

## Neighborhood Liaison Committee

December 11, 2023

In attendance: Rachel Skiffer, Jerry Mullaney, Ana Gomez, Paige Berardo, Anne Purcell, Murali Naidu, Rodney Thompson, Sam Palley, Dylan Strangmeyer and Sean Lavelle

Absent/Invited: CMR Ramachandran, Jason Langkammerer, Amber Childress, David Gross,

Meeting begins at 12:02 pm.

### Introductions

Murali, HRS trustee and Chair of Facilities and NLC opens the meeting. Rachel Skiffer introduces herself, followed by Jerry, Ana, and Paige, all Head-Royce team members. Rod and Anne introduce themselves. Anne mentions that she lives at the back of Alida Court. Sam introduces himself and his team members, Dylan and Sean.

### Start of the School Year

Ana shares that this isn't her first meeting but it is the first in her new role. Her presentation is in keeping with her predecessor's, Mary Fahey. School began on August 21. We have 906 current students enrolled and 370 of those students are riding one of the bus services. This week is finals week for Upper School students and we will conclude the week with our Holiday Program, a great tradition which draws crowds as LS students perform. 11:00 am start of program. School ends at 12:00 pm—a half day. We go on holiday afterwards and are closed until Tuesday January 2, a faculty work day. Classes resume on January 3. There will be some sporting events over holiday break but all will entail on campus parking in Lot F. Looking ahead to January, we are hosting UC Berkeley's Smart and Connected Communities on January 12 at 9:00 am and neighbors are invited. Please send Ana an email and she will send you RSVP instructions. This program aligns with our goals of being a good neighbor.

Anne asks about the Berkeley program. She indicates that neighbors are very concerned about how the school is mitigating the evacuation risk as there is no finalized evacuation plan. Anne notes that perhaps during the lull in between semesters would be a good opportunity to address the plan. She also asks what is the format of the January meeting?

Ana says it's a workshop from 9:30 am–12:30 pm in the Community Room. Different stakeholders will attend but Ana does not know exactly what is being offered.

Jerry responds that HRS shared a draft of the evacuation plan around the time of the hearing of the City Council.

Anne replies that what she wants is a signed off plan. She wants to know what mitigation measures are in place now in lieu of a signed off plan?

Jerry responds that we're implementing everything in that draft plan now. Section about communications and how we're working with local authorities and information sources. Drills as noted in the plan. We had a drill last spring that involved off campus as part of the drill. Vegetation management is in full swing and all components of the draft plan are being addressed.

Anne asks Jerry if it's the same document that their expert reviewed? Then Anne suggests she and Jerry follow up privately about this together. She reiterates the community's concern about fire and the scare they felt as they watched the fire of many years ago pour over highway 24. .

Jerry responds that he's happy to talk offline with her. Jerry asks Anne to share what gaps there were between the draft plan and what she thinks is missing. Anne agrees, noting that it will be time consuming. Jerry assures Anne that he understands what she's saying and how the neighbors feel and takes it very seriously. Jerry notes there has been a lot of progress over the years and that HRS continues to raise the level of preparedness.

Anne asks Ana to share Berkeley plan with them so that they can invite other neighbors.

Murali asks Anne to share gaps in advance of the next meeting to make the next meeting more productive.

Anne says she can share a second opinion letter that the fire expert wrote with the HRS team.

Anne shares neighbor input: A neighbor on Alida Street has seen HRS parents picking up students there in the afternoon. She doesn't know how many students / parents this is as neighbors aren't monitoring it closely but it's something they need to stay on top of so that parents don't start to copy each other. Neighbors need to be able to access their own homes.

Ana says we have ongoing communications with HRS parents; we will remind them of the rules again for when we come back from break.

Murali says he's seen this too but that in his experience the HRS security team is on top of it, shooing parents away.

## **Vegetation Management**

Jerry notes that vegetation management is a key part of the plan but with South Campus construction taking place now, this responsibility has shifted to Cahill as the campus is now

closed for the next 16 months. Tree removals and debris removal are mainly taking place due to construction by Cahill. South Campus is now a separate topic for vegetation management because of the construction.

Our focus is really now on the North Campus and with regards to that, he feels his team is doing a great job. All fire inspections were performed over the summer or by the end of the summer and we passed all of them. Certificates have been copied and filed on the website. Compliance with authorities is 100% up to date. Our bar is now higher than what is required legally; we're keeping vegetation as low as possible and are taking a year-round approach with folks working constantly all over campus. Jerry asks the neighbors if they observe anything that's out of place to please let Ana know.

Rod asks Jerry about the school's strategy for eucalyptus trees. Can Jerry provide an update on plans / timeline for moving forward on that strategy?

Jerry responds that there are some specific trees that he'd like to remove (or reduce the height of) this year but this hasn't happened yet. If we get any weather that makes things look different from what they are now we would address that immediately. Jerry doesn't have specific dates for tree removal but there are trees earmarked for removal..

Rod says Eucalyptus trees are one of the most frequent concerns brought up by neighbors. He asks for continuous updates about the trees in future communications so that he can share that with neighbors.

## **South Campus Update**

Sam notes that Cahill and HRS sent a joint letter at the beginning of the school year with a way to submit questions and concerns along with email and phone contact info.

