

NOMA Monthly Meeting

January 10, 2019

Montana Branch Library, 17th and Montana

I. Attendance

A. Present Members: Chair - Nancy Coleman, Vice Chair - Danilo Bach, Treasurer - Victor Fresco, Membership Chair - Caryn Marshall, Secretary - Jeff Brecht, Derek Devermont, Jeff Gordon, Ann Greenspun, Todd James, Steve Lissik, Sonya Fox Sultan, Jim Williams

B. Absent Members: Phillis Dudick

II. Approval of December 6th Minutes

A. Jeff Brecht Moves, Danilo Seconds. All in favor.

III. Treasurer's report

A. Victor Fresco: Everything is up to date. All bills have been paid.

IV. Welcome and Announcements from Chair

A. City Council Vacancy

1. Tony Vasquez has resigned from city council. I hope that anyone interested would apply to this position. Transparency has been requested regarding the criteria being used to fill the vacancy.

2. Danilo: Deadline for the application is January 17th.

B. Winter Newsletter

1. Membership form is in the envelope. Dues can be sent in anytime.

C. NOMA's Community celebration and next meeting

1. This will be held during End of Feb / Beginning of March. We are awaiting response from The Aero Theatre

D. New 4th Street historic district in Ocean Park has been proposed

1. There is a community meeting about this on Thursday the 17th.

E. NOMA is interested in gaining more information on 401 19th St. in Gillette Regent Square, an applicant for a demolition permit, to see if it qualifies for landmark status and will so inform Landmarks Commission.

1. The current interim emergency ordinance allows the Commission to ask for more research to be done for structure over 40 years of age. If they decide against, neighborhood groups/organization or residents can still pursue an application.

F. Salute to retiring Board members, Jane Koehler and Caryn Marshall

1. Caryn Marshall will continue to work on membership
2. Jane Koehler has been very active in preservation and coordinating monthly library meetings for members.

V. Introduction of our new SMPD Beat 4 Neighborhood Officer Peter Lashley and Neighborhood Liaison Suzie Lockwood and their comments:

- A. Peter Lashley has been a police officer for 15 years. He worked on the mounted unit for 10 years. He also worked with the motorcycle and patrol divisions. Peter has been a neighborhood officer in SM for two years and is familiar with the North of Montana Neighborhood.

1. He consistently hears that residents would like to see more officers on patrol.
Under the new chief, the department is approaching full staffing. This will help with more units on patrol.
2. The SMPD is transitioning from three departments to four. This is an effort to place more sworn police officers on the street.
3. Member Question: Could you tell us more about your roles?
 - a) Peter Answer: I am replacing Capri Redondo as our neighborhood officer. Suzie is the civilian liaison. Contact information is available on the SMPD website. Title and region is being updated. Business cards are available at tonight's meeting.
4. Member Question: I come across animals while walking through the neighborhood. How should I handle this?
 - a) Peter Answer: Call the non-emergency phone number. He recommends that you add this number to your phonebook.
5. Member Question: What have you found to be unique and/or problematic in NOMA?
 - a) Peter Answer: The largest change for me will be moving from a downtown environment to a neighborhood one. There are mostly neighborhood disputes in NOMA. Previous two-month crime rate is down. There are also some homeless issues.
6. Derek Question: How does the crime rate of Santa Monica compare to that of neighboring communities?
 - a) Suzie Answer: In the borders of the city, it is similar to our neighbors.

7. 2nd Question: Santa Monica has been the subject of civil rights lawsuits recently. Have officers been trained to combat this?
- a) Suzie Answer: There have been recent incidents regarding neighbors thinking houses had been broken into. Police responded and found that the suspects were the owners of the homes. The SMPD requires that their officers undergo annual training for 40 hours. The subjects vary greatly. In terms of demographics, the officers of the SMPD are highly diverse.
8. Member Question: Along Montana Ave, there are crosswalk lights which are very convenient. Are there plans to expand this? The Ocean and Palisades intersection is an example of how dangerous these crosswalks can be.
- a) Suzie answer: This is being explored by city hall.
- b) Peter Answer: The original company that provided the crosswalk lights is no longer working with the city. The city is establishing relationships with new vendors. These types of crosswalks can cost approximately \$750k per intersection.

VI. Election of the 2019 NOMA Board:

- A. Candidates for a two-year period are: Derek Devermont, Victor Fresco*, Ann Greenspun, Todd James*, Evelyn Lauchenauer *, Steven Lissik*, Sonya Sultan*
1. Asterisk denotes incumbents.
- B. There are seven members up for election for two year terms. 5 for re-election and 2 new board members. Half of the board comes up for re-election every year. The directors are elected by slate. The slate is determined by our Nominating Committee, consisting of several Board members and at least two

at-large members. Biographical information for candidates is available online for incumbents and in printed form at registration table for first-time board members.

- C. Mary Marlow from the Transparency Project will oversee and certify the vote.
 - 1. Slate unanimously approved by attending members' show of hands (31-0).
 - 2. Thanks again to Jane and Caryn!

VII. About the Library: Patty Wong, Santa Monica Chief Librarian.

- A. In March, Patty will have been the chief librarian for two years. Stephanie Archer is the Montana Branch Manager. Two other library board members are present.
- B. A Library Board position will become vacant soon; applicants are encouraged.
- C. Patty has been a librarian for almost 35 years. Most of those years have been spent in Northern California.
- D. Upcoming Initiatives:
 - 1. Not everyone in Santa Monica has a library card. Staff is doing outreach to increase membership. The library is free for everyone and offers more than 2,000 programs per year including Yoga, Internet Access, Meeting Rooms, and Story Telling.
 - 2. Fine-Free for Youth. Youth members are no longer subject to fines. This will encourage a more open environment for all members.
- E. Member Question: I have heard many complaints about homeless people in the library. Is there truth to this?
 - 1. Patty Answer: The library is a public space, so everyone is welcome. We have created a stronger code of conduct which encourages people not to

sleep on the grounds. Also, social workers will be implemented on library grounds. The level of complaints about homelessness in libraries has fallen from 1 in 4 complaints to 1 in 10.

