

**NORTH PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
AUGUST 2016 MEETING NOTES**

DATE: AUGUST 18, 2016

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 September 12, 2016.

The next meeting will be **THURSDAY** September 15, 2016 at 6:30 pm in a second floor meeting room at Grace Lutheran Church, 3967 Park Boulevard.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

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

Steve Hon	Katherine Hon
Claudia Watts	Paul Spears
Sharon Turner	Randy Sappenfield
Jody Surowiec	Michael Thornhill
Hilda Yoder	George Franck
Bob Bauer	

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

Judy Ciampoli

Welcome!

2. AGENDA REVIEW AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Katherine announced that North Park Main Street is arranging a walking tour of the commercial area for Archtoberfest. The date is October 1 and George will be a leader. Jody can help. George will need the amplifier and guide booklets. Jody will need the notebook with photos. We should have one other helper. If you can help, notify Katherine at info@northparkhistory.org or 619-294-8990.

Baron's is the new market replacing the Fresh and Easy at University Avenue and 32nd Street. They are looking for a mural artist. They are excited to come to North Park and may coordinate with NPHS on decorating with historical photos or other projects once they are settled.

NPHS will conduct a private walking tour of the Dryden District for a group who contacted Katherine. The date is October 16 at 10:00 am. There will be about 8 in the group. Michael will check his schedule, but Katherine can conduct the tour if he is not available. If you can be a helper to show the notebook of photos and keep people on the sidewalk, notify Katherine at info@northparkhistory.org or 619-294-8990.

The City Historical Resources Board staff have accepted the nomination of John Pearson as a Master Builder as part of the nomination for individual historic designation of a Spanish Colonial Revival home he built on Texas Street near Myrtle in 1925. Katherine as Secretary of NPHS prepared the appendix with the nomination of John Pearson for the consultant who submitted the homeowner's package. The nomination document for John Pearson was approved by the NPHS Board on January 5, 2016. The house and Master Builder nomination will be considered by the Historical Resources Board at their meeting on September 20 at 1:00 pm. Steve and Katherine are attending to speak for NPHS.

3. MINUTES ACCEPTANCE

The minutes from the July 21, 2016 NPHS meeting have been posted on the website.

BUSINESS PORTION OF MEETING

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

The financials were sent to the Board in advance of the meeting. In the period from July 17 to August 8, 2016, one NPBS member renewed and one new member joined. We received \$100 in a donation/bonus from our insurance company. Paras Newsstand bought four original North Park history books (two perfect bound, two coil bound) at the wholesale price. NPBS also received income from five car show entries and two car show sponsorships (thank you, Tera Vessels Vintage Homes Real Estate and North Park Main Street!). The total income in this time period was approximately \$443. Expenses recorded in this time period included \$393 for portapotties at the car show, \$11 for stamps and special postage for the letter of comment on the North Park Community Plan Update EIR to the city, and \$168 for website security upgrade for 3 years on Go Daddy, which was approved by email vote by 11 Board members on June 2, 2016. Total expenses in this period were approximately \$572.

Steve reported the good news that NPBS received the check for our full requested amount of \$2,350 from the County Community Enhancement Grant Program. The grant is for \$500 to help us put on the Car Show, \$1,100 for continued art consultation from Gail Goldman, and \$750 to help fund three preliminary concept proposals for Water Tower art.

ACTIVITIES PORTION OF MEETING

5. WATER TOWER PUBLIC ART PROJECT UPDATE

In finalizing the draft artist request for proposal, Gail notified us she thought we should prioritize the potential "canvas" as the vertical square reservoir walls, versus the fencing above the walls, or the fencing with the access gate, or the walls of the two-story stucco building on the city's property. Paul noted concerns about what could be mounted on the reservoir walls, and if an artist would be limited to paint, which he does not think is a good prospect on concrete. Would an installation that hangs on a bracket from the top be feasible? Is the area in the corner of the site a possibility? Is the fence on top of the reservoir scheduled for replacement? Katherine will continue to try to get clarification from the City engineers about these questions.

6. CAR SHOW - SEPTEMBER 10, 2016

Car Show planning is well underway. Steve reported that we have six \$100 sponsors and 25 cars. Vince has created another stellar poster, which A7D printed as an in-kind sponsor. Michael, Randy, Sue, Jody, Steve and Katherine distributed them. Steve reported that Balboa Tennis Club will have Ohana Cafe onsite at the tennis courts to provide great food on the day of the Car Show. Steve and Paul will put up the no parking signs in the parking lot on September 6. Bob and Steve will mark the asphalt on the parking lot with the space boundaries and numbers on September 9.

