

Chatsworth Neighborhood Council, Land Use Committee
Chatsworth Train Depot, 10038 Old Depot Plaza Road, 7 pm
Minutes May 19, 2016 – Draft Minutes

Jeff Hammond (substitute chair of committee) called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

Present: Linda van der Valk, Michael Harris, Jeff Hammond, Carol Lucas, Andre van der Valk, Chuck Knolls, Mark Levinson, Janice Eddy-Languelin, Teena Takata, Judi Daniels, Vicki Briskman

Not Here: Larry Heller, Jim Van Gundy, Michael Preis, Dan Huffman

Stakeholder and Public Comments:

Church appeal hearing; 10854 Topanga Canyon; 5 member commission, initially four were there, chair left, had to decide if continuing hearing due to 3 people, lots of confusion. The ZA suggested this decision would not be a precedent, if they made that statement so they did, the community plan that provided horsekeeping protection was not acknowledged by anyone although brought up by community presenters. The appeal was denied, but there is a plan check review in 2-3 years (to show compliance with the conditions). Noted request for allowed days of operation was expanded at the hearing for certain holidays not in initial request. Zoning Administrator never acknowledged the contents of the community plan relating to horsekeeping provisions at the hearing that provide protection west of De Soto and North of Chatsworth Street.

Minutes from last meeting:

Minutes approved from April. Michael Harris moved, approved.

Presentations and Possible Motions:

9710 De Soto – Zone Variance request from MR2-1 to allow motorcycles and ATV sales and repairs. Applicant is Wheels in Motion, presently at 9525 De Soto. MR zoning does not allow motorcycle activities. Operating hours are 9am to 7pm, close one hour earlier on Sunday and Friday. No residential uses are near this location.

Motion to support the variance for the use of automotive sales, service/motorcycles and ATVs. Teena seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

*****Teena needs help with who made this motion*****

9755 Topanga Canyon Blvd, hotel approval and related actions (near present Radisson hotel)

Brad Rosenheim presenting. Site is 81,000 square feet, mixed present zoning. They have been here twice before, initially they presented a plan for 124 rooms, 5 stories. They have reduced the height to 45 feet to conform to the Specific Plan. The number of rooms has been reduced from 124 to 105 rooms, one floor eliminated, so the revised request is for 57,497 square feet for the hotel building. They reviewed the driveway, based on concerns expressed at the last meeting. Creating a signalized intersection at Marilla does not work, not enough land for required configuration of the intersection. They widened the driveway by five feet, add chevrons on the left (west) side of Topanga Canyon, to help push vehicles away from the curb and improve visibility of oncoming traffic as vehicles exit with limited view of oncoming vehicles. Amount of structures on the lot – they propose 39% lot coverage, not 50% permitted under the plan. To discuss Oak Trees. John Avlinger (sp?) arborist attended to discuss Oak trees. 5 trees are on the property. 1,3, and 5 are mature. One is on front lot. SW tree (on the west side of the RA lot) needs a retaining wall to be kept, with a significant distance around the tree, they removed 10 parking spaces to accommodate the SW tree. The tree to remove is in the existing parking lot. The tree seems buried below grade, picture of a big “Y” branch was shown, the paving within a foot of the trunk is difficult for the tree to survive. Scaffold limb extends horizontally, and that branch has a significant cavity that will allow rot in near future. Two other cavities on the more vertical limb. Root system is likely destroyed under the parking lot. This tree is on the southwest corner area of the eastern property. This tree now needs to be removed, due to pad grading changes and tree condition. This tree would have needed a retaining wall to keep, but it likely would not thrive due to the issues presented. Arborist feels the tree has a very limited future life span (a few years). If the ground were opened up, then it may benefit the tree to open up the paving, it just depends on if the roots are destroyed or damaged. Note this tree has a very reduced crown, likely 90% reduction from a typical healthy tree. Estimate the age of this tree is 100 years old. What replacement trees are proposed? Usually 4 trees, min 15 gallons as per the rules. They are proposing 7 48 inch box trees. Does the mitigation need an inch for inch? Not in Los Angeles. No mitigation in the pool area. City standard is 4 replacement trees per 1 removed tree. They would replace 12 trees by code, but want to use

the larger trees to plant less trees. The other oak is 4 inches, just at the intersection of the hotel lot to the parking lot. 4 inches is the smallest tree to be protected, there is a retaining wall going in. Also another 10-12 inch tree on the middle of the south side of the parking lot, and the grade will be changing there. 4-6 inch trunks are the usual diameter of the trunk on a 48 inch box tree.

Question on tree, is 12 better or the proposed 7 better? It depends....

Comments on limited view distances at the driveway; and dangers caused by the lack of view distance. View distance is maybe 120 feet, the stopping distance for a 50 mph vehicle is 200 feet. Pictures of the site and the related hotel blocking the view were presented. The view is blocked by the existing building that is built immediately behind the sidewalk, blocking view of exiting drivers. Questioned about the number of accidents at the site? The hotel has been there since 1991. No documented accidents there. Question about left turning people who drive over the median. Question if chevrons will be effective; also, based on previous stated intentions by Cal-Trans, Topanga likely will become three lanes in each direction in this northern section. The Specific Plan also seems inconsistent with this. Specific plan, motel prohibited, perhaps a hotel is allowed. A strip mall will be allowed, and that would have more traffic. Comment was that chevrons seem to be respected on other streets. Carson City, Nevada, a sensor in the road provides some sort of signalization/caution light when oncoming traffic is coming. They have noted they expect to haul 5500 cubic yards of dirt as part of the project (no haul route required).

Motion – Motion to support the project. To support the zone change from (Q) C2-1 to C2-1 and the CUP approval for the hotel within 500 feet of the R zone, and parking in the RA zone, a variance for the transitional height from hotel to the R zone. Support removal of oak trees, #1 (large damaged tree), tree #2, #4, with replacement of 7 48 box trees, consider adding 5 additional oaks trees to meet the technical number of trees to be replaced. Traffic calming to include chevrons and five foot widening of driveway. Judy moved, Vicki seconded, Motion approved with 2 no votes, rest voting for project.

Stakeholder and Board comments;

City Cultural Heritage ordinance; various changes are proposed. They include earlier notice to property owners, stay of demolition when application is deemed complete. 60 day time extensions, currently 75 to 90 days to act, now 60 day period.

Messy transient parking at Mason park. They won't block the parking.

Integrity initiative - Someone wanted a general plan amendment, were not getting it. They want to stop all planning approvals for two years. Garcetti came back with a five year plan to update all the community plans, the LA Times is against this. That would be a big deal. Maybe file a CIS community impact statement.

Construction is close to starting near Vicki, maybe, some sewer lines are starting to go in.

Meeting ending 9 pm