

COMMUNITY
NORMAL HEIGHTS
PLANNING GROUP

NORMAL HEIGHTS COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUP
4649 Hawley Boulevard San Diego, CA. 92116

Draft Meeting Minutes – February 7th, 2017

Meeting Beginning Time. 6:00pm by Caroline McKeown

Board Attendance (x means “present”):

x	Gary Weber	x	Nancy Lawler	x	Mark Lawler
	Bill Conway	x	Ralph Enriquez	x	Scott Kessler
	Jim Baross (C)	x	Ryan Zellers (in at 6:02)	x	Joseph Fombon
x	Caroline McKeown (T)	x	Dan Soderberg (in at 6:02)	x	Khalisa Bolling
	[vacant seat] (VC)	x	Earlene Thom	x	Adam Deutsch (S)

C=Chair; VC= Vice Chair; T= Treasurer; S=Secretary

Administration Items:

The Meeting Agenda includes an update from District 3 Councilman Chris Ward, we’ll progress through items until he arrives, so some items might be out of order.

Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes:

The Minutes of the 1/3/17 NHCPG meeting were distributed prior to this meeting. Adam made edits in response to feedback from board members. Joseph moved to approve the minutes and Khalisa seconded. The approval was unanimous. Ralph abstained, as he was absent from the January Meeting.

Treasurer’s Report:

No change from last month: \$2287.66 to date. We haven’t even gone near funds from the city for administrative expenses, which is \$500, and we haven’t discussed how to spend that. Adam made a motion to accept, Joseph seconded. All approved.

Communications:

Reports from Community Groups

1. Chloe Madison, representative for Chris Ward, introduced herself, and handed out a newsletter for District 3, and said he'd arrive at about 6:15.
2. **NH Comm. Assoc.:** No representative present to present.
3. **Adams Ave. Business Assoc.:** Scott (of AABA fame) reported that contactors started working on trip-and-falls last week, grinding down 190 spots from Texas to Vons, and preparing for unplugged. Resident asked about tree trimming—specifically a bushy one that was missed around Bancroft and Adams--and Scott gave a brief update about those, and any that were missed will be addressed soon.
4. **Adams Ave. Recreation Council:** Nancy reported that there are those without homes there, and there is active drinking (of vodka, brand unknown) she's observed. Bob, from the Rec Council, also reported that the issue of transients in the parks will be on the agenda for the 2/28 meeting.
5. **Friends of NH Canyons:** Alberto has nothing to report at this time, and because of the rain, the ground's pretty soft right now anyway.
6. **NH Urban Arts Assoc.:** They meet on the First Wednesday of every month, including tomorrow, 2/8, at 6pm to discuss upcoming community art projects.
7. **El Cajon Business Association:** Ralph has been elected to that group, so we'll add that to the agenda and minutes for updates from that organization. A resident asked about information about the lot at 37th and ECB, and Ralph provided some explanation and contact to reach out to (the developers of 37ECB, Danny Fitzgerald). Gary mentioned the lot at 37th and ECB is supposed to be a community space, and it's in progress without a clear timeline yet.

Reports from Government Representatives

8. **Javier Gomez from Assemblyman Todd Gloria's Office:** He's here to introduce himself, and get contacts from anyone in the neighborhood who wants to be in touch. Gloria's currently working on bills to make signature authentication on memorial easier, as well as bills to help students wear religious garb at school graduations, and to decriminalize HIV. The website for Todd Gloria is <https://a78.asmdc.org/>

(The floor was opened for public comment, but everyone wanted to wait for Chris Ward before they made their comments.)

9. **Special Attendee, District 3 City Councilmember Chris Ward:** Cloe Madison, his representative, introduced herself, and handed out a newsletter for District 3.

Councilmember Ward greeted the crowd, and expressed his excitement at begin our representative. He's excited about his staff, including Molly Chase, Chief of Staff who has been with the city for some time.

