

BANKERS HILL COMMUNITY GROUP MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES

Monday, March 15, 2021
Via Zoom videoconference

BHCG Acting Chair Nancy Moors called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. The following Steering Committee members were present virtually: Moors, former Chair Amie Hayes, Treasurer Jeanne Rawlings, Secretary John Lamb, Ann Garwood, Qamar Bradford, John Percy, Becky Veen, Char Lou Benedict, Bruce Dammann and Peter Raymond. Approximately 30 people participated in the virtual meeting.

Non-Agenda Public Comments

Raymond, member of the Bankers Hill Neighborhood Parking Committee, the local arm of the Uptown Community Parking District, brought attendees up to speed on construction efforts along 4th and 5th avenues. He said he wants to work on getting promotional banners for neighborhood thoroughfares.

Treasurer's Report

Rawlings reported that as of Feb. 28, there was \$3,836.21 in the bank. In hopes of generating input on how to spend those funds, Moors said she has signed up with Constant Contact, which should be more reliable than MailChimp with minimal investment to gain that input.

Government Representatives

Kohta Zaiser, representing Mayor Todd Gloria, provided a COVID-19 vaccination update and information regarding small-business relief funds, rental assistance and school-reopening plans.

Jake Estrada, representative for state Assemblyman Chris Ward, provided information about unemployment-benefit assistance.

Featured Business

Qamar Bradford, proprietor of the Broker's Building Art Gallery at 1827 Fifth Avenue, provided an update on the collective's artistic endeavors and efforts to survive during the pandemic. Bradford said the gallery has seating for as many as 50, but that number has been reduced for safety precautions during the pandemic.

Rawlings said it was great to have the gallery in Bankers Hill, adding maybe it signals an opportunity for BHCG to focus some of its attention to needs and developments south of Laurel. Percy noted that a new coffee shop/florist has opened at Elm between 3rd and 4th avenues in the area.

Floit Properties Presentation

Dan Floit, owner of Floit Properties, shared preliminary sketches and general plans for a proposed mixed-use residential tower he wants to build on the northern Bankers Hill block bounded by 5th and 6th avenues and Upas and Thorn streets. He said the structure as planned would rise 21 stories with 238 units and 400 parking spaces, including 17 surface spaces. Floit said 100 of the underground parking spaces would be dedicated to electric vehicles.

He said an older building at 6th and Upas will be preserved and converted into a "high-quality" restaurant. Other retail — possibly a coffee shop — is also planned. The driveway entrance would be situated on Upas, he added. Apartments would range in size from 650 to 2,300 square feet. Floit said he's designing a unit for himself on the top floor. He described the demographic he's aiming for as "aging Boomers."

Floit said Uptown Planners supports his plan, adding he believes he can build the tall tower “by right.” He said he didn’t recall if affordable units would be provided in the building or elsewhere in other buildings he owns in the Uptown planning district. He said hopes to break ground in April of 2022 and complete construction in two years.

A concern was raised about the entrance at Upas. It was also suggested that perhaps Floit consider including a high-end grocery store in the development. Floit said he wants the “best building possible,” but was non-committal beyond that.

Hayes called it “a great project” and thanked Floit for preserving historical resources on the property. Floit said he also plans to renovate the “sad-looking” apartment building at Thorn and 5th prior to building the high-rise. The name of the project, he added, is Park Summit. The architect is Joseph Wong. Asked why he was choosing to build condos but rent them out as apartments initially, Floit said, “I don’t want to get sued.”

Committee of One Hundred Presentation

Roger Showley, president of the Committee of One Hundred, gave attendees a virtual tour of developments in Balboa Park. The non-profit group has worked to preserve the park’s architecture, gardens and public spaces since 1967. Showley talked about the tile-mural project at the Automotive Museum and other ongoing improvements in the South Palisades area.

Meeting adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by John Lamb, Secretary.