

Minutes of the Lincoln Boulevard Task Force Streetscape Sub-Committee

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STREETSCAPE SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING: TUESDAY, AUGUST 28, 2012 @ 7PM – 9PM

At the home of Iris Waskow, member, Boarderline Neighborhood Association
715 Navy St. – Santa Monica, Ca 90405 iwaskow@ajula.edu

Those present:

Gloria Garvin
Paul Bailey
Kathy Solomon
Christian Boyce
Nina Fresco
Iris Waskow
Roger Swanson
Maria Rodriguez
Paul Kaufman
Wes Thompson

Agenda:

- Welcome new members – introductions, backgrounds, related interests
- Update on committee progress: liaisons with SM City staff, City Council, Planning Commissioners. Gloria gave a brief update on correspondence with Elaine Polachek, SM Assistant City Manager. Elaine is convening interdepartmental staff meetings and has invited the LBTF to be at the table.
- Share ideas, photos, files, etc. Discussion of softscape and hardscape ideas, see below.
- Set specific tasks, commitments, goals, timelines
- Next Streetscape sub-committee meeting: Tuesday, October 30, 2012 @7PM–9PM (tentative date)
- Adjourn

SUMMARY

It was a lively meeting in which everyone shared excellent and creative ideas and offered to help the project move forward.

Kathy Solomon will contact the Tree People to see about the possibility of their participation.

Gloria Garvin agreed to contact Nancy Powers about landscaped medians.

Iris Waskow will look into possibilities of grants for trees.

Paul Kaufman suggested the use of gray water to irrigate landscaping on Lincoln. I'm hoping he'll have time to find out more about that.

The whole group agreed to look more closely at trees that may be appropriate on Lincoln – to research, take notes and photos so we'll be educated about this when it comes to the vetting process.

Maria Rodriguez offered to research statistics on traffic accidents on Wilshire before and after the installation of medians.

Kathy Solomon and Paul Bailey will research the use of "green walls" in other cities.

Gloria Garvin will look into the adoption of flower boxes and parkways in other cities.

Roger Swanson will discuss the possibility of a "green wall" along the fence line of Olympic Alternative High School with the principal of the school.

Roger Swanson will find out more about "Mid-Block" lights and crosswalks.

Iris Waskow volunteered to lead the effort to bring public art onto Lincoln. She will discuss this with the Public Arts Council and gather information on public art in other cities.

Roger Swanson offered to gather materials and photos of creative and artistically designed bike racks in other cities.

Wes Thompson said (at the close of the meeting) that he would talk to those in the city in charge of street and sidewalk cleaning and let them know our wishes regarding the cleaning of Lincoln south of the I-10.

Finally, we all agreed to keep our eye on planning and zoning issues that will affect Lincoln Blvd. south of the I-10.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

- Softscape
 - MORE TREES on parkways and medians
 - how many feet apart: 25' - 30'? (This topic wasn't discussed.)
 - install mature trees vs. saplings?
IRIS stated that the size of tree matters; young saplings cost less, but have a poor survival rate. We should push for somewhat mature trees. She shared her experiences with the Borderline Neighborhood Association and trees that were too young not surviving.
 - species of trees on Lincoln?
ROGER stated that the current trees on Lincoln are American Sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) and Brisbane Box [*Lophostemon Confertus*.] He suggested that both of these species would be fine trees if watered and maintained properly.
 - KATHY recommended getting the Tree People involved and offered to write to her friends on the Board.

