

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

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UNNC Executive Committee Meeting

Tuesday, April 25, 2012
Council District 10 Field Office
1819 S. Western Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90006

MINUTES

(approved May 15, 2012)

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-President Billie Green opened the meeting at 6:03 p.m. A quorum was present.

Members present: Stevie Stern, Billie Green, Norman Gilmore

Members absent: Wesley Todd.

Additional UNNC board members present: Laura Meyers, John Arnold.

CD 10 representatives present: Sylvia Lacy

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: Stevie Stern moved to approve the agenda as presented.

Norman Gilmore seconded.

Vote: Approved unanimously.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BUSINESS

- A. Executive Committee approval of members appointed to the UNNC ad hoc committee per the Governing Board's voting in favor of the motion as of March 3, 2012, which was: "UNNC appoint an ad-hoc committee to review all proposed certificate cases and any unpermitted work that is subject to the Jefferson Park HPOZ with between five and seven members, including ex officio the Chair of the Planning and Zoning Committee and the Chair of the Historic Preservation Committee. Each additional member must be a Jefferson Park resident, or have professional experience in architecture or preservation (or both). There shall be at least three members who are Jefferson Park residents and at least two who have professional experience in architecture or preservation. The ad-hoc committee shall hold publicly noticed meetings to accept community input and shall make recommendations to the Office of Historic Resources consistent with the Jefferson Park Preservation Plan. The initial committee shall be appointed at the next UNNC Executive Committee meeting."

MOTION: Stevie Stern moved to table the item.

Stevie Stern asked what the goals of the ad hoc task force are, and what would be coming out of this open forum.



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Laura Meyers stated the following purposes.

1. To provide an open, transparent discussion in public of Jefferson Park HPOZ cases.
2. To end private emails to people like Laura Meyers, John Arnold, and others whom the Planning Department is currently emailing informally when seeking local input on Jefferson Park cases.
3. To provide a training ground for potential future HPOZ Board candidates.
4. To possibly record the meetings and provide both recordings and minutes to the Office of Historic Resources, per Sylvia Lacy's suggestion.

Laura Meyers stated that she did not envision the ad hoc committee as one that necessarily needs to take actions. It would be an ad hoc committee because the committee will likely not need to have a standing meeting.

Norman Gilmore asked that the committee be formed, that they be allowed to elect a chair, and come up with their procedures that could be vetted. The procedures can be double checked with the city attorney to determine what recommendations or actions would need to go through UNNC Governing Board. The goal is for the committee to comply with the Brown Act and to be compliant with the city and neighborhood council charters. If for some reason the committee needed to take an action, and that action had to be affirmed by the UNNC Governing Board, then it could be handled as a "consent calendar."

Billie Green asked, by way of example, if she had a certificate case, would she have to wait up to a month for the Governing Board to affirm an ad hoc action.

Laura Meyers responded that certificate cases have a 75 day timeline in any event, so UNNC has time to respond within that. Laura Meyers also stated she understands that the Office of Historic Resources does not want cases to go to neighborhood council governing boards, as they have no specific expertise regarding Preservation Plans. Laura Meyers does not think it should be a goal to have the Governing Board review actions by this ad hoc (unless it was a zoning case), although handling it through a consent calendar could be acceptable if the city attorney stated that was a requirement.

John Arnold suggested it could be difficult to handle the issue of the ad hoc reviewing unpermitted work, because it might be seen as trying to get the planning department to enforce its rules.

Laura Meyers pointed out that the Jefferson Park Preservation Plan does provide for local review of all unpermitted work, with a partial purpose of not rewarding those who avoid doing permitted work with expedited review by the Planning Department.

Laura stated that the Planning Department has waived hearings for two certificate cases, presumably because they thought they could because of the current lack of an HPOZ Board. In addition, she stated that some Jefferson Park residents were concerned that the Planning Department in fact was expediting enforcement without local review, which is not the intent of the Jefferson Park Preservation Plan.

Laura noted that when West Adams Terrace did not have an HPOZ Board, neither Planning,



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Council District 10, nor the UNNC Governing Board objected to all West Adams Terrace certificate cases going through the UNNC Planning & Zoning Committee. Actions on those cases were not ratified by the UNNC Governing Board. The Planning Department sent a representative to those meetings who took their own notes, and board members of other local HPOZ boards also assisted.

Stevie Stern stated that the city attorney said that subcommittee's recommendations to the city have to go through the Governing Board. Stevie expressed concern about the feasibility of a planner listening to a mass of public comment on a recording. Stevie said that if it couldn't take actions, then would the committee have a point.

Norman Gilmore observed that when an applicant goes to meet with the ad hoc committee, there are two benefits: first the applicant is learning about the requirements in the Preservation Plan that apply to their project and they are likely to be getting as good or better advice than may currently be given by the city. The meeting is an opportunity for the applicant to learn so that they can better plan their project for historically sensitive renewal; and second, this ad hoc committee is an opportunity for neighbors to provide feedback about a proposed project, for example, that a modification may impinge on their property. Norman gave the example of a recent applicant who did unpermitted work, and then her neighbor built an unpermitted wall that now prevents the first neighbor from opening the car doors on that side when parked on the driveway. The committee provides an opportunity for everyone to ascertain what the facts are in a public forum.

