



NORMAL HEIGHTS COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUP  
4649 Hawley Boulevard San Diego, CA. 92116

Meeting Minutes – October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018

(This is the “November” Meeting, but has been moved as to not conflict with Election Day)

Board Attendance (x means “present”):

X	Gary Weber (C)	X	Linda Case	X	Mark Lawler
X	Gautam Dey	X	Zephen Specht	X	Scott Kessler
X	Jim Baross		Alison Flynn	X	Marty Graham
X	Caroline McKeown (T)	X	Dan Soderberg	X	Michael Chandler
X	Rose Kelly		Thomas Lovell	X	Adam Deutsch (S)

C=Chair; VC= Vice Chair; T= Treasurer; S=Secretary

#### Administration Items

1. Start of NHCPG Meeting at 6:15pm: Call to Order. This meeting began with Principal Sylvia McGrade giving us an update on the construction of Adams Elementary, where tonight’s meeting is being hosted (and a week early, as to not conflict with Election Day). Questions were asked about design of the fencing around the park on School St. and about gates being open after school hours. Fence designs aren’t available yet, but Principal McGrade explained that gates will be open from around 3pm when school ends and students are no longer present outside until about 9am the next morning daily, and open on all weekends.
2. Introduction of planning group members.
3. Agenda Modifications/Setting. No changes were made.
4. Approval of previous meeting minutes – Adam sent out a draft of the Minutes from last month, received comments from the board, made edits accordingly, and sent out the Minutes again. **M/S:Caroline/Linda. All approved, except, who Gautam, Michael, Scott, abstained** because she was absent from the last meeting.
5. Treasurer’s Report – Caroline. Balance is at \$2341.79, with \$10 income pending. We also have a new \$500 of city money to **M/S:Jim/Linda: All Approved.**

#### Public Comment

6. Non-agenda public comment may be limited to two minutes per person
  - a. Nothing!

#### Reports

##### 6. Government Representatives:

**Brett Weise from Councilmember Chris Ward:** Congratulated Michael on getting married, and is excited about the Spirit Stroll along Adams Ave.

The Styrofoam Ban and Regulations on Single Use Plastics passed the first vote in the City Council. Meanwhile, each district has been successful in identifying places for housing sites and units for resources to help those struggling with homelessness.

Caroline expressed concern about how people are using lots of park spaces as off-lease dog parks, and it's a problem; there were 37 dogs running around the field at Birney Elementary. Brett explained that The Humane Society is now handling Animal Control responsibilities, but apparently don't have the staff to handle the city wide problem of people letting their dogs run loose in public parks. Brett says that they're working to hire more staff as they take over this contract with the County. Caroline mentioned how schools in District 9 have been handling it (with fliers informing people where nearby dog parks). Jim asked if the County contract with the Humane Society will also enforce off-leash ticketing, as Park & Rec staff aren't dealing with it at the moment. Brett said that he thinks it might include that, but he'll look into it and get back to us.

Another resident asked about SDPD staffing. Brett says that 3 academies have come in in the last few months, so that will help when they complete their training. SDPD seem to be short by around 190 officers, but there is a slow increase with recent raises in compensation and benefits. For those who need, Brett will provide the contact information for the HOT staff. He recommends calling nonemergency line to report concerns that aren't urgent, like a crime in progress.

Gerald reported that he's known people who were deterred from joining SDPD because they make officers go through academy again, rather than have a smoother transition process when coming from another department.

## 7. Community Groups

- a. **Adams Avenue Business Association:** The Spirit Stroll is coming up on Small Business Saturday, November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2018. It's a \$20 ticket for 3 oz spirit tasters at 12 location.

Regarding the Adams Avenue Street Fair, there was a conflict where Parks & Rec decided that the AABA couldn't use the field for the carnival anymore because of damage to the grass, but it was already damaged before the carnival set up. After a meeting with the mayor's office, they resolved it. Apparently in the last renovation, the construction people didn't hook up the sprinklers correctly when they installed them, so there are other people working to resolve those things. The school made something like \$4500 from the carnival this year, and the city makes \$2500 from the event. It will return!

