

Downtown Area Neighborhood Alliance

Meeting Minutes

Monday November 21, 2005

7:00 – 8:30 PM. 3501 Mr. Rubidoux Dr. (relocation)

Attendees (per sign-in sheet): David St. Pierre, Norm Gritton, Keith Alex, Laurie DeFrance, Molly Dougherty, Heather Troxel, Jack Larsen, Nanci Larsen, Susan Ridder, Dick Wing, Donna Wing, Betina Brotzen, Nancy Castillo, Jerry Crouch, Jim YOuten, Rod Wolf, Eva Yakutis-McNiel, Dave McNiel, Jim Talcott, Kevin Shellman, Chani Beeman, David Lucas.

1. Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Alex at 7:20PM.

- The meeting location was changed due to lack of access to the Issak Walton building.
- Meeting attendees introduced themselves.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes for October 17, 2005

✓ **Motion to approved Minutes as submitted.**

M/S/V: Jack Larsen/ David St. Pierre/Carried

3. Councilman Dom Betro's Report

- City staff just presented the **Fox Theater renovation project** timeline and it shows a June 2007 completion date. Councilman Betro would be happy with a September date. The Neelander group has been notified that they can put the Fox Theater on their 2007/2008 season tour. This will bring Broadway quality productions to Riverside as they tour the Southern California region. The project contracts will begin coming to the City Council for approval in December.
- Several downtown development projects continue to proceed. They included the Thriffty project at 14th and Market St.; 9th and Orange St. across from the new parking structure; Metro Pacific which is around the Fox Theater. These projects are very important to the revitalization of the downtown area. Negotiations are taking place and of course will bring the possibility of **eminent domain** into the picture. This is a very touchy issue and it can make or break an elected official. However, the development of downtown has been stalled for years but this is the time to take a strong stand and do what's right for the well-being of downtown and Riverside.
- There are discussions taking place regarding the **Brown Automotive building** on the corner of Lime and University Ave. That building has a lot of problems, including environmental pollution. It may have to come down to make way for a class "A" office building. The building is owned by people who own several of Riverside's most blighted properties, including properties across Merrill St. from the Riverside Plaza.
- The year-round **Homeless Shelter** is open and operating with 60 beds and capacity for 120 beds during cold weather conditions. Space for the Service Access Center, next door, is being purchased. Riverside County is deeply involved in that project

Things are moving very quickly to possibly remove the old armory building, largely due to changes at the March Air Reserve Base.

- The City Manager continues to develop ideas for expanding the University Ave. **Beautification plan** to the whole downtown area. It's important to create a common look and feel to downtown, rather than the mixed pockets that currently exist. A committee that includes landscape architect Ian Davidson will be designed streetscape plans. We should see some sprucing up and changes for the holidays.

Answers to questions:

- Yes there have been several downtown beautification plans, but this is the first since Dom's election and he intends to have it implemented.
- The map distributed by Joyce Powers has some errors and any problems should be sent to Dom via email so he can have them corrected. Especially if there are problems with historical preservation.
- Dom was not aware of any changes to the "Structure of Merit" designation. If necessary he will work to undo any changes, which will be difficult given the current council. It will take strong community support. He will check into the status and report back to DANA.
- Dom will check into whether the Market St. median will allow a left turn from Mission Village. It may not, it may be necessary to make a "U" turn at Ridge Rd.
- The city will not operate the Fox Theater when it's completed. Dom expects to find an operator that will oversee the Theater and the properties in the Metro Pacific development so they can be managed as a whole unit.
- Not sure what the delay is for Savon, but they should begin construction by December.
- The City Council approved acceptance of FEMA money to help improve the lakes at Fairmount Park. The city will purchase equipment to dredge the lakes, which has not been done in years. The money will be used to improve flood control and fix damage for the storm flooding from last year.
- The city is using some money from an improved budget to upgrade security in parks. There will be security guards from 6PM-7AM and some parks, including Fairmount, will have security cameras.

