

Minutes – NOMA Annual Meeting Saturday, January 21, 2017

Reception 2pm Meeting 2:30 – 4:30pm

Aero Theatre 1328 Montana Ave.

1. The Annual Meeting was called to order at 2:38 pm. A quorum was present. Attending Board Members were Chair Danilo Bach, Nancy Coleman, Todd James, Phillis Dudick, Jim Williams, Jeff Gordon, Eve Lauchenauer, Jane Koehler, Caryn Marshall, Victor Fresco, and Steve Lissik. Absent: Sonya Sultan.
2. Original video of the North of Montana Avenue neighborhood by teen-age resident Tess Fresco was screened.
3. Performance by the Franklin Elementary School Cheerleading Team; Ashley Benjamin, advisor.
4. Election of Board members for the expiring terms, Vice-Chair Coleman officiating, Mary Marlow of the Transparency Project serving as Inspector of the Election. Elected to one-year terms were Danilo Bach and Jeff Gordon; to two-year terms, Victor Fresco, Evelyn Lauchenauer, Sonya Sultan, Caryn Marshall and Steve Lissik.
5. Panel Discussion – “Santa Monica’s Future: Downtown and Beyond.” Featured Speakers: Mayor Ted Winterer, Council member Sue Himmelrich, Residocracy’s Armen Melkonians, and Diana Gordon of Santa Monica Coalition for a Livable City (SMCLC): moderator, Chair Bach, with written questions submitted by audience. Of note: Citing the 45% of the vote that the SM slow-growth initiative LV (the so-called LUV Initiative) received in last November’s election, Melkonians argued that the Council, developers, and planners need to take into account the resident’s development concerns. He was challenged by an audience member on the reason the LUV Initiative set such a low height maximum, which the questioner thought doomed the initiative, and he answered: to be consistent with Tier 2 in our building code and avoid legal challenge. In answer to a submitted question, he also said that Residocracy would take its lead as to its next issue and direction from its members. Council member Himmelrich presented her views, urging the city to concern itself with the results of what it’s doing, to more consistently analyze projects in light of their impact on our growth, and also on their success in obtaining more affordable housing for those on moderate fixed incomes. Ms Gordon spoke about worsening traffic and congestion despite all our mobility efforts. Excessively tall buildings or densities as proposed in the Downtown Community Plan (DCP) will only make things worse, she added. The final DCP should include improved citizen involvement and oversight so that: No project that exceeds 4 stories should be approved administratively; projects greater than 4 stories (with "common-sense exceptions") should be voted on by the public after Council approval; higher heights and densities should not be set for the "opportunity sites" downtown; there must be a maximum development cap for Downtown, limiting the total amount of new development that can be built in the until 2030, as the current growth estimates are way too low. Furthermore, 4th and Arizona, site of the proposed Plaza at Santa Monica, is public land and public land requires a public vote. Also spoke of the gentrification forces at work in our City and the need for workable policies to resist this, and in answer to a question, called the

proposed City Services Building (CSB) a municipal "vanity project." Mayor Winterer emphasized that the Downtown Community Plan (DCP) was coming up for adoption by the Council and that ideas and opinions should be submitted for consideration. He also answered questions on other topics, such as the pending selection of a new City Attorney. In that regard, he made clear that since the City Attorney's responsibilities and contact are primarily, if not exclusively with the Council and not the public, interviewing of candidates by neighborhood associations was not part of the present process, nor necessarily desirable, and resident concerns and issues could be given to Council members in their vetting of candidates. On a question about the unexpected costs and siting of the expensive environmentally path-breaking CSB, he did not want to give opinion as it was coming up before the Council Tuesday evening. There was no considered discussion by the forum participants of a public park for downtown SM.

6. Acknowledgements and Announcements: Chair Bach expressed his thanks individually to the vendors and businesses who had donated goods and services to the day's meeting and to videographer Fresco and Ms Benjamin and the students from Franklin School whose participation was so enjoyed and appreciated. Announcement was also made of the Public Scoping Meeting for an EIR for the Plaza at Santa Monica project, 1/30/17.
7. Adjournment at 4:30 pm.

The next meeting of NOMA will be February 2, 2017 at the Montana Branch Library.