Norman Gilmore also noted that the idea of recording entire meetings was a brainstorming attempt to address the potential concern that this committee could not give advice to OHR without going through the Governing Board. Norman considered it unfair to criticize a hypothetical solution to a hypothetical problem. He suggested that if recording entire meetings is not feasible, we'll figure out something that does work.

John Arnold asked what would happen if the ad hoc committee gave incorrect advice, for example, requiring that a house be a certain color. He also stated that there was only hearsay that the city has given incorrect advice to Jefferson Park residents.

Laura Meyers claimed that the committee of individuals that John has assembled are extremely qualified and there was no chance they would give wrong advice more often than the city.

Laura Meyers also noted, that if this ad hoc committee was not formed for some reason, then as chair of UNNC Planning & Zoning Committee, she would be able to agenda these Jefferson Park cases through that committee. But one of the goals of this new committee is to get these cases out of UNNC's Planning & Zoning and Historic Preservation Committees and into a more focused committee, which neither she nor John would chair.

Laura noted that the city planner assigned to the Jefferson Park HPOZ had waived public hearings for two certificate cases, and then sought personal opinions on the cases from a small number of individuals via email. This is the type of non-public input that should be avoided.

Laura Meyers reiterated that everyone would rather have the official HPOZ Board be appointed, but it was her understanding that City Planning was holding out for an additional staff position before allowing the officially required HPOZ Board to be appointed.



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Stevie Stern stated her feeling that in terms of what Laura wants to accomplish, it could be more easily expedited by having CD10 create an advisory board (independent of UNNC).

Laura Meyers stated that it was in the city charter for Neighborhood Councils to do what is proposed for this ad hoc committee.

Based on her understanding from a conversation with a city attorney, Stevie stated that the ad hoc committee could not advise city personnel without going through the Governing Board.

Norman Gilmore stated the idea of an Advisory Board to CD10 handling Jefferson Park HPOZ cases was new. We don't know what this is, what rules it would be subject to or how it would work. Norman stated that he believed the number one concern of Jefferson Park is transparency. He thinks if there is a task force that goes through CD10, through field office employees, that doesn't have Brown Act publicly noticed meetings, that isn't required to notify the applicant or to post meeting notices at the Jefferson Park Library, then that is not a solution for Jefferson Park. Jefferson Park would welcome CD10 staff to attend publicly noticed meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee. We appreciate both additional voices and the ability of CD10 to get things done with the city. But this Advisory Board idea is not currently before us.

Laura Meyers reiterated that the Neighborhood Council has already voted to form this committee. Without the committee the cases revert back to existing UNNC committees.

Laura Meyers noted that there is nothing in the municipal code that allows the Planning Department to not form the Jefferson Park HPOZ Board. The municipal code states that public hearings held by an HPOZ Board shall be held in various circumstances relating to HPOZs. In absence of an HPOZ Board, HPOZ cases are supposed to be heard by the Cultural Heritage Commission.

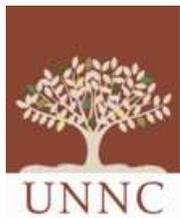
As there was no second to the prior motion, a new motion was made.

MOTION: Norman Gilmore moved that the names proposed for the committee be read into the record to determine if they meet the qualifications.

John Arnold said that this was an issue because over the last four months there has been a flurry of cases. John felt the certificate cases were pretty straightforward. John Arnold was concerned about review of unpermitted work by the Governing Board, and whether the board had sufficient expertise to address code enforcement issues.

John Arnold proposed the following names, all of whom have agreed to serve on the committee.

1. Laura Meyers, ex officio
2. John Arnold, ex officio, architect active in historic preservation, resident
3. Sandy Zalagens, real estate agent and has restored two bungalows in Jefferson Park, resident
4. Carol Allen, architect, and resident, trained at the Gamble House as an undergrad
5. Liz Eatman, resident, Professor at Art Center in Pasadena, interior designer, and her family is from this neighborhood
6. Sheila Jones, resident, Ethics Professor at Mt. St. Mary's college
7. David Saffer, resident, active in preservation for two decades, active in WAHA



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John stated that the above team would be good listeners, who are attuned to the preservation plan and the historical cultural history, and work well with their neighbors.

Stevie Stern seconded.

Vote: 2 in favor, 1 opposed.

Norman asked whether the plan is for the committee to meet, elect a chair, establish procedures, and then to review those procedures with the city attorney to see if any change would be needed to the authorizing motion to comply with the city attorney advice.

There seemed to be consensus that this was suitable. There are no current cases, so there is not a particular urgency.

Stevie thinks that the UNNC Governing Board was not qualified to review the cases, but might be required to approve the committee work.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Norman Gilmore announced that he had become aware of a lawsuit filed in Los Angeles Superior Court by Dianne Lawrence against the city asking for the bumpouts on Arlington at 20th and 21st to be removed.

Meeting adjourned around 6:49 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Norman Gilmore

UNNC Secretary

May 16, 2012

Attachments: None.