



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

1. The May 2, 2013 meeting was called to order at 7:07 PM. A quorum was present. Attending were all Board members: Danillo Bach, Patricia Bauer, Victor Fresco, Albin Gielicz, Todd James, Carol Landsberg, Evelyn Lauchenauer, Doris Sosin, and Mary Jo Stenger.
2. Adoption of Agenda and approval of the Minutes for April 4, 2013 meeting. The minutes were approved as written. There were no changes/additions to the Agenda.
3. Actions taken since the last meeting:
 - a. Motion to donate \$100 to the SAMO High was passed.

4. Miramar Hotel Report:

Representatives of NOMA met with the developer associated with Michael Dell's Ocean Avenue LLC - The Athens Group - to discuss their plans for the hotel. This group has developed 7 luxury hotels to date including the Montage in Beverly Hills. Michael Dell's Ocean Ave LLC paid \$200 million to purchase the Miramar hotel in 2006 and is proposing to transform the 4.5 acre site. They must retain the landmarked fig tree and the landmarked brick building at the corner of 2nd St. and California Avenue.

The presentation by the Athens Group indicated that this project will be a trend/precedent setter. The new Ocean Building, is currently proposed to be sitting in an East-West orientation, in the center of the site- as proposed by the City- will rise 262 feet with a 60-foot uninhabitable spire. This is one of 8 "opportunity sites" where it's proposed to have no height and density limits - 3 of these sites are on Ocean Avenue. The Athens Group said that the City representatives told them to go high rather than broad. The land use plans for the Miramar include 280 guest rooms, restaurants, meeting space, retail stores, spa and fitness center, and up to 120 market rate luxury condos. Across 2nd St. on another lot that is now a parking lot, they are planning to build up to 40 affordable residential units. They also plan to have a 2 - 3 levels in a subterranean garage providing up to 484 parking spaces. The Miramar EIR Scoping Meeting is May 16, 2013 in the Main Library from 6:30 to 8:30 pm.

Development Agreements that allow for greater than code height and density are a way for the City to make money or get things they need paid for by developers through "Community Benefits". Right now the City has financial difficulties – our unfunded pension plan amounts to \$246,203,938 and state wants some funding money back. It is also interesting to note that the number of employees of the City of Santa Monica is approximately 2,528 and the number of residents is about 90,400 which means there's one employee for each 35.7 residents. For comparison, in Beverly Hills there's one employee for every 31.8 residents and in Los Angeles, there's one employee for every 80 residents.

5. **Community Workshop on Downtown Height and Density:**

City planners have proposed the eight downtown sites be designated as “Opportunity Sites” with no limits on height or density. The first City workshop on the Downtown Specific Plan did not allow residents to voice their opinions on this idea. As a result of complaints from neighborhood associations about this, the City has scheduled a workshop for Monday May 6, 2013 to hear resident comments on what we want to see in our downtown. Most of the current buildings we see downtown haven’t been built to the maximum height and density already allowed so we don’t have a sense of what our downtown would look like if it was built out. NOMA has circulated a flyer about this important meeting. Comments were made that the EXPO line needs parking downtown. Santa Monica Place is an example of how residents can make a difference. The site was originally supposed to have 3 towers and residents successfully eliminated this plan.

6. **Discussion of Community Benefits:**

Through the development process, the City allows developers to build taller and denser buildings if they agree to provide some “Community Benefits” in return. These benefits include things like affordable housing units, traffic mitigation measures, and physical improvements to the community. There is no clear definition of what a “community benefit” actually is. Some things being called “Community Benefits” are actually required such as the preservation of the landmarked fig tree at the Miramar site. Others are actually building amenities that will help the developer save money by increasing the price to buyers or renters. Different neighborhoods would appreciate different kinds of benefits. And there is the idea that creating a list of Community Benefits may erroneously suggest that the residents of the neighborhood approve of buildings that are higher and denser.

7. **Housing Element:** This presentation will be rescheduled.

8. **Embassy/ Palihouse Hotel:** Laura Wilson

- The Embassy Apartment and Hotel has been sold to new owners. The Embassy is currently closed for renovations and will open in June as a Palihouse hotel, with a Lobby lounge bar.
- There are 3 rent controlled tenants left and they have 2 years left to stay- then the new owners may have them evicted under the Ellis act. The rest of the rent controlled tenants have been bought out.
- The new owners added a large new patio in the front garden and they have applied for a type 70 liquor license to sell and serve from 6 am to 2 am in the front garden, lobby lounge bar, back patio and all 38 rooms.
- This is an R-3 residential neighborhood in WILMONT. The sale of alcohol is not permitted unless they have approval via a CUP. The building is a “nonconforming commercial property”. The property has 1 parking space and the new owners want to provide valet parking and 5th and Wilshire. According to a business license request from Hollywood Hills Valet cars will be parked at Robert Forest physical therapy.

This is a violation of the basic values of the LUCE: “The community’s core values form the basis of the LUCE.” “Preserving Existing Neighborhoods. The *highest priority* of the

community was the preservation of the existing character and scale of Santa Monica's neighborhoods." The Highest priority of LUCE will be undermined if the NONCONFORMING Embassy/Palihouse changes into a full-scale hotel and lobby lounge bar with alcohol sales and service allowed. This will set a very bad precedence for future development in residential neighborhoods.

9. Reports:

- a. Treasurer's Report: NOMA has received about 95 membership renewals and \$3,000 in membership dues after "residents" in the 90402 zip code got our City sponsored annual newsletter/survey and request for membership dues.
If you haven't already done so, please send in your 2013 membership dues as soon as possible. NOMA also received a \$2,700 grant from the City to expand our membership. Our IRS forms are slowly moving through the system.
- b. Social Subcommittee has been formed: We had a great Social Mixer on May 5, 2013 at SemiPrecious. Many people attended and enjoyed the event. We will need to be more careful about having guests sign-in at our next function.
Thank you again to Amy Weber of Semi-Precious for hosting the event and to our Social Committee: Meyera Robbins, Helen Winkler and Evelyn Lauchenauer.
The next Social Mixer will be held from **6-8 PM on Friday, June 14, 2013** at Pure Sense located at 729 Montana Avenue.
- c. A Development Subcommittee has been formed: Danilo Bach, Meyera Robbins, and Carol Landsberg will be part of it. Others wanting to be on the committee, please let us know. We will ask to help the Pico neighborhood.

10. Future Agenda Items: Will do via email- lack of time

11. The **June 6, 2013 NOMA meeting will be held from 7PM to 9 PM at the Main Library** due to a scheduling conflict at the Montana Library.

12. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:59 PM

Carol Landsberg, Secretary