

# Downtown Area Neighborhood Alliance

## Meeting Minutes

Monday May 16, 2005

7:00 – 8:30 PM. Fairmount Park Boathouse

**Attendees (per sign-in sheet):** Norm Gritton, Heather Troxel, Chani Beeman, Greg Hixon, Marta Brwon, Rick Bural, Pam Bohne, Joe Bohne, Laurene Bryden, Dick Wing, Donna Wing, Bonnie Reynolds, Chris Jones, Dave McNiel, Jack Larsen, Nancy Larsen, Laurie DeFrance, Jim Talcott, Linda Van Voorhis, Pat Dean, Tina Lang, Rebecca Prieto, Michael St. Peter, Victor Saninz, Eric Tani, David St. Pierre, Lindsay Abercrombie, Eva McNiel, Dan Hantman.

**City Staff:** Belinda Graham, Ralph Nunez, Pedro Payne, Nancy Castillo, Chuck Griffiths.

**1. Meeting was called to order by Norm Gritton at 7:00PM.**

Each attendee introduced themselves.

**2. Approval of Meeting Minutes of April 18, 2005**

✓ **Motion to approved Minutes as submitted**

**M/S/V: Nancy Larsen/Heather Troxel/Carried**

**3. Report from Council member Dom Betro**

- Council member Betro thanked area residents for getting involved in the discussion of the **indoor motorcycle racetrack**. The Land Use Committee is recommending denial of the Conditional Use Permit. The issue will come to the full city council in the near future without much support. It's a good project but the location was not right and the feasibility of on indoor race track is questionable.
- There is a proposed **code of ethics for City Council and city Boards and Commissions** that folks should review and provide input. Some of the issues raised by DANA about the activities and comments of council members fall within the scope of the code of ethics. It is available on the City's website.
- The Development committee will be meeting on Thursday, May 19<sup>th</sup> at 3:00PM on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor of City Hall to hear staff recommendations for the **1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>/Orange-Market development**. Downtown residents are encouraged to attend and participate in the discussion.
- Council approved money for the **Homeless emergency shelter and Access center on Hulén place**. The goal is to have the facility open by September 1<sup>st</sup>. Enforcement of appropriate ordinances is happening in Fairmount Park. There has been a marked reduction in the number of vagrants hanging out in the park. Great effort has been made to connect people in need with appropriate resources. Joan Thirkettle and her staff have developed a resource card that directs people to services to assist with homelessness. The next step is to have the Armory removed from the park.
- Council member Betro applauded DANA for following through on providing information about potential **Parolee homes**. Two task forces have been developed to address the problem, one is within the police department and the other is made up of representatives

from all city departments involved in addressing the problem (RPD, Code Enforcement, Public Works, City Attorney). The intradepartmental task force identified 16 homes, with the help of the DANA list that should be investigated for compliance with city ordinances. Of the 16 properties, 4 were given highest priority for action. Three of those properties are in the downtown area and on the list provided by DANA. There are efforts at the County and State level to change the process for parolee and sex offender discharges into communities.

Council member Betro **invited Lt. Grffits to talk about the RPD Parolee/Group Home task force.** Griffiths reported that Lt. Mark Boyer (former Downtown area commander) has been selected to head the task force that includes 4 POP officers and 6 patrol officers. The POP officers go to the homes to identify any non-compliance with city ordinances or licensing requirements. They began by visiting the property on El Dorado, which is a designated **“Sober Living” facility.** They found drug paraphernalia and so the report will reflect non-compliance with “Sober Living” requirements and lay the groundwork to enforce compliance or closure. The 6 patrol officers provide enforcement in the neighborhoods by mointoring the activities of parolees away from their homes. When they are found to be out of compliance with parole requirements, they and their group home are held accountable. The property at **2810 Fairmount** has been shut down and was to be boarded up by the owner, which has not yet happened. The property owner is being assessed civil penalties for each day the house is occupied or potentially occupied.

**Answers to questions**

Lt. Griffiths described the process for parolee discharge which releases parolees to any city within the county they were arrested. In checking with other law enforcement agencies, the city of Riverside seems to have about the same percentage of parolees as other cities in Riverside County.

Changes in the leadership of the department of code compliance will not change the commitment of addressing concerns about group homes and compliance with the city’s ordinance regulating group homes. It’s a tough problem but the city’s attention and commitment are there.

- Council member Betro introduced **Ralph Nunez to discuss the Wildlands Conservancy project and upgrades to Fairmount Park.** There are many improvements that are the result of the Santa Ana River Master Plan and grant funding. The maintenance buildings at the front of the park have been removed and the area landscaped. The Butler building and a storage shed in the park have been removed and 4 new picnic shelters are planned for various areas in the park, those picnic areas will include BBQs. The old gazebo has been removed and 2 new gazebos will be constructed, one in the Rose Garden area. The main restroom has been remodeled and includes better security. Dying trees have been removed and new trees have been planted. The old scout camp will be the site for an outdoor classroom as part of the Wildlands Conservancy project. The classroom will be decoratively fenced. There will be trails and other amenities designed to be safe and attractive to families and constructive uses of the park.

