

# Venice Neighborhood Council

Post Office Box 550

Venice, CALIFORNIA 90294



## Land Use and Planning Committee MINUTES September 5, 2007



# UNAPPROVED

1 **1. CALL TO ORDER – ROLL CALL APPROVAL OF THIS AGENDA AS**  
2 **PRESENTED OR AMENDED**

3  
4 Challis Macpherson called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm. LUPC Members  
5 present: Jim Murez, Susan Papadakis, Maury Ruano, Challis Macpherson,  
6 Arnold Springer, Ruthie Seroussi, and Stewart Oscars. Jed Pauker and  
7 Sylviane Dungan arrived late.

8  
9 **Susan Papadakis moved to approval the agenda as presented; seconded by Jim**  
10 **Murez.**

11  
12 **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

13  
14 This item was tabled.

15  
16 **3. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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18 Ivan Spiegel provided information on the upcoming Candidates' Forum,  
19 November 10, 2007 Town Hall and Election. It was reported that sign-up  
20 sheets were made available for interested stakeholders to receive e-mail  
21 regarding VNC news.

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**4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Phil Raider admitted that he made a mistake when he was on LUPC by voting for approval of the Ray Hotel project and hoped that the LUPC members would feel the same way.

Reta Moser warned that the Oxford Basin water retention basin was backing up.

Stewart Oscars commented that ...

**5. NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. August 13, 2007 at a regular meeting of the VNC Administrative Committee, it was moved and passed that the VNC Land Use and Planning Committee undertake a review of Zoning Officer Jim Tokunaga's planning staff report on the Ray Hotel, 901 Abbot Kinney Blvd, and report back to the VNC Board of Officers (on this staff report) at the September 18, 2007 meeting of the Board of Officers.**

Challis Macpherson opened discussion after reading this statement: Ladies and Gentlemen, LUPC has been instructed to review, evaluate, analyze and critique the planning staff report by ZA Jim Tokunaga in light of the public comment at this meeting and our own land use and planning knowledge and experience. Stakeholders are not limited in any way in public comment; however the ensuing LUPC discussion will be limited to recommendations on the ZA planning staff report on the Ray Hotel project.

If there are any current VNC Board Officers present perhaps they could stand up and be recognized. We shall keep a running tally of speakers and their support or non support of the ZA report and/or Ray Hotel itself. We shall also take an approximate count of the number of people

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1 attending the meeting itself. Count at 7:00 pm was 79, approximately 30  
2 people came and went during the rest of the meeting.

3  
4 Please note that there are no speaker cards and no time limit for each  
5 speaker. Public comment closes at 9:30 pm. I am turning the gavel over to  
6 the VNC President, DeDe Audet, to preside over the public comment  
7 section of this item. President Audet will then read the Code of Civility.  
8 The gavel will return to me at 9:30 pm after public comment. At that time  
9 LUPC will then deliberate and make recommendations to the VNC Board  
10 of Officers.

11  
12 Public comment starts now. Chair will ask for a motion as soon as public  
13 comment is over so there is a motion on the floor for LUPC deliberation.  
14 At 9:50 pm the chair will call for a vote.

15  
16 Organized presentations were made by Steve Freedman, Dennis  
17 Hathaway, David Ewing, Carmel Beaumont, Gail Rogers, Marvin Klotz,  
18 Laura Silagi, Kelly Willis, Marta Evry. NOTE: Two of the papers  
19 presented during this organized presentation are attached to these  
20 minutes.

21  
22 Comments were made by Lori LeBoy, John Michael, Eric Holber, Clarence  
23 Carter, Toby Sally, Larry Berloff, Lorene Ross, Steven Lake, Steven V.....,  
24 Kate Lutz, Diane Markham, Dean O'Connelly, Susan Renny, Karen Wolfe,  
25 Jerry Carney, Lisa Smilac, Barbara Brown, Hagy Belzberg, Liz Wright,  
26 Bruce Birch, Dawn Hollier, Marta Evry, John Michael, and Karen Wolfe.

27  
28 Chair asked for a show of hands from the audience from those who DID  
29 NOT approve of the ZA Staff Report which was under public comment  
30 and LUPC discussion. Majority of the audience raised their hands.

31  
32 Chair asked for a show of hands from the audience from those who DID  
33 approve of the ZA Staff Report which was under public comment and  
34 LUPC discussion. There were no hands raised.

35  
36 A motion was made to approve the ZA staff report. The motion died for  
37 want of a second.

