

**NORTH PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
JUNE 2019 MEETING NOTES**

DATE: JUNE 20, 2019

TIME: 6:30 PM

The first part of this meeting was a Business Meeting of the North Park Historical Society (NPHS) Board of Directors, and the second part was the activities discussion for the organization. These notes include updates as of July 5, 2019.

The next meeting will be **THURSDAY July 18, 2019 starting at 6:30 p.m.** in a second floor meeting room at Grace Lutheran Church, 3967 Park Boulevard, corner of Park Boulevard and Lincoln Avenue.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The following members of the NPHS Board of Directors were present:

Steve Hon	George Franck
Katherine Hon	Jody Surowiec
Paul Spears	Claudia Watts
Judy Ciampoli	Michael Thornhill

The following members of the NPHS Board of Directors were absent:

Hilda Yoder	Randy Sappenfield
Bob Bauer	Sharon Turner

Member Michael B. joined us. Welcome all!

2. AGENDA REVIEW AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The latest Pacific Beach Historical Society newsletter was circulated for viewing.

The June 2019 PastMatters column in *Uptown News* presented the long history of Paras Newsstand on 30th near University. A scan of this article is at the end of these meeting notes.

Steve offered a copy of the Arcadia book "Images of America — San Diego's Kensington" to the group, and Michael Thornhill gratefully took it for his collection.

Katherine said that Russell Johnson, Community Manager with Union Cowork North Park on 30th Street, offered to let NPHS have meeting space for our monthly meetings at no cost. He also offered space and assistance for a presentation or a "pop-up museum" if we would like to develop an event. The group noted that our current meeting space at Grace Lutheran Church is in a very convenient location with plentiful free parking. The Union Cowork location is in a busy part of North Park, with parking available at the garage for \$1 per hour or on the street within a few blocks. So there are trade-offs to consider. Katherine has a meeting set with Russell to see the meeting rooms on Monday, June 24. She will report at the next meeting.

3. MINUTES ACCEPTANCE

The minutes from the May 16, 2019 meeting have been posted on the website.

BUSINESS PORTION OF MEETING

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

The financials for the period of May 16 through June 19, 2019 were sent to Board Members before the meeting. During this period, three members renewed (thank you, Beth, Ruth, and Bill!), and one renewing member gave us a donation of \$100 (thank you, Bill!). We got three car

show entries, one car show sponsor (thank you, Randy!), and a donation of \$10 from a car show exhibitor (thank you, Larry!). Total income in this period was \$300. Expenses in this time period included our annual liability insurance premium (\$1,000), the final payment to Gail Goldman for her assistance on the Water Tower art project (\$850), reimbursement for parking at the Festival (\$55), reimbursement for postage stamps (\$11), and reimbursement for the 2-year renewal of our SSL certificate for the website (\$159.98). Total expenses for the time period were \$2,075.98.

ACTIVITIES PORTION OF MEETING

5. NPHS CAR SHOW

We currently have 9 cars registered, four paid sponsors (Steve, Randy, Observatory and North Park Main Street), and two promised sponsors (Barons Market and Vintage Homes). The poster is in process by the designer who prepared the last two posters. The photographer who came last year will take photos again. A7D has agreed to print the posters, and North Park Trophy will provide their wonderful trophies. Steve and Katherine are going to take flyers to the Car Club Council meeting on July 2. We were invited by the president, who showed his hot yellow 1971 AMC AMX last year.



6. STORY BOARDS ON UNIVERSITY AVENUE

Katherine found a photo of Don Covington, who developed the storyboards, with an installed storyboard and emailed it to Jody on May 24, 2019. Jody sent it to the Maintenance Assessment District (MAD). We hope the photo will help the MAD restore in-place the concrete storyboards in the sidewalk around the theater and other buildings at University Avenue and 30th Street.

7. CONSULTING ON HISTORIC RESOURCE DESIGNATION POTENTIAL

Paul initiated this project in 2018 to help homeowners interested in achieving historic designation of their homes understand the process. Since January 2018, NPHS has responded to 12 requests for a preliminary assessment of the potential for their homes to achieve designation. We have conducted 4 assessments this year so far. Most homes the team has assessed have the potential to qualify as individually significant historic resources or as contributing resources in a potential historic district. People are appreciative of the advice. Our challenge is getting the word out that we are providing this free advisory service.

8. 5G TOWER ISSUE

Historic resources advocates have become concerned about the recent state and federal regulations pushing for installation of 5G wireless facilities. If existing street lights and traffic signals are not available, tall poles (separate poles for each wireless carrier!) could be installed in the public right-of-way throughout the city, including historic communities like North Park, Kensington, Hillcrest, etc. The City is currently updating their Land Development Code to include regulations and guidance about new freestanding cellular towers. The group was asked if NPHS should write a letter supporting city control of the manner in which new facilities are placed and evaluation of potential adverse aesthetic impacts, especially in designated and potential historic districts. Michael T. moved and Jody seconded NPHS write such a letter. The motion was approved unanimously. George has started a letter and Katherine will complete a draft for the Board to consider via email.