Cahill has received 5 complaints so far including the one from Anne a few months ago. Each has been addressed immediately. Sam says he felt appreciation from neighbors for the quick response. One was about changing the fence color from orange to gray which was completed. Another wanted ivy plant to be protected. There was a dust complaint. A desire for a fence to remain, which it has. And one complaint was about the flashing blue lights from the security camera. November 3 was the date of the last complaint. Noise monitoring is still ongoing and nothing they have done has exceeded the threshold.

Rod asks about the annoying safety beeping sound of construction equipment. Are those sounds required? Sam responds yes, they are, and it comes up on every project. The sounds cannot be disabled. If you hear them early in the day (before 7:00 am) please let them know but otherwise the sound must remain.

Sam notes that the tree removal has been done. There might be one or two more to come out but abatement is complete on all buildings to be demolished. Abatement continues on 2 buildings to remain. Abatement is one of the big items noise-wise.

One building is awaiting PGE before being demolished.

Moving forward with the site being cleared, they will begin grading, storm drain, retaining walls, and utilities. Work is starting on the east side and working west. They will reinforce historical structures to support the exterior of the building while they remove the entire interior and redo the structure. Neighbors shouldn't hear too much, Sam notes, because that work is interior. That concludes the building update.

Rod asks, with weather being forecast, what are your projected construction hours between now and the next meeting in mid May? Are there any anticipated extended periods for not expecting to have construction occur?

Sam responds that if heavy rains are predicted, there won't be construction. The team also has time off for the holidays: Christmas Day and New Years Day they are off. Otherwise, Monday through Friday from 7:00 am–4:00 pm are their regular construction hours. They will work continuously without break barring any weather.

Rod asks how heavy the rain has to be for construction to stop.

Sam responds that rain is always a challenge. In general, they will try to make the call the day before but it's really a day-by-day call. They can almost always make the call to work or not the day before based on projected rainfall. However, all ops happening within the buildings will continue because those spaces are watertight; only earthwork will be canceled due to rain.

Rod asks how far in advance do they forecast working on a Saturday.

Sam responds that they have no plans to work Saturdays. He is 95% sure that work outside is not allowed outside on Saturday but work inside could still occur. This has not happened yet but if it did, it would be very quiet. However, he repeats, they have no plans to work on Saturdays.

Rod asks, is it to circulate times when anticipated extreme noise periods will happen to people who live within a couple hundred feet? Rod says folks would like to know when big construction days are going to happen, week by week.

Jerry asks Sam if we could alert neighbors ahead of time during anticipated times of higher noise?

Rod is appreciative of this suggestion, If there's a way to communicate that in advance they would love to know. People who work from home and so forth would really like to know.

Sam responds that perhaps they could provide construction updates on the website along with project updates. He can coordinate with Jerry and Ana offline to plan ahead and share via website.

Sam notes that it is the west property line where work will be close to the property line. When that happens, Sam would absolutely let folks on the property line know ahead of time. Sam says they don't anticipate any high noise, but could provide those types of updates.

Jerry questions how the neighbors would know if the website was changed?

Rod appreciates that this is a good idea; it would still be beneficial and helpful to neighbors.

Murali says we're not going to make everyone happy but making info available it would be great no matter what.

Anne asks Ana, what are the hours of the Friday holiday celebration? Ana responds 10:00-11:00 am and 12:00-1:00 pm will be the highest traffic periods.

## **Communication Ideas**

Murali asks about the next meeting location and whether folks would like to meet in person or Zoom?

Rod has mixed feelings about Zoom vs in person; parking and security concerns. Personally he'd love to do it in person at least once a year. Maybe in the spring.

Murali thinks security and parking would be easy and a non issue given so few people would attend and most of the neighbors could simply walk over.

Anne would love the next one to be in person. She'd be fine with that.

Murali suggests we reach out in advance to see how we feel before the next one.

Murali ask Rod and Anne, what can we do to facilitate communication from HRS to the neighbors? Discussion ensues about HRS distributing a letter to Rod and Anne's contacts or having them forward any communications from the school. They would prefer to keep neighbors' contact information private. Jerry notes that our letters go out to all folks who live within 300 feet of the campus.

Rod asks if they could distribute the process for submitting a complaint to their contacts. He says they could help broaden the communication by sharing out to their own contacts.

Jerry says he'll forward Rod the electronic version of what was sent (complaint process) for Rod to forward.

Ana shares that there's a newsletter for neighbors called Neighbor Notes and one was sent out a couple weeks ago and you can subscribe to it.

Anne says she and Rod should redistribute the neighbor notes.

Rod says If we are able to put anticipated construction activity on the website – just anything out of the ordinary (in partnership with Cahill) it would be good to know. He will work to make neighbors aware of that info.

### **Closure and follow up**

- Anne and Jerry need to connect about gaps in fire expert report. Anne to send Jerry info from second fire expert
- Construction schedules posted on website
- Email copies of letter about complaint process and neighbor notes to Anne and Rod
- Next meeting aim to do in person.
- Ana to share info about Berkeley meeting on the 12th with Anne.

The meeting was adjourned.