



# UPTOWN PLANNERS

SPECIAL MEETING  
Uptown Community Planning Group  
October 25, 2021

## DRAFT MINUTES

In attendance: Michael Brennan, Mary Brown, Christopher Cole, Roy Dahl, Clint Daniels, Gail Friedt, Mary McKenzie, Tom Mullaney, Lu Rehling, Helen Rowe Allen, Bill Smith, Mat Wahlstrom

Arrived during Action Item 2: Brer Marsh

Absent: Matt Medeiros, Stuart McGraw, Steve Cline

### I. Call to Order at 6:04 p.m.

1. Introductions

2. Adoption of Agenda

Adopted by unanimous vote.

### II. Action Items

#### 1. NAVWAR

A joint project of the US Navy, SANDAG and the City of San Diego. The plan includes up to 10,000 housing units, plus hotels, commercial and retail space; total building space up to 19.5 million square feet, with heights up to 350 ft tall (32 stories).

a. The Navy representative was not able to participate on this date.

b. Presentation by **Save San Diego's Character**: Patty Brooks, Sue Trebon, and Frank Pavel.

Reasons were presented for supporting the Navy's Alternative 1, and opposing Alternatives 2-4.

**Public Comment:**

Paul Jamieson. Asked if the Housing Commission and Housing Federation were consulted. (Answer from Susan Trebon: No.) Need to accept housing near transit.

Clifford Weiler. Substantial traffic impacts, especially for Mission Hills. Project too big. Encourage writing Secretary of Navy.

Sanjay Stone. Support housing, especially in blighted area such as Midway. Alternate forms of transportation would reduce traffic problems.

Frank Pavel. Development should be architecturally correct and responsive to climate and traffic. Old Town transportation center is only a half-mile away from this new proposed transportation center.

Sharon Gehl. Supporting document should be available. Navy preferred alternative best for environment. We can't all live in single-family housing. We need new, energy-efficient housing, and it should be near public transit. Property not within Coastal Commission zone.

Joseph Rocchio. Once in generation opportunity to provide infill development on this site. Good location for transit center. Creates a walkable community.

Lauren Carter. As architect, view this as irresponsible development. Navy not communicating with community groups; ignoring infrastructure needs; poor preliminary renderings. Other locations for developing housing throughout the city. Need to address character of surrounding communities.

Clint Daniels. Asked for documents previously submitted.

Tom Mullaney. Will provide those documents.

Lu Rehling. Point of order: Request also provide copies of documents shared on screen.

Chuck Sevilla. Opposed to options 2-5. This is a federal issue. Contact your congressional representatives. federal representatives. The Environmental Impact Report is woefully inadequate. In addition to high wall, adding 10,000 units. Traffic from this and other projects in same area will create traffic glut. Inadequate treatment of security issue.

Steve Huemmer. The infrastructure is not there to support this project. Major concerns about traffic. Two nearby intersections are already overburdened. Even users of bicycles and public transportation still own cars, which require parking and impact traffic.

Tobi de Frates. Architecture and design out of line with risks to environment. Request Coastal Commission letter to be made available. Why Navy rep not here today?

Tom Mullaney. Navy said it would like to attend but representatives not available tonight.

Carol Emerick. 10,000 new residences already proposed for Hillcrest and more for Medical Center, too. So Mission Hills will be in new housing sandwich.

**Presenters' response to Public Comment:**

Susan Trebon. Provided four documents, which can be sent to the board members (also available on Navy's website). Chose NAVWAR-only alternative one because no middle ground presented as an option. Would like to have conversation with Navy. MCRD, Liberty Station, and

Old Town are historic sites. Should be continuity in architectural design, scope, and scale. National Registry of Historical Sites reviewing this development with regard to whether contributes to heritage. Trolleys expensive especially relative to low actual use. Comparison to Madrid used by SANDAG but not similar. Also, what is proposed does not reflect where people live and work. There are more appropriate empty spaces for housing development. Coastal Commission does have responsibility to address developments that might have spillover effects on coastal zones. Influence now requires citizen influence on Congress.

Patty Brooks. Issues with cybersecurity in that location, defeating primary purpose of Navy facility. Hotels are included in the proposal, not only homes. Traffic impacts. Not opposed to housing but to how being developed without community input.

### **Board Comments:**

Helen Rowe Allen. Long-time resident of Mission Hills. Opposed to the project. Effects on environment, tourism, existing businesses.

Mary Brown. Long-time resident of Mission Hills. Opposed to the project. Community has come together on this issue. Needs more discussion before decision.

Michael Brennan. Favors proposals to bring new housing to the area. It shouldn't overwhelm the local community but be opportunities to connect. Good design could result in that and put people next to transit.

