



MINUTES

**Ad-Hoc Committee on Environmental Issues for the BABCNC
Wednesday August 29, 2018 10:00 a.m.
Franklin Canyon Park, Rosenfeld Auditorium
2600 Franklin Canyon Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90210**

1. **Call to Order & Roll Call of Ad-Hoc Committee** – Members: [Robin Greenberg, Mindy Mann, Jamie Hall, Robert Schlesinger, Stephanie Savage, Cathy Wayne & Nickie Miner; Patricia Bell Hearst, plus Ellen Evans & Maureen Smith who joined this committee today.]
7 Present: Mindy, Robin, Stephanie, Cathy, Ellen, Maureen S., and Jamie arrived at 10:36 am)
3 Absent: Robert S., Patricia & Nickie; (Maureen left at 11:15 am; Stephanie left at 11:36 am)
2. **Approval of August 29, 2018 Agenda Moved** by Cathy; **seconded** Stephanie; **6/0/0 approved**
3. **Public Comments on non-agendized items:** None.
4. **Discussion & Possible Action on Environmental Issues to be Raised & Followed at Board meetings:**
 - Ellen brought up issue of CEQA / and how Categorical Exemptions continue to be problem. When undeveloped land is not found to contain "protected species" it is then not valued as habitat at all in the Planning Department's environmental evaluation process, which then allows the rampant destruction of hillside habitat. Our Planning Dept. does not have a biologist on staff.
 - The BABCNC sent a letter to CPC based on a motion approved at meeting (retreat date) on August 5th.
 - Jamie brought up primary argument that the entire SM Mountain zone is an environmental resource that has irreplaceable value. You can't deem a project exempt when it's an environmental critical concern. We've been doing MNDs in the hills. They started transitioning from MNDs to CEs. There needs to be greater clarity as to when a project in the hills is going to get an MND vs. a CE.
 - Jamie would like to authorize a new letter.
 - Regarding enforcement for trees, for Protected Tree Amendments, we need to say: These are the changes to the ordinance that we want: There's no protections for significant non-protected trees, such as are within City of Beverly Hills. Jamie noted that the following things can be done:
 - 1) Pre-application consultation requirement. The first step: Pay a \$500 fee, fill out the pre-application consultation form which will have full cost recovery;
 - 2) Budget to hire two environmental planners to be embedded within the Urban Forestry Division to help architects to modify project to avoid removal of trees.
 - Jamie recommended that we have a meeting with Nick and have a subcommittee that attends that meeting to prepare a list of proposed amendments. Jamie will set up meeting with Nick.
 - Also talk about "scenic highways" – set up guidelines, as interim guidelines are not being followed; need to push our councilmembers from CD4 & CD5 that the city needs to provide funding to adopt the guidelines and to confer with experts. Find out who is the right person to speak to.
 - **Ad-hoc Committee volunteers for this: Jamie, Ellen, Stephanie & Mindy**
 - Mindy thinks that tree contractors should have a license. Jamie noted that we need to do a massive outreach education program, telling people that during March or April, the black walnut can't be cut down, etc. Robin noted that we get notices from the LAFD every May to cut brush 200'.

Motion: Recommend that the LAFD brush clearance notice be amended to include language about protected trees and requirement to obtain a tree-removal permit. **Moved** by Jamie; **seconded** by Stephanie; **6/0/0; approved.**

- Cathy Wayne noted that the “Resilience Plan” is a worldwide plan, and one of the major issues is to plant and keep trees to avoid heat islands.

- Ellen would like to see an environmental report comparing LA with other cities in the country and world about rules and procedures relative to environmental impacts. Jamie recommends this being done by a grad student; talk to Travis.

- Cathy Wayne noted movement to remove Planning and CEQA to rezone vast areas SB-828; need to have meeting with Senator Ben Allen.

- Cathy Wayne related that we are the only city with a wildlife reserve in our core. Would like a marketing/publicity campaign around that, press, names of people to support us, to get message out. She noted that there are a number of national groups buying up open space, specifically those buying up massive amounts of land in the prairies, for a Prairie’s Wildlife area; and a number of others are doing the same. She would like to see if we can join up with them; get our mission out there as well, and learn how to be successful.

