

LMU Neighborhood Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

Westchester Senior Center

February 13, 2013

6:30 – 8 p.m.

Attendees: Hampton Cantrell, Clarence Griffin, Cyndi Hench, Nate Kaplan, Erika Kemmerer, Linda Kokelaar, Patricia Lyon, Tony Ramos, Shirley Sher, Jade Smith

Absent: Ross Williams

Committee Members Introduced:

- Clarence Griffin – LMU Director of Community and Government Relations/Co-chair
- Cyndi Hench – Westchester/Playa Neighborhood Council
- Erika Kemmerer – Co-chair/Westchester neighbor
- Nate Kaplan – Representative from Councilman Rosendahl's office
- Linda Kokelaar – Co-coordinator/Westchester neighbor
- Shirley Sher – Westchester neighbor
- Patricia Lyon – Westchester/Playa Neighborhood Council
- Hampton Cantrell – Chief of LMU Public Safety

Guest: Tamara Martin, L.A. Department of Transportation

LMU's Master Plan Compliance Report

Nate Kaplan said he spoke with the L.A. Dept. of City Planning and the compliance report is currently not complete, projecting it to be available in about 1-2 months. Delays include department layoffs, as well as the attention to accuracy the task calls for, as the repercussions for any oversight could be serious. Once the report is available, Kaplan will make it available to LMU for posting on their website.

Completed Master Plan Projects:

- a) Fencing extensions along 78th Street and Fordham: LMU was tasked with this construction to address the issue of students jumping the fence to enter campus, and it is now complete one year ahead of schedule.
- b) Landscaping along McConnell Avenue border: This project is complete with the exception of one outstanding house, which will be addressed separately.

Department of Transportation

- a) Tamara Martin of the L.A. Department of Transportation was introduced to provide facts about the available street parking options, including the establishment of a permit-only district. Nate Kaplan stated that if this option is selected, LMU has agreed to pay \$24,000 each year in residential parking permits. In order for the district to be designated as permit only, 67% of a street block, with a 6 block minimum, needs to be in support of the change. In terms of voting, each resident would equal one house, which is entitled to one vote. Currently a moratorium is in place, and Councilman Rosendahl spoke with the general manager, who said the department would work with the councilman's office to expedite this project.

Martin continued that the request for permit parking is not a guarantee that the request will be granted. Each street must petition for the option and there must be 2/3 support from each block. A parking study will then be conducted to determine the situation. To pass, there must be at least six blocks with 75% of the parked cars from out of the residential area (e.g. commuter vehicles). If the district passes the study, then the reports are submitted and commentary from all involved parties will be heard. Martin stressed the length of the process, citing that just to have preliminary signs created could take a minimum of six months and projected the process could reach completion within a range of 2 to 5 years. Alternate options include designating the district as a 2-hour parking zone. Martin also reminded that either situation does not guarantee parking spaces at all times.

Martin continued explaining that 3 annual parking permits would be provided to each household for \$34.00 each, as well as 2 visitor permits. Daily permit options are also be available for \$2.50.

Erika Kemmerer asked two questions of Martin: a) Would the 6 required blocks have to be contiguous, or can they zig-zag throughout the neighborhood? Martin explained it depends on the size of the district in question, as the borders can extend up to two streets beyond the designated district. b) Can a street initially decline to be part of the district and then later join? Martin explained the district can be made smaller after establishment (streets can be removed from the zone), but it cannot be made larger (streets cannot be added after establishment). She also explained that a street can petition to have the signs removed, which is the same type of process.

Cyndi Hench asked what options are available to streets not initially included in the district, which will then become bombarded with the overflow traffic. Martin explained the same petition process is available.

An audience member wanted to know if students renting in the area would participate in the voting. Martin explained that if students are renting, then they are able to vote.

Public Comment

Patricia Lyon opened the meeting to the public comment portion, calling upon Jean Cassetta, a resident on Loyola Blvd., who asked about the \$24,000 annual contribution from LMU toward the permit parking.

David Griffith, a resident on Gonzaga and 83rd streets, read a newspaper article excerpt from January 2010 explaining parking protocol on the LMU campus. The article explained that the campus offers free parking, but notes that parking permits must be purchased in the future. It was pointed out that Mr. Griffith was referring to a draft version, not the approved version, of the Development Agreement.

Chen Song, a resident on 80th St. and Loyola Blvd. since 2009, offered a cost analysis of the situation. Song explained LMU is the only benefitting party, as the costs to the neighborhood include the inconvenience and the housing value decrease as a direct result of the parking situation. Tensions with students have also compounded the problem, as trash cans have been moved from their designated pick-up locations and cars blocking driveways have been towed. She called the two-year time frame to resolve the problem unacceptable and urged audience members to consider legal action for a quicker solution.

Erick Gerdes, an LMU alum and resident of 70 years on Loyola Blvd. and 83rd St., expressed his disdain for the university, saying LMU is exhibiting bad will toward the community. He echoed Chen Song's suggestion of legal action as a solution, saying a lawsuit would stall the Master Plan for at least a decade.