Michael will be onsite early with Steve and Katherine at 6:00 am. Sharon will come at 7:00 am to help set up the canopies. Paul, Sharon, and Turner (thank you, Claudia, for volunteering your husband!) will be onsite by 8:00 am help guide cars to their assigned spots. Michael and Katherine will check the cars in. Steve will make sure the portapotties get unloaded in the right place when the Diamond truck arrives. George will take the first shift under the canopy, and Jody will be there later in the morning to conduct the very important job of counting votes for People's Choices.

Update: The weather was perfect, we had hundreds of attendees, and car exhibitors enjoyed the day. This year, some of our regular exhibitors could not come, but we got 45 paid car exhibitors and ended up with 41 cars making it to the show. Three drive-ups that arrived without pre-registration helped make up for the no-shows. There were 190 votes cast for "favorite car." See the next page for photos from Steve and Katherine of the winners and some of the fabulous cars that showed.

THE TROPHY WINNERS



1st Place: Bill Mayer's
1960 Austin Healey Sprite



2nd Place: Ron Wakefield's
1951 Hudson Hornet



3rd Place: Teresa Klohe's
1969 Dodge Dart Swinger

OTHER HIGH VOTE-GETTING FAVORITES



Tim Taylor's
1961 Chevrolet Impala



Rick Rosiejka's
1929 Franklin Landau



Larry Eddy's
1960 Plymouth Fury

BUSINESS FAVORITES



North Park Main Street picked
Teresa Klohe's
1969 Dodge Dart Swinger



A&B Sporting Goods picked
Daniel MacLeod's
1960 Ford Edsel Comet



Geographie picked
David Fenner's
1941 Dodge Pick-up Truck

SECRETARY'S FAVORITES FOR BEING FIRST TO REGISTER



Douglas Dill's
1973 Porsche 911 E



Bill Mayer's
1960 Austin Healey Sprite



Larry Okey's red Buick, which was a substitute for his Pontiac which looks like Lew Prince's blue Pontiac next door, which got the placard. Oops.

7. GEORGIA STREET BRIDGE RECONSTRUCTION

The City has begun the long awaited project to reconstruct/restore the historic Georgia Street Bridge. Keep in mind that traffic will be disrupted along this part of University Avenue for about a year. Katherine's article appeared in the mid-August issue of Uptown News.

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Georgia Street Bridge: too beautiful to lose

PastMatters
Katherine Hon

It's no secret that the North Park Historical Society loves the Georgia Street Bridge. It has been our logo since we formed in 2008 and is on the cover of our latest book, "Images of America: San Diego's North Park." So we are understandably nervous about the bridge seismic retrofit and rehabilitation project now underway. There is a lot of work to do before the bridge is returned to its original glory about one year from now. The three grand arches that span 68 feet over University Avenue will be preserved, but the rest of the bridge will be rebuilt from those arches upward to look like it did when it was originally built in 1914, including light posts and open-style railing on top. To increase vertical clearance and protect the bridge from being hit by tall trucks, University Avenue will be grinded/excavated down 2.5 feet. In preparation for that street lowering, electrical utilities were previously lowered and a new water line segment was installed. (Remember that traffic disruption! It's going to be déjà vu all over again!) The vertical walls will be reinforced with soil nails and then refaced to look like when the walls were new and not all gunked up with shotcrete. The project's total cost is about \$14 million, and most of the funding has come from the Federal Highway Administration through Caltrans. Yes, you can count Caltrans among the community heroes who value the historic bridge and worked hard to make this rehabilitation project happen. The bridge has needed major repairs for decades due to excessive overlays of asphalt on the deck and drainage problems that allowed water to seep into the spandrels and corrode the interior rebar and concrete support system. But when the proposed solution in the 1990s was to demolish the bridge and replace it with something cheap and simple, the community vigorously objected. The bridge was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1998, thanks to the extensive research and detailed application prepared by historian Alexander Bevil on an all-volunteer basis as his gift to the community. With that national standing, the bridge replacement project died. Fast forward to 2008. The city of San Diego initiated an engineering study and alternatives analysis for seismic retrofit of the bridge and walls, with funding to be provided through Caltrans. Because the bridge is on the National Register of Historic Places, and because Kevin Hovey, the Caltrans person in charge of coordinating local projects, loves historic bridges, Caltrans agreed to help fund the bridge project only if the bridge would be restored in accordance with Secretary of Interior Standards. This meant preserving as much of the original bridge as possible and rebuilding the rest to its appearance when it was completed in 1914. Is the bridge worth all this time and money to restore? Because it is a landmark, a gateway and a symbol of the streetcar expansion that opened our community to urban development, the North Park Historical Society thinks so. Many others in the community would say yes, including elected officials Councilmember Todd Gloria, County Supervisor Ron Roberts, California Assembly Speaker Emeritus Toni G. Atkins, and U.S. Rep. Susan A. Davis, who all spoke at the July 19 groundbreaking. But don't take their word for it. Let's ask some fifth-graders. Several years ago, while the bridge was being studied, two classes of McKinley Elementary School students wrote about what the bridge means to them. Alyssa told the engineers, "I think we should save the Georgia Street Bridge because it has been there for many years. ... It has been here since 1914 and I remember it since I was little. Whenever I'm at the bridge it reminds me that I'm almost at my cousin's house. And I think that instead of changing it you could restore it." Jasmine told them, "If it goes down our history will not be the same. Once our history is lost, it's gone forever." Keith pointed out the unique architecture of the bridge, saying that it is "an amazing sight to behold. That my friend should stay and be appreciated by all of North Park people. It is too beautiful to be gone." Indeed it is.