Chris Cole. The project does not fall under our geographic jurisdiction. Falls under the Midway-Pacific Highway group. Should share their August 11 letter. Proposals make sense, compare to Navy's Manchester project downtown.

Roy Dahl. Would have been better if Navy had presented better designs. Should add housing in proportion to jobs in order to reduce vehicle miles traveled. Need to see transit designs and job commute info.

Clint Daniels. Support Chris Cole's suggestion. Totally supportive of housing. Presenters' arguments disingenuous re: pros and cons of development and actual support of new housing. Re: historic point, any change will affect. Alternative 4 provides most parkland and least environmental impacts (lowest BMT) per CEQA. Provides workforce housing near jobs and transit. Not in Coastal Commission boundary zone. Building housing elsewhere would create more traffic. Creates new community that will connect to Mission Hills.

Helen Rowe Allen. Point of order re: time limit. Tom. No strict time limit for board members.

Gail Friedt. Retired from Navy. Offended by comments about Navy. Navy creates one-fifth of the total gross regional product of San Diego. We need more housing. Supports the project. Area blighted. Navy provided opportunities for public comment. Military active duty not allowed to talk about project and cybersecurity. Sounds like conspiracy theory.

Mary McKenzie. Documents need to be available to everybody under Brown Act, not just to board members. Affordable housing not addressed. Not all Navy employees who live there. Quality of life issue for residents of Mission Hills. Should not build for infrastructure that is not there yet. The Sports Arena presentations look like Disneyland. Hopes that NAVWAR is not like that.

Lu Rehling. Requesting more community contacts is not anti-Navy. Objected to comments about the motives of others, like "disingenuous"; stick to issues. Chat feature being used in a way not helpful to our open meeting format. Important to recognize the environmental costs of demolition and new construction. SOHO proposed adaptive reuse to meet Navy's needs. Affordable housing is not included. Developers driven by own benefits. Uptown Planners and Coastal Commission clearly have reason to give input because of range of effects; not an island. New "climate-resilient San Diego" program, but SOHO has pointed out issues with building on liquefaction zone. Re: traffic: SANDAG rep recently quoted that even people who use public transportation still use cars. Not everyone who lives there will work there. Opportunities for affordable housing; but Navy gives only all-or-nothing choice. Need analyses, as others have noted. Impact on tourism, especially on Old Town.

Bill Smith. Agree with Clint Daniels' comments. Do not think will look like images. Could take 20 years. New type of downtown. Small group opposes large project. Get used to being a big city, which will evolve. 21 stories not that high; build up and leave open space. Panic not justified.

Mat Wahlstrom. San Diego is a military town. Benefits and also is sometimes a golden handcuff. Write to Congress and the Secretary of the Navy. Many problems with project as proposed (alternative 4). The site has huge environmental obstacles, not just impacts but existing site conditions. Located on flood plain. Navy has obligation to provide deed-restricted housing for its employees. Public-private partnerships with no affordable housing requirement do not meet needs. Downtown Navy yard development now handing public park component over to private developer. Project is so contentious because it has problems.

Tom Mullaney. Infrastructure is needed. The Housing Elements reports that the city has zoning capacity for 145,000 housing units. The scale of the project is excessive. 10,000 units on this site would mean more residents than the City of Coronado and higher density than Manhattan. The Coastal Commission letter was good; will share on website. We need to see the Navy's answers to their questions.

\*MOTION by Lu Rehling: Provide letter of support to Save San Diego's Character for its recommended NAVWAR plan alternative. Second by Mat Wahlstrom.

Tom Mullaney. Why?

Lu Rehling. Sufficiently informed on this issue, so timely to vote now. NIMBY slur thrown out too easily. Need smart growth. Twenty-year rollout makes allowing this project go forward as is even more problematic.

Mary McKenzie. Offered an amendment: That we write a letter of support to presenters, after seeing the documents. Lu Rehling. Do not see how would work procedurally. Tom Mullaney. No mechanism. Mary McKenzie. Withdraw proposed amendment.

### **Board comment:**

Clint Daniels. Point of information: Any board members have financial ties with Save San Diego's Character?

Chris Cole. Oppose because working with Midway CPG is proper way. They have done thorough job and ask good questions of Navy.

Michael Brennan. Would like to hear from the Navy. Need information from both sides.

Roy Dahl. Respectfully agrees: We don't have enough information to make a decision. Once I do good chance would support this motion but voting against at this point.

MOTION. Helen Rowe Allen called the question. Mary McKenzie seconded.