- b. **El Cajon Boulevard Business Improvement Association:** Gary says there's some movement on the properties at 40<sup>th</sup> and ECB, and we'll look forward to more details, hoping the developer puts in something in keeping with the Communities Plan, and in accordance with requests we've made before.
- c. **Normal Heights Community Association:** Nobody from that group.
- d. **NH Urban Arts:** Mike Palmer gave a presentation about design for Adams Ave. Park. It's an abbreviated presentation from a recent NHUA Meeting, and a very similar presentation was given to us in July of 2017 (Those Minutes: [https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/170711minutesnh\\_0.pdf](https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/170711minutesnh_0.pdf) ). This month included a very impressive presentation of mosaic options from professional tile muralist Kim Emerson.

The next meeting of the NHUA is the second Tuesdays of the month from 6 to 8 at that Adams Ave. Rec Center.

Caroline pointed out that while all this planning has been going on, Parks & Rec did their own plan, and didn't talk to anyone in the community at all. In fact, shortly after (like 12

hours) a community input event with Urban Arts, logs and boulders were put in the park as part of a drought tolerant plan. Why would we think that Parks & Rec would start listening to the community now? (Parks & Rec *never* sends a representative to this meeting, and severely under-parked Normal Heights is routinely left out of the annual City Budget for improvements and services that are required as part of the Mid-City Communities Plan). Jim is also concerned that the city will not listen to the community.

Another resident said that the park has been a place where homeless gathered, calling it a list of grievance over the last 3 years “historical perspective,” and applauded that the park is now dirt and will be plants, as to deter homeless people from using public space. However, Caroline pointed out that rocks and sticks in a park dissuade active use by the community, and we need active use to have people present, so that it’s not a place that is being *misused*. Caroline pointed out that 3 years is not “historical,” and that park has a long history in this community, spanning decades, after coming into existence largely by the efforts of people like Gary Weber.

Rose said she’d love more trees to meet the Urban Forestry plan and have more shade on Adams Avenue.

- e. **Adams Rec. Advisory Group:** Bob Keiser reports that they didn’t know anything about the boulders and logs being dropped at the park on Adams Ave. until he got there last week. Parks & Rec made decisions without even talking to the Rec. Advisory Group. Their next meeting is Nov. 27<sup>th</sup> at 6pm, with a proposal for what to do next with the park in terms of the plan we saw tonight. Caroline asked if it was the city’s plan, but it’s the plan Mike Palmer presented tonight.
- f. **Social Media & other Communications:** Adam & Caroline: Nothing to report, because Caroline’s been busy, and Adam can’t stand to look at things like Nextdoor because it’s a whole lot of garbage. He hopes the neighborhood can social-media better.

### Chair Report from Gary Weber

- 8. Memo to Council District 3 - Plan implementation strategies: We’re here to implement the Mid-City Communities Plan. Density, Parks, and Traffic are all part of this stuff. He met with Chris Ward’s office and called for a delay on the Meade Ave. Bike Plan until we can learn about the how money is being spent on the project, and how the project would impact our community, and align with the Communities Plan.

Adam and Caroline pointed out that we’ve formally asked the city and SANDAG multiple times for how they’re spending money, for them to not proceed until they show us their plans. Jim strongly objects to Gary asking for a delay, but Gary seems to have spoken in line with what this committee has voted on multiple times. In a letter sent by the NHCPG to SANDAG’s manager Danny Veeh on July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2016, we wrote:

“In addition to the efforts already being made to communicate about this project, we hope SANDAG would foster direct contact with residents/property owners in Normal Heights generally, but also *specifically* to property owners along Meade Avenue. SANDAG and the City of San Diego must, we believe, consider, respond to, and when appropriate, incorporate citizen concerns about the functional, aesthetic, social, economic, and cultural impacts of this project on one of our major transportation corridors.”

To date, it is not clear that direct contact has been made, and we have yet to receive updates on incorporation of citizen concerns about the impacts mentioned.

- 9. Ward Canyon – Ramp reconfiguration progress: The land the ramps is on (get summary from Gary).
- 10. CPC meeting – Parks Master Plan: The city has made a little brochure that says “parks are good,” and it’s very thin. The head of Development has made it clear that the City is in charge of the Parks Master Plan. Hopefully they’ll consider the Communities Plan. People in this

community are interested in how our parks are designed, and they should be listening to us. We know our needs, and Gary's hope is that the city, state, county, and school district will provide the resources to make the things the community needs.

Nobody is "bad" in this, but Parks & Rec and the Planning Department do things without talking to us. We have a new planner, and they should be here next meeting.

11. 12<sup>th</sup> Amendment – Land Development: we should look it over and comment on it soon, perhaps as a Discussion Item next month.
12. New proposal - Rate a Block: Gary proposes we evaluate blocks in Normal Heights, and decide what defines community character, and what violates that character. He thinks we should find a way to have fun evaluating the 80-90 blocks in the neighborhood, so we can look at specific elements to address, and "norm" our thoughts on aesthetics and function.
13. Holiday meeting schedule: Do we want to "go dark" for December, or have a general workshop-style meeting? He'd like a session where we discuss Density, Parks, and Traffic, what's good, and what might we want to change? He suggests we have a workshop around Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>, and made the Dec. Meeting a bit more fun.  
It's 7:50pm, and Jim says he's going to leave at 8 (he didn't leave until we adjourned).  
Caroline proposes we have an Action Item in Dec. to tackle items fresh in January.  
Hopefully workgroups will meet before then. We did not make any changes for the December Meeting.
14. Thomas Lovell is resigning, so we will have a vacancy to have on the agenda for next month.

### Action Items

15. **To pursue Rate a Block and refine the draft criteria and point system.** See above.  
Caroline thinks that the criteria is a bit subjective at the moment, and suggests we make some kind of stands and rubric. Gary agrees. Brett has data he can make available to us, to help us make a more objective criteria. Jim requested that our new planner come to our next meeting to help us access resources to help with this effort.  
**We're going to table it until next month.**
16. Light the Heights! - Marty Graham will discuss implementing and funding exterior lighting. Harbor Freight would give us a discount on lights (~\$30). If it's mounted on a public tree or structure, a permit is required. Marty would like a plan to test installing these.  
**M/S:Jim/Gautam:** Motion to purchase 10 of them (or a case with either 9 or 12), and identify sites via public notice to try and install them.  
Caroline requests precise numbers for budgeting, and a return policy. Gerald suggests looking at what kind of batteries it takes. Votes: Jim, Dan, and Michael, Marty approved. Adam, Gautam, Zephen, and Caroline opposed. 3 abstained (Scott, Rose, Linda). **The idea is tabled.**
17. To buy a video system for NHCPG Meetings: **M/S:Rose/ :Talk to the city funds to invest in a video system.** Caroline said that the AABA has a projector we can use whenever we want.  
**No action at this time.**

### Discussion Items and Working Group Reports

18. NH Canyon access and preservation: Michael Chandler gave a brief update on feedback he's received, including concerns about homelessness, environmental risks, fire, and encampments.  
Adam suggests looking at the impacts/risk in Kensington as a result of the bike path installed along the 15. Michael suggested there are also impacts from scooters and other changes that have been happening city wide that are beyond our control.  
Some of the same people who are adamantly against any project because they think that it will increase homeless issues interrupted the Marty and Michael repeatedly. They asked a

bunch of questions as if the plan was carved in stone, but it's still in very early stages, like collecting ideas and thoughts on even making a path.

19. NH History: Zephan Specht: Has prepared a report that is below about making a book of the history of Normal Heights. That report is below.
20. Projects with the 45-year rule applied: Nothing of note.
  - a. 3166 Adams Avenue (code compliance)
  - b. 4430 Cherokee Avenue
  - c. 4803 34th Street
  - d. 3927 Madison Avenue
  - e. 4337 Felton Street
  - f. 4866 Mansfield Street
  - g. 4465 36<sup>th</sup> Street

*Note: we received notice that the previously approved setback variance project at 3226 Madison has been withdrawn.*

### **Adjournment 8:27pm**

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<http://www.sandiego.gov/planning/community/profiles/normalheights/agendas.shtml>

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