Ward has a lot of updates to share: he's working on a number of committees, including the Rules Committee, and is the Vice Chair of the Infrastructure Committee—and he has seen a 5 year outlook for infrastructure funding, and there's a gap that's closing between funds and the costs of services needed. There's about \$115m in city infrastructure projects for the city this year. He's also on the Environment Committee, and Parks and Rec falls under that, including Ward Canyon Park (note: the park in Normal Heights is not named for the new Councilman). He's also working on the Public Safety & Livable Neighborhoods Committee, and is looking forward to working on the conditions in District 3 connected to that. He's also on the regional committee to address issues in conjunction with county efforts, so the city isn't working without larger support. There are also efforts to advocate for more resources from the state. One specific challenge Ward mentioned is that we don't know if there are beds available tonight at shelters for those who need them, and that's the kind of information he's hoping to centralize and coordinate, and is looking forward to turning some negative trends around.

He has time for questions:

Caroline asked about Ward Canyon Park, and how it's an unfinished plan, and this neighborhood has a shortage of parks already. Ward responded that he's aware, and is pushing for funding.

Ralph asked about a NH Library, as it's part of our Community Plan. Is that a viable option? Ward says "yes and no," and explained the process by which other libraries have been funded recently, including seeking private donations/endowments for it. There's also a case to be made for looking at the usage of other library locations, which are pretty busy at the moment. He suggests crafting a proposal to present to city staff.

Dan asked about Historic Sites in San Diego, and how there are proposals to compromise those sites, and the Mills Act, etc. so he's curious about how those can be preserved, citing Professor Narwold at SDSU about how that act helps the neighborhood, and he wants to know how we can preserve those sites. Ward explained that the memo in question has a lot of complicated details to sort through, and it's going to be a long process to vet the points therein (as covered recently here: <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/politics/sd-me-sherman-planners-20170302-story.html>). Ward also values our perspective, as people who know the neighborhoods block-by-block. Dan contents that "great cities preserve their history, and we're a great city!"

Gary asked about great parks and open spaces, and he encourages Ward to help us implement our Community Plan to get the major projects and resources we need in Normal Heights. We have a \$70m short fall from our projected needs, and spaces need to be opened for recreation and for open spaces for residents to enjoy. Our density is growing, but we also need open spaces to compliment those. Ward agreed, and will communicate with us about efforts to come.

Sabrina, a resident of the neighborhood, thinks that more parks means more homeless in the neighborhood, and she wants the issue of those sleeping in parks and setting up tents in the neighborhood to be addressed, whether it be through more public housing, affordable housing, and the old library downtown that hasn't been utilized for housing needs as was planned. Ward said that the old library building has a lot of historic value, and he is looking at using that building for different needs than housing, as previous efforts to use that building haven't been successful. Sabrina is begging for a creative solution to the housing/homeless problem.

A number of residents are also concerned about the condition of our streets in Normal Heights, especially compared to the work that's been done in Kensington much more recently. Tickets opened through the "Get it Done" app get closed as soon as they're opened when people use the app, and Ward wants to know about when that happens, because it shouldn't be that way. It's for customer service, and he's committed to that service's delivery.

Rebecca (resident, and member of SD Audubon Society) has 3 questions: What are the priorities for the Environment Program? Ward says wetlands conservation is a larger regional project, which the council working on with Mission Bay Park. Regarding Pure Water (project to be more self-reliant in

terms of water needs), Ward explained our water processing/reliability plan, and he also explained our Zero Waste program to reduce landfill and be fully zero waste by 2035. What is his response to the revenue shortfalls of Measure A (the SANDAG measure that failed on the Nov. 2016 ballot)? Ward suggested contacting Councilmember Cole and Mayor Kevin Faulkner, as they are on the board handling those concerns. Last question: with Measure J, and funds moving from Mission Bay to Balboa, she wonders if there's a plan to how to handle Balboa Park's issues. Ward explained that there is more work underway to sort out how Balboa Park and other regional park projects will be planned, and how to fund projects in those areas. The city is behind on those projects, and invites people to participate.

Meanwhile, residents mentioned that city work crews are filling in sidewalk damage with asphalt, which isn't the proper way to repair a sidewalk, and violates our historic sidewalk pattern. Ward says he's going to look into that, and determine why that's happening. Several people reported they were told that the city was waiting to redo streets until after utility undergrounding (whenever they plan on doing that).