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2 A motion was made to suggest that the VNC Board of Officers rescind its  
3 approval of the Ray Hotel. The motion died for want of a second.  
4

5 **Susan Papadakis moved to support the recommended height limitations from**  
6 **the ZA Jim Tokunaga's staff report; seconded by Jim Murez.**

7 **VOTE: 3 in favor, 5 opposed, 1 abstention. The motion did not pass.**  
8

9 **Ruthie Seroussi made the following motion, seconded by Jim Murez.**

10  
11 **The Land Use and Planning Committee approves in part, and rejects in part, as**  
12 **follows, the staff report from City of Los Angeles Planning Department's**  
13 **Zoning Administrator Jim Tokunaga, dated July 18, 2007, regarding the Ray**  
14 **Hotel project, Case Number APCW 2006-9483 SPE CDP CU SPP SPR MEL:**  
15

- 16 **1. Height to conform with the Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan**
- 17 **2. Traffic study to be redone and consider cumulative impacts using correct**  
18 **location of projects in area and pedestrian safety, and specifying mitigation**  
19 **measures.**
- 20 **3. Define LEED certification as Gold or what Gold entails, as specified in**  
21 **developer's promotional materials.**
- 22 **4. Valet only on sight, no off-site parking**
- 23 **5. Employee parking on site only**
- 24 **6. Define construction and delivery routes, and delivery and pedestrian drop**  
25 **off and pick up locations**
- 26 **7. Provide 50 employee parking spaces on site in addition to other**  
27 **requirements, or purchase in lieu parking spaces at going rate to construct**  
28 **the spaces**
- 29 **8. Define noise abatement for patio and pool**

30  
31 **Vote: 5 in favor, 4 opposed. The motion passed.**  
32

33 **6. ADJOURNMENT**  
34

35 The meeting was adjourned by common consent.  
36  
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1 **Attachment**

2  
3 **Comments for LUPC by Laura Silagi**

4  
5 **We have an opportunity to begin something new. Instead of trading over-scale**  
6 **projects for some “Community Benefits”, let’s look at what can be done by law**  
7 **and deny projects that are outside the criteria for variances & specific plan**  
8 **exceptions.**

9  
10 **Let’s stop spending our time hearing these projects, and have a policy of denying**  
11 **those projects that do not fit the legal criteria for variances & exceptions. Then**  
12 **let’s spend the time at future LUPC meetings discussing and planning for the**  
13 **upcoming Venice Community Plan revision. The Venice Community Plan and**  
14 **the Venice Specific Plan are documents arrived at by community participation.**  
15 **The Community Plan looks at areas such as affordable housing, open space**  
16 **needs, schools, historic concerns, transit, traffic and other planning matters.**

17  
18 **Within this context we can discuss what are our commercial needs to create a**  
19 **walkable and interesting Venice that serves all those who live, work and visit**  
20 **here. Instead of the usual LUPC meetings that deal with piecemeal exceptions,**  
21 **members could hold meetings on topics of public interest, and invite in experts**  
22 **to assist us as needed. That way, we can spend our time productively and get**  
23 **community involved in things that matter to all of us.**

24  
25 **As for this project, it is being sold on the grounds of being "green" and "historic"**  
26 **but neither claim is legal grounds for granting variances. We all want "green"**  
27 **projects, but the added traffic impacts alone would create more congested and**  
28 **that is hardly "green". The historic nature of the building is also in question.**

29  
30 **Developers are watching. If exceptions are granted by our LUPC and VNC for**  
31 **projects based on other than legal measures we can be sure that there will be**  
32 **many, many more developers asking for the same treatment and stating that the**  
33 **community is in favor of such projects.**

34  
35 **Let’s not keep letting ourselves dealing with projects that don’t even try to**  
36 **comply with the Specific Plan.**

37 **Let’s spend our time being productive.**

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**Comments read into the record by Carmel Beaumont:**

**Members of LUPC:**

**I and my neighbors were originally in support of this project and still have no problem with a second hotel coming into our neighborhood. However now that the Recommendation Report has put the project into perspective, we have changed our minds about the impacts this project will have on our community. The Traffic portion of the Recommendation Report cites the Mitigated Negative Declaration that was filed on behalf of the Ray and forms the basis of the Los Angeles Department of Transportation's Traffic Assessment recommendations which "concludes that while the project will generate 757 net new daily trips... this addition does not constitute a significant impact."**

**I have documented portions of the Crain Traffic Study (submitted as part of the MND) that are flawed. This could mean the information and data studied by the Department of Transportation (DOT) did not adequately describe the project related cumulative traffic impacts of the project. The community should be concerned because this is the document upon which the DOT based its own Traffic Assessment of the Ray project and does NOT in any way address the Cumulative Impacts of this project and related projects in the area.**

