

URBAN DESIGN & PRESERVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES - APPROVED
Wednesday, August 9, 2017
6:30 pm
Silver Lake Library Community Room
2411 Glendale Blvd. – Los Angeles, CA 90039

1. CALL TO ORDER

Attending Committee Members:

Bob Lisauskas
Scott Plante, Co-Chair
Joe Ferrell, Co-Chair
Anne-Marie Johnson
Barbara Ringuette
Georgene Smith-Goodin
David Wheatley
Craig Collins
Liza Temple
Genelle LeVin

Non-Attending Committee Members:

Carole Cetrone
Rusty Millar
Jerome Courshon
Rosa Max
Cliff Towne

The meeting began at 6:30pm with 10 committee members present.

2. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Anne-Marie Johnson said that on this coming Saturday, from 3:30pm to 5pm, there will be the first in a series of discussions. This one is about life as an American Muslim. It will take place here in this room.

Barbara Ringuette announced the Planning 101 course. If you're interested in land use, this course explains the elementary principals for this. You'll learn about basics. The course will take place next Monday at City Hall beginning at 6pm or 6:30pm.

David Wheatley said that he was in Toronto in July. They are very strict about neighborhoods there. They don't have large structures in areas of single family homes.

He asked whether the clock time can be corrected? Also, can you find a location where we're not booted out at 8pm, he asked. That would be helpful.

Co-Chair Scott Plante said we don't have a successful location at this time. Anne-Marie Johnson has been searching for months.

Regarding the Schindler Project he said that there will be a community meeting on September 14 (tentative). There is no location yet. It will involve Paul Feingold and the tenants.

Plante then read an explanation of what the Silver Lake Neighborhood Council Urban Design and Preservation Committee does and doesn't do.

3. MOTIONS & RESOLUTIONS – Discussion and Possible Action

- a. LA Express Car Wash -2580 N. Glendale Zohn
Case Number ZA-2006-10209-CU NC Region 7
Requesting extended hours of operation. Review updated sound data.

Dave Zohn said that he was last here on June 19.

Raphael, owner of LA Express Car Wash:

I've been part of Silver Lake since 2005 when we bought the Union 76 gas station that was falling apart. There was a recycling center. We got rid of that tenant. We built a pretty nice car wash.

Longer hours were approved than what we're asking for right now. Basically, I'm respectfully asking to work the hours that we want.

Now the hours of operation are 7am - 7pm weekdays and 9am – 8pm on Saturdays and 11am to – 8pm Sundays. They request 7am to 8pm Sundays through Thursdays and 7am to 9pm on Fridays and Saturdays.

We hired an acoustic consultant. We introduced various options that reduced noise by 7-8 decibels (db). We've moved the blower back and achieved an 11-12 db noise decrease. That's a bit of a decrease. There is significantly lower noise. We hope you can recommend it for approval, said Raphael.

The car wash is located at Glendale and Fletcher. There are no neighbors here.

Plante said this is your third visit here and I know that you notified everyone.

Johnson asked how long has noise been reduced by 11-12 db? Dave said that began 2 months ago with the 7-8 db reduction. However, in the past two weeks, noise is down 11-12 db.

Johnson said it's indicative that neighbors aren't here. I would be loath to approve extended hours. You can't un-ring the bell. There is no way to reverse approval. You're a terrific business, she noted.

Dave explained that in the City process, there are two levels of approval. There is a 12-15 month period that you have to prove that you're complying with things.

Craig Collins said that this process gets the applicant to engage with the community and create dialogue. That's what's happened here. There is sound engineering. This is a good model for others.

David Wheatley said good luck with your progress. What do decibels mean, he asked. We don't have the data to decide. We need to make more effort to get neighbors here. He commented on ideas about industrialism and machinery going nonstop.

Jerry said I just came back from your car wash. Your car wash was quiet enough for me to make a phone call.

Bastion said I'm a neighbor. The right side of the washer is not getting the soap off. Raphael said that he'd look into that.

Genelle LeVin cautioned that you can't compare street noise with what neighbors may be hearing up the hill.

Liza Temple asked him to repeat the proposed hours of operation. She also asked can you put the decibels in context?

