



Bel Air-Beverly Crest Neighborhood Council
Planning & Land Use Committee Meeting
Tuesday September 12, 2023 7:00 P.M.

Minutes

Name	P	A	Name	P	A
Robert Schlesinger, Chair	X		Stephanie Savage		X
Robin Greenberg	X		Nickie Miner	X	
Don Loze (<i>Virtually Present</i>)	X		Jamie Hall	X	
Shawn Bayliss		X	Jason Spradlin	X	
André Stojka (<i>excused</i>)		X	Ellen Evans	X	
Steven Weinberg	X		Patricia Templeton	X	
Maureen Levinson	X		Leslie Weisberg		X
Stella Grey	X		Travis Longcore <i>ex officio</i>	X	

Vice Chair Jamie Hall called the meeting to order at 7:12 PM. Secretary Miner called the roll with quorum met. Board member Donald Loze was present online. Vice Chair Hall welcomed audience members noting that we were live streaming and had several people participating remotely. He welcomed those in the audience to attend meetings in the future on Zoom.

1. **Motion** to approve the September 12, 2023 Agenda was **approved** as **moved** by Evans and Spradlin.
2. **Motion** to approve the July 11, 2023 Minutes (Attachment A) were **approved** by 11 yeses, 0 noes and 2 abstentions from Templeton and Grey, as **moved** by Longcore and Evans.

3. **General Public Comment:**

Fred Lariano commented remotely regarding his opinion that the rules on fence heights in residential R1 lots should be revised to fit what people are actually doing with their properties. He noted that a lot of properties in the city exceed current limits, e.g., in Bel-Air Holmby Hills he sees 40’ hedges on property lines and 8’ tall fences. He noted that many of these properties do *not* have variances. Discussing this with CD5, he was asked to bring this up to Neighborhood Councils.

Robin Greenberg shared that a dear community member, Barbara Dohrman from the Skycrest area, has passed away. Robin expressed her appreciation for Barbara, whom she noted had contributed to the community over many years and will be greatly missed.

4. **Chair Report** – Robert Schlesinger related that the proposed hotel for Benedict Canyon was reviewed by Planning Director, Vince Bertoni, and that he has changed his prior position. Chair Schlesinger described gratitude by members of the community in attendance at City Hall when Councilmember Traci Park (CD11) changed her vote.

Projects & Items Scheduled for Presentation, Discussion & Possible Action:

5. **1261 N Tower Grove Dr. ZA-2022-9453-ZAD-ZAA ENV-2022-9454-EAF**

Project Description: Remodel of existing 2-story sfd into a 1-story, 6,755 sq ft sfd incl additions to the existing sfd footprint; new 2330 sq ft alq; and haul route request in the RE20-1-H-HCR Zone.

Filed 12/30/2022 Assign/Staff 01/27/23 Esteban Martorell

Applicant: 1261 Tower Grove, LLC

Representative: Benjamin Eshaghian [Crest Real Estate]

Permanent Link: <https://planning.lacity.org/pdiscaseinfo/caseid/MjYzODEy0> where the Initial Submittal Documents provide details of the project.)

Mr. Benjamin Eshaghian provided a Power Point Presentation of the project and was accompanied by Architect Bertram Beissel von Gymnich, who was present to answer questions. Some comments by the presenter included that that this is a ZA & ZAD request; they are reducing the current height from two stories to one story, to approximately 15-1/2 feet; the project is in Zone RE 20-1-H-HCR, on a 40,317 square foot lot, and there is no basement. The applicants are providing five total parking spaces, two in garage.

As to the request for relief from the 20-foot continuous paved roadway (CPR), the presenter noted that there are pinch points away from the property frontage. He noted that they are also required to pursue a ZAD seeking relief of the 25' rear-yard setback and are providing a 19'11" rear yard for the Accessory Living Quarters (ALQ) which contains a bedroom and gym. They are requesting a haul route for 1506 CY total export, they have a tree report, approved by Urban Forestry, and a biologist reviewed the site with full biological assessment showing no biological impacts as a result of new development. There are no plans to remove trees, protected or otherwise.

