

MINUTES – NOMA MEETING MAY 4, 2017

Reception 6:30 pm Meeting 7 pm

Montana Branch Library

1. The May 4, 2017 meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm. A quorum was present. Attending Board Members were: Chair Nancy Coleman, Vice Chair Danilo Bach, Jane Koehler, Caryn Marshall, Sonya Sultan, Jim Williams and Phillis Dudick. Absent: Jeff Gordon, Evelyn Lauchenauer, Victor Fresco, Todd James and Steve Lissik.
2. Approval of the Minutes of the April 6, 2017 meeting by Caryn Marshall and seconded by Danilo Bach.
3. Treasurer's report: approximately \$13,721 in account, with no bills outstanding.
4. Chair Nancy Coleman thanked the volunteers for organizing today's half-hour social preceding the meeting and informed NOMA members that future volunteers can contact her and will be fully reimbursed by NOMA for all their expenses made towards organizing the 30-minute gathering before our monthly meeting.
5. Announcements:

Member Paula Kayton announced that there had been an increase in break-ins in the neighborhood. Our police community officers encourage all types of crimes to be immediately reported. If you have security cameras and catch suspicious activity report it to the police. Remember to lock your cars and make sure your windows and doors are locked.

6. R1 zoning considerations: Bob Posek opened a discussion about how the R1 zoning has developed since the NOMA's first involvement in 1998. There is a noticeable increase of the demolition of older homes. There is an increase in the number of new homes that are out of proportion compared to the adjacent older homes (a practice known as 'McMansionization'). The old Spanish Colonial Revival architecture is slowly fading away. The new construction appears to be in the "Nantucket" style used in "developments" rather than in established residential communities. Bob Posek advocates the preservation of the neighborhood and attempt to prevent the new all "very" similar looking white houses/boxes that appear to be overwhelming our neighborhood. A goal is to keep the demolitions from continuing is to stimulate renovations to existing structures. Are there incentives that the City should be offering to retain the existing housing stock in order to conserve the current structure, style and look?

Bob invited residents to join his team to work on preserving older homes. (A sign up sheet was circulated during the meeting.) He said now is an interesting and important time to get involved. If you are interested contact Bob Posek or chair Nancy Coleman.

7. The Downtown Community Plan: Mary Marlow, of the Transparency Project and the organizer of the neighborhood council group that has studied the DCP and the Draft EIR for it, spoke on the present state of the DCP. Representatives from the Neighborhood Council, including NOMA, studied and wrote comments on the Draft EIR. The responses from the City were not available for over a year, when the Planning Department presented the newest version of the DCP to the Planning Commission. There were few changes made as a result of the work that the Neighborhood Council made.

The City attempted to obtain stakeholder opinions before issuing the new DCP in April 2017. The City held focus groups, initiated an on-line survey that included responses from residents, developers, visitors, and employees/workers in the downtown area. According to Mary Marlow, the survey skews large concerns because most of the surveyed people are not Santa Monica residents, but visitors and employees. There was a statistically accurate survey taken in 2014 and published in 2015 that considered the desire of residents. The results of the work done in 2016 with the public forums and ad hoc on-line survey do not show the same results. The desire of those in 2014 wanted easy access to the downtown (improved traffic and parking); non-chain stores; no large high-rises, and the maintenance of the beach low scale development that enables sun and air circulation which are characteristic of Santa Monica history.

With a lot of new developments lined up, Downtown Santa Monica expects to have 3200 new residents, while now only 4500 people live in the area. The current community plan predicts a residential increase of 25% including affordable housing.

There is an emphasis of getting residents out of cars and using bikes, car-pooling, public transport and walking. The goal is to have up to 65% of all trips made in combination of these methods.

Other considerations not considered directly in the plan but are related include a freeway cap that would connect the downtown to the Civic Center and greater use of public transport.

The NOMA Board sent the City Council a letter in February asking that there be a centralized public park on 4th/5th and Arizona Ave.

Numerous other issues remain to be settled. These include making sure that legitimate historical preservation of landmarked buildings or those listed on the

Historical Resource Inventory (completed in 2017). Mary Marlow stated that we should be protecting and preserving Downtown Santa Monica and she says that façade retention is not a substitute for preservation. Perhaps the most important issue is how high and how dense the Downtown should be and who gets to decide? The current DCP allows those mixed use buildings (commercial on the first floor and housing above) with less than 50,000 they go to the Planning Commission only. Those buildings with 30,000 that are solely commercial go the Planning Commission. Only buildings above 60,000 go to the City Council. The height limits vary from 50 feet to 84 feet (next to the Expo Line). There are those who feel that the height limits should be higher but others who argue for lower heights more public scrutiny of the projects. There could be a lower number of square feet required for City Council Oversight. For larger sites/height and density a super-majority of the City Council. There is also a possibility of having a voter initiative for those sites that are taller than 130 feet. While these latter possibilities are not now a part of the DCP they could be added.

The Planning Commission is having hearings on the Downtown Community Plan throughout the Month of May and will vote on it on May 31st. Go to www.downtownsmplan.org to leave a comment or to review the plan, the FEIR, the calendar and meeting schedule to get involved.

7. Make Music Day: Join NOMA on Wednesday July 21st for a free gala concert of The Wilde-Hartmans & The Rattle Snakes at the Palisades Park (at Georgina and Ocean Ave.) from 5:30pm to 8:30pm. Bring a picnic and enjoy the sunset.
8. 4th of July Main Street Parade: Celebrate the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and NOMA's 6th year participating in the Main Street Parade. To participate, contact Evelyn Lauchenauer: evelyn.nomaboard@gmail.com or (310) 906-0163.
9. Adjournment at 8:44 pm.

Because of a scheduled meeting of the SM Library Association/Commission? scheduled in the Community Room June 1, the next NOMA meeting will be held the following Thursday, June 8, 2017, at 7 pm at the Montana Branch Library with a social preceding at 6:30.