Dave said they achieved a reduction from 61 db to 47 db. When moving the blower to the center of the funnel, noise went from 51 db to 46 db in that area. He said that he welcomes people to come to the site. We have a quiet and clean operation.

Georgene Smith-Goodin said that she was trying to get a sense of what the neighbors felt from the minutes of the last visit. There were two complaints then. If the sound level was bothering someone, you wouldn't have to check, said Dave. Their hearing is August 23 at 9:30am at City Hall, he added.

Joe Ferrell mentioned the conversion to hand wash, an idea from last time. Dave responded that that would throw the entire operation out of whack.

Jerry commented that 46-60 db is the sound of a dish washer.

Plante sought a motion to support operating hours from 7am-8pm Sundays through Thursdays and 7am-9pm on Fridays and Saturdays. Craig Collins seconded.

Straw poll:
15 yes
0 no

VOTE
6-4-0
PASSED

Yes Votes:
Bob Lisauskas
Scott Plante
Joe Ferrell
Georgene Smith-Goodin
Craig Collins
Liza Temple

No Votes:
Anne-Marie Johnson
Barbara Ringuette
Genelle LeVin
David Wheatley

Plante asked the applicants to please bring sound data next month to the Board meeting in September.

4. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

a. Review and Adoption of Minutes

Georgene Smith-Goodin made a motion to approve the June minutes. Johnson seconded.

VOTE
10-0-0
PASSED

Yes Votes:

Bob Lisauskas
Scott Plante
Joe Ferrell
Anne-Marie Johnson
Barbara Ringuette
Georgene Smith-Goodin
David Wheatley
Craig Collins
Liza Temple
Genelle LeVin

No Votes:

None

Abstentions:

None

Georgene Smith-Goodin said the July minutes don't reflect her comments.

Barbara Ringuette offered corrections for d. "Marathon Street". She also noted a typographical error in Andy Devos' name. She also said that she recused herself and spoke about collisions at that intersection.

Johnson made the motion to approve the July minutes. Smith-Goodin seconded.

VOTE
10-0-0
PASSED

Yes Votes:

Bob Lisauskas
Scott Plante
Joe Ferrell
Anne-Marie Johnson
Barbara Ringuette
Georgene Smith-Goodin
David Wheatley
Craig Collins
Liza Temple
Genelle LeVin

No Votes:

None

Abstentions:

None

3. MOTIONS & RESOLUTIONS – Discussion and Possible Action --- REVISITED

- b. 4321 Sunset Blvd. – Jay’s Bar Benjamin
Case Number 2012-2224-CUB-CU-PA1 NC Region 5
CUB renewal for a full line of alcohol sales.
Proposed hours: 7am-4am daily

Plante read a letter from a neighbor named Judith Smith. People said they have no problem with their extending hours to 4am. Being able to walk in and have a beer until 4am is cool. People are very respectful.

Johnson asked if the state is already approving later hours, why is this a part of the conversation? Ringuette said that proposed legislation hasn’t gone through the State assembly yet. Also, the City must approve it.

Wheatley asked how did neighbors find out about this? Plante responded that they found out through the 500 foot notification rule. Collins said that he understands that with an open hours extension to 4am approvals will be case by case. Wheatley asked what rules govern this? Plante said that it has to go through ABC (the California Department of Alcoholic Bureau Control), which takes 2-3 months.

Gary Benjamin, a representative of Jay’s Bar, which is located in Sunset Plaza at Sunset and Fountain:

Jay Batten is here tonight. He opened a pizzeria in 2008, then opened a gastropub, Jay’s Bar. The menu includes salads, breakfast, flatbreads, and cocktails. I reached out to Jay, said Benjamin. It’s a personal favorite of his in the neighborhood. The bar also offers burgers and Moscow mules. There is no live entertainment. People read books. It’s a mix of café culture.

They obtained their license in 2012. They want to add an additional two hours of liquor service to 4am, should the State allow it. The bar is already open until 4am.

A Woman who lives next to El Cid sent a letter of support. Jay’s is housed within a concrete bunker, noted Benjamin. He added that the McDonalds across the street is open 24 hours. Socializing in pubs makes people happy, he said. Jay’s wants to utilize the extended hours. People can meet new and old friends.