- KATHY also recommended inviting Nancy Powers, Landscape Designer extraordinaire, to become more involved in our Streetscape committee.
 - GLORIA agreed to contact Nancy Powers.
 - IRIS said it's important to plan for maintenance and irrigation and to install hardy species of trees.
 - CHRISTIAN said that since there are not yet medians on Lincoln, the kind of trees to plant in medians or "islands" may not yet have been decided upon and are essentially up for grabs. We may be able to have some good input here, at least that's the hope.
 - GLORIA said there may be grants available for trees and that the City has encouraged us to pursue this.
 - IRIS said she is willing to look into grant possibilities.
 - PAUL K. suggested that we look into the use of gray water from businesses on Lincoln and that this may give a tax credit. The irrigation of trees and shrubs could be set up to be attractive and functional.
- Landscaped parkways
 - What types of trees, shrubs and flowers for parkways?
 - American Sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) and Brisbane Box [*Lophostemon Confertus*] are currently the species on Lincoln.
If new trees were to be added, what should these be?
GLORIA reported that Elaine Polachek has invited our group to help in the "vetting" process as they plan to install up to 50 new trees on Lincoln as soon as the re-paving of Lincoln is completed, which should be around Thanksgiving. These trees would go into what are now empty or distressed tree-wells.
- Landscaped medians
 - What types of trees, shrubs and flowers for medians?
GLORIA shared ZINA's thoughts and concerns about landscaped medians in other parts of the city.
GLORIA stated that she and PAUL B. had driven Wilshire that afternoon taking photos that indicated no visual obstruction due to trees or other landscaping on the Wilshire Blvd. medians. She also shared research on the dimensions of Wilshire Blvd. compared to Lincoln.
ROGER said that with the new striping for traffic and priority bus lanes on Lincoln there would be plenty of room for appropriate medians.
MARIA offered to research statistics on traffic accidents on Wilshire before and after the installation of medians.
CHRISTIAN AND IRIS discussed the possibility that medians can make a street safer and help streamline traffic.
- "Green" walls
CHRISTIAN asked the group to clarify the concept and purpose of "Green Walls."
PAUL B., KATHY and GLORIA spoke about the green walls in Mexico City and the fact that these had improved air quality there.

NINA asked if other cities had gone as far as to require green walls and what that would mean to Santa Monica.

KATHY and PAUL B. offered to research the topic of green walls and share information with the group.

ROGER brought up the fact that green walls need to be watered and maintained. It was asked, if this were to be done by local businesses or property owners, would the city be able to give them assistance with water bills?

- City/BBB/resident/business/property owner partnership

- “Adopting” tree-wells, flower boxes, medians?

ROGER said that currently it is against city code to plant in tree-wells.

GLORIA mentioned that the city had stated adoption of tree-wells as one possibility for beautification and may waive that part of code if it were done as part of a beautification plan.

PAUL K. said he would follow through on the task of documenting the stretch of Lincoln between Pearl and OP Blvd., east side only, with photographs and pacing out distances between tree-wells.

NINA suggested going online to view Santa Monica Maps. City of Santa Monica: OPIS.

IRIS shared that the Borderline Neighborhood Association tried planting in front of an auto business on Lincoln. They spent their own money and tried hard to make it work, but the project ended up being frustrating and everything died. She suggested that if this kind of “adoption” takes place we would have to be smart and more sophisticated about it than they were; we would need to understand the flow of car and pedestrian traffic and definitely have the city as a partner. There would have to be an overall plan of planting, watering and maintenance. Raised or elevated beds would help as then the plantings wouldn’t be stepped on so easily.

KATHY suggested a partnership with the schools on Lincoln.

ROGER said that there’s a possibility of plantings all along the fence at the Olympic High site. He said he would discuss it with the principal there.

IRIS suggested hardy vines or bougainvillea making that whole block a green wall.

CHRISTIAN said we should start somewhere, even pay someone to put in something beautiful to begin the process. With the city, use a program such as the “Adopt-a Highway” program where sponsors “adopt” part of a highway by either doing the beautification work themselves or by paying someone else to do it.

ROGER clarified city vs. business owner responsibility for maintaining parkways, sidewalks and tree-wells.

NINA suggested getting celebrities involved.

- Hardscape

- Lighted crosswalks, smart crosswalks, art crosswalks

The Streetscape sub-committee had previously agreed that more crosswalks were necessary between the I-10 and the southern city limit.

Crosswalks at intersections are tricky on this stretch of Lincoln because the roads don't always go straight through – such as where Marine and Navy intersect Lincoln, with an offset. Mid-block crosswalks can go in straight lines since they do not have to line up with any existing features.

ROGER discussed the possibility of “Mid-Block” lights such as the one in front of Peets on Main Street - one possible location being Lincoln at Pacific. He will find out more about that through the Transportation and Pedestrian sub-committee.

