

LHA Annual Meeting 11/10/16

Present

Directors: Peter Turner, Liz Sterns, Ron Shapiro, Jack Backus, Chris Metcalfe

Staff: Lisa Ray, Patty Montmorency

The meeting was called to order at 7:32pm by LHA President Peter Turner. Peter introduced the first speaker, City Administrator Sabrina Landreth. Sabrina grew up in the neighborhood – her kids are 5th generation Crocker Highlanders and attend Crocker Highlands School, as did she.

Sabrina has had a very busy couple of nights since the national election, dealing with protests downtown. She considers herself the “Chief Bureaucrat” and prefers to work behind the scenes. Oakland has a strong mayor form of government and the city’s department heads report to Sabrina. The Assistant Police Chief reports to her because we currently do not have a chief. This means that Sabrina is spending more of her day with OPD. After her morning check in with the mayor, she heads over to the Police Administration building. Sabrina shares that they have just closed the recruitment period for a new chief and she is very excited about the candidates and hopes there will be an appointment by the end of this year and the new OPD Chief starting early 2017.

OPD is on the cutting edge, technologically speaking. Officers started wearing body cameras 4-5 years ago and continue to work on analyzing data about police stops using the body-cam video. OPD has also been featured at the White House for innovative practices. Violent crime is significantly down and Oakland is on track for the lowest homicide rate in a decade.

The city has a \$2 billion budget and a \$600 million infrastructure bond just passed that will be used for street repairs. Without the bond, an Oaklander born today could have gone their entire lifetime never seeing their street repaired.

The issue of homelessness is one affecting all 14 cities in the county. City staff is frustrated – the city has spent a lot of money to clear encampments only to have homeless move back in. This population needs additional services, like mental health and substance abuse programs and there is no place to rehouse people. City & county bonds were passed to address the 1400 homeless on our streets. There is an experimental camp of 40 people at 35th and Peralta that is providing outreach and limited services. We need to be willing to try new approaches to this issue – Sabrina is willing to listen to all ideas. One possibility is a partnership with Laney College to build and place tiny houses.

Sabrina then took questions from the attendees: Q: How can citizens extend the career of the new police chief? A: We need to hire for the right reasons. Sabrina is hopeful that the perfect candidate is in the current pool, but city will wait for right candidate. Age is a factor and

we are looking for stability. A new police commission was voted for on Tuesday and we still have federal oversight from court case 13 years ago.

Q: What are the conditions / climate for long term success for the new chief? A: we are asking a lot of this person and this is a tough time for law enforcement in this country. The new chief should be given space to do their job.

Q: It seems that property taxes are on the rise – shouldn't we be shifting this to big business? A: The budget is almost \$2 million, but very little of this is from sales tax. We have gas stations, Walgreens and auto sales, but we need to build our retail base. The Oakland business license tax needs tweaking and the cannabis industry has potential.

Q: Will large companies coming into Oakland, like Uber, improve the tax numbers? A: Uber has independent drivers who will pay taxes, not Uber. There are other large employers coming to Oakland who have been priced out of SF.

Q: Is Oakland doing anything to develop our retail base? A: Small business is a large factor here, with the Fruitvale district the #1 area in town. We need to grow them with support from the city council. There is a large amount of retail space in development, both uptown and downtown, but it remains to be seen whether the new spaces will be utilized.

Sabrina can be reached at her email address: slandreth@oaklandnet.com

The next speaker was our District 2 Councilperson, Abel Guillen. Abel agreed with Sabrina that the week after the national election had been a rough week. He met with merchants this morning who are resilient, but want property protection. He is hopeful for the youth of Oakland and the future of the city. Although there was an 18% cut this year for Head Start funding, Abel is elated that Measure KK passed and recognizes the challenge of using the money wisely.

The city has a goal of building 17,000 new residences, with a focus on downtown areas near BART. The council has voted to move forward with development of the 12th street parcel as mixed income housing - \$18 million from the state will be approved mid-November. Re-development of the Kaiser Center – to be renamed Oakland Civic Center – is also seeing progress. The plan, designed by a District 2 resident, includes keeping the theater and providing a home for the arts while converting fifty thousand feet of space to commercial and retail use.