Alberto asked about repaving of alleys, and describe how horrible they are, i.e. "like war zones." Ward is aware, and said the most alleys are city property, and should be addressed by the city as opposed to property owners. Contact his office so they can look at plans, and be aware of what's happening. He will hold the city accountable for making proper repairs.

Ryan followed up on street issues: when pavement gets too distressed, and is in such poor condition, a road needs to be restructured, as more casual repairs will no longer hold. His point is that our streets are really falling apart, and likely need more than just routine maintenance.

Marty said she's been told that they're closing tickets to make their numbers look better, and Ward wants to know about those so he can follow up and have "strong conversations with department heads."

Another resident asked about priorities for federal funding that's been approved for infrastructure projects. Ward asked for that individual to follow up with his office via email.

Another resident asked about an MLS (Major League Soccer) team, and invited Ward to their games to get a sense of people's excitement for MLS in Qualcomm. Ward's priorities for that area include development of the river park; he wants to preserve opportunities for SDSU to use that space in the future, one way or another; he also wants affordable housing on that site; additionally, he wants a strong public process for input on that area, but without a public subsidy. That being said, those boxes seem to be checked by proposals for MLS on that cite, and conversations are ongoing.

Rebecca asked about Qualcomm projects helping Murphy Creek, and Ward is aware of that, and will investigate options.

Marty spoke up to compliment Cloe about her efforts as a fresh addition to the city staff.

10. **Non-agenda Public Comment (may be limited to 2 minutes each):** It seems we smashed through that with Councilmember Ward.

11. **Web & Social Media:** Caroline &/or Adam : still working on moving normalheights.org to the public trust with neighborhood organizations.

Information/Discussion Items:

12. **Adams Ave. Elementary School construction progress update:** Scott reports that the project is delayed with permits; they currently report that they'll break ground in March.

13. **Update on Transient people in Parks:** see earlier in the minutes, and the Rec Council Meeting in two weeks. Caroline suggested one idea is better signage, so the people know what the parameters are, and so police can act with more publically posted information. A question came up about the Neighborhood Watch, and that runs out of the Community Association. Adam suggested we get a representative from them to speak with us next month. Sabrina spoke again, suggesting we should all be angry about it.

14. **Developing an informational flyer of NH related community organizations and contacts; led by NH Community assoc.:** They weren't present to report on that.

15. **Utility Undergrounding, reports from recent public meetings:** Adam attended the 1/18/17 Meeting in Balboa Park, and explained that, really, it wasn't about moving forward with undergrounding plans we're currently aware of. Rather, the meeting was about how the 2009 Master Plan for undergrounding is being changed. The "blocks" that they've designated are going to be redrawn with a new system (based on GIS);

these blocks will be smaller than they are now. From there, the blocks will be prioritized by a number of objective criteria, and one subjective measure.

They were presenting a *draft* of the new plan, to be fully fleshed out by summer, they said, and hopefully approved by the City Council by the end of the year.

At the meeting, Adam asked about Normal Heights, and suggested that because this is largely a land-use issue, they'll want to communicate with Planning Groups, but those running the meeting in Balboa Park didn't seem interested in that approach. Perhaps later when they actually define the new blocks, there's a place for us to chime in, and Adam did mention that their GIS data might correlate to the other social/cultural factors that have lead to neighborhoods feeling needlessly divided, and that the areas of lower-income and more diverse populations seem to typically find themselves placed at the bottom of lists. They said that that was not their intention, but it's something that will hopefully come into focus as the blocks are drawn and priorities are set.

In short, all the conversations we've had as a Planning Group over the last year (at least) are moot, as the plan is changing. The community is clearly frustrated with this development.

Gary chimed in about how he told the staff that some city works have been surveying some areas, and those at the undergrounding meeting said some projects might be underway, if they've already started.

Again, residents expressed frustration over the lack of transparency and information about utility undergrounding, and the lack of coordination between utilities, sewer/water pipe work, and street resurfacing.

16. **Efforts to Create a Normal Heights Library:** Ralph briefly talked with Chris Ward earlier. Ralph would like to address adding resources like Libraries to our neighborhood. Gary supports it, as it's in our Community Plan. Caroline mentions that it's a project that the city is aware of, but needs funding. Also, we have Ward Canyon Park, which isn't complete at this time. But we should collect community input about what our neighborhood needs. Sabrina is opposed to a library, as she thinks it's another place where those without homes will gather. Others voiced support for the idea. Ralph and Marty suggested we cannot allow our fear about some concerns in our community to stand in the way of progress in other areas.

