

DRAFT MINUTES  
Northridge West Neighborhood Council (NWNC)  
Special Board Meeting via Zoom  
Wednesday, 23 February 2022

- I. Meeting Call to Order and Board Roll Call
  - President Abby Bailes called the meeting to order at 8.01PM, welcomed over five attendees, and eight board members. A quorum was declared via the following roll call:  
Here (8) Abigail Bailes, Brian Cathcart, Kathleen Edwards, Janis Kraft,  
Jennifer Krowne, Sonny Liampetchakul, Joel Lowell, and Glen Wilson  
Absent (5) Yi Ding, Bill Fox, Jorge Jimenez, Lucio Padilla, and Angelica Robinson
- II. General Public Comment
  - No one had any public comment.
- III. Announcements
  - There were no announcements.
- IV. New Business – Discussion and possible motion to submit a letter to the LA Department of City Planning (LADCP) regarding the proposed Northridge Fashion Center apartment complex
  - The Planning, Land Use, and Zoning (PLUZ) Committee requested this special meeting as the deadline to file an appeal to this 350-unit apartment complex is Thursday, February 24<sup>th</sup>. The PLUZ has already held several meetings on this topic, and was anxious to finalize the letter to the LADCP.
  - Jennifer, chair of the PLUZ, confirmed with DONE that committees can call a special meeting with such 24-hour notice.
  - The PLUZ already unanimously approved a letter outlining their rejections of this project. Although this letter was emailed to the LAPD, LAFD, Traffic Surfaces, and CD12, the project seems to be moving forward with minimal public support.
  - At this point, the NWNC cannot make an official appeal to this project. However, individual stakeholders could write such an appeal to the LADCP.
  - Andrew Krowne, who also serves on the PLUZ, added that the NWNC could certainly write a letter to oppose this project. He also urged the NWNC to suggest low-income housing. As this letter will go to the LADCP, the more they hear from the citizenry, the better.
  - Land use consultant Kristen Lonner reported that Brookfield Properties already made several changes to this proposed project.
    - Brookfield is working with the mall’s security team and their police advisory board to connect with the cameras
    - The developers will install a high-visibility crosswalk at Shirley Avenue and Plummer Street. The NWNC did not express interest in this, hence it was omitted from Brookfield’s most recent presentation.
    - This new apartment complex will be connected to the mall via multiple new stop signs.
    - This project will acquire a Silver LEED certification to reflect its full sustainability. There are currently over 3,000 solar panels on the mall’s roof; additional panels will be installed atop this apartment complex.
    - The garage will be more integrated with the nearby buildings to improve the aesthetics.
    - In September 2021, there was an approved traffic study from the city’s Department of Transportation (LADOT) and traffic consultants, Fehr & Peers. Their letter stated that “based

- on the vehicles miles travelled (VMT) established in LADOT's Transportation Assessment Guidelines, the proposed project would not result in a significant transportation impact on VMT as described ...". However, a portion of this study may have been completed during the pandemic, while the restaurants and movie theatres were not at full capacity.
- Kathleen reported that she never saw this letter from LADOT and asked when it was completed. Kristen replied that this letter was released on 2 November 2021. Although the calculations were compiled when the theatre was closed, they expanded their calculations to consider traffic when the mall, theatres, and restaurants would be fully operational.
  - Brian requested a report of the mall's traffic capacity before and during the pandemic, as well as at this time. Kristen replied that there was a report of what 2025 would be like with or without this new apartment project.
  - Janis and Brian expressed concern that when Porto's Bakery opens at 19467 Nordhoff Street, there will be a great deal of increased traffic in all directions along Shirley Avenue, Nordhoff, Prairie, and Plummer Streets.
  - Abby added that the board previously voted on a letter objecting to this development; however, that letter did not reference affordable housing.
  - Andrew added that the NWNC could change their mind down the road. He believes a scaled down version of this project could be viable.
  - Jennifer mentioned that the traffic report from 2018 [which was used for this project] might not have considered the new mixed-use buildings at 19535 Nordhoff Street nor 19600 Plummer Street.
  - Andrew compared this new project to the Vineyards of Porter Ranch, where current standards do not allow for sufficient parking. There is also a concern that the Northridge Fashion Center lacks adequate parking.
  - Brian and Abby had a concern about walkability, which could be improved via shaded areas, bike lanes, places to sit [during a long walk], etc. Perhaps Brookfield could do something to relieve this?
  - Kathleen and Brian requested left-turn and right-turn lanes when exiting the parking area onto Shirley Avenue. Brian also requested electronic walk signs and signals.
  - Janis, Kathleen and Abby mentioned that there have recently been several streetlights off along Nordhoff Street and Shirley and Tampa Avenues. This may be due to copper theft.
  - In addition, there have been problems with violent homeless people near the Lowes at 19601 Nordhoff Street, throwing rocks at cars, etc. One of these vandals was recently taken into custody by the LAPD.
  - Jennifer regretted that high-end housing seems to be all that is available in Northridge. The NWNC has previously taken a stand requesting additional low-income housing.
  - Abby asked about the balcony objection. Jennifer mentioned her concern about safety, as people can access the 1<sup>st</sup> floor balconies from the street. Kristen replied that there would be secure access points to restrict access to the units. Each individual apartment on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor would have their own gate; only tenants could grant access [for a party or similar social event].
  - Jennifer stated the following:
    - She has lived in the northwest valley her entire life. This project is just too huge, like something one would see in Woodland Hills. With all the tall buildings in Woodland Hills, that area is becoming like downtown LA or Century City.
    - Although she serves on the PLUZ, she first learned about this project via social media before the developers presented information to the PLUZ.
    - If built, she would like Brookfield to consider several units set-aside for lower income families.