There are several events planned in the park this summer: Fishing Derby on June 11<sup>th</sup>; the philharmonic will have 2 concerts in the park one on July 10<sup>th</sup> the other on August 28<sup>th</sup>. These events have been funded by grants

**Answers to questions:** The staff are sensitive to the historical nature of the park. The chain link fencing is temporary. Permanent fencing will be wrought iron, in fact the

mangled iron park sign has been restored and will be replaced at the park entrance when the landscaping and other improvements are completed.

There are discussions happening with the County Flood Control district to ensure they are keeping the storm drain system cleaned to prevent pollution of the park lakes. Eventually, there will be consideration of a filtration system to prevent lake pollution.

- Council member Betro introduced **Belinda Graham to discuss the land transfer plans for Fairmount Park:** The Riverside Redevelopment Agency is in negotiations with the Riverside Public Utility to transfer ownership of land along the Santa Ana River for property at the front of the park along Market St. There are also discussions about property on North Hill and the possibility of placing historic homes on those sites.

**Answers to questions:** It may be ambitious but the hope is that some of the Wildlands programs can begin this summer, but at the latest the project will be fully operational by next year.

The property along Market St. will belong to the Redevelopment Agency once the land transfers are final. They will determine the use of the property and the occupants. It is hoped that they will be park related, such as bicycle rentals or restaurants that have patio seating that faces the park, etc.

#### **4. Riverside Police Department**

See Lt. Griffiths report in agenda item 3.

#### **5. Community Police Review Commission: Pedro Payne, Executive Director of the Human Relations Commission and interim Executive Director of the Community Police Review Commission**

Dr. Payne provided an overview of both the Human Relations Commission and the Community Police Review Commission and their functions. He provided brochures and annual reports for both commissions. The CPRC meets twice a month, once for open meeting and once for closed session complaint review. The HRC meets once a month but also hosts various activities and forums in the community. The HRC will be hosting a community discussion on the latest Traffic Stop Study of the RPD.

#### **6. Treasurer Report: Jim Youden**

Jim was not present so there was no report provided.

#### **7. Planning & Development / David St. Pierre**

- At the May 5<sup>th</sup> Development meeting the committee approved a pilot project for manufactured housing at 11<sup>th</sup> and Ottawa. Final approval of the project will be at an upcoming council meeting.
- The Redevelopment Agency is looking at proposals for the **development of an office building at Market St., between 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>.** The project may close Almond St. since it is a less used road. The agency is receiving a lot of interest in the development of the site, they anticipate a several story building. Dom pointed out that the redevelopment process is a useful tool to addressing problem properties, such as Sav-a-minit.
- The Development Committee will meet Thursday, May 19<sup>th</sup> at 3:00PM on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor of City Hall to hear staff recommendations for the development of property between 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>, Market and Orange St. It is likely the developer for that project will be selected during that meeting and recommended to the full council.

- New Downtown parking structure is scheduled to open in Fall.  
**Questions Answered:** The 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> St. development must meet the same 15% affordable housing requirement as all new housing developments in the city. However, the development will not receive any CC&R money from the Redevelopment Agency. So, while the emphasis will be on homeownership, the city will not have the same authority of enforcement that it has at the Mission Village

The Downtown Specific plan changed zoning and density regulations along Market St., which is why the height of the buildings will be higher as Market enters the downtown core. The development around the Fox Theater will be multiple stories.

The Fox Theater development project is moving along. There will be updates in the next month or two. The automotive businesses will be demolished beginning in the next several months. The property between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> St. will be reserved for the “state of the art” performance center. Savon will begin development soon.

The plans for a new fire station on Olivewood near Kane are beautiful. The architecture fits nicely with historic downtown. There will be many nice craftsman homes available to be moved to properties in the downtown area. Some need fixing up, but are worth preserving. Perhaps some can be moved to the front of Fairmount Park to house businesses.

#### **8. Project Subcommittee Update: Eva McNeil for the Party committee**

The subcommittee are developing plans for a DANA Neighborhood party to coincide with the symphony performance on August 28<sup>th</sup>. It will be a “bring your own food, we’ll provide the BBQ, raffle and fun activities” event. The subcommittee needs volunteers to collect raffle prizes, design yard signs and develop DANA info to distribute at the event.

- ✓ **Motion to approve up to \$150 to purchase materials for the party, such as a banner and flyers, etc.**

**M/S/V: D. McNeil/St. Pierre/carried**

#### **9. New Items/Issues:**

The Neighborhood Conference is scheduled for Saturday, July 9<sup>th</sup> at Cal Baptist University. Information cards were distributed.

The question of whether DANA wants to provide time at meetings for political candidates will be discussed at the June meeting.

#### **10. Next meeting is scheduled for Monday June 20, 2005, 7:00 PM. at the Fairmount Park Boathouse**

#### **11. The Meeting was adjourned at 8:45.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Chani Beeman, DANA Secretary