

# D.A.N.A.

## (Downtown Area Neighborhood Alliance)

### Meeting Minutes

Stewarts Boathouse, Fairmount Park

Monday, January 15, 2007

7:00 p.m.–8:30 p.m.

**Attendees (per sign-in sheet):** Sadie Campbell, Jack and Nanci Larson, Don Wilson, Rich Stalder, Jim Reed, Terry Walling, Tom Donahue, Bill Odien, Jim Braving, Shirley Van Rennes, Dick and Donna Wing, Damon Castillo, David Stewart, Susanne Cesari, Angelo Cesari, Michelle Dawson, Greg Taber, Boyd Bradshaw, Larry Hansen, Pat Dean, Belinda Graham, Marilyn Morris, Robert E. Boyd, Susan Hannibal, Laurie Hardy, Joan Donahue, Julie Hand, Gerry Douglas, Eric Lesser, Ken Kushner, Michael A. Smith, Linda Q. Smith, Janice Penner, Nanette Pahini, Mike and Myles Denholtz, David Lucas, Jerry Crouch, Jean Wong, Bettina Brotzen, Christina Duran, Kevin Dawson, Catharine Wolf, Debbie Meneses, Heather Troxel, Molly Dougherty, Pete Kallinger, Keith Alex, Chani Beeman, Mike Gardner, Rick Kanter, Denise Boles, Dave McNeil, Norm Gritton, Roger Dahl, Leean Bitterolt, Karen and Jim Oster, Kris Whitehead, Jan Lewis, Janey Clegg, Darrell Hand, Julie Hand, Erich Lewis, Dorette Peterson, Cathy Emery, Nicki Sands, Gerry Short, Justin Kowalski, Lenny Lavervie, Anne Pedelaborde, Kevin Bauder, Dan and Cyndi Schroft, Rod Wolf.

1. Meeting called to order by Chairman Chani Beeman at 7:00 p.m.  
Chani asked the new members of the DANA board to introduce themselves.  
Members were reminded by Treasurer Heather Troxel to renew their membership for the coming year.
2. Approval of Minutes of November meeting
  - ✓ Motion to approve minutes after the spelling of a member's name was corrected
  - M/S/C: St. Pierre/Wilson/Carried
3. **Meeting Agenda Topic**  
Chani provided some background on the agenda for tonight's meeting, which will focus on the proposed Tequesquite/Fairmount Park land exchange. Chani welcomed and acknowledged the members of the public who came to the meeting to hear Councilman Betro discuss the proposal, and explained that Dom's normal spot on the agenda would be used for that purpose. She also explained that half the meeting would be dedicated to discussing the land swap, and the rest of the meeting would focus on regular DANA group business. Index cards were supplied to the audience to write down questions for Dom to answer after his presentation.

Dom said he hoped to clear up any questions or misunderstandings about the land swap issue, and then went on to describe the details of the plan.

### **Land Swap Plan**

The plan proposes that 42 acres at Tequesquite Arroyo, an undeveloped area including the old landfill site and parts of the riverbottom, be exchanged for 17 acres of property at the front of Fairmount Park, which would be given to the Redevelopment Agency. Redevelopment would then give the Parks Department 59 acres of wetlands at the rear of the park where it borders the Santa Ana River. The Tequesquite site would be sold and the money used to help fund improvements at Fairmount and other parks in the city.

Some of these improvements would include dredging, an amphitheatre, and other amenities. It could also help fund the purchase of the Ab Brown soccer field, whose lease is up in 2010. Dom said that the idea that money raised from the land exchange would be used to restore the Fox is false, and that those funds have already leveraged and will come from other sources.

Dom said the wetlands area is important ecologically and hopes to both preserve it and make it accessible to the public through the creation of nature and wildlife trails.

Dom stressed that there are no plans for development in the Tequesquite area now, but he would support projects like senior housing, and acknowledged that parking and other issues would need to be addressed before any development could take place. Dom said that he would only support a Tequesquite development plan that included at least one five- to 10-acre park.