In favor of stopping debate: Helen Rowe Allen, Mary Brown, Chris Cole, Roy Dahl, Clint Daniels, Mary McKenzie, Lu Rehling, Mat Wahlstrom

Opposed: Gail Friedt, Bill Smith

Abstained: Michael Brennan (not appropriate to take motion on this tonight)

Motion passed. 8-2-1

\*VOTE ON PREVIOUS MOTION by Lu Rehling:

In favor: Helen Rowe Allen, Mary Brown, Lu Rehling, Mat Wahlstrom

Opposed: Michael Brennan, Chris Cole, Roy Dahl, Clint Daniels, Gail Friedt, Mary McKenzie, Bill Smith

Motion failed: 4-7-0

Chris Cole and Mary McKenzie. Appreciate presentation. Tom Mullaney. Recognize presenters and thank for time. Materials will go on website.

## **2. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU)**

a. Per Tom Mullaney, calls were made to four building industry representatives, but a speaker was not provided.

b. Proposal for revisions to the current ADU ordinance.

Presentation by **Neighbors for a Better San Diego**: Geoff Huetter.

The group is not opposed to ADUs but is seeking the adoption of a city ordinance that more closely matched state law, without unneeded and harmful provisions added.

The city's Housing Element shows capacity for 175,000 housing units, without counting potential ADUs. ADUs dilute the incentive to build where it's best, on transit corridors.

### **Public Comment:**

Lu Rehling. Given late hour, suggest reducing time limit for public comment? Tom. No.

Bill Keller. Do not understand how much is likely to happen. Talking about nightmare scenario that might happen down the road. Is ADU legislation the problem or density bonus?

Paul Jameson. Both sides should be present. In Talmadge added fewer than 200 units in 10 years and even that has been opposed. Question recommendations to putting lower- and middle-income housing units on dangerous road while protecting parking and traffic in other areas. Let's not take housing tools out of our housing toolbox.

Sharon Gehl. Question for Tom Mullaney: Other side speakers interested in talking tonight. Why not invited? (Tom Mullaney: Attempted with no success.) We need more housing of many types

near public transit corridors. Evidence that works. 30' foot height limit. Nothing wrong with housing being built by investors. We need to apply the same rules to multi-family housing as to single-family housing.

Clifford Weiler. Favor more housing but not how implemented in city. City Council makes decisions before hearing public counsel. Is Todd Gloria in area where ADUs allowed? Our children and grandchildren may live in housing units that are basically dorm rooms.

Oscar Tavera. Areas for improvement need to be looked at. But fearmongering. Need housing near transit and jobs. Times changing: remote work, different technologies, not all need cars and weekly trash pickups. Density bonus is best incentive. Some people prefer smaller units and would benefit.

Sanjay Stone. Resident of Mission Hills. ADUs do not damage character. Advantage for multi-generational family homes. My house has junior unit where nanny lives. We need to hear from both sides. Getting ahead of the problem before enough information.

Lauren Carter. There is a big difference between 1 ADU in a single-family residential neighborhood and 10-20 ADUs. Bad planning; not infrastructure to support. Property owners do not know going on; like a back channel to go around zoning. People invest based on zoning and should have input.

Ed Balsamo. Generally supportive of more housing and ADUs are tool. The city's regulations have moved too far away from the intent for ADUs. Agree that one ADU on a site or for grandparent or nanny is different from 4-5. City should make reasonable; overall good proposal to not go too far from state requirements. Question 4-foot setback provision for structures already on property.

### **Board Comments:**

Helen Rowe Allen. Sufficient info has been available and our job is to be aware of issues. Ready to vote.

Mary Brown. Agree with Helen: Need to be aware of the news. Ready to vote.

Roy Dahl. (Technical problem so asked to comment in chat.)

Clint Daniels. Presenter did not offer support of NAVWAR, and that is problematic. Agrees with speaker re: supporting repeal of Prop 13. Disingenuous to suggest that "fly by crow" is done in San Diego only. Housing belongs within a half-mile of transit. Concerning to pit students' welfare against family households. Again, people say they want housing but oppose proposals. Also craziness to give Sacramento control over local control.

Mary McKenzie. Not being taken over by state because we want to adhere to state laws; not giving up power but being good citizens. The city's current ADU policy is ridiculous. Is there a standard for what is infill development? Not need more information. Granny flats understandable but not any number of units in a back yard. Will not make it affordable.

Lu Rehling. Unfortunate other side could not attend. But not reason for putting issues on hold if not reasonably available. Terrible what happened with process. City Council was misled that this is just following state law. But city has mushroomed to make requirements much more extreme. Although though most "granny flats" not occupied by family members, no one opposed

to one or two ADUs on a property; impact on parking, traffic, infrastructure not that intense. Though not yet happened, possibility of different scale of development and impacts. Setbacks can matter. Density bonus is part of problem. Not addressing affordable housing where needed in sizes needed. Not based on accurate and complete information. Not fearmongering to have concerns.

