



Venice Neighborhood Council



Questions:

Please limit your answers to the 9 questions below to 200 words or less each.

1) Please explain why you wish to serve on the LUPC:

My skills, diligence, and judgment would contribute to farsighted planning, better projects, and managed growth. I have been a practicing business and real estate litigator for over 20 years in Los Angeles, and for several years in the late 1980's and early 1990's, I was a real estate developer, bringing the first apartment building recycling program to the City of Los Angeles, in over 100 apartment buildings. I am experienced in statutory interpretation, including the Planning and Zoning Codes. I have a basic familiarity with the planning process, and a deep conviction that constructive neighborhood involvement always yields a better project.

I was on the Venice CPAC for over 8 years. I took my responsibilities seriously, visiting every site on the Agenda prior to the meeting, and attending nearly every meeting. I was respectful and kind to the applicant, to my neighbors who attended the meetings, and to my fellow Committee members. I strongly supported two aspects of the CPAC's evolution: First, we provided Councilmember with comments and suggestions, instead of just a simple vote count on a Motion. This made the Committee more effective in advising the Councilmember, showing the rationale behind the vote, and focusing on the community's concerns. Second, reports were provided on how each project fared as it went through the planning process, to its ultimate conclusion. This provided the Committee with insight into what the thinking of the Councilmember and the Planning Department, so that we could be more effective in contributing to the outcome. I hope these practices will be part of the LUPC.

I have a good sense of when someone is being obstructionist and unreasonable, and I still look for any useful contributions despite the vitriol. I am open-minded yet decisive, and I am comfortable with being in the minority if I believe in the merits of my position.

2) Have you served before on the LUPC or other planning and land use related committee? If so, what committee and when?

During my involvement with the LUPC process in the early 1990's, the Councilmember's staff recognized by interest and expertise, particularly my ability to understand and to explain the Code, and appointed me to the Venice CPAC in August, 1993. I served for 8 ½ years, until the CPAC was disbanded in 2002. When the LUPC was formed as part of GRVNC, the Board met for the purpose of expanding the LUPC to allow appointment of several additional members, and it was expected that I would be appointed. However, at the Board meeting, I spoke in opposition to the Motion, because I felt that the only reason it was necessary to expand the number of members of the LUPC, was because Board members had been appointing themselves to the LUPC. The Motion failed for procedural reasons, and was never renewed, and shortly thereafter, GRVNC disintegrated.



Venice Neighborhood Council



- 3) Please state your professional qualifications or related experience relevant to this position:

Business and real estate litigation lawyer, 1986 to present;

Vice President, North Village Co., developer of residential apartment and condominium projects and commercial projects, 1989-1992;

Founder, North Village Recycling Project, first apartment building recycling project in the City of Los Angeles, serving over 100 apartment buildings, used as a model project in "Recycling In Multi-Family Buildings," a guide prepared by the City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works, Integrated Solid Waste Management, 1990-1992;

Member, Venice Community Planning Advisory Committee, August, 1993, through May, 2002;

Los Angeles Superior Court Temporary Judge, hearing Small Claims and Traffic matters, all continuing training courses completed, 2003 to present.

- 4) Please list your previous and/or current neighborhood or community involvement:

In addition to those listed in number 3, above:

GRVNC Elections Committee for the very first election, then on election day, worked in conjunction with the League of Women Voters to supervise election issues and questions, as I was not running for office; organized food for election night.



Venice Neighborhood Council



- 5) Please list the three most pressing planning issues you feel are facing the Venice Community:

First, the relationship between public transportation, housing density, and open space. These issues are so interrelated that they are one.

Second, public parking, for both residents and visitors. As a major tourist destination, either parking or public transportation must be vastly improved.

Third, affordable housing. Lots more funding for VHC.

Also, fence height. We are allowing residents to maintain tall fences in the front yard area, resulting in our streets becoming a corridor of wall-lined fortresses, shutting out the world and diminishing open space.

- 6) Under what kinds of situations do you feel it to be appropriate to grant exceptions or variances to the Venice Specific Plan or other LA City Planning codes?

Certain findings are required to grant exceptions and variances. Many "findings" are counterintuitive and only pay lip service to the requirement of findings. It comes down to one's vision and judgment, and whether the proposed project meets the spirit and intent of the Code, and satisfies the needs and desires of the Community. When a lot size is 42' x 140' and density is calculated based on 1,500 square feet per unit, the owner is just short of 4 units. If there is ample parking for 4 units, and the neighbors are not opposing 4 units, and if one of the units is designated as an affordable unit, I feel that a variance would be appropriate, absent countervailing factors.

Where the Specific Plan and the Planning Code have failed to keep up with forward-thinking urban planning, and they are not anticipated to be revised soon enough to allow new solutions to difficult problems, exceptions and variances allow us to experiment with new solutions.



Venice Neighborhood Council



7) What is your opinion of the Venice Specific Plan?

It needs to be reviewed and amended to correct problems, but the City does not intend to allocate the resources to do so for several years. We should not sit quietly and accept this delay. Where there are deficiencies identified, they should be corrected at a faster rate.

8) How do you view your role in private interactions with developers who have projects proposed before the Land Use and Planning Committee?

So long as it is in compliance with the Brown Act and any other ethical guidelines, and does not create a perception of bias, it is my opinion that meeting with any neighbor, developer, or other interested party, results in more input, and therefore a better project. As a member of the LUPC, I do not see it as our "role" to meet privately with developers. as The information they would provide privately should be available to everyone. If I was contacted by a developer and a private meeting was requested, I would suggest that the neighbors be contacted and their participation sought, along with the applicable neighborhood association, if any.

9) What is your Vision for Venice?

A small, self-governing community where innovative solutions to energy, housing, transportation, and resource conservation issues are discussed and implemented. A government with a cooperative, can-do attitude that helps businesses open and grow and serve the community and the world. A responsive and nimble government where nearly every member of the community is on a committee that contributes toward the betterment of a tiny segment of society.

A diverse, artistic, musical, athletic, outdoor paradise by the sea, ruled by kindness and compassion.

A community with the best public schools, and the highest-paid teachers and law enforcement officers in the world.

A place where intelligent life from other places (planets? dimensions?) feels comfortable enough to manifest itself, to share solutions to each others' most difficult problems.

Thank You for Volunteering to Help Our Community!