

DEL REY HOMEOWNERS & NEIGHBORS ASSOCIATION

BOARD MEETING OF JUNE 1, 2009

Italicized remarks concern developments that occurred before or after the board meeting.

Call to Order and Roll Call: Janice Santos, Parliamentarian; Elizabeth Zamora, President; Elizabeth Pollock, Recording Secretary; Tobyann Mandel, Corresponding Secretary; Michelle Rudo, Treasurer; Mary Anderson, Director; Aaron Bernardin, Director; Chris Nevil, Director; Marlene Savage, Director.

Excused absences: George Gross (First Vice President); Wendy Averill (Second Vice President); Casey Anderson-Gross (Director and Membership Chair); Aaron Bernardin (Director).

Guests: Cindy Mejia, field deputy for Councilmember Bill Rosendahl; Thomas Safran, Andrew Gross, Hart Comess-Daniels of Thomas Safran & Associates (“TSA”); Karin Shaw (with her two children), for the Goethe International Charter School; Local residents Don Dombrowski, Thomas KIELTY, Clare Sassoon, Eric DeSobe (Del Rey Neighborhood Council (“DRNC”) board member, Ana _____, _____.

Goethe International Charter School, www.goethecharterschool.org: This school will open on the campus of Marina del Rey Middle School in September 2009. It will be a public (tuition-free) school offering bilingual instruction in German and English. Spanish will be added in the upper grades. The first classes will be kindergarten through fourth grade. The goal is to provide graduates with an International Baccalaureate degree, recognized worldwide. The program is modeled after the Albert Einstein Academy in San Diego, California, and a former principal from that school, Luci Fowers, is the Chief Education Officer at this school.

The school will be using six bungalows that can be accessed through a side entrance to the campus. Parents will be arranging car pools; no bus transportation will be provided. The initial enrollment will be eight classes of 24 students each. The initial enrollment was chosen by lottery, and the kindergarten and first grade classes are full. There is still some room in the second through fourth grade classes.

The school got its space because Proposition 39 requires public schools to offer unused buildings to charter schools. The school got a startup grant of \$450,000 and a Walton Grant of \$250,000. It also will receive Average Daily Attendance money from the state. The fundraising efforts will continue.

The school’s teaching methods are inquiry based and project based. German was chosen as the immersion language because the founding parents were German, but some board members are Spanish-speakers.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes of the May 4, 2009, board meeting were reviewed and approved on a motion by Tobyann Mandel with a second by Michelle Rudo.

Treasurer’s Report: The May report was reviewed and approved by the board.

Thomas Safran & Associates, Inc. (“TSA”), 11952 Culver Blvd., Del Rey Plaza Senior Housing:

Thomas Safran explained that his company develops and manages “limited profit” projects. As samples of their work, he pointed to Redwood Village at Redwood and Maxella Aves., and to the senior housing at Navy and Ozone in Venice (now operated by the Presbyterian Church).

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The Safran development group consists of Andrew Gross, vice president of development, and five other people. Safran repeatedly emphasized that the City Planning Commission had approved their five story, 178 unit design, and TSA's willingness to have only 155 units would mean 23 fewer units available for low income seniors. *(After the Planning Commission approved this project, the Los Angeles County Superior Court ruled in Environment and Housing Coalition Los Angeles v. City of Los Angeles, Case No. BS114338/BS114091, that density bonuses granted under the city's ordinance were invalid. On June 5, the court denied the City's motion for reconsideration and confirmed that the guidelines set forth in state law (Government Code section 65915 ff) should determine the maximum bonuses allowed. Under state law, the density bonus is determined by the floor to area ratio and limits the maximum density bonus to 35 per cent over existing zoning. The previous owner had planned to build 78 apartments. Thus, if the trial court's ruling is upheld on appeal, it may be that TAS cannot build more than 105 units.*

At TAS senior projects, the residents must be at least 62 years old, but 72 is the average age of new residents. The residents' income must be less than \$3190 per month. TAS paid \$10,050,000 (\$170 per square foot) for the property, and TAS says it has put \$2.3 million into the project so far.

Safran's personal passions are to make school grounds available for public use after school hours and to design his projects as if his parents were going to live there. The original plan was to build Phase I (89 units) and then Phase II (66 units).

