



Best Practices For Monitoring Potential Development

Stellar Example –

- The Land Use & Planning Committee of the Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council (SONC) has *established a highly efficient, respectable, and credible system for working with potential developers in the area.* By working with the NC Board Members, a stance against a proposed development is almost always successful in blocking any community unfriendly proposal.

As a result, this committee is the “busiest committee of the NC.” (Rick) The presentations presented by the developers are usually very professional and of high quality. Only one development (that didn’t request any variances) was approved by the zoning administrator and did not have the support of the committee. With the rise of property value in Los Angeles, this committee has worked with the community to monitor the future of their neighborhood in a time of rapid change. Stakeholders of SONC finally have a role in monitoring all potential development in their community, a position not readily available in many communities.

Challenge – not all communities are lucky enough to consist of stakeholders from a variety of professional backgrounds. Therefore, remember to be representative of all sectors of the community.

Benefit – by being a fair and reasonable judge to all proposals, developers will actually be willing to work with your community to modify the project to the liking of both parties!

Lesson – this committee can be frequently be lost in the details of the proposal, so be careful not to keep the rest of the board uninformed about the gist of the project!

Word of advice - “the composition of the committee has to be valid.” (Jill)

Furthermore, the committee needs to be “fair & balanced, in order to be reliable” As a result, “trust & credibility” will be established with the Planning Department & Council office. (Rick)

Remember to check in with your DONE Project Coordinator for regulation updates, new info, and other resources!

Special thanks & acknowledgement to all those interviewed:

Jill Barad, Chair of SONC

Rich Mayer, Chair of Land Use & Planning Committee, SONC

Interpretation of interviews & creation of ‘best practices’ completed by DONE intern: Helen Leung



Best Practices for Monitoring Potential Development:

- ❖ **Have a balanced Land Use and/or Planning committee**
 - With representatives from all segments of the community
 - Including residents, business owners
 - Without overrepresentation, especial from homeowner's associations or big property owners with lots of land
- ❖ **Recruit those with professional backgrounds**
 - Especially in urban planning, landscaping, architecture...
- ❖ **Keep in touch with the Planning Department**
 - In order to be updated on any potential developments
- ❖ **Invite all potential developers**
 - To come before the Land Use & Planning Committee
 - To meet with committee members before the public hearing
 - But remember to be open-minded and respectful
- ❖ **Establish guidelines**
 - For all developer presentations, including, but not limited to
 - Brief description: type, size of lot & building, open space, density, parking...
 - All allowable zoning & any requested variances, exceptions, and discretionary action
 - Graphic illustrations (including adjacent property) & architectural plans
 - Enough copies for all committee members
- ❖ **Consider proposal thoroughly**
 - Potential traffic problems, fire hazards, sunlight reduction...
 - Especially how it fits into the community at large
- ❖ **Encourage public input**
 - Notify property owners w/I 1,000 ft of development (only 500 ft. is required by law)
 - Especially adjacent property owners of the proposed development
- ❖ **Permit "Working Groups"**
 - W/I the committee that works with the developers to make changes to the proposal to would lead to a more favorable stance by the com
- ❖ **Create a "Design Advisory" group**
 - Within the committee to look at aesthetics
 - "provides an opportunity for more depth" (Rick)
- ❖ **Make a site visit**
 - To the proposed development
 - Especially all committee members
- ❖ **Write letters**
 - To the zoning administrator, hearing officer, planning department, local newspapers, and Council office if proposal is not supported by the NC
- ❖ **Keep NC Board Members updated**
 - Throughout the month, especially where there are no meetings
 - Stakeholders may frequently inquire about potential development proposal
 - The committee's stance will eventually be presented to the board