- Landscaped/irrigated parkways
We agreed that parkways should be landscaped wherever possible and with the landscaping should come irrigation to ensure that the plants survive.
- Landscaped/irrigated medians
Discussed earlier – pros and cons of medians – safety as a first priority. If landscaped medians or “islands” can be constructed in such a way as to not create a safety hazard, then they should be installed as a way to green and beautify Lincoln. Nancy Powers may know more about this.
GLORIA agreed to contact Nancy Powers.
- Install Silva Cells
Silva Cells are excellent means to promote plant growth.
ROGER mentioned that they cost approximately \$7000 each.
- “Green” walls
Discussed above.
- Public art in medians/parkway
IRIS volunteered to lead the effort to bring public art onto Lincoln. She will work with the Public Art Commission. There are lessons to be learned from her experience with the Boarderline Neighborhood Association. There could be competitions by artists who would submit designs. Guidelines could be written up for work that fits the character of the community: fun, quirky, intelligent.
ROGER pointed out that public art can be a “community benefit” and that may be a way to bring art onto Lincoln, but that we would want to be part of the “vetting” process so that we don't end up with an eyesore.
GLORIA added that we should think outside the box. She shared Conor's idea that we could make Lincoln fantastic! Iconic entry portals, gorgeous artwork in every possible aspect from covered bus benches to crosswalks.
- Gateway feature at Ozone/arch/“green” arch/sign/other
IRIS will research public art, including gateway features that work successfully in other areas.
- Iconic gateway feature at Lincoln-I-10 bridge/arch/“green” arch/sign/terminus Route 66 theme

NINA had previously mentioned that Lincoln at the I-10 was the terminus of Route 66 and this theme may be brought into the art at that location. There is some controversy over the precise location of the terminus of Route 66, nevertheless, this theme could be brought into public art at the Lincoln – I-10 intersection. We can check further with the Historic Landmarks Commission on this.

- Public furniture/benches/chairs
GLORIA said this was a good idea and would probably come at a later stage.
- Bike racks - artistically designed
IRIS said that bike racks should not be considered public art.
GLORIA said that this is an item mentioned by the City as a short-mid-range possibility.
ROGER offered to gather materials and photos of creative and artistically designed bike racks in other cities.
- Trash cans - artistically designed – to be discussed
- Traffic control boxes - artistically designed –to be discussed
- Manhole covers - artistically designed – to be discussed
- Bus benches/covered bus stops
ROGER said these were currently being designed and would most likely be installed in the more heavily used bus stops on Lincoln south of the I-10.
- Street lighting - artistically designed – to be discussed
- Pedestrian lighting/sidewalk lighting –artistically designed–to be discussed
- Murals - to be discussed

Steam-cleaning the sidewalks and upgrading street cleaning on Lincoln.

WES said he would talk to those in the city in charge of street and sidewalk cleaning and let them know our wishes regarding the cleaning of Lincoln south of the I-10. He said that street cleaning on Lincoln had already been upgraded to 3 times per week. What some on the Streetscape sub-committee have discussed is a desire for the sidewalks on Lincoln south of the I-10 to be steam-cleaned at least once a week (the Promenade is cleaned nightly); and the street to be cleaned at least 3 times a week.

Zoning issues were discussed, including Development Agreements, Community Benefits and the use of Transfer Development Rights (TDRs) We all agreed on the importance of paying attention to the new zoning ordinance update in Santa Monica.

Books: There are many good books and online resources re: urban planning and streetscape design. Two books that I've found most useful are: [Santa Monica's Urban Forest Master Plan](#) (contact Heidi, Urban Forest office, Clover Park: heidi.said@smgov.net) and [Great Streets](#) by Allan B. Jacobs.

Files: Start anywhere that interests you. Google any of the above listings and start collecting files of ideas, photos, wonderful things that have been done in other cities from Westchester to West Hollywood, Dubai to Mexico City. Share these with the group.

Grants: If you're interested in the \$\$ aspect of what we're doing, go online or to the SM Library to find granting agencies that may fund the installation of trees along Lincoln. Things to remember: Lincoln south of the I-10 is still considered a state highway and there may be state or federal monies available; also, greening up the boulevard may qualify for environmental agency grants.

Liaisons: Reach out to other groups and organizations to see what they're doing and let them know what we're doing. Compile contact information so that we can keep in touch and network.

Dream: Literally, dream, and if anything emerges re: streetscape, write it down, no matter how fantastical it may be. Don't let concerns of practicality or cost hold you back.

Ask yourself: What do I really want to see on Lincoln?

Here are some thoughts that have been expressed by others: cool, hip, low-key, not-glitzy, individualistic, eclectic, old-Santa Monica feeling, relaxed, low-density, safe, clean, beautiful, green, fun, sexy. Bio-swales, clear blue solar panel bus shelters, two-tone pavers and a cleaning/maintenance schedule like the Promenade has where it's steam-cleaned at night. Nice rubbish and recycling bins, mature(ish) trees, attractive pedestrian lights, lovely, comfortable benches and chairs, median and parkway landscaping -- see? Now it's up to at least \$240,000/per block and we've only just begun. We can always scale down later when reality bites.
