

SPECIAL TOWN HALL LAND USE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

June 17, 2025 7:00pm
AURORA BANQUET HALL,
7179 FOOTHILL BLVD., TUJUNGA

Draft

1. Call to Order and roll call.

	Board Member	Roll Call
1	Richard Marshalian	Absent
2	Cindy Cleghorn	Present
3	Nina Royal	Absent
4	Liliana Sanchez	Present
5	Vartan Keshish	Present
6	Betty Markowitz	Present
7	Berj Zadoian	Present
8	Peter Darakjian	Present
9	David Jenkins	Present
10	Jorge Martinez	Present
11	Alternate: Stephanie Mines	Absent
12	Alternate: Vacant	
13	Alternate: Cathi Comras	Absent - Resigned
14	Alternate: Vacant	
8 Present; 0 alternates present; 2 absent including alternates.		
Note: Members of the Board that are not LUC members included Sherry McCoy, Karen Moran, Mike Siegel and Lydia Grant.		

2. Approve outstanding minutes – This was deferred until the next meeting.
3. TOWN HALL regarding 7947 Foothill Blvd. 6 story development ED1 project.

Note: The beginning part of the meeting was dedicated to discussion about this controversial project that Sacramento is pushing on cities to provide housing for low income people. Although only slated for 30 minutes, discussions were active with about 32 people attending the in-person meeting, including the 8 members of the LUC. The discussion on the ED1 project lasted longer than an hour.

Members of the Public are designated MC's in these minutes without any attempt to provide names. The primary issues are that this 6 story, 63 unit, ED1 apartment complex (1) exceeds current Sunland-Tujunga building codes for height which is 3 stories; this is 6 stories, (2)

impacts emergency egress which is already a major concern for residents in the event of a fire or earthquake, (3) does not have adequate parking with only 30 parking units allocated that include 7 commercial parking for the stores planned to be built on the first level, and (4) does not provide any funding for needed infrastructure and services that have to be provided (e.g. sewage, water, power, etc.) with the assumption that these costs would have to be picked up by the City. This project had already been discussed at the May meeting of LUC and the intent of the Town Hall was to encourage broader local resident participation.

- Cindy introduced herself and provided some handouts for attendees that reflected status and intent for this project including a Letter of Compliance. Lydia commented that there are many bills coming out of Sacramento that are impacting cities throughout the state and that Sacramento (the State) has not bothered to find out how these bills are impacting the cities before pushing out more bills. Lydia said that 'affordable' is a matter of definition; these units would still assume that residents are making salaries in the neighborhood of \$150K/year. We need to write letters to our Assembly person. Currently the bill says that if the area is within ¼ of a mile from a bus-stop or train station, the ED1 unit(s) can be built. These units take away our view and greatly impact evacuation routes.
- Lydia said that the Neighborhood Council is asking for a Grand Jury investigation into the evacuation routes which might help. When the Paradise fires happened, the Grand Jury Investigation found that there was not enough egress to evacuate people. The STNC has been identified as a high fire danger area. The City of LA has a map and only two ends are considered viable for entry/exit – inadequate to evacuate the entire cities. In addition, current maps show that the vast areas for Sunland and Tujunga are assessed to be high fire zones, but the actual street (Foothill Blvd) which is the (only) major route for driving is NOT assessed to be in the high fire zone based on the maps developed sometime in the past. This needs to be reassessed. The small strip of area not assessed to be in the high fire zone is contained by vast areas all designated high fire zones. It is not ok to build apartments along this route. Lydia noted that all STNC board members are volunteers, as are LUC members. Lydia recognized and thanked out host, Aurora Banquet, for allowing us to occupy the space for the meeting.
- David Jenkins, a member of the LUC, introduced his wife. David commented that the state is bending all rules to make this ED1 project happen, including the number of stories and parking spaces. There is retail space on the bottom floor but additional commercial space is not needed in this area. Our council-woman, Monica Rodriguez, sent out letter today but this is not in her control. The project is at the beginning stage now and moving slow, but the residents need to object now. There are 2 levels of underground parking and it is a huge project. If it is permitted, additional residential units can be expected to be built on Foothill Blvd, now restricted by code. The building will be 66 ft high and studio apartments will be about 300 sq ft, very small. The one bedroom and two bedroom units are also small, perhaps 500-600 sq ft. David thanked Lydia for pushing for the Grand Jury investigation.
- Lydia said she is working on a packet with the entire story and our dissention and that if the Grand Jury finds anything criminal is involved, they will prosecute. Lydia said that while the Fire Departments are supposed to approve changes (e.g. road diets), this has been circumvented to date. If anyone has additional information, please let Lydia know so she can include in the material she is developing. Her goal is to complete it within 1-2 weeks. Right now it has been written by an attorney who is a friend and is well written. While Lydia doesn't know the time-line for the Grand Jury investigation, she will keep us informed as she finds out.

