

**BANKERS HILL COMMUNITY GROUP
MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES**

Monday, March 18, 2024
At BH Clubhouse

Michael Meacham began the meeting at 6:32 pm, welcoming the approximately 89 attendees from Bankers Hill and nearby Uptown and San Diego neighborhoods. The evening's agenda and format was explained.

Featured Business - Dr. Ashley Lynch Naturopathic Medicine 2333 First Ave, San Diego. Dr. Lynch introduced herself sharing her background, a practice overview including health concerns treated (allergies, cardiovascular, hormone imbalances among others) and treatment modalities used (prescription medicine, physical medicine, biofeedback, nutrition among others). She offered an introductory discount for new clients.

Announcements

- Helena Aguirre announced the upcoming Museum School Spring Block Party taking place on April 13th from 11:30 am to 2:30 pm at 211 Maple Street will raise funds for the parent organization to be used for sewing, art, music and dance activities for students. Neighbors were informed that Maple Street will be closed to traffic between 2nd and 3rd Avenues from approximately 8am to 5:30pm.
- Jeanne Rawlings announced that BHCG recruitment for PRIDE litter clean up volunteers will begin next month. She introduced Mark Maddox, Senior Director of Programs for PRIDE who shared this year's festival theme "Making History Now" and provided an overview of upcoming events and timing culminating in the PRIDE Festival July 20 and 21. Mark noted that BHCG is one of 50 valued partners that makes the festival and surrounding events possible.

Feature Event – Panel discussion on the future of our local community planning group. Michael Meacham introduced Zach Thompson of Vibrant Uptown and Patty Ducey-Brooks of Uptown Planners. Each provided an overview of their respective organization's roles and plans to represent the 6 Uptown Neighborhoods in advising the City Planning Department on the community plan, development and land use matters. The City Council will decide this month on which group will represent Uptown going forward. If selected, Vibrant Uptown plans to hold an election for representatives and the current elected Uptown Planners will be welcome to run for a seat on the new board. Presentation from Uptown Planners is attached; Vibrant Uptown did not provide theirs.

By written survey meeting attendees their views of priorities for Uptown development by force ranking among 19 priorities including affordability, natural space, parking, sidewalk infrastructure, building height, senior services, child care services and several others. The top vote getters are pending.

Following the presentations and more than an hour of intensive audience questions, attendees were offered the opportunity to express their personal preference for one of the two groups by written ballot. Of the 71 written ballots submitted, 51 were in favor of Uptown Planners, 20 were in favor of Vibrant Uptown. The community preferences will

be shared with Mayor Gloria, Councilman Whitburn, the Planning Department and the Housing and Land Use Committee.

Michael thanked all participants and closed the meeting with a reminder to attend the April Pick and Stroll and Mingle events. Meeting ended at 7:50 pm.

UPTOWN PLANNERS STATEMENTS AT BHCG MARCH 18, 2024 MEETING delivered by Patty Ducey-Brooks:

Good evening.

Now that you know a little about me, I want to remind you of my role with the Uptown Planners board.

For that purpose, here's a documented description of Uptown Planners:

Uptown Planners serves in an advisory role to the City of San Diego on topics related to land-use, development, and discretionary projects in the six neighborhoods of Uptown. We provide a forum for public discussion of planning issues in Uptown. Our board and committee meetings are open to the public at large. The meeting agenda is based on input from residents, business owners, project applicants, and City staff who seek advice from the board as part of the City's community planning process.

We hold elections annually and this past month added 10 new people to the board. Those are people who you elected. This is a diverse group of individuals from throughout the Uptown community who are renters, homeowners, and business owners who want to be your voice, the voice of Uptown.

We believe in equity, diversity, and inclusiveness...which is represented by the makeup of our board.

Before I continue, I'd like to ask you several questions.

How many of you are here because you care about your community?

How many of you are here because you believe in transparency in government?

How many of you believe that your voices matter and should be heard by your elected officials?

Well, that's why I am here. I am here to represent your voices, your community concerns, your interests.

As your elected representative, I feel an obligation to know what you expect of us, and to take a serious position on issues that are brought before us.

All of us on the board have made it known that we support Urban development.

However, we feel it's extremely important to be respectful of the existing neighborhoods and that we take a serious look at the projects and changes that are proposed by the city and/or developers.

We feel strongly that we follow due diligence. Listen to you, and act responsibly...do the research...and make sure that the proper steps have been taken to ensure quality results.

One of the important issues is Infrastructure. When we are talking about adding density, more development, we must consider its impact.

- Water
- Utilities
- Sewer systems
- Services to support growth and development
- Roadways
- Parking
- Parks and open spaces
- Environmental

We also make it our obligation to consider the needs of all residents of Uptown...this is not a cookie cutter approach:

- Financial status (upper, middle, and lower income)
- Age
- Diversity
- Single, couples, families
- Lifestyles
- Workstyles

With urban development it's especially important that we address the amenities available to residents to function and have a quality life:

- Schools
- Parks and recreational facilities
- Grocery stores and other retail outlets
- Hospitals and medical facilities
- As well as other mandatory services

We also consider the existing conditions to act responsibly and sustainably, such as:

- Promoting adaptive reuse of existing buildings versus costly demolition and new construction.
- Resisting the increase in silent "ministerial" approvals without community planning group input

As you can appreciate, there is a lot to consider.

