

Sunland Tujunga Neighborhood Council (STNC)
Minutes of Special Board Meeting
regarding the proposed Canyon Hills/Whitebird Development
November 17th 2004 - 7 PM
S-T Municipal Bldg.
7747 Foothill Blvd., Tujunga

Call to Order:

Ken McAlpine, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:08pm at the Municipal Building with approx 65 stakeholders in the audience and 17 Board Members. A quorum was established. Board members absent were: Louise Clarke Stone, Mona Curry, Samuel Graham, Bert Bresher and Matthew Kearl.

Public Comments - non agenda items:

Marti Marshall, Chair of the Election Committee announced dates for the upcoming STNC election and encouraged all to attend the candidate forums. Applications were available and handed out encouraging stakeholders to run for office.

Public Comments - agenda items:

Comments on behalf of the Developer, Mr. Rick Percell:

Jack Rubens the representing attorney for: Mr. Rick Percell, Owner and Developer for the Canyon Hills/ Whitebird Project spoke on behalf of the developer. Mr. Rubens spoke of how the developer had prepared the project keeping in mind the needs and wants of the community; one of the main issues being maintaining the "Open Space". Mr. Percell is responding to this demand by requesting a change of zoning which would enable him cluster the housing and therefore leave approximately 700 acres of land, 80%, totally reserved as open space. Another issue that the community had voiced was that of the lighting. Mr. Percell had resolved this concern by getting the lighting below 50% of normal standards and that this is being permitted as the roads are private. Mr. Percell studied the architectural design of the housing that will adapt as well as possible to the scenic surroundings.

The Corresponding Secretary read the following comment received via e-mail from a stakeholder:

The hills of the greater Los Angeles area represent an inestimable natural beauty. In my twelve years living in the LA area, I have seen more and more houses springing up on the hills, diminishing--and often tarnishing--their natural beauty. I call it the ant hill syndrome, and it seems especially prevalent in LA and its surrounding areas. It seems that City Councils are always persuaded by greedy developers who have the money, lobbyists, promotional gadgets, and PR people to get their way and run rough shod over the ordinary people who live in the area. I only hope that this does not happen in the case of the Canyon Hills/Whitebird development.

Sincerely
Dr. Kirk Bonner

At this time stakeholders in the audience who filled out speaker cards were invited to speak.

Sam Ross requested that the SNTC oppose the Whitebird Canyon Hills project. Mr. Ross displayed diagrams and sketches of the sound walls and sound receptor locations and provided members of the STNC board with a photo copy of his diagrams. Mr. Ross explained how these walls would result in a negative effect along the Scenic Corridor.

William Grove spoke regarding the Environmental Impact Report and pointed out the large water tank (a photo was handed out) that currently exists and that this project will add another ugly water tank to our beautiful mountains. Mr. Grove disagreed with the destruction of water lines for this project.

Dean Wallraff of the Sierra Club spoke against the project and explained his viewpoint and concern regarding overcrowding and traffic issues. He stated that he did not see any reason to change zoning especially since the Community Plan that exists is specifically to avoid such overcrowding of homes on small portions of land.

Jill Furillo from the California Nurses Association, spoke mainly of the air pollution and that the emergency rooms were overcrowded with patients suffering from illnesses that are caused by pollution. The project will increase the pollution and increase the number of people suffering with respiratory diseases.

Fred Fehlan spoke against the project saying that the ordinances were made before and were made with the collaboration of the community. The scenic plan would be "torn to shreds" if this project was accepted.

Mark Raymond spoke to oppose the project and suggested that the community take the responsibility to make sure the Verdugo Hills stay as they are. He also compared the project to Santa Clarita and said it brings unwanted crowded stores and enormous traffic issues.

Lyn Williams is concerned about the impact of the traffic enjoys the life style of Sunland and Tujunga and does not want that to be destroyed.

Mark Fogwell strongly opposed the project and said that the developer wants to change the rules, which turn against the Community.

Lisa Keene, Tujunga resident, expressed concern over transferring all the density of this proposed development to the North of the 210 freeway making it a "negotiating dumping ground" just to solve all the issues South of the 210 freeway.