- She added that two mall access points would be taken away by this new development.
- She made a motion for the NWNC to send this letter as is, but there was no second.
- Kathleen added that the city seems to advocate for high-density housing.
- Abby asked about the setback from Shirley Avenue. Kristen replied that this will have a 0' setback; however, Brookfield would probably establish a 3' sidewalk. Kathleen and Brian expressed concern about this lack of a setback.
- There was a concern regarding allocated parking. The only parking restriction is the allowance for handicapped spaces. Andrew feared the parking lot could be reduced by 40% or 50%. Code versus practicality is a key issue, as evidenced by the insufficient parking at the nearby Vineyards of Porter Ranch. In addition, emergency vehicles could be affected by the loss of an egress.
- Stakeholder Mikkie Loi added her concern that the lack of parking near the mall could roll over to the nearby residential streets. She previously served on the set-up committee for the Emergency Preparedness Fair at this parking lot. They received many dirty looks while setting up this fair (which temporarily eliminated 40% to 50% of the available parking spaces).
- Brian agreed with Mikkie, and suggested that the city may have to issue parking permits for nearby residents.
- Abby Bailes made a motion to send the letter stating that the NWNC does not support this project in its current form; Joel Lowell seconded this motion, and it passed.  
Aye (6) Bailes, Cathcart, Kraft, Liampetchakul, Lowell, and Wilson  
No (2) Edwards and Krowne  
Absent (5) Ding, Fox, Jimenez, Padilla, and Robinson
- Jennifer Krowne made a motion to add a reference to affordable family housing (not necessarily homeless housing); Brian Cathcart seconded this motion, yet it did not pass.  
Aye (3) Cathcart, Krowne, and Wilson  
No (5) Bailes, Edwards, Kraft, Liampetchakul, and Lowell  
Absent (5) Ding, Fox, Jimenez, Padilla, and Robinson
- Abby Bailes made a motion to amend the letter to express concern about access for emergency vehicles and crowding onto nearby residential streets; Jennifer Krowne seconded this motion, and it passed unanimously.
- Brian Cathcart made a motion to send this letter [which follows] as is; Joel Lowell seconded this motion, and it passed unanimously.

Dear LA Department of City Planning,

This letter serves as the second communication from the NWNC regarding case # DIR- 2021-7970-SPR-VHCA, the 350-unit apartment complex and 6-story parking structure to be located at the northwest corner of the Brookfield Northridge Fashion Center.

The NWNC wants to reiterate it does not support this project in its current form. This position and this letter were approved by unanimous vote of 8:0 at a Special Board Meeting on 23 February 2022.

Furthermore, the NWNC is concerned that the LADCP has issued preliminary support despite widespread community concern expressed over the scope and impact this project will have in our community. Therefore, we reiterate the significant concerns regarding the following:

1. We request that the overall size of the projected be reduced. The project consumes a major portion of parking within the Northridge Fashion Center's northwest lot, which is currently heavily used by current consumers. The demand for parking is anticipated to exponentially increase with the reopening of the AMC movie theater and the addition of Longhorn Steakhouse. This project will put unnecessary stress on consumers trying to frequent these and the other mall businesses. This includes but not limited to the seasonal farmer's market

and the loss of parking to hold that event (which is immensely popular within the community).

2. We are concerned that a lack of parking spots may add stress on adjacent communities and neighborhood streets, as people attempt to park outside of the mall area.
3. We request data and to assure adequate access for emergency vehicles.
4. We request data to demonstrate adequate handicapped parking to access all areas of the mall, shopping, restaurant, and apartment complex areas.
5. We request that Brookfield clarify and address security issues regarding 1<sup>st</sup> floor access and balcony design to prevent people from jumping into patio areas.
6. We are concerned that Brookfield is creating a structure with a zero foot set back on Shirley Street. We request a larger setback.
7. We have traffic safety concerns for Shirley Avenue, Plummer Street, Prairie Street, and Nordhoff Streets and the loss of ingress and egress points for the mall parking, to be converted to apartment complex access only. We request improvements to address these concerns, including but not limited to the installment of high visibility crosswalks, illuminated crosswalk signage, and crosswalk tones to create a safe crossing area.
8. We ask that Brookfield plant and maintain (into perpetuity) shade trees around the entire sidewalk perimeter of the final development.
9. Lastly, we want a walkable neighborhood and ask that Brookfield Improve walkability by improving lighting along Shirley Street, plant and maintain shade trees in walking areas, and install shaded bench seating along walkways, as well as bike lanes.

The NWNC requests that the LADCP do not support this project in its current form and encourages the applicant to reduce the size, address the various concerns, and resubmit its application.

#### V. Adjournment

- Abby Bailes made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9.37PM; Brian Cathcart seconded this motion, and it passed unanimously.