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



This board displayed at the construction groundbreaking event on July 19, shows original (top), existing (middle), and future retrofitted (bottom) views of the bridge. (Photo by Katherine Hon)

8. PLANNING ISSUES - NORTH PARK COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE

This process continues to be one of the most frustrating and distressing community issues we have been involved with. NPBS is most concerned about the potential impacts to neighborhood character, historic resources, and low-income residents in the "Pedestrian-Oriented Infill Development Enhancement Program" area in the North Park Community Plan Update (NPCPU). This density bonus program is not related to providing higher density along transit corridors. This program targets existing two-story apartment buildings in a broad residential area between Lincoln and Howard avenues from Florida to Boundary streets for demolition and replacement with much higher density development that could be up to 73 dwelling units per acre (du/ac) versus 44 du/ac new base zoning.

The implementing language in the NPCPU states, "The Pedestrian-Oriented Infill Development Enhancement Program is available to applicants with existing development projects of 6 dwelling units or more in Multi-Family Residential areas designated as Medium High up to 44 dwelling units per acre within the area located between Lincoln Avenue and Howard Avenue." NPBS contends the program potentially affects historic homes and bungalow courts in addition to apartment complexes, because while all of the much-maligned apartment buildings constructed by Ray Huffman in the area have at least 7 units, bungalow courts typically have 6 units, and pairs of homes each with 2 units behind have a total of 6 units. George Franck, NPBS Vice-President, wrote a guest editorial that was reviewed and approved by the Board at the meeting. The editorial appeared in the August 26 issue of *Uptown News* (see the last page of these minutes). Steve submitted a shorter letter to the Editor for the *Union Tribune*, but they did not print it.

Update: Seven NPHS Board members and seven other NPHS members attended the September 6 meeting of the North Park Planning Committee (NPPC) where the NPPC voted on the Plan. NPHS members who commented included Steve, Katherine, and Cia.

Steve told the NPPC, " I am President of the North Park Historical Society and our Board has sent letters to the City and the Planning Committee regarding our opposition to the Pedestrian-Oriented Infill Development Enhancement Program Area. We feel that this policy is detrimental to the character of the neighborhood and just bad public policy. In my professional career I spent over 38 years in the health and human services field mostly for the County of San Diego but also as a consultant to the Sheriff's Department Medical Care Division. I have experience in substance abuse services, mental health, and public health, and in all three of those areas I had involvement in homeless issues. I feel strongly that the City of San Diego's Planning Department failed to address how the redevelopment of Downtown, the Gaslamp Quarter and East Village would impact housing stock for low-income persons and how it would add to the problem of homelessness. I see the potential for similar impacts if the Pedestrian-Oriented Infill Development Enhancement Program Area goes forward. Thank you."