Robert Engel, a resident on 83rd St. and Gonzaga Ave., complained about the students, citing them as a "public nuisance." Engel said he experiences problems with students every weekend and alluded to student cars potentially being vandalized in the future by aggravated neighbors.

Christina, a resident on 83rd St. and Gonzaga Ave., began by saying she is crying because she is upset by the whole situation. She said she has had a child care center at her home for the past 13 years and the parking situation has forced parents to park blocks away. She has witnessed car crashes at her intersection and has seen vehicles speeding at 50-70 miles per hour down the residential streets. Christina said she fears moving her vehicle and leaving her home, as the parking is so uncertain. She also noted she has not seen the same amount of police presence as previously patrolled the area.

Clarence Griffin introduced Tony Ramos, LAPD Senior Lead Officer, to the audience and advised residents to bring any speeding issues and concerns to the attention of Officer Ramos.

Dan Boyle, an alum of LMU's Graduate School and resident on Loyola Blvd., said he is disgusted with LMU, citing the parking situation, speeding vehicles and constant trash in the vicinity. Boyle asserted that LMU is taking advantage of the disorganized community and said the solution is not permit parking, but for the university to reverse its decision to proceed with its Master Plan.

The audience asked if this new plan to charge for parking was originally included in the Master Plan, to which Clarence Griffin responded that it was.

Dan Boyle questioned if LMU ever asked residents of their opinions of the plan, and Nate Kaplan remarked that Rosendahl met with LMU's President David Burcham asking if the parking fees can be cancelled, to which he was told that was not possible.

Trevor Canlot, a resident of 8327 Loyola Blvd., said he purchased his house for the convenience offered by the location. He said he owns 26 cars in total, but has 3-4 cars at a time at his property, in addition to vehicles of visitors, his partner and others on the street as well. Canlot stated parking was never an issue before now and he does not want to pay to have to park in front of his own house. He explained that his employer, Fox Studios, is required to provide parking for its employees and said LMU should do the same.

An LMU food services employee, said she is upset about the parking charge, which not all employees can afford. She says some of her co-workers have quit as a result, and she has been forced to combine payment with another employee and carpool each day. She says employees are not given a payment plan option for the charge and the situation is completely unfair, saying she agrees with the discontent of the community.

Don Buckwald, a resident of the Playa Vista area across from the main entrance of the university, expressed his concern about Bluff Trail Road, citing it as a dangerous curve that needs the curb to be painted red. Nate Kaplan said it is possible to have the curb painted, or signs posted, and that Buckwald should get in contact with him.

Another food services employee at LMU thanked the committee and said the parking situation has had a largely negative impact on the entire residential community and the university's employees. He said he is a member and representative of the Unite Here Union, a union for food service employees, and cited examples of employees with

median incomes of \$15,000 to \$17,000, annually. These employees cannot readily afford the parking charge and are not granted exceptions or payment plan options, but rather required to pay in full. Workers, according to him, are now at risk and forced to choose between their healthcare insurance charge and the parking charge. He encouraged the community members to join the Union's movement against the university's actions, saying LMU, through this action, is not operating as a community member right now, but rather displaying very bad will.

Jeff Elder, a resident on Gonzaga Ave. and former District 5 representative, thanked Tamara Martin for her presentation, as it provided clarity to the situation. Elder recalled discussing issues spurred by the university ten years ago that never reached a solution, and said this may be a similar situation. He said preferential parking is not the answer and advised that the moratorium be closed, telling community members to educate themselves about the issues. LMU, according to Elder, has a grave PR problem, citing the students' attitudes as a negative impression of the institution. Elder commended Clarence Griffin for holding the community meeting and commended the employees who spoke against the university. He pressed that a solution to the problem is not to threaten vandalism of student cars or use strings of expletives, but to unite as a community with a cohesive voice. He questioned if Councilman Rosendahl would allow stores in the area to charge for parking, and said it would not be permissible and neither should it be permissible for LMU to do so.

Hampton Cantrell said he has about thirty security guards through a contract security company, similar to Sodexo, the food services company also contracted by LMU. Cantrell further explained the security company chose to pay for the parking costs for each employee, so none of the employees were financially impacted.

Sodexo employees stated that they are similarly subcontracted by the university, but they are no less a part of the larger LMU community and should not be unfairly financially impacted.

Lauris Haylor said she is one of the original residents in the area and has heard from outside individuals, such as employees cutting trees and USPS employees delivering mail that the parking situation does not allow for service vehicles to be accommodated on the streets. No one can easily find parking and she stressed that the students are the group that needs to cut back on parking in the neighborhood.

Larry Hunt was called upon, but waived his speaking opportunity.

Larry Engler, a resident since 1991 at 8100 Regis Way and LMU alum, said he likes the university less now because of the students. He notes a difference in the type of student now and said this adds to the mounting issues. Engler said he is not an advocate for permit parking and pointed to Santa Monica as an example of the difficulties of permit parking. LMU has made a mistake and needs to right the situation by reversing the decision and housing the student cars on campus.

