

Mayor's Cabinet Meeting Highlights

Tuesday February 3, 2014

Below are highlights from the February 3, 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.

MAYOR'S REPORT

The lily pond dedication is being held on Feb. 4. The city is reaching out more to residents with a "hire local" program by increased advertising in the local media when there are job openings. Only 4% of employees are residents.

REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Architectural Commission – Chair James Blakeley

The commission considered two projects on the agenda that are still ongoing, one at the old Jack and Jill location. Two projects were sent back for restudy including remodel of the Rite Aid building because the design did not meet the commission's aesthetic standards. The commissioner recently walked the city and found 128 sign violations (signs that do not meet code and were not approved either by staff or the commission) in the City. This is partly because enforcement is not a priority and because the penalties are too low to be an incentive for the owners to follow the City ordinance. The mayor asked for a revised penalty structure to increase the incentive both to enforce the ordinance and for the store owners to follow them.

Charitable Solicitations Commission – Chair Alissa Roston

The commission is considering creating an annual award to be given to a charity that does a good job of raising funds for their cause in order to inspire other charities to do the same. (The city's policy is that at least 50% of the receipts from an event go to the charity.) The commissioner is a member of the Arts of Palm Centennial Committee and reported that installation of several works of public art will take place in the next few weeks. The artwork, suggesting palm trees, will be by prominent artists including Brad Howe, Michael McMillen, Mike Stilkey, Peter Shire, Peter Alexander, Ryan Schmidt and others.

Cultural Heritage Commission – Commissioner Vice Chair Meralee Beck

The commissioner asked for guidance on how to pass information along to the City Council about some of their activities. The commission started a survey of City historic buildings, but the contract with surveyors has run out. So much more of the city's building stock is now eligible for land marking than when previous surveys were done, including Trousdale. The commission is reaching out to real estate agents and asking for their help with voluntary compliance with the historic preservation ordinance. At the Centennial Concert, a film clip was played that showed all the buildings and businesses that are no longer in existence, which resonated with the audience and emphasized that the community is supportive of historic preservation. Some homeowners have come to the commission wanting their homes to be landmarked. The Union 76 gas station on Santa Monica Blvd has been listed in a new book on LA architecture.

Design Review Commission

No commissioner attended the meeting.

Fine Art Commission – Chair Fiona Chalom

A special meeting of the Fine Art Commission was held to discuss protection of the Kusama, update on the Bove project and commission role definition as defined by the liaisons. The commission is still waiting to get a final version of the Fine Art Ordinance, which shall clearly outline the process for acquisitions and de-accessioning art, and the process and criteria by which property owned art can be acquired. R&P Commissioner Robbie Anderson gave a presentation about the protection of the Kusama piece. There will be a post-and-cord barrier rather than an inverted barrier as previously discussed. The Recreation and Parks Commission suggested that the color of the post-and-cord system should harmonize with surroundings. Risk management has asked that the post-and-cord system be between 36 and 40 inches high. The commission prefers the lower height and is looking into the number and the thickness of cords that would make it effective but not visually intrusive. The commissioner chair has withdrawn her support for a non-representational piece by Carol Bove, because she felt that the artist wasn't of the stature of the other artists on display in Beverly Garden Park and aesthetically the piece would not be accepted by the community. Her suggestion was for the FAC to save and purchase a piece that is more in keeping with aesthetic of a more representational piece and an artist with the stature of the other artists. The new Fine Art Commission chair next month is Sandy Pressman.

Health and Safety Commission – Chair Gail Millan

The commissioner passed out disposable thermometers and bottles of hand sanitizers. Flu activity is high. The H1N1 flu is infecting and killing young, healthy people in addition to the more vulnerable population. It is still a good idea to get flu shots. The Dangerstoppers video on influenza is available on the website. The commission is finishing up their recommendations about e-cigarettes and tobacco sales, which will be presented at the Feb. 18 City Council meeting.

Human Relations Commission – Commissioner Rochelle Ginsberg

Because of attrition due to a resignation and others terming out, leaving the commission with three members, as well as the cancellation of last month's meeting because of lack of a quorum, it has become difficult to sustain and further some of the commission's work according to the intended schedule. With the reduced numbers, the commission's constitution prohibits the formation of ad hoc committees because that would violate the Brown Act. Nevertheless, the commission has continued its work on the "Civil City-Civil Streets" program that will roll out on March 4, only two weeks later than the planned date. Additionally, the Human Relations Commission and the City Library are collaborating on a "One City, One Book" initiative to create a shared community experience. Finally, the commission is waiting for direction from the City Council regarding the potential for broadening the commission's purview to include issues of tenants' rights. The commission received an orientation from the Housing Rights Center's Director of Outreach and Public Education at its January meeting.

Planning Commission – Chair Brian Rosenstein

The commission workload has been light. They approved an art gallery for a residence in Trousdale. The commission is finalizing recommendations for R1 standards and will present these to the City Council in March or April. The recommendations will take into consideration bulk and mass of the home, but not a reduction in square footage. The commission prefers to use incentives rather than ordinances to reach their goals. They are also looking at different way to regulate the required number of parking spaces, most likely using square footage, rather than the number of bedrooms. A public hearing on the 700 Linden accessory structure will be held at the Feb. 4 City Council meeting.

Public Works Commission – Vice Chair Ron Shalowitz

The commission is starting to review staff recommendations for water rate increases. Public works will be considering water conservation education materials. A subcommittee of the two newest commissioners met with MWD regarding community outreach programs. A new commissioner appointee will be considered by the Council at the Feb. 4 meeting. The commissioners just visited a water treatment plant in Santat Clarita.

Recreation and Parks Commission – Chair Howard Rosoff

A second Father/Daughter Sweetheart dance was added in March and both events are sold out. The active adults/seniors will have a Valentine's Day dance on Feb. 16 La Cienega Community Center. Registration is underway for the Adult "7 on 7" Soccer League. The swim portion of the Swim Gym at Beverly Hills High School remains closed with repairs anticipated in the next couple of weeks. Woofstock 90210 - The annual "Pet Extravaganza" - relocates to La Cienega Park due to the renovation of Roxbury Park and will be held Sunday, March 2. The next Music in the Mansion will be held Sunday, Feb. 16. The concert will feature classical sounds of "Smoke and Mirrors". The Centennial Tree, a Morton Bay Fig, named Paloma, was planted and dedicated in Beverly Gardens Park with over 80 people attending. The Roxbury Park Community Center is nearing completion with opening set for the spring. Now that the lily pond is complete, the next Beverly Gardens Park renovation project will be the Electric Fountain.

Traffic and Parking Commission – Chair Andy Licht

The Santa Monica Blvd. Reconstruction committee has recommended that the City widen the entire boulevard to 66 feet throughout the route, which would create space for bicycle lanes. Widening the street to a uniform width also would allow the work to be completed in fewer phases and shorten the construction time. In addition they recommended adding landscaped medians. Public safety officers have assured the group that they never use the center area for emergency access and that the medians would not be a safety concern. Work on construction-impact mitigation will begin after the Council makes their final decision about the design. Construction is set to begin in the spring of 2015

The next Mayor's Cabinet meeting will be held Mar. 3, 2014 at 6:30 p.m. in City Hall Room 280B.