

Neighborhoods Commission (NC) June 10, 2015
informal notes by L. Ames

agenda: <[link](#)>

Public Comment

Ed Rast: (1) SCVWD is working on Master Plan. (2) NC can formally request Council to do the audit of rezoning "gifts", as discussed in NC Budget letter. (3) Envision 2040 update this fall: watch for rezonings.

Rhonda Berry: Our City Forest. Trees need help in drought. OCF is co-sponsoring a "lawn-buster" program. Website: www.OurCityForest.org

Liaison Report

Jaki, staff to CM Don Rocha (D9):

- Mayor's budget passed
- Homelessness: a call for a moratorium on encampment sweeps, & a stop to mobile home conversions. To be discussed at Council June 16th.
- Levitt Pavilion cmte 6/15/15: structure at St. James Park. Q: Is it coordinate w/ Historic Landmarks Cmsn?
- City setting up Marijuana Control, similar to Gaming Control.
- SJ Sharks renewed their lease.
- Three Creeks Ped Bridge approved. (WG Trestle to be demolished; new bridge will have plaque honoring the former trestle.)
- SJ State will take over the Hammer Theater, reuse for 3 years.

Fireworks

Discussion lead by Chief Colleen Mulholland Harrison.

- All unsanctioned fireworks are illegal in SJ, even "Safe & Sane"
- Three sanctioned events: (1) Discovery Park, (2) Lake Almaden in D10, (3) SJ Giants stadium on Alma.
- There were 13 fires last year due to fireworks.
- SJFD will have video trailer on firework safety shown at movie theaters starting June 19th.
- SJPD will have Special Operations on-call for the 4th.
- The 4th is on a Saturday this year – likely to be especially busy.
- SJFD and SJPD asking for public compliance. Throw a BBQ rather than shoot off fireworks.

Cmsn discussion:

- SJPD should be more proactive: make some prominent arrests and publicize them. Illegal fireworks start a few days in advance: arrest, heavy fines; set expectations rather than just saying "overloaded"
- SC Co. has rushed thru new regs that hold landowners responsible for any fireworks set off on their property (see [www.http://wgbackfence.net/NC/County-Firework-PR.pdf](http://wgbackfence.net/NC/County-Firework-PR.pdf)).
- SJ needs to adopt the same. SJ has procedure for Emergency Ordinance: needed because of current drought conditions.
- Not just July 4th, but also preceding days, and Cinco de Mayo, Chinese New Year, ...

- Use past data to predict “hot-spots” for enhanced enforcement.

>> Motion: Chair to craft letter to Council asking for control of illegal fireworks. Passed unanimously. [[Letter](#) written and emailed to Mayor, each Councilmember, Legal & Staff, 6/12/15]

Staff Report

- Ernest presented Annual Summary of NC actions (<[link](#)>) to Council 6/9/15. Council feedback: (1) Appreciated NC work on SJPD Drones, and hopes we’ll help w/ Body Camera policy; (2) request for more communication from Commissions to Council. [NC already has sent several letters to Council (Commission structure, Drones, Budget): this is a request for “Chair’s Report to Council”, and also request that NC guide other Cmsn’s in methods of communicating.]

Work Plan (WP)

What should NC spend its time on this coming year? We need to figure out by Aug. meeting (and we don’t meet in July...); goes to Council for approval in Sept. Some items have already been predetermined:

- Have to revisit the process for Caucus election in Nov.; establish protocols and run caucus for even-numbered districts next year.
- In April and May: review Mayor’s budget proposal and give feedback.

Several ideas were submitted in advance:

- How to improve public involvement in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) process.
- Refine and document the process by which NC develops a work product. (1) How does topic get on NC agenda? (2) What is acceptable input? We need to establish a reqmnt that we are to get info 15 days in advance of mtg so that we can digest it and be prepared to take action – no more of these songs-and-dance on the day of mtg.! (3) Do we have standing cmtes that enable Cmsnrs to specialize in topics? (4) How do we convey our findings? Letters? Presentations to Council?

Too many WP ideas for cmsn to consider and select from now: we need to establish a subcmte to review and prioritize.

Go around the table and get top ideas from each Cmsnr. In no particular order:

- Public Safety (several votes)
- Code Enforcement (many votes)
- Community Engagement
- Policy on illegal removal of trees
- Illegal dumping and blight prevention
- Police staffing
- Development of “Dashboard App” for community input
- Policies on Police Body Cameras (several votes)
- Crowd-sourcing of private surveillance camera data
- Neighborhood Blight prevention
- Vision-Zero – traffic safety
- Graffiti abatement
- Transportation: pavement management

- Document the process of how NC does its work
- Safety of children after school – Community Centers?
- Fireworks & Nghbrhd cleanups
- Homelessness
- Community Outreach and Engagement
- Traffic calming
- Data-driven decision process: don't just respond to the last person speaking or the loudest; don't just accept the claim from presenter or staff that there is a problem: show us the data!
- Invite the City Auditor to attend and provide comment.
- Plus all the comments already submitted via email and distributed at the mtg
- Plus additional ideas: (1) track changes in Envision 2040 update; (2) impact of drought on city's trees? (3) BART & the Alum Rock Station? (4) Homelessness? (5) Permit Parking?

Chair made request that add'l ideas be emailed directly to Chair at LAmes@AOL.com. (Short discussion of Brown Act: one-way communication is okay.)

Working Group to meet in late July to prioritize, categorize, and suggest possible WP options.

Group members (less than a quorum – okay w/ Brown Act):

- Dan Keller– D9
- Nick Labosky– D10
- Gary Cunningham– D1
- Juan Estrada– D5
- Desiree Barragan– D3
- Terry Martin– D9
- Marie Arnold – D2
- Linda Locke– D4
- Larry Ames – D6
- Alternate: Joe Horwedel –D1

Ernest Guzman (Staff) will arrange meeting location.

Public Comment

Ed Rast: supports idea of documenting the procedure. Suggests setting up permanent cmtes to develop expertise in various topics.

Roma Dawson: Concerns that Council's Outreach Policy 6-30 is not being properly followed; asks for us to request a Staff Report on how policy is being implemented.

Next Meeting

No meeting in July.

Next Meeting – Wednesday August 12, 2015

[Item that was neglected to be mentioned: at Aug. mtg, cmsn will need to select the Chair & Vice Chair for the coming year. (I am not termed out and am interested in serving as Chair for another year.)]