**The street and alley system a block west and north of the RAY has not been changed since it was originally laid out as walk streets over a hundred years ago. Over time the area has become more densely populated with more traffic and the second most visited tourist area in California. This street and alley system is also the closest public road and access way between the Ray property and the shoreline.**

**I am concerned that the Project's contribution to cumulative impacts regarding cut through traffic in this area will be considerable as it is only one of three large developments within a 500 foot radius of this area.**

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1 There are related projects cited in the Crain Traffic Study that are not correctly  
2 located or accounted for. If the locations are not true then the analysis cannot be  
3 a true indication of the cumulative impacts this Project will have in the area.  
4

5 The MTA Project on Sunset between Main and Pacific is located on the Traffic  
6 Study map as being on Sunset at Speedway . This is two and a half times further  
7 away from the RAY than it really is and has the potential for 1319 new daily trips  
8 which were possibly not properly accounted for.  
9

10 DOGTOWN STATION at 700 MAIN ST. is currently under construction, and is  
11 not included as a Related Project even though it is less than 100 feet north of the  
12 proposed Ray Hotel . This project was NOT considered in the Traffic Study.  
13

14 Although the Palihouse Hotel project is across the street from the RAY property,  
15 on the *Related Projects Location Map* it is located on Lincoln and Machado more  
16 than a mile away. The Palihouse will add approximately 514 new daily trips to  
17 the area.  
18

19 As the locations of related projects mentioned above are flawed and/or not  
20 included, the Traffic Study is only partially indicative of the potential impacts on  
21 circulation and cut through traffic in this neighborhood. Cumulative impacts  
22 from the other three developments in combination with the Proposed Project  
23 were not analyzed in a meaningful manner.  
24

25 Traffic volumes for existing conditions were conducted in April and March and  
26 did not take into account the summer months that create a huge influx of beach-  
27 bound traffic to our area.  
28

29 The report did not take into consideration the major feature of Venice Beach as  
30 the second most popular California tourist destination or that it is a visitor  
31 serving area. It only mentions in the report that "Venice Beach is ¼ mile from the  
32 proposed project." This hardly takes into consideration the many impacts on the  
33 surrounding neighborhood that already exist and which the Proposed Project  
34 could compound or increase. This would include the possibility that the  
35 increased Project-related traffic would utilize neighborhood serving alleys as  
36 access routes to avoid congestion on the primary travel routes, and thus would



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1 create major difficulty for residents accessing their properties. Additional  
2 analysis should be conducted to evaluate these effects.

3  
4 The effects of an increase of pedestrian traffic to the beach and boardwalk in  
5 relation to pedestrian safety should be analyzed as Brooks Ave/Abbot Kinney  
6 will be the pedestrian gateway to the beach from the Ray.

7  
8 With these inconsistencies, this is the data that the DOT used to determine that  
9 the traffic study adequately described the project related traffic impacts of the  
10 proposed development.

11  
12 Although the DOT concludes that 757 net new daily trips from this project do not  
13 constitute a significant impact, the DOT Traffic Analysis does NOT address  
14 cumulative impacts. There is NO mention of the approximately 514 new daily  
15 trips from the Palihouse project, or the 1319 new daily trips from the MTA  
16 Project. Add that to the 757 new daily trips from the RAY and that's 2590 NEW  
17 daily trips that will potentially be added within a 500 foot radius of our  
18 neighborhood. There are no mitigation measures offered.

19  
20 The City Planning Department issued a Mitigated Negative Declaration and  
21 determined that by imposing mitigation measures, any identified environmental  
22 impact could be reduced to a level of insignificance; and that mitigation  
23 measures have been made conditions of approval. However, the DOT Traffic  
24 Analysis was silent on the issue of cumulative impacts so therefore no mitigation  
25 measures are offered regarding traffic. I provided documentation to the LUPC to  
26 back up my research.

27  
28 The Proposed Project in combination with Related Projects and existing traffic  
29 conditions in the North Beach area of Venice are sure to impact the streets and  
30 narrow resident serving alleys in the area.

31  
32 We are very fortunate to have the support of Councilman Rosendahl in  
33 upholding the Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan. This is an opportunity our  
34 community cannot afford to pass up and so let's show Councilman Rosendahl  
35 that we support his taking a stand in favor of the VSP. Reject any of the  
36 Planner's recommendations that contradict the VSP.

37

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1 **Respectfully,**

2

3 **Carmel Beaumont    Sunny Tomblin    Rick Gunderson**  
4 **108 Vista Place    109 Vista Place    714 Pacific Ave.**  
5 **Venice, CA 90291    Venice, CA 90291    Venice, CA 90291**  
6 **310 450-0106    310 399-3361    319 399-7370**

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