Bill Smith. Support state law SB9 approach. He supports the pledge from Tony Atkins that "4 means 4," not more than 4 units on a lot. Risk if someone wanted to maximize units could make a mess of a neighborhood. Financial incentive for developers or financial organizations to buy up single family properties and put multiple units on it. This would be rapid change of character. Appears City Council did not understand SB9 and made a mistake. State law is good.

Brer Marsh. This ADU program allows deed-restricted affordable housing through bonus system. Will provide affordable housing. ADUs rent for less than market. Rent affected by parking. San Diego has history of dense housing on lots that does not destroy neighborhoods. ADU preserves fabric of street façade. Feedback is that 10 – 20% of single family lots are realistic for building ADUs. Not going to see 14 units on properties.

Mat Wahlstrom. Inconsistent to say both will help solve problems and will have few impacts. Reasonable proposal to ask city to look again. Concerned about allegations that we cannot make a decision if, after good faith efforts to invite, one side on issue does not show up. Obstructive to expect to prove a negative. Agree with presenter.

Tom Mullaney. Presentation carefully researched and well-illustrated. Excessive provisions in the city's ADU implementation will lead to opposition. Ok to have one interior unit and one exterior unit. The proponents of the current ADU ordinance did not respond to multiple calls and emails. Not complex project like NAVWAR where we need to hear more.

The presenter, Geoff Huetter, responded to board comments. Density bonus that applies to ADUs is specific to ADUs; that is what exceeds state requirement. Proposing another incentive. Based on review of permits, previously only one ADU per property, already more. Need to get ahead not wait. Re: setback: Does not apply to existing structure. His group does not oppose all changes to single-family zoning. Change should be honest and transparent, and people should be able to trust city and see benefits. Bad development could get in the way of good development. Projects, including NAVWAR, proposed without sufficient community process. Question of height depends on target population for city. Not given parameters to do proper planning. San Diego reverted to existing 30' height. New construction often more than one story. Reasonable to put limits.

MOTION. Helen Rowe Allen moved that Uptown Planners ask the Mayor and City Council to bring the City's ordinance to bring it closer to parameters of the state's ADU laws, including revisions that have been proposed by Neighbors for a Better San Diego. Second: Mat Wahlstrom.

Mary McKenzie. Generally support. Brer stated rental ADUs are 80% of average rate; average in San Diego is about \$2400, so 80% is \$1984 per month, which does not qualify as affordable housing. If developments keep blowing off affordable housing, we will have empty units. So San Diego ordinance does not provide for affordable housing. Not issue of state control, just not going wacko.

Brer Marsh. State law intended as a base and specifically allows for cities to go beyond. So it is inaccurate to say that we do not comply with state law.

Roy Dahl. No problem supporting; know enough both sides. Biggest issue lack of parking. Poor planning.

Lu Rehling. We understand following state law but city has gone beyond. No confusion.

Brer Marsh. Problem with how motion is worded.

Mat Wahlstrom. Friendly amendment: Make "in line with state's baseline."

Tom Mullaney. Call vote on motion as is.

In favor: Lu Rehling, Mary McKenzie, Bill Smith, Mat Wahlstrom, Chris Cole, Roy Dahl, Helen Rowe Allen, Mary Brown.

Opposed: Gail Friedt, Brer Marsh.

Not present for this vote: Clint Daniels, Michael Brennan

Motion passed 8-2-0.

Tom Mullaney. Thanks to presenter. Saving next agenda item about getting info from the city.

Mat Wahlstrom. Give to Operations & Outreach Committee. Tom Mullaney: Ok.

Tom Mullaney. Next meeting on Tuesday, November 2; Zoom meeting.

Mary McKenzie. Having surgery so need someone to take charge of minutes for November. Lu Rehling. Will do.

Mat Wahlstrom. City Rules Committee will be considering Hillcrest historic district on Wednesday, 10/27, 2 pm.

### **III. Adjournment.**

Roy Dahl moved to adjourn. Second: Chris Cole. Approved by unanimous vote.

#### **Notes:**

1. Since this was a Special Meeting, there was not be a period for Non-Agenda Public Comment.
2. The Uptown Planners bylaws state that the chair does not vote, except in case of a tie. In the vote tallies above, the chair was not counted.
3. Minutes rough drafted by Secretary Mary McKenzie, developed by Chair Tom Mullaney, and completed by Lu Rehling.