

Mayor's Cabinet Meeting Highlights

Wednesday December 17, 2014

Below are highlights from the Dec. 17, 2014 Mayor's Cabinet meeting, a monthly meeting with the mayor and City commission chairs or their representatives. Please note that this meeting is intended to exchange information on commission activities; no official actions are taken.

REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Architectural Commission – Chair Barry Bernstein

There are many new stores and renovations going on at this time, including Bally's on Beverly Drive. A full list of projects will be provided at the next meeting. The commissioner wished everyone a happy holiday season.

Charitable Solicitations Commission –Chair Lillian Raffel

The commission evaluated and approved eight permit requests and nine financial statements. Eight charities are listed on the website as not meeting the City's 50% requirement for proceeds to go to the charities. Six organizations are listed on the website as consistently failing to file a financial report. The commission met with the Rodeo Drive committee to assist them in dealing with solicitors who are aggressively selling CDs and other merchandise on Rodeo Drive; they are using a copy of an expired permit for New Era Global. Anyone approached by these people should ask to see a permit and take a photo of it; staff will investigate. Jim Latta came to the last commission meeting to talk about Community Assistance Grants and coordinating with the Human Relations Commission and the Community Charitable Foundation. A proposed program to award deserving charities has been put on hold while the commission focuses on other projects. Existing penalties for violating the City's code on solicitations are not enough; the commission asked if code enforcement officers would be able to assist with enforcement.

Cultural Heritage Commission – Chair Maralee Beck

The Commission has not held a meeting since the previous cabinet meeting. City staff was honored at a recent holiday gathering.

Design Review Commission – Chair John Wyka

The Design Review Awards will be announced at 5:30 p.m. prior to the Feb. 17 City Council meeting; the awarded projects are two new homes and two renovations. A big increase in applications for residential projects was received prior to Dec. 5, when new

R-1 standards went into effect. Six new cases were introduced at the last meeting. Commissioner Susan Strauss is leaving the commission.

Fine Art Commission – Chair Sandy Pressman

The City Council had several questions concerning the Fine Art Ordinance. To answer those questions, members of the Fine Art Commission attended the Dec. 9, 2014 City Council meeting; clarification of the issues was offered and accepted. The City Council voted unanimously to pass the first reading of the Fine Art Ordinance. Two members of the Fine Art Commission (Lynn Hiller and Sandy Pressman) and two members of the Recreation and Park Commission (Howard Rosoff and Susan Gersh) met with City staff and the fence designer, John Lavezzo, at the Kusama to look at a sample of the proposed fence. It was decided to increase the height of the fence; the commissions are waiting to hear back from the designer. A Woods Davy sculpture from the estate of Carol Weisman was unanimously accepted as a gift to the City, contingent on finding an appropriate location.

Health and Safety Commission – Chair Myra Lurie

Five commissioners now serve on the commission, rather than seven. Areas of focus include brain health, immunizations and vaccinations (including pneumonia and shingles) healthy City lifestyles and active, healthy seniors. The commission is looking for a new name, rather than seniors, to connote how active many baby boomers are. The new Dangerstopper video is about sharing the road safely with drivers, cyclists and pedestrians. New dates for CERT training, both refresher and introductory classes, have been set. Everyone is encouraged to get flu shots.

Human Relations Commission – Commissioner Sonia Berman

The Embrace Civility Award was presented at the last City Council meeting to four organizers of a block party on S. Camden Drive. The commission is getting up to speed on landlord/tenant issues in order to prepare to hear cases involving disputes.

Planning Commission – Chair Howard Fisher

The commission recently spent several hours on a site in Loma Linda, where the owners want to build a 28,000 square foot home. The home as proposed would require 9,000 truck trips; neighbors felt it would be too disruptive. The commission voted not to move forward with the project; a liaison committee was formed to see if a less intrusive plan can be found. Developers want to build on the Mastros parking lot and instead contribute toward the in-lieu parking fund. The commission feels the current in-lieu charges would not cover the cost of providing parking spaces. Many people spoke before the commission on proposed changes to the Historic Preservation ordinance; the changes were approved 4-1. The commission provided a list of priorities to the City

Council. Craig Corman is coming off the commission in February.

Public Works Commission – Chair Ron Shalowitz

The commission continues to develop the 10-year Water Enterprise Plan. They are designing a new utility bill that should be ready by April; new elements will include previous month's consumption and a space for notices. Crown Disposal is being sold to Recology; an ad hoc committee was set up to evaluate the implications of working with a new solid waste company. The commission is evaluating the City's water storage capacity in the event of a major disaster. A possible shallow groundwater site that could increase the City's water supply has been identified. Other projects include replacing street lights with LED lights, and evaluating Public Works Services staffing needs.

Recreation and Parks Commission – Vice Chair Simone Friedman

Simone Friedman will become chair in January. The past year has seen many important accomplishments in the City's parks, including major renovation projects at Roxbury Park, Greystone Mansion and Beverly Gardens Park. Upcoming events include "The Manor" performances at Greystone and winter break camps. There was little damage to the City's parks and trees from the recent storms. A garden of native California plants is being installed at Beverly Gardens Park. Water mainlines are being replaced at La Cienega Park. Planned improvement projects include completing the Electric Fountain project and two new Gateway renovations. The Dec. 10 community meeting about renovating La Cienega Park was very positive; great suggestions came from residents. Many other meetings will be scheduled. The new playground equipment for Roxbury Park will be completed by mid March.

Traffic and Parking Commission – Chair Andy Licht

Lester Friedman will be the new chair next year. A taxi franchise system will be established in the City in April, pending final City Council approval. Two new companies would be serving Beverly Hills: Bell and Checker Cab. The commission discussed what to do about a parking shortage on Olympic Boulevard and is trying to find additional parking for residents.

MAYOR'S REPORT

The City Council held its annual priority setting session, which, for the first time, included input from the commissions. A complete list of the Council priorities will be provided in January. The City Council will continue the discussion on the Santa Monica Boulevard reconstruction project at the Jan. 6 meeting.

###