Action Items: (Items may be taken up out of order)

17. **Board Elections:** We've contacted eligible candidates for upcoming Board elections. Caroline gave a summary of the election process. Adam read a list of eligible candidates who have expressed interest via email or at the meeting, and confirmed the list of those who will appear on the ballot. Motion to approve the ballot by Ryan, and Joseph seconded it. All approved.

18. **Update Promotional Merchandise:** Ryan gave an update on a glass design. We scrapped a glass for St. Patrick's Day, as it's already on a Friday and the local restaurants/bars didn't think it would be necessary for that day. So Ryan created a glass design for Adams Ave. Unplugged, and is looking for feedback. Discussion revolved around making it less event specific, so they can sell over time without being put out of date so quickly. That event is April 29th, so we might want to set up a booth to sell those. But there's a lot to consider, so we'll revisit this next month.

Glasses sold best, but we can discuss other promotional items in the future.

19. **How to Spend Raised Funds:** Discussion for community enhancement/involvement expenditure plans, such as dinners, benches, projector screen, meeting notification signs, etc.: Caroline communicated that Jim suggested we get official name plates made (rather than using the paper ones Jim has made; Thank you, Jim!). They're about \$16 dollars each, and we should perhaps wait until after the election for any action on those. Scott says we can store chunky name plates in the office. We're going to look at design options and prices before we take a vote on those.

There's also the idea of getting sandwich boards to be placed outside on days of meetings, but we'll continue to think about these options after the elections next month. Name plates or boards would be funded from the city administrative operating budget, rather than from funds raised by the group.

Mark Roland, Treasurer of the Mid-City Little League, spoke about fund raising for the league. Normal Heights has the smallest field in the league, with over 200 kids playing, and they do a lot with not-much. The number of kids involved has been holding steady year after year, but sponsorship is down. Caroline recused herself from the conversation about donating, as she has a kid in the little league and felt like it was a conflict of interest for her to influence a vote that would directly benefit her child. The board discussed making a donation; there was clarification that the field is part of Adams Elementary. Sabrina mentioned people who cap in the park on Adams, and it was suggested that the more community use in a space, the more it deters transient activity in those spaces. Sabrina

asked why we couldn't donate more, and Caroline provided a brief explanation of the structure and function of the planning group's budget. Rebecca asked how long it took to raise the funds on hand, and the answer is about 4 years.

Adam raised motion to donate \$500 to Mid-City Little League, Dan seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous in favor. Caroline abstained, as explained above.

Committee and Ad Hoc Group Reports

20. **Community Planners Committee:** Mission Bay Dredging Project (Nov 2017), North City Pure Water Project, Muni Code "Street Preservation Ordinance", CIP Prioritization Process update at March CPC meeting. Jim will provide an update next month.
21. **Properties reviewed for historical significance:** 4432 33rd Street, 3189 Monroe Avenue, 5089 East Mountain View Dr.: Dan had nothing to report on these homes.
22. **Project Review Committee:** No new projects requiring review
23. **Transportation/Traffic Calming:** Ryan mentioned the crosswalk was moved on 34th, and lights were installed. A speed limit sign was also installed on 38th, according to Ralph.
24. **NH Friends of the Canyon:** Alberto Foglia discussed perhaps teaming up with the Adams Ave. Rec Council.

Adjourned at 8:15pm

The Next Meeting is 3/7/17

Anticipated/Requested Future Agenda Items

Agenda order and timing are approximate and subject to change. This information is available in alternative formats (sign language, oral interpreter, and/or Assistive Listening Device). To request an alternative format, call 619-533-3650 at least five (5) working days prior to the meeting. If you have questions concerning the NHCPG, please express them at the meeting or contact the NHCPG Chair, Jim Baross, at jimbaross@cox.net or 619-280-6908, or the City of San Diego Associate Planner, Naomi Siodmok at NSiodmok@sandiego.gov or 619-446-5064.

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