Board questions were asked and answered. Additional information included but was not limited to that the ALQ is 2300 square feet and there is no dedication of the street width at the frontage of the property. Vice Chair Hall asked, in relation to the ZAD for relief from the CPR, why it is infeasible to improve the road to 20 feet and what their proposed findings are for the ZA. Vice Chair Hall noted that dedications are publicly there but do not include the 20 feet, but that there would be pictures to refer to.

Member Grey asked further about the dedication, which she noted was likely required but not honored, stressing the importance to verify if at any given time there was a dedication required. Hall clarified that Grey was asking if there is a 28' dedicated, and, if not, whether or not BOE waived that requirement.

Member Greenberg asked and was told that there is no ZAD scheduled, and asked for a Google Map on the projector to look at the land. Further questions were asked and answered. We were told that one pinch point is at the turn on Beverly Grove Drive. (He wasn't sure if the pinch point on Tower Grove was measured.)

There was no public comment on this project.

Vice Chair Hall felt that it would be appropriate to continue the item and ask the applicant to return to provide two pieces of information: 1) What makes it impractical or infeasible to widen the roadway at the pinch points with specifics, and, 2) to address the dedication issue that Member Grey raised.

Brief discussion was held on the rear yard and concerns about possible fire, wildfire, firefighting, as perhaps the Fire Department needs space to move around with equipment and to pay attention to setbacks. Mr. Eshaghian noted that the true rear is occurring or functioning as a side lot because of its flag lot nature. The side lot is sort of the normal rear. Hall asked about the area of lot that is undeveloped, to which Benjamin noted that the ALQ comes into a part of that and the architect noted that there is a very steep slope and they do *not* have plans to build on that.

Motion to continue this item, and have the presenters come back to the PLU Committee with information on the exact location of the pinch points, along with pictures of that location, with some sort of narrative that provides an explanation of why pulling a B-permit to improve the roadway would be impractical and

infeasible passed by unanimously, as moved by Hall and seconded by Levinson.

6. **9369 W Flicker Way ZA-2023-1071-ZAD ENV-2023-1072-CE (Continued)**

Project Description: Remodel/additions to existing single family dwelling LOT Area 10,717 sq ft. Existing development contains 5,781 sf of RFA. With exception that prior for an additional 500 sf of RFA permitted, if bldg. complies with setback requirements, ht limits and grading limits of the Hillside Area Ordinance. Existing bldg. has envelope ht max envelope ht 39ft 6in. Basement, 1st & 2nd floor.

Filed: 02/14/2023 Assign/Staff: 02/28/2023 Dylan Lawrence

Applicant: 1st Avenue Flicker LLC. No EM or Tel.

Agent/Rep: JParker@PCCLA.com 818.591.9309 / Chloe Parker Chloe@PCCLA.com

Permanent Link: <https://planning.lacity.org/pdiscaseinfo/caseid/MjY0OTU20>

[This is being continued as it was canceled until seeing DSPNA. It will then be rescheduled.]

7. **2261 N Bowmont Dr. 90210 DIR-2021-9948-DRB-SPP-MSP ENV-2021-9949-CE (Coldwater Canyon)**

Project Description: Construction of approximately 1449 sq ft new 2-story addition over 669 sq ft basement/storage & 437 sq ft basement 2-car garage to existing 1990 sq ft 1-story sfd.

Filed 12/07/2021; Staff 04/11/22 Courtney Yellen – 06/14/23 Katie Knudson – 08/09/2023 Jude Hernandez

Applicant: Dr. Matthew Nejad matt@mattnejad.com

Representative: Dr. Ifa Kashefi ikashefi@gmail.com

Architects: Ghazal Shokoufandeh ghazal@group-s-inc.com

Shahram Shokoufandeh shahramgroups@gmail.com

Permits: <https://www.ladbservices2.lacity.org/OnlineServices/PermitReport/PermitResults/984911>

Address. Zimas: <http://zimas.lacity.org/map.aspx>

Permanent Link: <https://planning.lacity.org/pdiscaseinfo/caseid/MjUzMjM50>

Case Information under “Initial Submittal Documents” and on the Google Drive link below:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1P9eRqP5ktdHgV1Cz4J271AKno3GSPxM_/view?usp=drive_web

[The presenters were heard previously on Zoom at the July 11th PLU Committee meeting and return to respond to questions in person.]