- Cindy said that we have a community plan now for transportation corridors, and said that everyone at the meeting should feel free to comment, including anyone who is in favor of the project. All voices are welcomed.
- A MC identified himself as a builder and was astounded by how many things were being by-passed that are required for building such a unit. The number of cars can be anticipated to be 200 or more. He said that they now allow ADUs to be built freely and parking is already challenged on local streets from the additional residents. Safety concerns including jay walking on an already dangerous street can be expected, with more deaths occurring.
- Another MC agreed and said that this is the very beginning of changing the community for worse. This is a very high fire severity zone. Ricardo Flores attended the meeting, representing Monica Rodriguez. Ricardo noted that she was supportive and vocal about the golf course development which was proposed and successfully defeated and understands this is a high fire zone. Monica did not have prior knowledge about the project; it went through the state. Lydia said that once these bills are passed, it is a rubber stamp process and only building and safety are notified; the State of California can sue the City if they try to stop it. A MC (Mark) said that the City of Long Beach has had some success in the similar situation the opposition in the city? Cindy – Ricardo thank you for coming. Keep conversation going.
- An MC said that the rebuttal from the state for parking concerns could be expected to be that the people in these units will be using bikes and buses for transportation so parking cars won't be an issue. Other MCs agreed and noted that the city will have to provide the water, gas, power, sewage and garbage collections. An MC asked how much the units would sell for; no one knew.
- Another MC said, after reading the Letter of Compliance, that it doesn't mention a high fire zone – an omission by design. We need to gin up a document refuting points in this Letter. An argument has been made in the past that you cannot argue based on a hypothetical of possible fire, but the recent fires should influence this claim. The MC builder said we should find out what other cities are doing for parking; Lydia said she is working on this angle but commented that for these ED1 units, they don't have to do anything. West LA has 8 giant apartment complexes going in with zero parking. A MC woman who lives in La Crescenta attended their neighborhood board and found the bus rule to be mind-boggling.
- An MC said that the Executive Directive states that these units cannot be built in a high fire zone and felt that if Foothill Blvd was properly reassessed, this would be the path forward. Lydia is in agreement. Lydia said that Monica Rodriguez is trying to get the map changed at this time.
- Lydia said that she has to work some of these issues as a community member because STNC has a number of regulations that prevents her from proceeding. If there is a requirement for a set back (5 ft), this might also be a show stopper. Lydia said that in Our Neighborhood Voices, San Diego has one page where they can post information and updates and if we do similarly, this might be a good way to communicate with the community; going through the STNC might inhibit the process because of the rules that have to be followed. Help is needed to develop the page (or pages) in Our Neighborhood Voices.

- Final comments were made by other MCs that supported previous comments. Many felt that if this goes through, the nature of the community will be changed forever in a very negative way. Ricardo said he would stay engaged.
 - Cindy encouraged people to be part of the team to help with documents, etc. and the team needs leadership. Cindy thanked everyone for coming and said it is important to take concerns to our council-member so she can be a voice for us also.
4. DISCUSSION/UPDATES on various sites in Sunland-Tujunga. Cindy gave a very brief update on other projects that are on-going in the area due to time constraints.
 5. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS. An MC commented that the organization “Our Neighborhood Voices” was a great organization (a grassroots nonprofit sponsoring a ballot initiative to restore local authority over housing). Cindy commented that she has applications for the LUC if anyone is interested in joining.
 6. ANNOUNCEMENTS and Confirm Next LUC meeting July 21. Cindy confirmed that the next meeting would be July 21 via zoom.
 7. Committee Member Comments / Announcements & Future agenda items
 - Lydia said that documents of interest for the 63 unit ED1 project were on the STNC website.
 - Lydia commented about the recent selections and introduced Board members who were present at the meeting. Lydia also commented that oak trees that were illegally cut down were subject to having the perpetrator not being able to build for 10 years but no sanctions have been taken by the city in recent times when this has occurred. Lydia is watching bills coming out of Sacramento and encouraged people to write to their senators.
 - A MC commented that Long Beach pushed back with some success recently on a bill about illegal immigration and that we should band together to push our causes.
 8. Adjourn 8:30pm