Issues raised by the DRHNA board:

1. The setbacks are inadequate. There will be a semicircular driveway on Culver Blvd. for dropoffs. The garage entrance will be from the alley. The garage will be built to the property line, but the residential units will be set back. The setback from the alley will be 16 feet.
2. Safran's goal is to put the utilities underground, and TAS enforces its house and ground rules so that people do not use their balconies as storage areas.
3. Clare Sassoon, a Wagner Street resident, wants an environmental impact report done, particularly regarding traffic issues.
4. The height needs to be reduced to the zoned maximum of 45 feet. Can it be set deeper in the ground?
5. The units must be kept affordable for 55 years, and TAS controls who gets to live there.

C.D. 11 Report by Cindy Mejia.

1. Starbuck's (Centinela Ave. at Jefferson Blvd.): Tow Away/No Stopping signs have been posted. The Department of Transportation will post "No Turns" signs if the current signs have no effect. Cindy Mejia wants input from Casey Anderson-Gross and George Gross because they live nearby.
2. Public Art Wall at 4935 McConnell: Residents are pushing to have a mural painted there as a deterrent to graffiti. It would only be visible from the 90 freeway. This will be discussed at the DRNC meeting.
3. City Budget: During May, the big issue was the budget for July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010, and what cuts would be made. The new budget has been announced.
4. Councilman Rosendahl's reelection celebration will be on June 28, 2009, at the Mar Vista Farmer's Market.

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Neglected Properties: Tobyann Mandel reported that she was advised to call 311, the city's information number, to report neglected properties. The 311 operators will then determine to whom the report should be routed, e.g. to the Fire Department, Department of Building and Safety, Vector Control District. Although the City is supposed to respond to complaints within 72 hours, it may take longer because the property owner must be contacted and given an opportunity to act.

Culver Blvd. Median Near Sawtelle Ave.: This median was torn up during the 405 widening process, but it is maintained by the City's Department of Street Services. Cindy Mejia is trying to get the damage repaired, but Caltrans and the City have not yet resolved who should do what.

A Park for Del Rey: Elizabeth Pollock has talked to the Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust about their willingness to consult and advise us on ways to get a park for Del Rey. She has also left a message for the pastor at the City of Angels Church of Religious Science, 5550 Grosvenor Ave., to learn if the property (4.97 acres) is still on the market.

Community Safety: Chris Nevil reported that he is working on establishing a pilot emergency preparedness model on Juniette Street. Community Emergency Response Team ("CERT") members living on the street would be prepared to manage a cache of emergency supplies that would be kept at the staging area, Playa del Rey Elementary School. Chris Nevil is hoping that the DRNC can fund purchase of the cache. He is putting together a price list for the supplies cache.

Del Rey Neighborhood Council: The next board meeting will be on Thursday, June 11, 2009, at 7 p.m. at the Courtyard by Marriott Hotel, 13480 Maxella Ave., Marina Del Rey, CA 90292, tel. (310) 822-8555. On May 27, 2009, We ARE Marina del Rey asked the DRNC's Land Use and Planning Committee to support their group's call for the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to suspend consideration of all project approvals pending the development, with full public participation, of a well-defined, community-based Master Plan for Marina del Rey with a comprehensive environmental impact report or its lawful equipment. The committee referred the proposal to the full board of the DRNC. Santos Kreimann, director of the Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors said that his department wants projects to be allowed to go through the process if they meet muster.

For 2009-2010, the DRNC has a budget of \$45,000 (a 10% cut), and the City is not going to "sweep" the money not spent in prior years.

At the Mayor's Day of Service at Mar Vista Gardens on Saturday, June 27, from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., there will be a job fair program for people ages 14 -24. After a two day training program, participants will receive a certificate of completion. The program will teach such things as how to dress appropriately, write a resume. There will be a party at City Hall for the people that volunteer on June 27.

DWP Water Rates: Beginning June 1, the Department of Water and Power began charging higher rates to consumers that do not cut their water usage by 15 per cent compared to last year. Don Dombrowski asked if permits to build multifamily units will be stopped as a way to reduce water usage in the city.

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Alex Fay, Councilman Rosendahl's legislative deputy, is the person to contact regarding the water rates: (213) 485-3811.

***Entrada Tower:** After the meeting, Elizabeth Pollock was able to contact a representative of United Neighbors of Westchester (UNOW). That group did decide to appeal Judge McKnew's ruling on the writ. The appeal is due approximately June 26. The key points will be that the project is not within Culver City's 56 foot height limit, and the EIR did not consider "feasible alternatives" to the project.*

In the meanwhile, UNOW is also working on the huge tower planned for the Howard Hughes complex.

NEXT MEETING: MONDAY, JULY 6, 2009 AT 7:00 P.M.

ADJOURNMENT: 9:00 P.M.