Vice-Chair Hall introduced this, noting it is his understandings that the presenters have been to the Mulholland Design Review Board (MDRB) and return to address this committee’s outstanding questions and issues

The applicant’s representative, Dr. Ifa Kashefi, answered the PLU Committee’s written questions, a copy of which had been circulated to the board, can be found along with project plans under “Supporting Documents” at <https://www.babcnc.org/committees/viewCommittee/planning-and-land-use-committee> and was projected onto a screen during the meeting.

Public Comment:

Scott Baker, Esq. related that he is a homeowner in the hills, and represents the neighbors immediately south of the doctor’s house at 2251. He noted that he had a fine conversation with Dr. Kashefi, and wants to encourage her to build the house within guidelines for the house & type and location of the ADU. He opined as to excavation, that the 500 CY soil excavation doesn’t sound accurate, and believes it is 10 times that, providing examples that should be considered in the calculation. He noted that the pool is also on the property line, and asks what kind of noise factors, retaining walls will be built to contain the soil or the water in connection to the pool... He wants them to have what they want as long as it doesn’t interfere with his client’s safety. He noted that the grading map on Page 35 is incomplete and doesn’t talk about shoring, excavation, the pool, and caissons. It concerns him that we don’t know what it is now and asks how we can approve that excavation when it seems more than that. He noted that the pool is on the border of his client’s property. He is curious about the time needed for construction and neighbors’ concerns as to street & load, that the load plan would be affected by the estimated excavation, and that it is important to make sure we know what we are dealing with.

Amy Adelson thanked Matt Nejad and his mother, Dr. Kashefi, for opening dialogue and reiterated the primary concern of the neighborhood was that of public safety. She noted there are four other projects in

various stages of construction and asked that they find a way to build that doesn't compromise safety. She mentioned an agreement for Bowmont that builds upon the HCR protections, referencing their ongoing dialogue with 2350 Bowmont.

Elizabeth noted that as much as can be done beforehand will save down the road, to avoid problems later.

Steven Jarmus related that he has lived in the neighborhood 27 years, passes that area of Bowmont two to three times daily, and agrees that owners have the right to build as they wish but would like it to be in the character of the neighborhood. His bigger concern is safety of the neighborhood, as to fire risks, police and sanitation being able to come in and out, and on that section of Bowmont, being allowed to park only on one side of the street. He noted limited parking spaces for guests and service people and concerned if LAFD can get through that street safely to where he and others live, and encourages the owners to work with Amy and their community. He doesn't want to see a fire break out and lose their properties because they can't get out.

Jim Saltmar reinforced comments by the other speakers, adding that the streets are narrow, and about the multiple construction projects, and safety concerns. He looks forward to going through the points of the HCR and other concerns. He noted that any noise in the canyon reverberates and magnifies throughout the canyon and that it is paramount that the construction process is done safely. He asked the committee to evaluate the scope and other questions raised to make sure this is done properly.

The applicant's representative responded to the comments made and answered further questions. **Board discussion** was held, with Member Hall raised concern about possible piece mealing and concern that there might be an additional entitlement. Dr. Kashefi noted that she does not believe she will exceed 600 CY if it is required and that the pool has been taken into consideration. Asked whether they have gone to PlanCheck, there was some discussion regarding the PlanCheck process. Asked, Dr. Kashefi noted that this is a small addition, they anticipate that this will take one and a half years to two years to start, and probably six to eight months to build. As to the neighbors' expressed need for communication, Dr. Kashefi responded with a list of requirements of the HCR that they are prepared to follow, and noted that they have submitted a traffic plan. Member Levinson noted the importance of the project manager's communication with neighbors, citing examples. Dr. Kashefi noted that there will be a hotline for communication, a designated person, and intends to make this easy for everyone. Evans brought up trash collection days, to which Dr. Kashefi noted that they will be limiting cars, communicating with neighbors, and asking the workers to carpool. Member Weinberg pointed out that there is an existing relationship between the neighborhood and the construction going on at 2350 Bowmont, which he suggested should form the basis of what we'd like to see as a template for this construction, to which Dr. Kashefi reiterated the issue of practicality and that they will communicate with the neighbors. Hall discussed the need notification on upcoming construction activity, whether it is a project manager or other... that the HCR doesn't do that.

