

**SAMARKAND NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION  
BOARD AND ASSOCIATION MEETING  
February 23, 2006, 5:30 p.m.  
Location: Mountain Room, Samarkand Retirement Community**

**MINUTES**

1. **CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME:** Meeting called to order at 5:33 p.m.
2. **ROLL CALL OF BOARD MEMBERS:** Wayne Beckman, John Calder, Anna DeVore, Joyce Duncan Falk, Judy Freeman, Terry Johnson, Jack Meyer, Gwen Morse, Jim Smith, and Charlie Stapleton (Absent: Peter Basch, Dave Morse).
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Minutes were approved as submitted (M/S/C: Chalie Stapleton/Jim Smith)
4. **TREASURER'S REPORT:** Jim Smith reported a balance of \$1113.09, with two checks outstanding, for an adjusted balance of \$1200.77.
5. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** Committee Updates

A. **ALLIED NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION UPDATE:**

Charlie Stapleton reported: Allied is an umbrella organization of all neighborhood association groups. Charlie attended the January and February meetings to get a sense of what was going on with planning in the city. The representatives to Allied at the January meeting focused on issues related to their respective neighborhoods. He reported on some of the items covered: The general plan was discussed. It is a document that is required by law. Although there has been talk about work on it, not much has been done. There is a consultant, but Charlie's sense is that the purpose to date has been limited to advising the city on whom to contact so that the process may proceed. The target for the general plan revision seems to be 2008.

There was also discussion about the Lofts Project, specifically that planning and approval of such projects was being done in a piecemeal fashion. There is not a comprehensive plan for the development of the overall area. A law suit will probably be filed if the Lofts Project appeal is rejected by the City Council because the project by-passed CEQA and the city's parking requirements.

Jack inquired about CEQA. Charlie shared that CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) doesn't stop a project, it looks to identify the impacts of a project and the mitigating factors that can be taken. The issue is whether CEQA can be legally by-passed by City staff and a developer

Other issues discussed at Allied concerned zoning violations on upper State Street and on the West Side. After getting help at the city Council level, corrections have been made on the West Side.

Charlie said he would continue to attend these meetings if the Board wished.

B. **ZONING COMMITTEE:**

John Calder researched liability issues that were brought up at the last meeting. There have been no instances where an individual was sued for reporting a violation. However, there were many instances where individuals were harassed for reporting a violation.

John DeVore shared his understanding of anti-SLAPP (A Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation) laws, passed to prevent a corporation suing an individual or organization to scare it into dropping protests or suits against the corporation. SLAPP makes it difficult to bring a such a lawsuit in California. If someone tried to sue our organization, a judge could easily dismiss the suit.

At this point, no additional zoning violations have been referred to the SNA.

## NEWSLETTER:

John Calder handed out two artifacts: One was a plan for an SNA Newsletter production schedule, and the other was a sample newsletter (two versions).

John suggested that it could be a starting point for a newsletter, with a stated purpose to keep neighborhood informed (past and future). Minutes and notes could be included, and possibly messages from President.

Key Facts: Each newsletter would take 9-13 days of construction. By nature, meeting minutes could only provide ideas for articles (because of approval, they are always a month behind).

John's summary: We might run it every two months. Costs are the issue. A four-page spread would be \$90 a month. We could continue to use the website for time sensitive communication.

Discussion: Anna suggested that some neighbors might opt to take the newsletter by email. Gwen wondered why we didn't do it quarterly, feeling that it will be a lot of work and that it is costly. This brought up a discussion of dues to support more paper products. We don't want to discourage neighbors from joining. Gwen was concerned about "burn-out."

To get started, Anna suggested a summary issue, to update neighbors on the activity of the association, with a goal of April 1 and June 1 for newsletter issues. Wayne suggested that a form to join would be a good inclusion to the newsletter.

In discussion it was noted that few areas have not received a directory yet.