Sebastian noted that the bar is near Mas Malo. Is he the only one asking to be open to 4am? Our beautiful city has become a City of drunkards, he commented. He recommends closing at midnight. If you allow 4am, all liquor establishments will want that. DUI offences (Driving Under the Influence) is a very profitable business for the city, about \$10,000 each. He noted that alcohol service requires more and more police helicopters. There are lots of alcohol related accidents. Also, there is a junior high school very near.

Johnson said that this is the perfect location for this type of request but every other establishment will request this. We’ll open a Pandora’s box, she warned. The Los Angeles Police Department calls Silver Lake “bar city”. We are overwhelmed. She wants people to be able to get a decent night’s sleep. She is concerned about safety, hit and runs, and a lack of police.

This Committee never says no regarding alcohol. The minute this committee approves this, we'll get 10 requests. She named several bars. There will be no way to un-ring this bell and neighbors will be furious.

Smith-Goodin said that the State hasn't yet approved extended hours. Extended hours for restaurants should be treated separately. Several places serve food to 4am or beyond. Having time to sober up is a good idea.

If we look at extending restaurant hours until 4am there is a better way to approach this. They can come back if the State approves later alcohol hours, suggested Smith-Goodin.

Benjamin said it was time to renew the application anyway. It is rather costly and difficult to go through the process. We want to serve food later. At this location, it really is walled off. We would prefer to not have to come back again. I recognize that 4am is late for much of Silver Lake. However, we have all sorts of conditions.

Ringuette asked about the current hours. She also noted that adjacent to this is another property slated for development soon so it's not the perfect location. While facility is very good looking, the atmosphere of the place is bar. So food service till 4am, I just don't see it.

Jay, the owner, said I'm closed during the day, Monday to Friday. There's no foot traffic for garage pizza. It would help me a lot at Jay's Bar. He said that he makes no money during the day. if you close a bar at 2am, I don't have drunkards. Later hours give people more time to drink, instead of having to binge drink.

Ringuette said that she spoke to tenants. They like the food. They wish you'd be open during the day. Jay said that was costly.

Co-Chair Joe Ferrell noted that 600 ft is required by an ABC license for distance from schools.

David Wheatley said there is too much alcohol. Ending alcohol service at 4am sounds like New Orleans to me. I think LA is a different kind of city. Silver Lake is a different kind of neighborhood. It shouldn't be dragged down by alcohol. He wants a neighborhood impact report.

Jan Simone said I love both your businesses. Most people who go to bars take ride sharing. I like it that there are people out at night when I walk the dogs. This is a town with range of work hours, she noted.

Georgene Smith Goodin said that since the State law hasn't changed, I propose that we approve the extension of food service till 4am.

Johnson clarified approve to separate? To discuss them separately? Johnson seconded.

Kerry said I think the food is really good. Does being open from 2am-4am provide any upside or is it a problem? Sunset is different, a busy street. I don't think there is a problem with alcohol.

A Woman asked about hours. Wheatley noted that with Jewish Community centers around the corner. If this bar is allowed to be open till 4am, it sets a tone. Ringuette said that she is disturbed by the precedent, even for food.

Johnson said I agree with Barbara. There are 4 schools in Silver Lake where kids have to get up early. They need 8 hrs of uninterrupted sleep. This works for his location but not those closer to neighbors, said Dan.

VOTE for late night food

7-3-0

PASSED

Yes Votes:

Bob Lisauskas
Scott Plante
Joe Ferrell
Georgene Smith-Goodin
David Wheatley
Craig Collins
Liza Temple

No Votes:

Barbara Ringuette
Anne-Marie Johnson
David Wheatley

Abstentions:

None

Plante made a motion to discuss liquor separately. Johnson said I rule against the Chair. Our actions are premature. The State has not approved this. If this goes to the Board, every other establishment will follow suit.

Smith-Goodin asked can we postpone until the law is passed? Plante said sure.

Plante made the motion to postpone. Johnson seconded.