Katherine told the NPPC, " My day job for the past 25 years has been writing and reviewing environmental documents, and our 25-page letter of comment on the North Park Community Plan Update Program EIR was my attempt as a practitioner to help the City bring the EIR into compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act, C--E--Q--A, or seequa. I want to emphasize tonight that CEQA is the law, and an EIR is a legal document. One very important objective of CEQA is to disclose the consequences of projects proposed by government agencies so that decision-makers are able to make an informed decision. That is why it is so bad for an EIR to be missing analysis of impacts that would be significantly adverse. In fact, if new significant impacts are identified after a document is released for public review, CEQA requires an agency to add the appropriate analysis and re-circulate the whole document or at least the parts affected so everyone can review it again. So where are we in this legal process for the North Park Community Plan Update? We on the North Park Historical Society Board say the City's EIR failed to analyze and disclose many significant negative impacts, especially related to the Pedestrian-Oriented Infill Development Enhancement Program. We say that the law requires the City to analyze and disclose the negative impacts to population and housing, neighborhood character, greenhouse gas emissions, historical resources, and public services, facilities, and utilities. We say the City needs to then re-circulate the EIR for another public review period. We say that without this analysis, decision-makers, including you on the North Park Planning Committee, cannot make an informed decision about the North Park Community Plan Update."

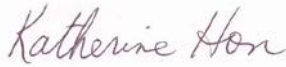
Cia told the NPPC, "As a forty year resident of North Park, I was saddened that you would consider a plan that offers no meaningful protection to the historical character of North Park. Several months ago, several of you committee members complained that the City Planners had ripped the rug out from under you as far as protections for the historic fabric of North Park are concerned. Then one business day before this meeting where you are being pressured to take a final vote, the City Planning Department circulated further revisions. This revision was sent out last Friday afternoon, the day before a three day weekend. This action was deliberate and unconscionable, and I hope the committee members are as outraged as I am. I would say to you, don't just roll over and let the City do a last minute cram-down, because they are in a big hurry to push this through. This plan is going to shape North Park for the next twenty years. I would challenge you to have the courage that the Uptown Planning Group had, and just say, No."

Alas, the NPPC did not listen, and they approved the Plan 11 to 3. The next steps are votes at meetings of the Historical Resources Board (September 14) and the Planning Commission (September 22). City Council committee and full council votes will follow soon afterwards in October. We will update interested NPHS members on our continuing efforts at the next NPHS meeting.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be **THURSDAY** September 15, 2016 at 6:30 pm in a second floor meeting room at Grace Lutheran Church, 3967 Park Boulevard, corner of Park and Lincoln Avenue.

Prepared by



Katherine Hon
Secretary, North Park Historical Society

OPINION

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Weighing in on North Park Community Plan Update

By George Franck

The North Park Historical Society (NPHS) has been participating in the North Park Community Plan Update process for a half-dozen years. We have commented on the Community Historical Survey and the draft Historical Element, as well as other land-use and design issues.

NPHS generally supports the intensification of the transit corridors as a way of improving our community and accommodating growth.

However, we oppose the current proposal to allow extremely high residential densities, high building height and increased lot coverage in the residential area between Howard Avenue and Lincoln Avenue. The objective of this proposed program is to replace the older infill (so-called "Huffman" apartment buildings), which have a paved front yard design (or streetscape) that makes walking and bicycle

use difficult in much of North Park.

We oppose this high-density redevelopment concept because:

1. While the proposed higher densities promote the redevelopment of Huffmans, they also encourage the redevelopment of bungalow courts, other well-designed multifamily buildings, and some remaining single-family homes. Many of these other residential buildings are potentially historic and most contribute to the historic, pedestrian-friendly design of North Park.

2. In the central corridor, all of these existing residential uses — especially the Huffmans — provide significantly lower rental costs or purchase prices than units in the new, more intensive development. One of North Park's greatest attributes is that the range of housing in the community accommodates a wide economic range of residents. North Park represents a truly balanced community; destruction of the

Huffmans would reduce adequate lower cost housing.

3. While the streetscape design of the Huffman type buildings is unfortunate, the scale of the buildings is more in keeping with community character. In contrast, the proposed city program would allow much higher multiple stories, out of character with the residential streets in North Park.

4. Other treatment of the Huffman buildings should be implemented to improve pedestrian travel and community appearance. While not a perfect solution, supplemental front yard landscaping including major street trees is an obvious option.

While some of the buildings on University Avenue and El Cajon Boulevard should be preserved because they are historic or potentially historic, these transit arteries are where redevelopment should be focused. NPHS continues to advocate those locations for increased density; we also support the preservation of an economically balanced North Park.

—George Franck is vice president of the North Park Historical Society.❖