



Agenda - Regular Meeting
Thursday, May 2, 2013, 7 - 9 pm
Montana Branch Library

1. Introductions – 5 minutes
2. Adoption of the agenda and approval of the Minutes from the April 4, 2013 Meeting.
3. Miramar report. Affiliates of MSD Capital L.P. have presented a new redevelopment proposal for the Fairmont Miramar Hotel, at the corner of Ocean Avenue and Wilshire. The revised drawings show a 21-story building topped by a 60-foot spire, with more square footage than Santa Monica Place. Albin, Pat, Carol, Evelyn, Danilo. 30 minutes. (See related article, attached.)
4. Community workshop on downtown height and density. City planners have proposed that eight downtown sites be designated as “Opportunity Sites,” with no limits on height and density. The last city workshop on the downtown plan did not permit residents to offer opinions on this important proposal, which could bring sweeping changes to the character of the city. Following complaints by neighborhood association leaders about the lack of openness to resident input, the city has scheduled a workshop on Monday, May 6, to hear residents’ views. We will fill you in on what is planned and let you know how to have your say. Carol, Pat, Evelyn. 30 minutes. (See flyer circulated by the NOMA board earlier this month, attached.)
5. Discussion of community benefits. Through its development process, the city allows developers to build taller, denser buildings if they agree to provide some “community benefits” in exchange for greater height and density. These benefits include things like affordable housing units, measures aimed at reducing traffic congestion, and physical improvements to the community. Do you think it makes sense to trade height and density for these potential benefits? Albin will lead a conversation about the process. 15 minutes. (See related article, attached.)
6. The news from NOMA and the community – 30 minutes
 - a. Treasurer’s report – Victor.
 - b. NOMA’s recent social mixer was a hit. We plan for another one.
 - c. Progress report: Membership renewals and returned surveys are coming in.
 - d. NOMA is awarded a matching grant.
 - e. Palisades Park update.
 - f. City plans call for an “activity center” on Wilshire between Berkeley and Centinela, with greater heights and densities than surrounding areas. Neighbors are contesting it.
 - g. News from the Neighborhood Council Meeting.
 - h. Board member comments.
7. The Embassy/Palihouse Hotel – Neighbors oppose the installation of a bar in this historic landmark on Third Street south of Wilshire, located in a residential neighborhood. Laura Wilson - 10 minutes (See related article, attached.)
8. Announcements – 5 minutes -- Santa Monica Festival, Montana Avenue Sidewalk Sale, etc.
9. Possible future agenda items: the future of Santa Monica Airport, wellbeing project, housing element. Other ideas?
10. Adjournment

Albin Gielicz, Chair

Flyer sent by NOMA board on April 12, 2013

Dear NOMA members and friends,

To the dismay of many residents and civic organizations, city planners have recommended to the Planning Commission the approval of a new Plan that would remove all limits on height and density for eight parcels of land in the downtown area. Among the eight are three large parcels along Ocean Avenue.

This draft Plan, containing the eight so-called "Opportunity Sites" was developed without any meaningful consultation with residents and community members on the crucial question of massively increasing the allowable height and density for buildings in our downtown.

Now, for the first time, the City has agreed to hold a public workshop on the issue of downtown height and density. This may be your only chance to voice your views on this critical matter before decisions are made that could irreversibly change the way life is lived in our community.

Date: Monday, May 6, 2013

Time: 7:00 p.m.

**Place: Civic Center Auditorium, East Wing
1855 Main Street, Santa Monica 90401**

Background:

The City of Santa Monica is in the process of revising its Downtown Specific Plan, a document that governs, among other things, the allowable height and density of buildings that will be built in the downtown area.

Representatives of neighborhood groups across the city have complained directly to city staff about the lack of public input into the creation of the so-called "Opportunity Sites," and have voiced concerns that an imbalanced development process will result in the loss of Santa Monica's civic identity.

Anticipating the approval of the proposed plan for unlimited heights and densities, developers have already prepared proposals for three huge hotel/condo projects along Ocean Avenue with 21-story towers nearly 300 feet in height. One of them, the Miramar redevelopment project, would have more square feet than the Santa Monica Place mall if it is approved in its current form. Many other similar projects are waiting in the wings.

None of these projects would be permitted under existing zoning.

Elsewhere in the downtown, some 17 other hotel/commercial/residential projects are also being proposed with heights as tall as eight stories, many with minimal public input.

Considered together, the combined impact of all these proposals on our small downtown area could be overwhelming.

The Time To Be Heard Is Now

The workshop on Monday, May 6, is the best chance for residents and community members to weigh in before the City Council approves a new Downtown Specific Plan, which will be in place until 2030. It's up to us to tell our city planners, the Planning Commission and the City Council how much growth we want for our city center before the proposed Plan comes up for a final vote.

Wherever in the city we live, we will all feel the impact of additional rapid population growth, increased traffic and parking shortages, deteriorating air quality, and other strained resources if all these projects go forward.

Please join us at the event on Monday, May 6, and let your voices be heard. It may be your only chance to express your views on this critical issue.

Sincerely,
The board of directors
NOMA

Supplementary Materials, for your convenience

1. "Miramar plans 2nd tallest tower in Santa Monica", by Jenna Chandler, Santa Monica Patch, February 22, 2013

<http://santamonica.patch.com/articles/miramar-plans-2nd-tallest-tower-in-santa-monica>

2. "Residents to talk height and density in Santa Monica's Downtown", by Jason Islas, Santa Monica Lookout, April 9, 2013

http://www.surfsantamonica.com/ssm_site/the_lookout/news/News-2013/April-2013/04_09_2013_Residents_to_Talk_Height_and_Density_in_Santa_Monicas_Downtown.html

3. "Setting Benefits for Development", by Jorge Casuso, The Lookout News, July 8, 2009

http://www.surfsantamonica.com/ssm_site/the_lookout/news/News-2009/July-2009/07_08_09_Setting_Benefits_for_Development.html

4. "Drinks won't be fun for everyone at Palihouse Santa Monica", By Jenna Chandler, Santa Monica Patch, April 2, 2013

<http://santamonica.patch.com/articles/drinks-won-t-be-fun-for-everyone-at-palihouse-santa-monica>