

Minutes – Regular Meeting Thursday, May 5, 2016

Social – 6:30; Meeting 7:03 – 8:55 pm

Montana Branch Library

1. The May 5, 2016 meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM. A quorum was present. Attending Board members were Danilo Bach, Evelyn Lauchenauer, Jane Koehler, Caryn Marshall, Jim Williams, Todd James, Phillis Dudick, Meyera Robbins, Sonya Sultan and Steve Lissik.
2. Approval of the Minutes from the April 7, 2016 Meeting. Moved by Todd James and seconded by Steve Lissik, unanimously approved as written.
3. Treasurer's Report by Chair Danilo Bach in lieu of treasurer's excused absence: We are holding \$11,400.
4. Beat 4 Neighborhood Resource Officer Capri Redondo and Lauralee Asch, Crime Prevention Officer, attending to make us aware of Hot Prowl burglaries in NOMA on April 21st. A Hot Prowl burglary is defined as a home burglary committed when the residents are in the house during the break-in. Victim of the Hot Prowl burglary Christa Strauss and her mother gave us an overview of what happened to her mother and family that night. Both officers advised us to be vigilant and double-check to lock doors, windows, gates and to have alarms on day and night. We were introduced to Derek Johnson, manager of SMPA, a not-for-profit NOMA area home security service since 1981. SMPA stays in close contact with SMPD. We also heard from Jordan Maroko of Ring.com about their security device with a motion sensor and video cam that connects to your cellphone and lets you remotely see and communicate with anyone at your front door.
5. Expo Line update and Open Street Events – Erin Taylor, SM Office of Communication: Expo opening day is May 20th with a Celebration Event in DTSM 10 – Noon. There will be free Expo rides, free BBB and free Breeze bikeshare. The three Santa Monica Expo stations are 4th Street, 17th Street and Bergamot Station. May 21st will feature local community station celebrations at all three stations with music, entertainment and food from 10 – 4 pm. The Coast celebration will be held on June 5th; the route will be Ocean Avenue from Wilshire and Main St. from Colorado to Marine. The route will be for cycling and walking only. There will be mobility hubs, restaurants and retail along the way to enjoy from 9-3 pm.
6. June Primary polling place change for many NOMA residents to Rustic Canyon. Jules Lamm has researched the change which may not be able to be reversed before the primary, but he is trying to find alternate polling locations in NOMA for the November election that are closer. Jules also reported on a newly-formed group called Santa Monica futures to review the state of democracy in Santa Monica and to promote terms limits for SM council members.

7. Hedges and fences – rules and code enforcement - Todd James. The hedges, fences and wall height issues have not gone away because there are many nonconforming fences, hedges and walls currently going up without permits. The registered “grandfathered” walls, hedges and fences are in a city data base. The code regarding heights has not changed -- fronts are 42 inches high and eight feet on both sides and at lot rear. On the sides and back hedges can be 12 feet and front is 42 inches high. There are exceptions -- backing on an alley the hedge can be as high as you want. If you have a fence or wall on the alley you can apply for a variance a two or four foot higher that must go through the Planning process for approval. The code has not changed in a decade, if you see a fence out of compliance you can call the City to ask if property has a permit and if not the City will send someone out to investigate. If hedges become overgrown and block the sun from your yard, first talk to your neighbor and let them know and if that does not work you can call code compliance to send someone out to verify if the hedge is in compliance and a letter will be mailed to the neighbor letting them know that they have fourteen days to comply. There is a \$250 fine for non-compliance. After seven days if they still have not complied there is another \$250 fine. The issue of front and side yards was also raised; this is spelled out in the 1999 Municipal Code. A house's street address and orientation can sometimes be changed so that its front becomes side-facing to maximize the use of higher hedges and fences, but this can be unfriendly to the immediate neighborhood. This issue may be a topic for the LUC committee to review.
8. Committee Reports: Membership, Governance, Land Use
Postponed because of lack of time.
9. Announcements:
 - i) LUVe Initiative has collected over 10,000 signatures, possibly qualifying it for November ballot.
 - ii) Council action: Hueston Report
NOMA supported along with other neighborhood associations. This report reviewed the questionable behavior of violations of the Oaks Initiative, Clean Government Initiative and the questionable firing of a newly-appointed City employee because of unallowed influence by a Council member (then-mayor Pam O'Connor). As a result of the report's findings, NOMA recommended a vote of censure for such clear violation and improper behavior. NOMA recommended a performance review of the City Attorney Marsha Moutrie for her lack of response in investigating earlier claims and letting the statute of limitations run out on the possible violations. The Council endorsed the report, with intent for performance review of our City Attorney, but with no censure of Councilmember O'Connor.
 - iii) Evelyn Lauchenauer re. new "Living North of Montana" magazine publication with an opportunity for a NOMA article every month to spread the word about the NOMA brand and the work we do in the community. The magazine is in its grassroots growing stage and plans to expand circulation in the future.
 - iv) Social Committee chair Evelyn on 4th of July Parade: NOMA has participated in the parade for four years. This will be the fifth year if there is enough interest; it is a short morning parade about hour long. There will be an e-mail about the parade sent to NOMA members and Friends to gather participation.

- v) Permanent drug drop-off now available at curbside receptacle at Public Safety Facility, 333 Olympic Drive
- vi) Solar Santa Monica workshop May 18 6:30 Ken Edwards Center
- vii) SMO Park planning, 7pm May 13 Mount Olive Church, Ocean Park Blvd.
- viii) Metro Expo service begins, May 20
- ix) Montana Avenue sidewalk sale, May 21 10–6pm

10. RFPs (Danilo) - postponed for lack of time

11. Public Comment: Anna Rogers

Developers buying homes that are 40 years old and on the HRI and soon after sale stripping the home of its defining features that could qualify it for Landmark consideration. Request that NOMA look into this to prevent this practice. Complaint also of demolition of house at 441 21 St. without neighborhood notice because of failure of city staff to do so.

12. Adjournment: 8:51.

Our next meeting will be June 2 at the Montana Branch Library

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