Public and pedestrian safety are issues Abel and his Chief of Staff, Richard Raya, continue to address. There is a committee discussing traffic concerns on Park Blvd. and methods to slow traffic. Breaking the project into 3 corridors, meetings are being held to gather neighbor input and residents can also send letters to Abel and city planning office. Abel then took questions from the audience:

Q. How does Abel communicate with District 2 residents?

A. Via Facebook, email newsletter and door-to-door.

Q. With the addition of lighted crosswalks, has pedestrian safety improved?

A. There is a high demand for more of these crosswalks and hopes that Measure KK funds will be allocated for this purpose.

Q. Will Measure KK funds be used for public housing?

A. No, of the \$600 million from KK, \$100 million will go towards housing displaced residents. The funds are to be spent on streets and roads, but can also be used to buy buildings. Oakland stands to receive \$90 million from the county for affordable housing and the city will partner with other groups to manage these funds.

Q. How many of the planned 17 thousand units are for SRO vs. other housing?

A. Not sure yet – no formula has been set.

Q. I live along the bus route and there are many potholes.

A. I work with Sabrina's office to address these issues – email me!

Q. Can you give us the housing #'s and timeframes for completion?

A. Yes, 17 thousand units will be built over the next 10 years. There will also be protections put in place on 17k existing units to avoid displacing residents. In 2014, there were 550 thousand new jobs, but only 50 thousand housing units as of 18 months ago.

Q. Is Oakland having a hard time attracting developers?

A. It depends on the developer. Some need assurances to invest here – there will be a new 30 story building on the Merchants Garage site.

Q. Is the city still tweaking the Grand Ave road diet?

A. Yes! There has been an increase in bicycle traffic and you can expect a change in early 2017 including new painting.

Q. What are the impacts of our sports teams leaving the city?

A. Not much. The teams don't pay rent on time and Oakland cannot spend \$1 billion to build a new stadium. The A's are committed to staying in Oakland!

To reach Abel, you can call him directly 510)205-9307 or email abel@abelforoakland.com

LHA President Peter Turner then provided an update on LHA. LHA will have a new Board member beginning in January and this will be Peter's last year on the Board. Interested members should consider throwing their name into the hat in September. Some of the issues addressed by LHA recently include:

- Repaving of 580 – while causing significant concerns for LHA members, had a better than expected outcome because both LHA & Abel interacted with Caltrans.
- Secondary Unit Ordinance – which could have impactful changes in LHA, most likely will not due to the economic impact of adding a 2nd unit
- Dilapidated homes within LHA – there are 2 common causes for these scenarios which can be economic or mental health issues. We continue our efforts to stay on top of these situations.

Peter then introduced the Committee Chairs and Board members, starting with Neighborhood Preservation, chaired by Jack Backus. NP works to create a dialogue between neighbors – the committee members are professionals and work to assist homeowners with design and preservation challenges and provide free advice!

The Parks Committee is chaired by Chris Metcalfe and meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month and also meets for park work days several times a year. Chris spoke about the work that's been done this year on the Sequoias in Carlston Triangle and also the tree maintenance in Oak Grove. Plum Patch will be updated in 2017-2018 and the committee is interested in design ideas. Chris invites all members to enjoy and walk through the parks – they are beautiful and there for you to enjoy.

If you're interested in the work of any committee, please join us.

Treasurer Liz Sterns shared that the dues will be going up \$7 to \$182 for 2017 – this works out to about 50 cents a day. To help LHA reduce mailing costs, please provide us with your email address. Annual packets and disclosures will be sent out in December. If you have any questions regarding the budget information that you receive, please contact Liz or Patty.

Ron Shapiro, chair of the Membership Committee, will be resigning this year, but has accomplished a lot in 2016. He has improved our communications, sent out a survey and organized many fun events this year. In 2017, we plan to redesign the website and increase our email communications. LHA's 100th Anniversary is coming up in October of 2017 and we will need help with lots of things – sign up if you have time.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:07pm.