NORWALK- LA MIRADA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

District Advisory Committee (DAC)
Chavez Elementary & El Camino Continuation High School Properties
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 1, 2024 – 4:00 PM

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:
Gema Rodriguez
Sonia Linares
Jennifer Amador
Elizabeth Jaimes
Anthony Armendarez
Martha Jauregui
Carlos Barajas
Marco Sanchez

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:
David Olea
Fernando Salazar
Janet Kang

1. **PRELIMINARY**
   a. The meeting was called to order by Rob Jacobsen.
   b. Jennifer Sun took roll call and Rob declared that a quorum had been established and that the meeting can continue.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
   Sonia Linares led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**
   Before hearing the Public Comments, for the record, Rob Jacobsen shared the agenda topics.

   Public in attendance thanked the Committee for their Recommendations for both sites. One commenter asked if the property was sold, could the District keep the developer from having it re-zoned. Rob thanked him for his question and advised that it would be noted for the Meeting Minutes. A virtual commenter asked that the Committee consider "market-value" homes and also asked for an Environmental Impact Report. Board Member, Dr. Robert Cancio, addressed the Committee and spoke on the importance of the integrity of the communities, population and how it affects property, and keeping the integrity of the jurisdiction of the District, its shareholders and stakeholders.

4. **REVIEW OF MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING**
   Sonia Linares asked for clarification on the Community Group Motion for the El Camino site. Rob directed her to Page 2 to show that the Motion failed.

Rob mentioned that in an attempt to capture what the Committee's wants, he pointed out that the option to Lease Chavez to a Community Group as a Number One Priority was voted down on Page 4 but on Page 3 it's voted 8/1 up. The focus today is to ensure the Recommendation Report reflects what the Committee would like it to reflect.

Gema Rodriguez asked who voted for Status Quo and Rob mentioned that it was not captured but the vote was 6 for and 2 oppose.

After review of the Minutes, Anthony Armendarez motioned to approve, Martha Jauregui seconded the motion and all were in favor of approving the Minutes of the March 20, 2024 Meeting.

5. REVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS & APPROVAL OF REPORT

Sonia Linares motioned to review and Anthony Armendarez seconded the motion. Rob advised that the floor is open for discussion on the Recommendation Report.

Sonia asked if context could be added for Chavez such as concern of traffic increase and safety of the students across the street, general lack of green space in the area, and that this is an underserved community, and for the El Camino site the environmental impact on the neighborhood, the traffic, and the compatibility for the area. Rob suggested seeking consensus on each concern separately.

Sonia proposed adding on the Summary that the Committee did not want to have apartments be developed on the Chavez site. Rob pointed out that at the last meeting, the Committee did not reach consensus on this, Page 2 of the Minutes shows 4 for and 5 oppose; motion failed.

Sonia Linares then motioned to include a **note that the Recommendation was made because there was concern of increased traffic and safety of the students attending the middle school across the street from the Chavez site**. Elizabeth Jaimes seconded the motion. Sonia Linares, Elizabeth Jaimes, Jennifer Amador, Carlos Barajas, and Gema Rodriguez voted for this motion. Anthony Armendarez and Martha Jauregui opposed (5/2). Please note that Marco Sanchez was not present to vote at this time.

Sonia Linares motioned to **add context on the reasoning for open space in that particular tract as it is considered an underserved community according to the US Census and that it is in the 92nd percentile for lack of green space within 2-miles**. Gema Rodriguez seconded the motion. Sonia Linares, Gema Rodriguez, Elizabeth Jaimes, Jennifer Amador, and Carlos Barajas voted for this motion. Anthony Armendarez, Marco Sanchez and Martha Jauregui opposed (5/3). Carlos Barajas expressed concern of the terms "green space" and "open space". There was some discussion and Rob mentioned that he would use "green space" in the Report.

Carlos Barajas motioned for clarification on El Camino being "market-rate" single family homes. Sonia Linares seconded the motion. Carlos Barajas, Sonia Linares, Elizabeth Jaimes, and Jennifer Amador voted for this motion. Anthony Armendarez, Marco Sanchez, Gema Rodriguez and Martha Jauregui opposed (4/4).

Sonia clarified that the Chavez site is in the 92nd percentile for lack of green space and 98th percentile for traffic proximity and volume.

Carlos asked for clarification on the term "single family homes" and if that included townhomes. Rob advised that it does not include townhomes.

