington Heights, West Adams and Jefferson Park Communities Neighborhood Council (UNNC), as approved through a motion on February 4, 2010. UNNC is a neighborhood council chartered by the City of Los Angeles in 2002. The above referenced project lies within UNNC boundaries on a nearly 8-acre site in Arlington Heights. As would be expected due to its size and prominence, the project has been the subject of many discussions, meetings, and debates among our stakeholders and government bodies for several years.

There were many UNNC stakeholders who expressed interest in reading the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the proposed Washington Square project. This was helpful because, due to the sheer volume of the DEIR with two separate development options being considered, there was a lot of information to process in a short time. The DEIR was distributed among those interested stakeholders for comment.

UNNC is pleased to present to you a broad spectrum of diverse comments from those community members who read portions of the DEIR. These letters represent the perspectives of their individual authors. These individual letters are attached to this document.

UNNC has not specifically voted yet on the proposed project(s). This matter will be taken up by the UNNC Governing Board once a public hearing has been set.

In this cover letter UNNC does wish to express some concerns about the DEIR itself, based on the Governing Board's previous actions and longstanding UNNC policies relative to land use matters.

The UNNC Governing Board has adopted a “Vision Statement” for all of our community’s commercial corridors, which envisions in part a “*pedestrian-friendly, transit-friendly, green, sustainable, livable urban village that is sensitive to historic preservation.*”

Specifically relative to Washington Boulevard and the subject project site, the UNNC Governing Board has also voted on and approved a proposal for a Washington Boulevard Specific Plan (enclosed herewith) that includes (but is not limited to) the following elements:

- 1). *Pedestrian orientation*
- 2). *Transit friendliness*
- 3). *A Design Review Board*
- 4). *Mixed use (including live-work) zoning*
- 5). *Creation of a neighborhood district with neighborhood-serving businesses*
- 6). *Elimination of conflicts between current zoning and uses*
- 7). *Elimination of nuisance uses*
- 8). *Designated common parking*
- 9). *Sensitivity to historic preservation as appropriate (both in terms of the Corridor’s existing fabric of 1920s commercial buildings and/or older residences on the corridor as well as the historic housing adjacent to it)*
- 10). *Inclusionary zoning*

The plan for Washington Boulevard is consistent with Los Angeles citywide policy on urban form and design, and reflects such recent City initiatives as the Broadway District CDO Design Guide and the proposed Lincoln Boulevard Community Design Overlay. Our community deserves nothing less than others in terms of good urban design that meets current urban form practice.

UNNC’s concerns regarding the above project as presented in the DEIR include but may not be limited to:

- a. The project does not match the intent, spirit or stated policies of the City of Los Angeles Citywide General Framework, legislatively approved in 1996 and incorporated by reference into the General Plan and the Municipal Code. Specifically, the Framework states as one policy objective the conservation of Los Angeles’s residential neighborhoods – both single family and multi-family communities. To support that objective, the Framework lists such guidelines as the transitioning of large projects to the scale of adjacent stable low-rise multi-family residential areas, and shielding parking from view. The subject project as proposed appears to do neither.
- b. The project does not conform to the UNNC’s vision of Washington Boulevard as a neighborhood-oriented boulevard with a traditional relationship of commercial uses fronting directly to the street. The project as proposed includes no commercial space that opens directly to the street, and therefore fails to enliven the public way or recognize it as a vital commercial corridor. The Framework itself calls for storefronts on the city’s commercial boulevards.

- c. The project does not conform to the UNNC's vision as a pedestrian friendly, transit oriented public street. In lieu of this, the project proposes only internal vehicular plazas that offer pedestrian "connectivity" to the site while offering no amenities or direct pedestrian entries at the street.
- d. The project does not include any alternatives that employ design suggestions from two meetings held in 2008 with neighborhood architects (qualified and licensed professionals) that sought to make the project more compatible with the neighborhood. Among these suggestion were: to not have two stories of above grade parking creating inhospitable walls at all sides of the project, especially adjacent to existing residential areas; to not have an fortress-like, inward-facing project that turns away from the public realm; to not have an 85' building height directly adjacent to an RD-2 zoned neighborhood; to not have blank walls or false windows at ground level on Washington Boulevard, in lieu of active storefronts; to not have the primary access of the project be the automobile entrance and plaza.
- e. CEQA requires adequate information for the Decisionmaker to certify that an environmental analysis is complete, accurate and presents appropriate mitigations. However, the Washington Square DEIR does not include adequate clarity or detail, in the form of plans, elevations, renderings, and/or photo simulations, from which any analysis of design can be derived, nor impacts be determined. Thus it is not possible for the Decisionmaker (or UNNC's stakeholders, nor UNNC itself) to evaluate whether the project is consistent with stated policies and/or objectives. The lack of visual materials – what does the project really look like in the community? – hampers any attempt to evaluate its impact on the adjacent neighborhoods.
- f. The DEIR fails to address issues of "cut-through" intrusion traffic on residential side streets as part of its traffic section, and therefore cannot offer mitigations for this problem. The Citywide General Plan Framework identifies "Liveable Neighborhoods" (p 5-13) as a mandatory focus of the City's planning efforts and further identifies "slow residential streets" as an important component of liveability. Numerous commentators at the scoping hearing for this project identified several internal-to-the-residential-neighborhoods streets and intersections that required study for potential traffic impact. The DEIR fails to address those streets and intersections.
- g. The project only addresses, albeit inadequately, historic impacts on the adjacent church. But it does not address the intact 90-year-old neighborhood to the south, nor the broader historical setting of Arlington Heights (established as a township in 1887); nor does the DEIR adequately evaluate the potentially significant 1964 "Googie diner" commercial building at the corner of 10th Avenue and Washington Boulevard, which the project seeks to demolish.

UNNC believes that the project as proposed is not compatible with the neighborhood for, at minimum, the reasons stated above, and that this DEIR is inadequate in its project description to allow for any meaningful mitigations or alternatives that might make it more compatible.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns.