

Minutes
Venice Neighborhood Council
Santa Monica Airport Ad-Hoc Committee
Wednesday, March 17, 2010 9:00 A.M.
Rose Café, 220 Rose Ave., Venice

Chair: Laura Silagi
Attending: Stephanie Body; Joan Miner; Ingrid Mueller;
Amanda Seward; Mindy Taylor Ross

I. Call to Order Meeting called at 9:00 A.M. by Laura Silagi

II. Introductions and Public Comments Ingrid brought up the topic of elected officials in relation to airport issues when she reported hearing Henry Waxman on CSpan addressing a UCLA group on Health issues. When asked about Santa Monica Airport as a problem he agreed but said the only thing that can be done is to tell the FAA to be more “mindful” of the people below. The committee decided that this was too weak a response and then discussed what we currently know about various officials’ and / or candidates’ airport related positions and actions. The committee decided it needs to begin to question and to tap into candidates’ positions and needs. Laura thanked Ingrid for generating this action topic as we will, by actively questioning officials and candidates, start to gather information and to apply pressure.

III. Old Business

A. Survey of Neighborhoods Problems with printed distribution have arisen because Los Angeles neighborhood councils’ funding has been frozen, and this includes our committee’s promised funds for the survey and for the VNC’s newsletter. Laura gave the good news that so far, with little PR, we have 114 responses to the survey on line. Through discussion the committee agreed that we should continue to get the survey out because it is a valuable tool for promoting an awareness of the issues, for gathering some statistics, and for developing an email list of people willing to act. A technical discussion followed regarding how to achieve these survey goals through the VNC website and through internet tools. It was also agreed that we should consider how one would present the information we gather to candidates and officials. Laura and Mindy will pursue continuing to get the survey out and analyzing the data. All the committee will promote the online survey through word of mouth.

B. Hiring Aviation Expert for Advice Laura said that the fund shortage also meant that there is no money to hire Jon Rodgers. We cannot raise the \$300. on our own because it is not allowed to raise private funds for VNC actions. Amanda felt that the administration may not be permitted to take back money that had been promised to committees. Laura agreed to ask again.

C. Working With Other Neighborhood Councils & Organizations Laura reported that Josh Crosby from Venice Sky (which wants to get the flight path over the Venice “walk streets” changed) asked for help as he is having a difficult time getting the release of information from airport sources regarding original flight path decision making. There is a “Pilots Guidebook for California Airports” which he cannot access and which has pre-1984 agreement information. Amanda said that legally there should be available public record of the guidebook if it was used to make the kind of decision that would make the flight path go south instead of north. It was also mentioned that we and the other organizations need to consider how to use this information. A possibility is bringing it to the attention of Santa Monica Airport Commission Chairman Offer Grossman who has expressed a desire to pursue change through examining significant original past documents. Amanda expressed the opinion that we keep in mind that soot and air pollution is becoming as much a problem as noise. The committee agreed. Laura reported that MVCC Airport Committee co-chair Bill Koontz and Marty Rubin of CRAAP have agreed to a larger gathering of heads of the various community organizations focused on SM Airport issues. It was discussed that although it can look like teamwork could be difficult, independent groups can get far with their own efforts, and then common interests and an overall strategy can be established. There are long and short term goals. Bill Koontz’s group is formulating a letter that others would sign on to. Our committee will work on our own letter to get support from others. Amanda will take on establishing a working relationship with other groups. A list of organizations was begun.

D. Santa Monica Airport Commission Meetings Laura and Stephanie reported that the February 22nd Santa Monica Airport Commission Environmental Workshop was very similar to the North Westdale Neighborhood Association January 11th Forum on the Science of Santa Monica Airport Pollution. There were the same speakers and information with the shocking exception that speakers were backtracking on the statement that the level of pollution was equal to downtown. It was discussed that there should be a record of the original Westdale statements. Probably Marty Rubin has a video tape. This is potentially a big action issue that needs to be verified as a real issue. It is a serious issue as it pertains to the value of Westside residence. Laura will ask Marty for a clip. Reported was the uncertainty as to whether lead has been devalued as an issue. Laura said a panel member reported that the long term view of aviation and Santa Monica Airport was rosy, but that does not apply to now.

F. Fact Gathering Regarding Flight Schools and the FAA Laura gave a brief report on her and Stephanie’s visit to a new flight school. More to come as they will take a test flight soon.

IV. Next Meeting April 21, 9:00 A.M. Rose Café

V. Public Comments Ingrid restated our interest in the larger gathering of community groups re SM Airport. All agreed that the new goal for the meeting would be June.

VI. Adjournment 11:00 A.M.