- Jamie noted that a lot of groups will say they’ll support us but won’t do it themselves.

- Mindy noted that in response to the proposed hotel project in Benedict Canyon, they have a campaign for “No Hotel in Benedict Canyon” which Mark has done an incredible job on, with 1,500 people signed on.

- Cathy Wayne noted that we could potentially act on our being designated a scenic highway.

- Jamie recommended having an **open space ad-hoc committee**; as to legislation, the Wildlife Corridor is lingering; we need to **focus on open space element update of the General Plan**, which has not been updated since 1972. They are looking at having a wild lands component; they are supposed to map areas that are undeveloped open space areas. It’s not as comprehensive as the MRCA’s planning and linkage map; we need to familiarize ourselves with the open space element; take a meeting; draft a meeting with suggested revisions to current draft. As our community plans are being updated, e.g., Hollywood Community Plan, this is our time to speak up as to the most significant and most important areas, do outreach events about open space elements of the General Plan and an update on the Hollywood plan.

- Volunteers to work on Protective Tree Ordinance Amendments: Jamie, Mindy, Stephanie, Ellen.

- Stephanie mentioned issue of older houses being demolished without regard for asbestos, etc., adversely affecting air quality.

- Jamie noted need to be aware of the existence of the **Eastern Santa Monica Mountains Habitat Block map**, which the Conservancy gave to the city planners.

Link of pdf from January 2017 (may be updated since): http://smmc.ca.gov/pdf/attachment4564_Map.pdf
The map uses open space areas with numbers so that when there’s a project within that zone, this is supposed to trigger a thought in the mind of Planners that this is in a habitat linkage zone;. The City of Los Angeles is not using the map; by-right projects give no thought to this. It covers area from 405-101.

- How to use the map? How to get letters to use the map? Jamie: The city has a software program with clearances. If we added a new field, and ask is it mapped in this area: Yes or No? If it is mapped, it triggers some review. A stop sign comes up when it is officially mapped in this area.

- Mindy noted that Building and Safety has a long list with tree issue at the bottom of the list. Jamie noted that this is a software issue, easily done. As to the **Permit Application Check List**, Stephanie noted it all

depends on how you disclose that information. Jamie: Map it. When it's populated, it's predetermined that you're in that area. Should change it so you cannot go to the next item before dealing with tree removal and habitat linkage block issue. Stephanie noted that it's arranged arbitrarily; "abutting or on."

Motion: Adding clearance summary sheet clearance for habitat linkage block for properties that are abutting or on the habitat linkage block; and prioritizing tree removal clearance on the same sheet **moved** by Jamie; **seconded** by Ellen **7/0/0**; **approved**.

- As to ridgelines, (e.g., project on Blue Heights) recommend having a moratorium on development on ridgelines. Moratorium to last a maximum of two years to preserve the status quo until an ordinance is adopted. City has to make certain findings under state law. Come up with a list of examples; e.g., developments in the ridgeline, and we are concerned that we want the status quo preserved until the ordinance is finalized.

Motion: Recommend that a moratorium be adopted for development along ridgelines **moved** by Jamie; **seconded** by Stephanie; **7/0/0**; **approved**.

- "Buy a Piece of LA" is a reform program with regard to hillsides. The Conservancy has a "Right of First Refusal" CM Ryu's office has required recently, that if you sell your property to the next door neighbor (in this program), you have to grant a conservation easement over the property. The adjacent owner can use the land in a way that is sound.

Motion: We recommend that the city require that a Conservation Easement or Deed Restriction be placed on vacant hillside properties that are sold through the "Buy a Piece of LA" program. **Moved** by Jamie; **seconded** by Mindy; **7/0/0**; **Approved**.

5. **Good of the Order:** None.

6. **Adjournment:** Cathy moved; Robin seconded and the meeting adjourned at 11:51 am.

Next Committee Meeting Date: Monday 09/24 from 9:30 a.m.

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