4. Riverside Police Department & Neighborhood Walk Update /Nancy Castillo and Nanci Larsen

- The Riverside Police Department has launched a "Crime Prevention for the Holidays" program and she distributed crime prevention tips for businesses and personal safety.
- The neighborhood walk went well, though we might want to walk on the weekend since darkness made it difficult to see problems. Joyce Powers stayed with the walk for the entire time. Walkers had a chance to tour Save-a-minute to see improved grocery section and to see problems with the Su Casa apartments.

5. Treasurer Report / Jim Youden

- See attached report for details:
 - \$105 was collected for the Seed Fund
 - \$193.75 from the Bake Sale has not been included yet, since he doesn't have it.
 - Total funds available: \$604.25
- Nanci Larsen introduced her neighbor Susan Ridder who teaches at Mission Middle School in Rubidoux. Susan presented information about "Adopt a Family" program that she and her students undertake each year. The program provides food and gift cards to needy families in the area.
- ✓ **Motion to approve donation of all the Bake Sale money to the "Adopt a Family" program at Mission Middle School.**
M/S/V: Jack Larsen/ Nanci Larsen
 Discussion included points that the project serves people very close to downtown and the donation should be approved. Eva brought up that the total amount of \$193.75 is a large portion of the group's total funds.
- ✓ **Substitute motion to approve donation of a \$100 of the Bake Sale money to the "Adopt a Family" program at Mission Middle School.**
M/S/V: Eva Yakutis-McNiell/Jim Youden/carried

6. Planning & Development / David St. Pierre

- Development sub committee of the City Council met on October 27th to discuss the Brown Automotive building and moving forward with building a class "A" office building.

7. December Meeting Holiday Party Potluck Update / Molly Dougherty

- A sign up sheet for the potluck was passed around. People can sign up to bring food or other items such as plates, utensils, fire wood etc. There are also places on the sign in sheet to take on a "chore."
- Santa Claus has RSVP'd his attendance at the party.

8. New Issues

- Dave McNiell reported that the North Hill residents met with Dom and city staff to discuss plans for the area. Interestingly, one of the residents who got people riled up about houses being built on the top of the hill and other misinformation, presented an idea for building on the hill. The committee decided that there would be no further discussion about building on the hill, but rather there would be better landscaping, lighting and security for the area.
- Jim Youden announced the Heritage Square neighborhood group will host its annual fundraiser "Twelfth Night Dinner" on January 7th and 8th. The cost is \$80/person.
- Jim Youden announced that the Old Riverside Foundation (ORF) has been contacted by Laura Bush's office about nominating a program for the "Preserve America" community award. Only 92 cities nationwide are eligible to submit nominations. ORF is planning to submit the "Twelfth Night Dinner" Heritage Square fundraiser for the award. This annual event has run for 11 years.
- ✓ **Motion to have the elected Chairperson of DANA write a letter of support for the ORF nomination of the "Twelfth Night Dinner and Celebration" fundraiser for the "Preserve America" community award.**

M/S/V: Jim Youden / David St. Pierre/Carried

- Dave McNiel announced that DANA will be one of the groups visited by city staff for input to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds distribution.

9. 2006 D.A.N.A. Board Elections

- Chani Beeman reported the nominations submitted as:
 - Chair – Keith Alex
 - 1st Vice Chair – Norm Gritton
 - 2nd Vice Chair – David St. Pierre
 - Treasurer – Jim Youden and Heather Troxel
 - Secretary – Chani Beeman
- Nominations from the floor were opened, none received.
- Jim Youden distributed ballots to vote-eligible members.
- Election results were tallied at the end and will be announced at the December Holiday Party meeting.
- Chani Beeman pointed out that DANA may need to reconsider the language of Article 4.04 of the Bylaws which seems to prohibit any “termed out” officer from being elected to another office, which will require a full turnover of the DANA officers at next year’s election.
- ✓ **Motion to have the nomination committee (Chani Beeman, Keith Alex and Nanci Larsen) discuss the situation and make a recommendation to the group at the January meeting.**

M/S/V: Dave McNiel/ Eva Yakutis-McNiel/Carried

- 10. The Holiday Party will be December 19th at the Issak Walton building, FairmountPark at 7:00PM**

The Next business meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 16th at 7:00 PM. Issak Walton Club, Fairmount Park

- 11. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20PM**

**Respectfully submitted,
Chani Beeman
DANA Secretary**