Asked, Dr. Longcore noted that the only discretionary approval is MDRB and our advice will be to them... He noted that the question is whether or not the size of the house is consistent with the neighborhood... and it has been noted that they have said it was consistent with the houses built in recent years. He thinks there is some room for some give and take. One of the considerations can be is whether or not this is consistent with the character of the neighborhood. He would like the committee to advise the board as to whether they think the DRB should exercise its discretion to say it does or does not fit with the neighborhood.

Attendee, Mr. Scott Baker, asked about the remodel to which Hall noted that this is a major remodel that triggers the discretion. As to compatibility of the house within the neighborhood, other houses were discussed, and it was noted that the neighborhood is diverse. Amy Adelson provided insight as to the recent irresponsible or noncompliant projects in the area... and noted that it depends on how you define the character of the neighborhood. Other comments were provided by an attendee as to the diversity in the neighborhood. He noted that there are plenty of the houses in the neighborhood with the more modern nature.

Member Templeton acknowledged that times have changed since the 1950s ranch houses, many of which are obsolete. She noted that the neighborhood is diverse that is already changing, and feels that people should be able to build what they want to build within reason, complying with all the laws... Amy Adelson noted that, in the spirit of serenity, it was determined that the emphasis should be on process at this point, because they were told of what would be approved, and, in the spirit of collaboration, agreed that we should talk about quality of life, the construction process and public safety, where we can have some kind of influence, as MDRB has already weighed in, on a preliminary basis.

Mr. Baker raised further concerns about the project that this is not a remodel, but that this is raising this to a three story house. He believes that it would not be done in six months, pointing out that the expense of the project is of concern. He noted that the neighbors do not care about the design, however, he cares about excavation, and that a structural engineer hasn't weighed in, after three meetings, and is asking that they have a structural engineer address items. He gave an example, that the code requires a 3' x 6' deck and excavation around the entire foundation, noting that this does not mean that they don't have to excavate, and believes that that was not included in the calculation. Dr. Kashefi provided her disagreement with the comments made by Mr. Baker. Schlesinger asked about depth of bedrock, to which Dr. Kashefi provided a detailed reply.

Motion to recommend approval, recognizing that the applicant has agreed to follow to the maximum extent feasible the good neighbor policies proposed by the neighborhood and in place for the project at 2350 Bowmont moved by Vice Chair Hall and seconded by Evans. Further comments included but were not limited to that we could acknowledge the concerns that structural analysis hasn't taken place, we could mention to the MDRB that we don't know how many caissons.

Amy Adelson interjected that several points raised here have to do with hammer heading at an intersection, which she thinks may make it feel not feasible to access the driveway without going into the intersection, the chokepoint of the neighborhood, hammer heading there, at the Bowmont/Hazen intersection... because they have had significant issues at that intersection. She acknowledged Dr. Kashefi's comments as to budgetary constraints but pointed out that it is a chokepoint in the neighborhood, at an intersection that is essential for ingress and egress, and that is a big concern, why it was a prominent point for the template provided not just with 2350 but with other properties as well. Amy noted that she would appreciate any good faith best efforts made to address workers' parking and the hammer heading issue, reversing down the length of the street, for large vehicles and heavy equipment. Dr. Longcore acknowledged that he would support this motion in recognition that we are having this conversation, figuring out the tough points, and that our recommendation to the MDRB is in recognition that this is happening.

The motion **carried** by 8 yeases, 0 noes & 4 abstentions by Miner, Longcore, Schlesinger and Loze. PLU Committee Vice-Chair Hall thanked the applicant, the development team and the neighbors, noting that he hopes the dialogue continues.

The meeting adjourned at 9:23 pm, to meet again on October 10, 2023 at 7:00 PM.