

WUNA Council Meeting

Dec. 2, 2010.

I. Call to order: Meeting called to order at Trinity Presbyterian Church meeting room, at 6.30 p.m. by Chris Gans, president. Members attending: Adrienne Parry; Ford Burkhart, Secretary, and Carolyn Niethammer; Judy and Noah Sensibar; Sandra Morse; Dave Boston; Chris Gans, President; Anne Sawyer; Roger Wiens; Cheri Wiens, Treasurer; Richard Mayers; John Patterson, Gal Witmer, Patricia E. Pinzon, Matt Williams. Others: Jill Bielawski, Cathy and Bob Morrison; Don Durband, representing City Ward 6; Christina Parisi, City Manager's Office.

II. Minutes: Carolyn Niethammer moved, Cheri Wiens seconded, approval of minutes of November meeting. Approved unanimously.

III. Announcements: None.

IV. Call to the Audience: Ford mentioned that Old Pueblo Trolley needs more trolley drivers badly; anyone interested in training can contact Ford; Cathy Morrison expressed interest.

V. Beer Booth: Jeff Thomas discussed booth plans for the Street Fair next weekend.

VI. Entertainment District/Christina Parisi, City of Tucson, City Manager's Office: Background: April legislation eases restrictions on liquor licenses near schools and churches. It will let the city allow exemptions from the 300-foot distance limit. The city must adopt an entertainment district boundary of one square mile; it can create 3 districts in the city. Cheri asked if noise regulations will apply to the entertainment district; Christina said the no local ordinance is waived by the special district rules. Parisi asked for comments on the map, which she displayed (copies were distributed at the last meeting). Parisi invited comments; a district is under consideration for 4th Avenue and the Main Gate area.

VII. Chris Gans, development updates: Several projects were reviewed:

No. 1: Project 714 seems to have lost its original developers and new ones are being sought.

No. 2: Trinity Church has put out an RFP (request for proposal) to various developers to develop the area they own apart from the main church building including the parking lots and educational building. They want to see appropriate development for the site. They will keep WUNA apprised of their plans.

No. 3: The District at UA, on 5th Street at 5th Avenue: This is a student housing proposal that is in the new Infill Incentive District (IID) that will need city approval for modifications from current zoning limits. Gans said it may lower property values in the nearby area to have a 60- to 75-foot-tall building, well above what R-3 zoning (40') allows, with proposed zero setbacks from all streets and up to 45' setbacks next to existing nearby properties; the former proposed height was 60 feet. The project will have 700 beds and 529 parking spaces in a 60' tall garage and on street property owned by the developer. Gans stated that he has a conflict with the proposed development and cannot represent WUNA in any future actions concerning this project. Richard Mayers will take on that role. Gans asked if the WUNA board wanted to take an official position during the 20 day comment period. Protections for the neighborhood are not great; to get the modifications developers are requesting, they may need to have WUNA and neighbor support. The new proposed height of 74 feet exceeds the current R-3 zoning, and the size of the proposed project sets a precedent that could repeat all along 6th Street. Up to seven historic homes will be lost to the project if the developer plans are approved and the developer buys all or most of the existing properties adjoining the project. These are zoning modifications, Gal Witmer pointed out, and will need various levels of approval. Carri Niethammer pointed out that for the future, developers will take advantage of our neighborhood charm and then destroy it; she said there would be a "Domino Effect," one block and the next, and high-rises could pop up as far as the University. Gal said board members should write letters, individually and as a board with an official WUNA position. Chris distributed talking points to Board members and recommends that if WUNA board members want to comment individually, they should send letters to Russlyn Wells, Lead Planner, at City of Tucson Planning and Development Services, PO Box 27210, Tucson, AZ 85726-7210.

A motion was made by Sandra Morse, seconded by Cheri, for WUNA to send a letter opposing the modifications the developers are seeking for The District at UA Project. The motion passed unanimously with Chris abstaining. WUNA board members were urged to write their own letters to the city by Dec. 12.

The Infill Incentive Districts (IIDs): Several members commented that the IIDs need to have better transitional zones to give neighborhoods more protection; you can build at 60 feet height with only a 30 feet setback from other property. Board members were asked if they wanted to request the City Council to suspend or change the IID to provide more protection for existing neighborhoods and allow time for the neighborhoods to provide input. Chris said the IID measure may result in flight from neighborhoods. Matt moved, and Richard

seconded, to have WUNA write to the city council to state concerns about the lack of neighborhood protections in the ordinance. IID Measure passed unanimously; Chris abstained.

John Patterson noted that the board did support the 714 Project, and now he hoped the board would stand together against these towering structures. There were “months of headache and heartache” as a result of the board’s stand in favor of that project, Patterson said. Richard Mayer agreed that we should have slowed down our decision. Noah agreed, saying the Board should in the future not make any decision when a developer makes a presentation. Matt Williams underscored the need for solidarity as a neighborhood. Chris added that in such a situation the board must step back, get more information, learn the process, hold workshops. Cheri said the talking points from Chris were useful for opposition to the Hole in the Ground Project. “It shows it can happen to any of us,” she said. Don Durband said Armory Park is now regretting being too passive on the headquarters building planned for Broadway downtown.

VIII. Committee:

University relations: John Patterson distributed a report.

Elections: Dave Boston reviewed the list of nominations, with most officers agreeing to run again. We need to fill seats of Teresa Vasquez, Roger Wiens, Anne Sawyer and Bridget Werchen; and find someone to split a seat with Gerry Jiuliani. Ford will run for Secretary, and Carri Niethammer will run for historian.

Other: An annual meeting was set for Jan. 14, at 6 p.m., at Fellowship Hall at Trinity Church. Carri and Cheri agreed to co-chair the committee with Sandra Morse and Ford Burkhart helping out. Cheri moved, and Carri seconded, that the meeting budget not to exceed \$300; motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.