VOTE to Postpone

10-0-0

PASSED

Yes Votes:

Bob Lisauskas
Scott Plante
Joe Ferrell
Anne-Marie Johnson
Barbara Ringuette
Georgene Smith-Goodin
David Wheatley
Craig Collins
Liza Temple
Genelle LeVin

No Votes:

None

Abstentions:

None

- c. 1637 Silver Lake Blvd. – L&E Oyster Benjamin
Case Number 2017-2763-CUB NC Region 1
CUP for a full line of alcohol sales.
Proposed hours: 9a-11p Sunday-Thursday, 9a-1a Friday-Saturday

Linda Rogers, a resident who lives less than 1,000 feet from the restaurant, offered a letter of support. Another neighbor also offered a letter of support.

Gary Benjamin, representative:

The restaurant sought a liquor license last year. The restaurant is special with a track record, said Benjamin. The owner of the Botanica restaurant also offered a letter of support.

The space has been occupied by a restaurant since 1989. It became Dimenico's in 2008. In 2012 there was an expansion of the restaurant. The oyster bar has become a neighborhood institution. It has been called oyster nirvana by a newspaper. It has been named one of best oyster bars in America. The LA Weekly has been instrumental in ushering in a new era of quality restaurants in Silver Lake.

We serve 10-15 different varieties of oysters each night. We have served over 300 varieties of oysters since 2012.

The change that they are seeking is to allow the sale of a full line of alcoholic beverages with seafood dishes. Flavors and textures complement each other. It's food and drink. We don't expect patrons to increase consumption of alcohol. There will be no change of hours, which include 9am to 1am on Fridays and Saturdays. The valet company won't park cars on public streets.

Dan Melankoff says that he lives 2.5 minutes away from the restaurant. He said that it offers the best seafood in Los Angeles, certainly in the neighborhood. I go there frequently with friends. However, the lack of drink options makes choices less desirable so I often don't go. The restaurant has mature patrons want more options. I go to bed early at night and I've never heard any noise.

Brendan, who said that he lives about 500 ft or less from the restaurant with a bedroom facing the alley behind the restaurant, said that the business has been a big boost for the neighborhood. They are very respectful. He is a patron. I've never seen any of the rambunctiousness that people fear. I was a nay on motions for the liquor license for Botanica.

Robin, who said that she lives at 1621 Silver Lake, said her bedroom window looks into the bar. I have never had problem with the restaurant. She's been a patron. They are incredibly considerate. She'd also had concerns about Botanica. That's been a dream.

Tamara, who said that she lives next door, said I'm not a night owl. I'm often in bed by 10pm. She hears no noise from the restaurant. The only noise is from people going through trash cans.

Jerry said I agree with everyone. It's a quiet and well managed restaurant. It's a world class destination. Their food is unique. The chef is incredible. When you serve a certain type of cuisine you must have alcohol choices. Allow them to be who they are to create a complete experience.

David Wheatley said that he is opposed to the restaurant. It is not a world class destination. If they go to bed at 10pm how will they know there's noise? This alcohol, I'm opposed to the hard stuff. Why not have non-alcoholic pairings that don't intoxicate or break up families?

A Woman who lives nearby said that last Friday, there was a guy with an ax in the alley. Having the restaurant there makes me feel safe. I can't say enough positive things about them.

Former Silver Lake Neighborhood Council Secretary Christine Kantner said I want to support them. Georgene Smith-Goodin said I love oysters. I haven't gone there because they don't have the full license.

VOTE
8-2-0
PASSED

Yes Votes:

Bob Lisauskas
Scott Plante
Joe Ferrell
Barbara Ringuette
Georgene Smith-Goodin
Craig Collins
Liza Temple
Genelle LeVin

No Votes:

Anne-Marie Johnson
David Wheatley

Abstentions:

None

4. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS -- REVISITED

b. Committee Business

Ringuette asked can we have a way to see exactly what notification was sent out to neighbors so we don't have to ask? Also, when we have a straw vote, can it be confined to neighbors as opposed to the entire audience? Plante said he'd have to check the bylaws.

Plante also said that he's trying to find a new meeting place for September.

David Wheatley commented that straw polls bias the room. Johnson added that it's a precedent. You're not supposed to take them but that's done in this committee.

5. ADJOURNMENT

As the meeting ended a Woman commented that the floor outside of the oyster bar is dirty. She said that she's lived in Silver Lake for 45 years.

The meeting ended at 7:40pm.