

Mar Vista Community Council Old Fire Station 62 Ad Hoc Committee
Wednesday, April 15, 2009, 7:30-9:30 pm
St. Andrews Lutheran Church
11555 National Blvd.
Co-Chairs: Sharon Commins and Rachel Swanger

Minutes (Sharon Commins chaired this meeting and Rachel Swanger took minutes).

Call to Order 7:42 pm.

Introductions and Public Announcements/Comments

Sharon Commins welcomed everyone to the meeting and called everyone's attention to a recent ruling on the LA housing density bonus. There was general discussion about how this might affect the options available to the City Planning Department for building on the site of Old Fire Station 62.

New Business

Sharon reported that the motion to call for the establishment of a Surplus Real Property Fund in the event the old FS62 were sold at auction passed the MVCC BoD unanimously at their last meeting.

Sharon confirmed that the meeting with Councilmember Bill Rosendahl for April 23, 2009 at 5 pm in his West LA office would take place. There was general discussion about the content of that meeting. Len reported that Rosendahl had invited Sean Spears from the Housing Department to attend to present the scenario they have been working on for the site. It is likely to be 14 units of senior affordable housing that won't exceed the Q condition zoning for the site. But the question remains how it will be funded. Evy Nelson raised questions about the advisability of placing senior housing at that location given the hill down to all the amenities seniors would need to access for daily living and the traffic on Centinela. Nancy Howell objected to the notion that all seniors would have problems getting around. She asserted it would be possible to find 14 seniors who were still active and mobile. Sharon Commins raised the issue of the number of supportive and subsidized housing units in a 1.25 mile radius of the proposed site. In her research she found over 500 restricted units. She raised the question about why so much affordable housing was being situated in Mar Vista when Westchester had 0 and West LA had 2 or 3. Bobi Garland pointed out that in her canvassing of the neighborhood she had visited 30-50 residents in existing apartments on Centinela who are over 65 and paying low rents. So there is existing affordable housing for seniors in the immediate neighborhood. Committee members wondered if this would be lost should developers begin to buy property and build. Additional points raised by Debra Merrill: concerned the criteria for seniors living there; how the current LADH plan does not address their and the federal government's own criteria; lack of parking for the in-home care workers and personnel that will be needed; parking needs will be have to be accommodated in residential neighborhoods; the lack of temporary parking for Access, Wise Center or UCLA vans to take the seniors to doctors appointments, hospital appointments, and other various programs; Centinela Boulevard being too steep for some to navigate and the safety problems in having to cross the heavily trafficked street; the acoustical noise from the Centinela traffic

The Committee reviewed options for the property:

1. Sweat Equity renovation: Marilyn Marble pointed out that it would be costly now to development. The numbers just don't pencil out. This might be a short-term option to take an eyesore off the city's hands. Sharon said she thought this was the direction the neighborhood was heading. Marilyn asked whether there was any money for such a citizen-led project. Len said there might be some stimulus money. Nancy said she thought it would be hard to find the funds to rehab the property. Sharon agreed that there

would be costs associated with repairing and/or replacing the heating, electric and other big-ticket items, and that if the community wanted to move in this direction they would have to make the case.

2. CERT-Solar Center: Rachel presented an idea proposed by Ken Frese, a Committee member who was unable to attend. Bobi said she was devoted to an Art Center, but she liked this idea better stating it made complete sense to have a CERT capability at this location. Nancy asked if the property couldn't continue to be used for the arts as well even if the main business was CERT and Solar. Committee members agreed that the Solar and CERT capability could provide some economic viability that might allow for other community uses that did not generate income. Len asked if we thought the CERT-Solar plan could pay for itself. Bobi stated that Santa Monica has been actively supporting efforts by citizens and businesses to move off the grid and they generate funds by doing so. This could be the fulcrum for MV to do the same. Evy asked if there were any CERT centers in our area. Sharon said Zone 6 has zero and that it does not have any disaster preparedness plan. Len said he thought Rosendahl might be interested in this idea. Patrick Melly asked what would happen on a daily basis inside the building. Bobi said she could call Sustainable Works in SM to ask about their specific efforts. Sharon reminded Committee members that it would be important for the project to bring profit to the City. She asked if we had a contact at the DWP. Len said he worked with Simone Taylor (Simone.Taylor@ladwp.com). The Committee agreed to do some more work and present this option at the meeting on April 23.

Rachel Swanger offered the motion: That the Committee refine the CERT-Solar Center proposal and prepare it for presentation to Rosendahl on April 23. Bobi seconded the motion which passed 9-0.

Old Business

Sharon provided an update on the website and survey. The Committee agreed to hold off on the survey.

There was no further public comment.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm