

SUNLAND-TUJUNGA NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
LAND-USE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
May 21, 2018

- I. Meeting was called to order at 7:09pm by Chairperson Cindy Cleghorn
- II. Roll Call
 - a. Present
 - i. Cindy Cleghorn
 - ii. Bill Skiles
 - iii. Elektra Kruger
 - iv. Nina Royal
 - v. David Barron
 - vi. Liliana Sanchez
 - vii. Vartan Keshish
 - viii. Pati Potter
 - b. Absent
 - i. Debby Beck
 - ii. John Laue
 - iii. Cathi Comras
 - c. No public representative present
- III. Self-Introductions of Board Members
- IV. Cindy C. described the nature of/function of the LUC, how applications are approved by the City if need be, explained the meaning of/use of by-right applications
- V. Approval of Minutes
 - a. **MOTION:** by Pati Potter to approve the May 7, 2018 STNC-LUC Meeting Minutes as amended 2nd by Nina Royal Vote: Unanimously approved
- VI. 7738 Foothill – Remodeling plans for a new façade and signage – Sipan Nazaryan, Project architect
 - a. Project site is located across the street from the VHCH
 - b. There are 4 existing pole signs that will remain, City approved
 - c. The façade will be totally remodeled, _____? _____ will be added
 - d. The building has three sections, each section stepped in height, each currently with differing facades/differing signage. Signage differs in size, some with channelized lettering, some with lettering in boxes.
 - e. The intent is to make signage of all sections the same to give the building more continuity as a single structure rather than as the appearance of three independent buildings stuck together – same size/same lettering/lettering inside boxes per City code
 - f. Currently the facades of each section is of different materials/patterns. Intent is to go with a single color/material for the façade again to bring continuity to the building – light/dark gray – Trim being a darker gray, stucco being a light gray
 - g. The roof will have a sheet of corrugated metal
 - h. The windows will be cleaned up, drawings will be removed to help give a more up-scaled look. There will be no change to the windows structurally. The moldings are currently somewhat rusted – they will be touched up/painted
 - i. The building will be stuccoed

- j. Landscaping will be added per planning to bring everything up to code. The building is up to the front property line so there is no room for landscaping at the front. The landscaping will be in rear parking lot area
 - k. There will be 11 parking stalls in the rear
 - l. Existing businesses will remain
 - i. Dental office
 - ii. Cleaners/shoe repair
 - iii. Vacant – smoke shop is no longer there despite signage therefore still exists
 - m. David B.: Thanked the owner for going to the effort/expense to improve the corridor
 - n. Cindy C.: What is your time schedule with the City?
 - i. Sipan N.: The plans are completely ready and engineered
 - o. Bill S.: Are there any plans for frontage lighting
 - i. Sipan N.: Yes. There will be lighting underneath the paneling and the signs will be lit at night
 - p. Cindy C.: We will put together a comment letter, have it at our next meeting for review and then it will be presented to the Full Board for final approval
 - q. Cindy C.: Requested an electronic copy of the plans
- VII. 6477 Foothill – CUP for new drive-thru car wash – Benjamin Fiss from Pacific Zoning
- a. It is a proposed express car wash. Appreciated input received from the NC and neighbors. Some significant changes have been made (see attached packet)
 - i. There was a request for a more detailed illustration of the type of landscaping proposed. The packet illustrates appearance of the proposed landscaping as well as a list of the specific trees to be used
 - ii. Landscaping will be along Foothill as required for corner commercial developments which are additionally required to be set-back fr the front property line. Non-corner commercial typically is built up to the front property line
 - iii. There are a lot of trees throughout the entire site. The north end is set-back 6’ from the property line and there is a proposed sound wall along the back of the property line.
 - iv. Landscaping is very lush, beyond that required by the City, but has been recognized as being important to this community. Based on other Projects approved by this NC, landscaping was very important so a lot of focus has been placed on landscaping
 - b. The packet also contains a determination of the Department of Transportation
 - c. The packet includes an exhibit of the dB levels both current as well as post-construction. This is part of the environmental analysis the City is preparing
 - d. Q&A (Q = Questions from the audience, C = Comment from the audience, A = Response by Mr. Fiss)
 - i. Q: How high is the retaining wall?
 - 1. A: Code has a maximum of 8’. We have requested 12’ from the City at the request of the neighbor in order to retain privacy
 - ii. Q: How tall will it be for the neighbor?
 - 1. A: The City measures it from the “natural grade”, not necessarily from our side to yours but more-or-less an average
 - iii. Q: Will you know the exact elevation?
 - 1. A: Yes we will

- iv. Pati P.: It kind of upsets me that by now you don't know where the height of the wall is – that you don't know what the natural grade is and you cannot tell ahead of time how tall the wall will be for the neighbor at HIS property line
 - 1. A: The estimate is about 8' on his side
- v. Q: What is the material that you are going to use for the wall? Is it sound proof material or is it regular concrete blocking?
 - 1. A: It is a retaining wall so it is a block wall which is still concrete
 - 2. Q: Will you face it with anything that is sound proof?
 - 3. A: There will be landscape
- vi. C: Re global warming and water usage – in Capetown they are down to 13 gal/person so climate change is getting hotter and dryer. The nights are going to get hotter and there will be more fires which will be needing/using water
- vii. C: In the last fires communities didn't have enough water to fight fires. The State has 2 Bills proposing to make California a permanent "water conservation State" with set standards for both indoor and outdoor usage
- viii. Q: What is going to happen with this business regarding the use of a lot of water and since the drought is getting worse are time limits going to be set for businesses that use a lot of water
 - 1. A: The good news is that the newer car washes are much more water efficient than the older car washes – or than people washing their own cars in their front yard where water just goes into a stormdrain
- ix. Cindy C.: What is the recycling process?
 - 1. A: 90% of the water used is recycled
- x. Cindy C.: How and where is that functioning within the system?
 - 1. A: All the mechanicals are within the building as far from the residential as possible while still maintaining the required setback from Foothill Bl.
- xi. Cindy C.: Is there some type of filtering system for the waste water?
 - 1. A: The waste water has to go through a treatment process before it can be discharged into the sewer system and via the sewer system it goes to the City's waste water treatment plants.
 - 2. A: The waste water does not go into a storm drain which would go straight out to the ocean
- xii. Cindy: So where does the water drain to?
 - 1. A: It goes into the sewer
- xiii. Bill S.: How much of the water goes into the sewer?
 - 1. A: 90% of it is recycled
- xiv. Bill S.: 90% = how many gallons?
 - 1. A: That depends on the volume of cars that pass through the car wash
- xv. Bill S.: So how many gal/car?
 - 1. A: 2 gal fresh water/car on the final rinse. Everything else uses recycled water
- xvi. Cincy C.: And how many gallons of recycled water is being used/car? How many gallons are needed to wash a car? If 90% is recycled, how many gallons are used/car to determine the 10% fresh water being used?
 - 1. A: I don't know how many gallons are used/car overall. There is a 5,000 gallon storage tank with clarifier system underground