F. Member Suggestion: I suggest that the Montana Branch implement stronger security measures such as cameras.

1. Patty Answer: We are moving branch by branch and installing cameras.

G. Member Question: At the Pico library, the men's room is spotless. At the Main library, the men's room is typically messy. Why is this?

1. Patty Answer: The Main library has 1,400-1,600 visitors per day. I'll make a note and see if we can improve this experience. Please always feel free to provide feedback like this so that we can attend to it.

H. Member Question: I always smell Marijuana around the Main library.

1. Patty Answer: We encourage all smokers to move 20 feet or greater from library entrances.

I. Member Question: Can we separate the children's library experience from where the homeless population stays?

1. Patty Answer: We are trying to enforce the code of conduct more consistently. This includes not allowing unaccompanied adults in the children's areas. Fewer than 100 of our 1400 daily visitors are perceived as homeless. More than 90 percent of that homeless community does nothing wrong.

J. Jeff Brecht Question: What is the library's approach to mobile technology and shared working spaces?

1. A new grant will allow us to install more mobile and flexible furniture as well as mobile computing solutions. More of the budget is being allocated to technology.

K. Jeff Gordon Question: Regarding paper books vs. electronic books, what is the library's plan moving forward?

1. Patty Answer: Annual budget is ~\$1.2M. About half of that is spent on paper materials. We do offer both paper and electronic. Children continue to utilize paper materials to a greater degree. One reason why is higher quality publishing in the paper space.

VIII. Presentation of plans for The Rainbow Garden, an environmental learning center, to be built at 4th and Montana: Thao Ma, NOMA resident and owner of 401 Montana Avenue:

A. Nancy: This building has been vacant for approximately four years. A proposal will be submitted to city council on January 16th. I ask that the owners be good neighbors starting today and begin to maintain the property.

B. Thao Ma: My husband and I have been in Santa Monica for 10 years and have five kids. We find food education to be very important. We have been inspired by the edible schoolyard located in Berkeley. We have been planning this children's learning center for five years. The education provided will focus on growing and cooking food. Local schools will be invited to the garden. They will harvest, cook, and share a meal. The building is beautiful, but we have viewed it more as a landscape project.

C. Member Question: Age group?

1. Thao: Elementary and pre-school age kids.

D. Member Question: How is this zoned?

1. Thao: Zoned R3 currently. We have applied for a conditional use permit.

E. Member Question: Is it open to the public?

1. Thao: No. It is specifically for students.

F. Sonya Question: How are you going to sustain this project?

1. Thao: Schools will not pay for the service. We are gifting this garden to the community.

G. Member Question: Where will kids arrive by bus?

1. Thao: There are seven car spaces in the alley behind the building. This space is large enough for a small bus.

H. Member Question: You said there would be groups of 40 children. How many groups per day?

1. Thao: We are planning on starting early in the morning and shifting from there as needed.

I. Member Question: Will the plantings be in the "front yard?" That is, facing Montana.

1. Thao: Yes.

J. Derek Question: You will be paying for all of this? Thank you.

1. Thao: Yes.

K. Member Question: Is there a website or more information?

1. Thao: Yes. You can also leave feedback there. therainbowgarden.org

L. Sonya Question: Would you consider having project for adults?

1. Thao: I'm not sure if that would be allowed. The application is for a school.

M. Victor Question: Tell us more about the fences and walls. Why 48 inch walls instead of 42?

1. Thao: The wall height is for safety.

N. Todd Question: Has there been an analysis for traffic?

1. Thao: Yes

O. Member Question: Is there an estimated date of completion?

1. Thao: Not yet. Building construction should be quick.

P. Member Question: Will you have a drive-through to drop off students?

1. Thao: We are having discussions about turning nearby metered parking into a loading zone.

Q. Member Question: Demolition/Construction timeline?

1. Thao: Not sure. We cannot begin until the plan is approved.

R. Derek Question: Is it possible to maintain the property in the meantime?

1. Thao: What would you like for us to do?

2. Derek Response: Clean up the brush for a start and or wildlife.

3. Thao: I will take care of the weeds this week.

S. Member Question: Thanks again. To the architect, was there no ability to clear the land prior to permitting?

1. Architect Answer: There was not.

T. Danilo Comment: For the architect, I hope that the colors of the building do not conflict with the natural surroundings.

1. Thao: The building looks modern because it is one square kitchen.

2. Architect Answer: The architectural review board will have a hearing about this property. You are welcome to attend and comment.

U. Evelyn Comment: Will it be one or two stories? Do you know current size?

1. Thao: It will be one story. It will be much smaller than the structure there now.

V. Nancy Answer: How do the Palisades alley neighbors feel about this?

1. Thao: Their reaction has been positive.

W. Member Question: Will the gardening be organic?

1. Thao: I don't want to scare anyone off with the term organic. We are focusing on the gardening aspect.

IX. Public Comment

A. Derek Devermont: Democratic delegates for 50th Assembly District at Santa Monica College on January 27th.

B. EIR for 4th and Arizona project: please contact Nancy if you are interested in working on this.

C. EIR for The Miramar Hotel is being assembled. We are unsure of what they are planning. Write to Rachel Kwok for more information.

D. R1 Zoning Ordinance is being amended. Bob Posek from NOMA is seeking additional volunteers for this group.