As elected members of the Uptown Planners board our job is to think intelligently and question the information that is presented to us on a regular basis.

We must do the work, which requires lots of time, effort and resources.

We also ask the tough questions, "Does it make sense?" "Is this fiscally sound?" "Does this really serve the public at large?" "Is there a better way to do this?"

I will give you an example:

At a recent Uptown Planners board meeting, representatives from the city presented for our approval a roundabout at 6th and Juniper, right next to Balboa Park.

This roundabout would combine walkers, people on bicycles and vehicles.

The cost for the roundabout is \$2 million today. It's likely to be more.

One of the most alarming components of the roundabout is that bicyclists would be encouraged to go up on to the sidewalk to effectively get around this structure.

A major concern voiced by the Uptown Planner board is that the roundabout will lead to more accidents, injuries and lawsuits...more tax dollars out the door.

We questioned, does this make sense? Are there other viable options?

The Uptown board unanimously rejected the roundabout because it was agreed to by city council without full community input.

This is a true example of acting responsibly and accountably as Uptown Planners' board members.

On the subject of development and plans for Uptown, the city is introducing Plan Hillcrest, which ultimately impacts all neighborhoods in Uptown with development, mobility and population growth.

This includes various forms of Upzoning in the Uptown community.

The challenge that Uptown Planners continues to address is making sure that the information that is being presented to us is accurate and reliable.

Recent information provided by the State Auditor shows that the housing crisis that was portrayed by officials in Sacramento is flawed and inaccurate.

In San Diego, as reported by KGTV/Channel 10 and the UT this past week, upwards of 33,000 residents left the area in 2023 and upwards of 15,000 in 2022. Those who are leaving say it's because of the cost of living and their inability to purchase homes. Fact is, most people don't want to be renters and continue to be subjected rent increases.

As an additional point of reference on this subject, a recent YIMBY publication offered this statement.

In a 2020 paper on this subject, it was found that new construction increased rents by 6.7 percent in nearby lower-priced housing.

Meanwhile, the fabled “filtering” effect can take years or even decades, and it’s unclear that it reaches the people in greatest need.

According to Kevin Erdmann, a senior affiliated scholar and author of *Building from the Ground Up*, and a firm believer in the power of zoning liberally...

The one major study of land-use reforms across the United States shows that, during the three to nine years after a city enacts upzoning and other density-increasing measures, new housing supply increased by less than 1 percent. That increase occurs primarily at the high end of the market, and there’s little evidence that new supply frees up additional low-cost units or makes them cheaper.

Uptown Planners board members use every opportunity to understand the reality of our population growth, and the fact that little is being done at the current time to assess the impact of all of the units currently coming on the market.

We continue to ask the city for this data so that we can proceed wisely and respectfully to the needs of Uptown.

It’s dangerous and callous to make decisions on behalf of development when you don’t have the facts.

Wouldn’t you agree?

Since we have reached out to the community and have heard your comments, Here’s what you’ve expressed:

- Public Spaces, not just a small clump of land: provide public amenities with neighborhood parks, recreational facilities geared to children and adults (playgrounds, tennis/pickleball/gyms/senior centers), and dog parks
- Street safety to include sidewalks, roadways, bike zones, crosswalks that make sense in the neighborhoods involved. Not a cookie cutter approach.

- Building development with respectable emphasis on the neighborhood character, which includes concern for height, density, off-street parking, and design. Let's build to impress!
- Affordability to include very low, low, and medium mixed income. With that thought, I want to emphasize that affordable housing has thus far not been accomplished in the Uptown area.
- Infrastructure, in place at the time of development to sustain the community neighborhood, to include schools, safety (emergency medical, police, fire), transportation (public, bike, auto, pedestrian), public spaces
- Most importantly, community engagement by the City and its departments to show cooperation and collaboration...working together to do what is best for the residents of Uptown.

As you can tell, the Uptown Planners board is working on your behalf to make sure that whatever we communicate and decide is truly accountable and accurate...and inclusive.

To serve you better, here's what we've recently initiated:

- Maintaining longer terms of office, so that businesses and residents can get to know their reps & reps can get to know their needs, as well as how the system works.
- Electing members only at-large and only to full terms of office, to ensure sufficient turnover & encourage voter turnout
- Adding an appointed seat for a (non-voting) youth representative.
- Streamlining how we run our meetings by adopting simplified rules of order.
- Keeping standing committees, including design review, historic resources, and public facilities.

- Increasing community outreach, rather than designating additional seats

If it's not obvious, we've spent a lot of time and attention on making sure we're doing what's best for the Uptown community. That's because we are here to represent you.

I thank you.