Miriam Lens

From: Greg Jones [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, February 22, 2011 4:02 PM
To: Miriam Lens; David Rizk; Richard Patenaude
Cc: Frank Goulart; Valerie Snart; Barbara Jervis; Larry Arend; Anna May
Subject: Tonight's Work Session Item--Historic Preservation

Dear Mayor and Council:

We understand the Council will be considering possible updates to the Historic Preservation Ordinance during your work session this evening. I would normally apologize for providing my comments at this late hour in relation to your meeting. However, in this case my lateness is due to having only received word late last night (from a Council member) that this was even on your agenda for this evening. Unfortunately, due to the lateness of our being informed, I will be unable to attend tonight's meeting and it's unlikely we will have much representation available.

Regarding appropriate notice to the community, I appreciate the many efforts the City is making in connecting with neighborhoods, but failure to notify neighborhoods of items that specifically impact them in a timely manner needs your attention. This is the second case in nearly as many weeks that our residents have not been notified of issues of interest to our neighborhood. The recent consideration of the Mission Corridor Specific Plan was not communicated to our neighborhood (and I am guessing other neighborhoods similarly impacted) except with one postcard to our past neighborhood president. While we endeavored to notify the neighborhood, it seems far more efficient and service oriented that the City notify constituents most effected. Residents of the area received no such notification. While the letter of the law may require only a '300 foot' notification, I know our City wants to do better than that. Reaching out to neighborhoods through the Neighborhood Partnership Program is laudable, but please don't neglect to inform neighborhoods of more impending policies that could impact their quality of life for years to come.

Specifically on tonight's item:

We appreciate staff's suggestion that they proceed with our neighborhood in consideration of the establishment of an historic district designation. We have much to learn as we consider our involvement with this initiative. As is typical in this kind of effort, the devil is in the details and at this point, we do not know enough of the details. Here are some of the details that we will have to hear about before we will be able to get on board as a neighborhood.

1. We will be interested in the development of a list of significant properties slated to start March 2011 and first review June 2011.

2. We will be interested in what Staff envisions in developing materials for Mills Act participation and other programs beginning in April 2011 with anticipated enactment by January 2012.

3. We will be interested in hearing what staff learned at the California Preservation Foundation's workshop entitled "Historic District Designations" on January 27, 2011 and how the lessons will be applied to the Prospect Hill Historic District.

4. What process does staff envision for gaining "approval" of such a designation from the property owners in the Prospect Hill Neighborhood?

5. Would participation under the ordinance remain voluntary within a district so designated? (Placing

restrictions over personal property rights will likely make acceptance much more difficult.)

We would appreciate staff's responses to these questions in writing once they have responded to you at the meeting.

As always, we welcome further discussion and opportunities for our residents to learn more about what is being envisioned. The PHNA Board will be happy to coordinate pulling the neighborhood together for informational meetings to better understand what is being considered.

Regards,

Greg Jones, President
Prospect Hill Neighborhood Association (PHNA)