- xvii. C: The FCBSB says going from Commerce going East on Foothill, 70% should be dedicated to parks, museums and recreational places. We are not even close to 70% - more like 0%. That is a concern
- xviii. C: The FBCSP has some restrictions. Major Activity Area #3 – Commerce and east on Foothill – it says “All drive-thru uses and auto repair uses are prohibited”. This is a drive-thru car wash. And traffic – we still haven’t determined how the ingress/egress traffic is going to happen
- xix. Q/C: Is the plan to have a place where people come out of the drive-thru, park their car and dry their car, etc? I am completely against this. This is going to bring property values down, there will be noise regardless of how tall the wall is
- xx. C: This type of Project will change the character of the neighborhood permanently. We are talking about a car wash, it is not a regular business. There will be traffic, there will be noise, it is not a bookstore
- xxi. Q/C: What are we going to do about traffic? Foothill is a death trap now. We used to get 2-3 deaths/yr, now we get 2-3 deaths/day so ingress/egress is a big concern – & I don’t care what anybody says, it is going to bring down property values
- xxii. C/Q: It is just going to become a cheap area effecting properties and residents. Have you done a study on how it will effect property values? A study on the dB that the sound wall will absorb?
1. A: The dB study is in the environmental study
 2. C: We don’t want it – it is cheap. A car wash is a cheap type of business for a residential area – it belongs to a main street that has other businesses on it. It does not belong in a residential area whatsoever
- xxiii. C: I have been a Tujunga resident for 15 years. As a property owner and real estate broker, my opinion is this Project would actually increase property values. Having driven by this vacant lot for 15 years, I have seen transients, people camped there, blight, so having a beautiful, landscaped car wash would bring a new chapter to this part of Tujunga that has been neglected for so long – I am in full support of this car wash
- xxiv. C: I, too, am a real estate broker having lived here all my life. I have to agree that putting something functional there will bring positivity. A lot of the issues presented are valid, but the City will ensure that our community is safe
1. C: The proposed owner has come to the Chamber of Commerce and as a Chamber we did extensive research into the owner’s previous car wash operations, have determined that it was not only a positive aesthetic to the neighborhood, but the quality of the machinery used is tip-top. It will be a positive for both business and residential owners
- xxv. Q: This opinion is very easy for a realtor who is thinking of business around there, to think of population & based on that their own business opportunities going up. Those saying this will bring positivity? Where do you live? Do you live in that area?
- xxvi. C: For the gentleman that lives on Creemore – you are not living on Tujunga Cyn Pl –it is a softer situation for you. Business is welcome in that area, but there is soft business, Right across the street – a hair styling place, physician’s office, etc
- xxvii. Q: Does the recycled water use pumps? And the blower for the dryer and the vacuum? What is the possibility they will all come on at the same time? 3 units running every time a car comes in?

1. A: The recirculating pump is located inside the tunnel, the blower and vacuum are enclosed in a concrete wall building
- xxviii. Nina R.: There appear to be 10 parking areas for vacuuming – will there be hoses there all attached to 1 vacuum pump somewhere in the back of the lot?
1. A: All the equipment for the vacuums is within the building which is the primary source of the noise – the vacuum itself. There will be underground tubing that connects to the vacuums heads
 2. Nina R.: There will be no noise from the vacuum heads?
 3. A: There will be some noise, not significant noise. The significant noise comes from the machinery itself which will be in the concrete building
- xxix. Q: How many parking spots are there? How many cars/hour will come for service?
- xxx. C/Q: I use a self-serve car wash on Foothill Bl right past Valmont that is open 24 hr/day. There are a lot of people hanging out there late at night making a lot of noise. What are the proposed hours for your car wash?
1. A: Proposed hours are 7am to 7pm
 2. C: So that is a big pos. The other place is open 24 hrs. I have seen cars screeching out of there – & here someone comes in & wants to do something pos. The other place is dirty, there are people w/loud music
 3. Pati P.: As an FYI, per City code allowable hours of operation for Sat is 9am to 8pm and 11am to 8pm on Sundays. Because they require a CUP, the community has the ability to place conditions into that CUP – eg different hours of operation. Attend the Hearing to request those
 4. A: As far as tightening hours of operation, we are open to considering what is reasonable
 5. Pati P.: And re a sound system – I have been to car washes with blaring music – are you going to have a sound system?
 6. A: I haven't decided on any sound system. Just as an FYI people do put on lower music as a calming effect so people do not turn on their own radios full blast while vacuuming
- xxxi. C: I have a petition signed by my neighbors (submitted to the Committee)
- xxxii. Liliana S.: Will you have an employee on-site to avoid loitering?
1. A: Yes, there will be one or two
- xxxiii. Cindy C.: Is it possible for the Project to have a buffer between the residents and the wall as has been the case with other car washes of this type?
1. A: It is possible and has already been done. Initially the driveway ran right against the property line. We have pushed it back 6' down which is giving up property that is usable land. And the additional request for increased height of the wall
- xxxiv. Cindy C.: In other Projects of this type I have noticed that there is fencing around the perimeter of the entire site and it is a requirement by the City. Can you explain that because none of these renderings show that
1. A: There is existing fencing that will be cleaned up and improved in some way
- xxxv. Cindy C.: Will the landscaping be drought tolerant or will they require watering?
1. A: There will be an irrigation plan – any new plant will require some level of watering, but we do have to comply with California drought

tolerant planting that is required by the City. There is no way around that

xxxvi. C: A vacant lot w/weeds growing, I am embarrassed to bring people to my house b/c it looks like a blighted area – that is what I am against. A car wash that is going to be over-regulated & compliant – I am all in support of that

xxxvii. Q: There are a lot of trucks parking on Foothill. Will they still be able to park there?

1. A: One of the reasons they choose to park there is because it is a vacant lot. Once there is a business there, they are less likely to park there. We will also be calling to report them

xxxviii. Cindy C.: To the Committee, I would like to know where you want to proceed with this. Thanked everyone for their participation. At this point we have heard about this Project a number of times, have had a lot of input from the neighbors

1. Cindy C.: At this point we either support a Project, not support a Project or just send comments which will go to the Full Board for their input/vote. Requested input from the Committee

2. Pati P.: This is a hard 1 w/a lot of pressure fr both sides. Clarified again that the STNC is not the final decision maker – that is the ZA at the Hearing & emphasized that people need to attend the Hearing to present their concerns

3. **MOTION:** by Liliana Sanchez that it is the responsibility of the LUC to speak for the neighbors who have valid concerns. If one of the options is to prepare a comment letter we should definitely prepare a comment letter voicing those concern 2nd by Nina Royal Discussion:

a. Will you voice comments both for & against as presented here?

b. Those living on Tujung Cyn Pl are not getting a fair voice. Their input should carry more weight as they are the ones being more imminently impacted than the voice of those who live elsewhere

c. Nina R.: If stakeholders submit letters to the STNC whether for or against, we can add them to the comment letter as a packet

d. Vote: Unanimously approved

VIII. 6454 Foothill (x Creemore) – Plans to reopen an abandoned gas station, Art Arutyunyan

a. There are no plans to have an auto repair section. There will be a small convenience store that will not sell alcohol. No plans have yet been submitted to the City. Though appearing abandoned, it has actually been under lease which just recently ended

b. It was used as a pilot test site testing a number of ways to clean contaminated soil

c. Q: Is the gas station/convenience store going to be a hub for day-workers like the Chevron?

i. Art A.: No, it will be owner-operated who will be on-site the whole time. We will not let that happen. We have another station in Pasadena where we get a lot of compliments on its cleanliness and maintenance

d. Q: Will it be a 24 hour station?

i. Art A.: We are not sure yet – our most recent information is that the City will determine what the hours of operation will be

ii. Cindy C.: That may be something surrounding neighbors may want to have input in

iii. Q: Are you pushing for 24 hours?

1. Art A.: We have not done it yet. The gas station that we currently have in Pasadena is open from 6am to 10pm
 - e. Cindy C.: There are some really nice looking gas stations in La Canada with nice facades – with use of stone, etc, landscaping, signage and windows. You might want to take a look at those
 - i. Art A.: Now it is just an abandoned gas station. We are planning on just making it look a lot nicer, to lighten up the place – it is really dark there right now and just to bring life back to the City
 - f. Cindy C.: The SP has design guidelines – please check those out because Arco may want the corporate colors used. Please stick with the design guidelines as much as possible
- IX. Discussion on other open/pending Projects
- a. 6152 Sister Elsie
 - i. No up-dates
 - b. 10324 Mt. Gleason
 - i. No up-dates
- X. Public Comments
- a. Jack Oats
 - i. On 7020 Elmo, they want to do some construction on this short street – there are only 4 houses on the street. They already have permits for 3 2-story townhouses. I don't know how they are going to do it – there is no garage
 1. They did an old remodel on it and are planning on putting 3 duplexes on it. There is no parking on the street. To park on the property you are going to have to drive by the guy's house to park in the back
 2. It is going to be a real mess. He got permits for rewiring, but it turned out to be a whole remodel – he ran some sewer lines to go to a neighbor's house on the front driveway and enter on Silverton
 - b. Nina Royal
 - i. There is a house on Valmont that was demolished below Haines Cyn. I have no idea what they are putting there – it could be multi-units, it could be anything
- XI. Response to public comments
- a. Cindy C.: Keep in mind that 90% of construction is by-right, but if something doesn't seem right don't hesitate to go to the City and question it. If you see building that you do not understand how they got permits, don't hesitate to ask. Sometimes they say "Oppps"
- XII. Meeting adjourned at 8:53pm