Fiona Engler, a master teacher, recounted a recent incident: while hosting members of a St. Monica's High School sports team at her home for a party, one of the parents and students witnessed intoxicated college-aged students vomiting in the street near parked cars. The parent found her vehicle covered in eggs and red cups littered around the area. Engler said she is ashamed of LMU, urging the university to reevaluate not only the Master Plan, but the image being portrayed by the students.

Bryan Johnson, neighbor of the Engler household on Regis Way and thirty-year resident of the community, is an LMU alum and master teacher recently hired by the university. Additionally he is a Presidential Donor and asked if other donors are aware of the costs. He urged the university to make the right decision in resolving the situation and thanked Clarence Griffin for taking back this evening's dialogue to the decision-makers on campus. Johnson also noted that the university's president should attend a community meeting. He said at an upcoming Presidential Donors event, he will be sure to convey the sentiments of the residents to President David Burcham.

Mark Holiday, a resident at 80th St. and Belton Ave., recalled having received an email about the LAX expansion and receiving a called from Nate Kaplan. He asked when were meeting dates, time and place going to be communicated to community members and said the City of L.A. and the university do not operate transparently, thereby not communicating the dates of upcoming meetings. Holiday also noted he is not an advocate of the permit parking option as a solution.

Clarence Griffin advised those who may not have received notice of this evening's meeting, which was announced in the Hometown News, the Argonaut and via email, to write their contact information on the sign-in sheet.

Roberta Frey began by saying the parking situation should not be compared to city services such as trash pickup, but rather parking is far more serious since it leads to delayed emergency response. Frey cited an incident on August 12th at 3:45pm during which paramedics took 15 minutes to arrive at her home when her mother had a medical emergency. The police response time was one hour and both groups commented on the lack of available parking in the street. Frey said she lives in fear of the situation and does

not advocate for a lawsuit because the university will not pay. She said it is unfair to burden the taxpayers and asked Martin why the process would take more than two years if stop signs at intersections with fatalities are quickly installed.

Roger Stephens, a resident on Fordham Ave. between 80th and 83rd Streets, said he is trying to refinance his house and has been informed by an appraiser that the parking situation will decrease the property value, resulting in money lost and no chance of reimbursement.

Kevin Layert asked if the decision is revocable, saying LMU has conducted this process completely backwards. Clarence Griffin responded that LMU is open to community suggestions and willing to listen. He said the first step being taken is assessing the impact on the community and surveying if the community wants permit parking. The audience responded that LMU should presume the community does not want permit parking.

Nate Kaplan assured audience members he will relay the sentiments of the meeting to Councilman Rosendahl, who will then call the university's President Burcham.

Linda Kokelaar said this dialogue is arriving too late and over 1000 signatures opposing the situation have already been gathered. She said the community wants to hear from the university.

Griffin said the university does listen, citing the previous recycling situation and how it has since been resolved to the satisfaction of the community. He said LMU is aware of the discontent and will consider all options.

Shirley Sher said the community demands candor of the university and noted the next committee meeting will be in May.

Kathleen Flanagan, VP for Communications and Government Relations at LMU, said LMU representatives will relay this information to the decision-makers.

Cyndi Hench said the residents are now aware of the financial impact on employees as a result of the parking situation and, once again, urged that parking permits are not the solution.

Shirley Sher mentioned at the last meeting it was suggested LMU close the back gate opening to Loyola Blvd. and asked if the president heard of the suggestion. Griffin stated the gates at 77th St. and Fordham Ave/78th St. have since been closed, however the gate to Loyola Blvd. serves as one of two entrances to the campus and will definitely need to

remain open. Hampton Cantrell said the entrance needs to remain accessible for emergency responders (e.g. fire, police, and paramedics).

An audience member asked for an estimate of how many people (students, faculty, staff, visitors combined) are, on average, on the campus at a given time, to which Kokelaar cited from a report last October the figure of 8,602. The audience member said the parking charge is an attempt at gaining extra profit for the institution, as the small community is being impacted the most.

An audience member said he recalled a community meeting discussion 12 years ago about the university's party buses provided to students, which he says was not resolved. He said LMU is acting arrogantly by not providing the community with answers to their questions, and suggested donors stop giving to the school.

Patricia Lyon surveyed the crowd asking how many residents in the area are in favor of permit parking, to which a resounding no was given. Roberta Frey said she is a proponent of permit parking because she sees it as the only tangible solution at present.

Chris Lynch, a resident on Fordham Ave. and former Neighborhood Council member, reminded the audience that the LMU representatives present do not have any authority over the decision and are solely reporting the information back to the decision-makers. He advised the university to be transparent and to reach out to community members not present, making them aware of the issues at hand. Lynch reminded the audience that no resolution will be reached this evening and to utilize the committee as a conduit to the university.

Kokelaar remarked that the university's borders (Alta Van, Fordham, 80th, 78th) cannot be designated as permit parking areas on the LMU side of the street, as it is considered a business section.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.