Steve Crouch said the RLUC (Residential Land Use Committee) had considered many alternatives, but as the projects stands today he is opposed. Mr. Crouch suggested allowing more time before making a decision.

Electra Kruger - SHPOA (Shadow Hills Property Owners Association) spoke about the matter of clustering the homes, which is in some way an advantage, and believes more time, should be given for discussion. That there should be a proposal for a clustered design that worked within the existing land use plan designations specifically. She said that if Canyon Hills were to apply for a zone change to RE40 they would still cluster the development, would not need to apply for a General Plan Amendment because RE40 still falls under the Minimum Density designation and this would still allow a large block of acreage to be available for dedication to a public entity while still honoring the heart of the Community Plan and still keeping the development itself at a somewhat lower density.

Yvonne Johnson said that she opposed the project as it has too many homes. Saying she had moved to the area for the beautiful wildlife and would not want to see that get destroyed. Ms. Johnson spoke also of the concern of not having enough community services now to support such a project, specifically in the areas of existing Police, Safety and Street Services.

Leona Swan from Sunland spoke to oppose the project.

Mary Ellen Eltgeoth opposed the project saying that the community does not have sufficient community services and current safety and will not be able to support this project.

The following stakeholders filled out cards in opposition to the proposed development but did not speak:

Edward Condit
Stephen Baker
Ginger Alberti
Lien Seese
Mary Mulally
Lareen Kunze

Residential Land Use Committee (RLUC) Comments

Mark Seigel, chairman of the RLUC committee, spoke about the 8 months of investigating and collection of facts that had taken place and the presentations to the STNC Board are now completed. He gave recognition to the RLUC committee for their hard work and time contributed to this committee. He stated RLUC's function is now completed and RLUC can now be disbanded. He recommends the STNC continue to work further on this matter by forming the Whitebird Committee and that several RLUC members should be asked to continue.

Unfinished Business

#1 MOTION: by Cindy Cleghorn - MOVED

That the Sunland Tujunga Neighborhood Council receive the report of the Residential Land Use Committee and the STNC Position Paper dated November 17, 2004 including Exhibit A. **Motion carried with one opposition.**

#2 MOTION: - Julianne Maurseth - seconded by Robin Siegel Meares- MOVED

That the Sunland- Tujunga Neighborhood Council take position on the Canyon Hills Project and the recent release of the FEIR (Final Environmental Impact Report), as follows:

We believe the Canyon Hills FEIR is incomplete as an environmental impact report.. We would prefer the Canyon Hills Project develop options, which are keeping with the City's General Plan and our Community Plan.

That the STNC send the attached letter including Exhibit A from the STNC Board to Emily Gabel-Luddy at City Hall in advance of the first hearing scheduled (December 9th, 2004) for the Canyon Hills Project. **Motion carried as amended.**

#3 MOTION: Robin Siegel Meares - seconded by Cindy Cleghorn MOVED

That the Sunland Tujunga Neighborhood Council **oppose** the Canyon Hills project as proposed, and that we request that Councilmember Wendy Greuel oppose the proposed project on our behalf.

Following are brief statements of the reasons for this position.

1. While we respect a property owners right to develop this property, the proposed project would not provide enough public benefit to balance the environmental damage and negative impacts on the existing community.
2. This community does not support the proposed amendments to the City's General Plan and our Community Plan. The community plan should only be amended for significant public benefit and with community consent.
3. The requested Plan amendments and zone changes, together with the significant grading and other aesthetic and scenic degradation described in the proposed project's EIR, would cause irreparable damage to our Scenic Corridor and to our community character, including our equestrian culture.
4. Although the DEIR and FEIR may be legally adequate by CEQA standards, many important issues are unresolved and are outside the scope of the EIRs.

Therefore, we have no option but to oppose the proposed project at this time.

However, the STNC wants to work cooperatively with developers that care about our community. Therefore, if Whitebird adequately addresses our unresolved questions and concerns, we would be willing to form a team of community members to continue to work with Whitebird to propose an appropriate alternative project. **Motion carried as amended unanimously.**

Closing Announcements

Marti Marshall, Chair of the Election Committee, reminded all about the upcoming STNC Election to be held December 11, 2004.

Meeting adjourned at 10:40pm

Minutes taken by
Patricia Brugger, Recording Secretary 2004