9. SCANNING OF SLIDES — FIRST EDITION

Katherine showed pictures of the Essery family that Don Covington had made into slides many years ago. This is the first set of slides to be scanned with our new slide scanner. The slides include the Essery Company Realtors-Builders-Insurers office at 4141 El Cajon Boulevard, and a glamorous 1951 photo of Eva Essery modeling the first chinchilla cape made in San Diego County (made from chinchillas raised by her son, Thomas, in Spring Valley but from animals who died a peaceful, natural death, we are sure).



10. UPCOMING COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

The annual events NPHS is participating in or organizing include the following:

- North Park Car Show: Saturday, September 7, 2019, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The Balboa Tennis Club has agreed to host us for our 10th and Final Car Show, and Steve has already obtained the permit from the City to use the parking lot.
- Toyland Parade: Sunday, December 8, 2019. This is the second Sunday in December, a change from being held on the first Saturday. North Park Main Street has taken over organization of this event, which is a good thing.

The next meeting will be **THURSDAY July 18, 2019 starting at 6:30 p.m.** in a second floor meeting room at Grace Lutheran Church, 3967 Park Boulevard, corner of Park Boulevard and Lincoln Avenue.

Prepared by

Katherine Hon

Katherine Hon
Secretary, North Park Historical Society

Read all about everything at longstanding Paras Newsstand

PastMatters KATHERINE HON

The recent closing of some of North Park's most venerable businesses like Pekin Cafe and Paesano Italian Restaurant should increase our appreciation for those who are still standing strong. Paras Newsstand, at 3911 30th St., has provided a dizzying selection of magazines, newspapers, paper goods and other convenience items since the early 1950s.

The store occupies the northwest corner of a large brick and concrete building constructed in 1928 for the United Realty Company. The building permit covered 11 stores extending from 3002 to 3020 University Ave. Owl Drug Company took much of the space, opening in February 1929 and remaining until after World War II. Joseph Jessop & Sons Jewelers next occupied that corner through the 1950s.



Kent Snyder (left) and Rocky Attallah welcome customers to Paras Newsstand, circa 2004. (Photo courtesy of Kent Snyder)

The space fronting 30th Street long held by Paras Newsstand started as the Basham Beauty Shoppe in 1930 and was Melody Beauty Shop later in the 1930s. During the 1940s, the space was alternately a beauty shop, gift store and vacant. In 1950, the City Directory listed 3911 30th St. as a cigar store operated by Frank L. Hill; it was listed as Baker's Cigar and Newsstand in 1952.

In 1953, Chris Paras bought the store, adding magazines and paperback books to the merchandise offered. By 1980, magazines constituted 80% of his business. In a 1980 interview for the San Diego Union, Paras said he started his business with just \$5,000 and felt it was better than some work he could have gotten into.

Paras came from a family of hard-working store owners. In 1903, his father George came from Greece to the U.S. through Ellis Island, where his last name was changed from Paraskas to "Paras" to be shorter and easier

to pronounce. George was the proprietor of a confectionary store in Chicago in the 1930s and listed his employment on his World War II draft registration card in 1942 as "Self employed, Newsstand" in Chicago.

Chris — the eldest of three sons — was born in 1923. He served in the Navy as a Machinist Mate on the aircraft carrier Intrepid during World War II, participating in many harrowing battles in the Pacific. By the mid-1940s, the family had all come to California. They initially lived in Escondido and later La Mesa, but in 1959 they were listed in the City Directory at 3930 Kansas St., just one block west of Paras Newsstand.

While Chris operated the North Park store, middle brother Stratie, born in 1928, ran the Paras Shop in Ocean Beach from 1952 to 1995. There was a third Paras store in La Mesa for many years. Youngest brother William, born in 1929, also clerked in the stores.

Chris sold the North Park



Chris Paras mans the counter of his store in 1982. (Photo by Dan Robbins, courtesy of Olga Paras and Omar Altman)

commitment to neighborhood service.

The San Diego Union-Tribune's Nov. 5, 1994 issue featured a profile of North Park's Paras Newsstand by reporter Bob Rowland, who proclaimed the store to be a "world of its own." He interviewed Kent Snyder, who had started working at the store for Chris Paras in 1986 and still works there today. When asked who shops at Paras, Snyder replied, "Hard to say — everybody, I guess." And in answer to the follow-up question — what are they looking for — he said, "Just about everything."

Paras Newsstand is the only retail store in North Park's commercial core to stock the definitive history of North Park's first 50 years, "North Park: A San Diego Urban Village, 1896-1946" by the late Donald Covington. Although Paras Newsstand started just after that book ended, the store continues to be an important part of North Park's history and future.

— Katherine Hon is the secretary of the North Park Historical Society. Reach her at info@northparkhistory.org or 619-294-8990.



Ken and Ann Gabbara have owned and operated Paras Newsstand since 2007. Ann has added pretty jewelry, knickknacks, gifts, souvenirs, candies and convenient snacks to the vast array of items offered for store customers. (Photo courtesy of Ann Gabbara)