### **Market Street Frontage**

Dom wants the front of Fairmount Park to become a showplace, and envisions cafes, bicycle and kite rentals, a visitor's center, and other projects to take the place of the Armory, the storage yard, and other structures.

### **Responses to Audience Questions**

- The Fairmount Park parcels on Market Street would not be sold. The plan is for the city to develop the area itself, or lease it out to vendors, but the city would retain control.
- Staff estimates value of the Tequesquite parcel at \$10 million.
- Right now there are no plans for Tequesquite development in the works, so any future development would have to be approved after the land exchange had taken place.
- No changes are planned for the removal of stop signs on Pine and Redwood.

- Plans for Hunter Hobby Park and the Ab Brown soccer field would be jeopardized if the land swap wasn't approved, in addition to the Fairmount improvements proposed by Parks and Rec.
- Question: Why couldn't the Tequesquite area be restored as a wildlife area instead of the Fairmount Park area? Dom says the Nature Conservancy and other experts have concluded that the wetlands area is a better choice.
- Question: What other funding sources for Ab Brown field and other projects have been considered? Michael Beck said they are already using a combination of redevelopment, land sale, and other funds.
- Question: Why can't school land be used for ballfields? Why can't the city and the school district agree on this? Dom said it's difficult to get RUSD to allow use of their facilities without charging fees.
- Question: What assurances are there that Dom's idea of a 5-10 acre park and senior housing will take place and not some other, less acceptable plan? Dom said there's really none, but as Ward 1 council member and Redevelopment Committee president he would work to make that happen. He would also recommend the creation of a community advisory committee to help act as a safeguard against an unpopular project.
- Question: What is Dom isn't around to make sure this happens? Dom said there are no guarantees, but he doesn't think that the council would be against future park development. Dom went on to say that he understood the lack of trust among the audience members that the project would not go forward as proposed, but he can't make up for what's happened in the past.
- Question: Why can't there just be trees and grass at Tequesquite? Ralph Nunez said the community ultimately decides the best use for its public land, and ballfields and soccer fields are very much in demand by the community.

#### 4. **Land Swap Time Allotment**

Chani noted that the land swap discussion had used up the amount of time allotted for the topic, and asked DANA members if they wanted to continue with the discussion and postpone other group business until the February meeting. A quick show of hands showed DANA members wished to continue with the land swap topic.

#### **Responses to Audience Questions, continued**

- Question: Will there be more police support and security with all the development? Will the parks be safe? Dom said that crime is actually down, but more people moving downtown and increased use of the parks by the public will continue to drive down the crime rate.

- Restrictions would be placed on the Tequesquite land so that only low density housing would be allowed.
- Question: Why does the land swap have to take place by giving the land to the Redevelopment Agency? Why can't it be given to the Parks Department instead? Dom said that Redevelopment can more effectively leverage the lands by combining with other funding sources, and that the Parks Department could only do a straight land sale. Dom said that no matter what, there will be some sort of park created that will benefit the Wood Streets area as well.
- Question: Would it be possible for high-density housing to be allowed in the area? Dom said he didn't think it likely that anything so against the community's wishes would happen.

Dom closed this part of the meeting by stating that city staff are not trying to force anything on residents, but that obviously more planning and thinking on this issue needs to be done. He hopes that residents see that this is a good plan that would ultimately benefit many Riversiders.

The last few minutes of the meeting were spent on other DANA business, including:

**5. Riverside Downtown Partnership**

RDP needs a downtown resident to sit on the board. Dave McNeil served in this capacity in the past, and the remaining group members agreed to nominate Dave to serve again on RDP.

**6. Wildlife Seeds**

Pete Kallinger reported that the wildflower seed planting won't take place until we get some rain, but said he'll email everyone when the time is right.

**7. Rose Planting**

The planting of the Jackson and Perkins roses should happen soon, and an email will go out to members with the date and time.

**8. DANA Membership**

For the benefit of audience members who might be interested in joining DANA, membership is open to all who live, work, or do business in the downtown area.

**9. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Molly Dougherty**  
**DANA Secretary**