## 6. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. SNA INCORPORATION: Anna called "We the People," the legal advice firm, about incorporating our association as a non-profit. She found out that it would be \$400 fee for docs and support. There is also a \$75 State fee. Overall the cost estimation would be \$500 dollars.

The Board asked about the benefits of doing this: Anna noted that it would have made the banking easier, and it would distance Board Members personal accounts from Association business. Anna expressed discomfort with her name on most of the accounts.

Judy inquired about doing the process alone, and Anna noted the difficulty of the forms. Joyce suggested that we could start on a mission statement. Anna noted that there was something in the old directory that might help get it started.

The board decided to postpone pursuing non-profit status, given the cost relative to the money we have in the association bank account.

- B. NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH DISCUSSION: Although this is a good thing, the board decided it should be tabled for a while, until we can find an individual to take it on. A proposal for neighborhood watch might be included in the newsletter, with the idea of enlisting neighbors to take this on. Anna volunteered to be a contact person for a volunteer.

In the meantime, Anna will contact the beat coordinator to figure out specifics for implementing a neighborhood watch (i.e. a timeline). Jim suggested getting a speaker from a neighborhood that already has a watch going.

- C. FIESTA NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES: Peter was absent, but Anna filled in and spoke to concerns over the Mercado del Norte.

Peter and others have observed problems with Mercado del Norte. A carnival was setup with generators, and the neighbors found it very disruptive. Peter sent a letter to Rich Hoag, the managing director of Old Spanish Days, and he has received no response. Peter's letter was sent September 16, 2005, and it identified issues and requested a response.

Gwen suggested that this might be a good example of an issue for which we might need to poll our neighbors.

This is a time sensitive issue, and the feeling was that it might be too late to impact the Fiesta for this year, but we might be able to have an impact on it in the future. (Anna) Joyce expressed the feeling that the the park is a poor place for a carnival.

Peter had suggested to Anna that we invite someone from the fiesta planning group to speak. We could also speak to them about Oak Park as well. The Board thought this was a good idea.

**D. FUTURE GUESTS:**

Suggestions: A Parks and Recreation rep. in March, and possibly Community Development in April.

**7. OTHER BUSINESS:** Items included

- A. **ELECTIONS:** It was noted that a call for nominations for the organization is coming up.
- B. **BY-LAWS:** It was noted that the By-laws needed revision, and that a sub-committee will be working on that.
- C. **SNA POSITION ON THE LOFTS PROJECT:** Jack brought up the issue of the vote the Board had taken in December on the Lofts Project. He indicated that he was uncomfortable with the quality of the information available (given the immediacy of the vote), and the implications for polling neighbors to determine the feelings of the larger neighborhood when the Association takes a position. He indicated that he had walked the area and was favorable to the project.

Jim Smith said that after he had more time to look at it, he deemed it to be more favorable than it had appeared at first.

Gwen agreed that the issue was procedural, and that a proper presentation timeline should be tasked to groups that ask the SNA to take a position.

Charlie noted that the issue that kept coming up in the Allied meetings was the problem with incremental building. The Lofts Project is not part of a whole comprehensive plan.

Joyce noted that there were articles in the newspaper recently that were relevant to the project.

Anna stated opposition to the project, deeming it too massive for the area, with insufficient setbacks and parking.

- D. **OAK PARK TRAFFIC CALMING:** Wayne noted that the traffic calming measures didn't pass in the neighborhood vote. Wayne will find out in the debriefing, March 1, what will happen next. Wayne will offer a report at the next meeting on the issues.
- E. **EMERGENCY NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN:** Gwen suggested that we seek emergency plan presentation, specifically tips for preparing one's home for an emergency. Anna thought this might also fit into neighborhood watch. Gwen will look for someone for May. This could be included in the newsletter.

**8. COMMUNICATION**

- A. Confirmation of meetings:
  - a. March meeting: Thursday, March 16, 5:30 pm
  - b. Guest/location: Parks and Recreation, Mountain Room

**9. ADJOURNMENT:** 6:47 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:  
Jack Meyer, Secretary

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