Elizabeth Jaimes motioned to **change the Summary of District Advisory Committee Meetings for Chavez, Item 3 to strike "auditorium" and insert "site"** with regards to a performing arts center use. Sonia Linares seconded the motion. Elizabeth Jaimes, Sonia Linares, Gema Rodriguez, Jennifer Amador, Carlos Barajas, Anthony Armendarez, and Marco Sanchez voted for this motion. Martha Jauregui opposed (7/1).

Martha Jauregui shared the City of Norwalk's Heart of Norwalk City Plan dated July 1, 2021 that shows zoning with Chavez as R-3. Rob clarified that R-3 is higher density apartment housing. Martha further mentioned that the Plan shows that the City wants to utilize Chavez as a park or a school. Rob restated that the role of the District Advisory Committee per Ed Code. It's to address whether or not we need these properties for school purposes and if we don't, what is the use we'd like to see. Yes, the City also has a say in this. Should the Board vote to lease or sell these properties, keeping in mind the recommendations from the District Advisory Committee, there would still be a process where the City has a say as to whether or not the use conforms to City plans or zoning which is a separate process that happens with the developer and the City. Depending on how the District puts out the Request for Proposal, the District can say, these are the uses we'd like to see, and/or seek a waiver that restricts the uses that the District/Committee feels should not be done. Rob noted the City does not designate/build schools, the School District does. He called for a recess so that copies of the Plan that Martha was referring to could be made available to the other Committee members.

The meeting was called back to order at 4:55 PM. Martha had identified two pages to be copied and distributed to the members. They are Page 3 of the Heart of Norwalk Vision Plan adopted July 6, 2021 that shows Chavez within a designated area on a map and Page 51 of the Heart of Norwalk Specific Plan Update dated February 20, 2024 that depicts Chavez's Current Zoning as R-3. After further discussion Rob stated City involvement is outside of the DAC process and suggested that the Committee get back to the Recommendation Report.

Anthony Armendarez posed a question for Sonia about the "lack of green space within a 2-mile radius of Chavez" and pointed out that Holifield Park is 1.1 mile from Chavez. Sonia replied that she was just going off of the parameters that are given on the screening tool for the census.

Sonia motioned to **note that Chavez is in a position to receive State funded grants because it is considered a disadvantaged tract under the US Census and meets more than eight burdens associated with the socioeconomic threshold for the area**. Gema Rodriguez seconded the motion. Sonia Linares, Gema Rodriguez, Elizabeth Jaimes, Jennifer Amador and Carlos Barajas voted for this motion. Anthony Armendarez, Marco Sanchez, and Martha Jauregui opposed (5/3).

Jennifer Amador questioned and motioned for the **phrase used on the last page of the Recommendation Report in that El Camino should be "disposed of" and motioned for it to be changed to "used"**. Sonia Linares seconded the motion. Jennifer Amador, Sonia Linares, Elizabeth Jaimes, Gema Rodriguez, Carlos Barajas, Anthony Armendarez, and Marco Sanchez voted for this motion. Martha Jauregui opposed (7/1).

Elizabeth Jaimes motioned to **include in the DAC Conclusion and Recommendations that Chavez was previously declared surplus property**. Sonia Linares seconded the motion. Elizabeth Jaimes, Sonia Linares, Jennifer Amador, Gema Rodriguez, Carlos Barajas, Anthony Armendarez, and Marco Sanchez voted for this motion. Martha Jauregui opposed (7/1).

Sonia Linares motioned to **add commentary to the Summary for the El Camino property stating that there was strong community input for no apartments**. Elizabeth Jaimes seconded the motion. Sonia Linares, Elizabeth Jaimes, Jennifer Amador, Gema Rodriguez, Carlos Barajas, and Anthony Armendarez, voted for this motion. Marco Sanchez and Martha Jauregui opposed (6/2).

Jennifer Amador motioned to **approve the District Advisory Committee Report and Recommendations for Chavez Elementary and El Camino Continuation High Schools with the changes passed this day**. Sonia Linares seconded the motion. Jennifer Amador, Sonia Linares, Elizabeth Jaimes, Gema Rodriguez, Carlos Barajas, Anthony Armendarez, and Marco Sanchez voted for this motion. Martha Jauregui opposed (7/1).

6. PUBLIC HEARING ON APPROVED RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEE

a. Member of the Whittier community had asked if there was a possibility that if the El Camino property is sold, can the District insert language so that it can only be developed as it's currently zoned for (RA-6000). Rob responded stating that the recommendation is for lease for post-secondary adult education, and sale to develop single family homes and that the Committee only recommends priority of uses.

b. Joseph Trevizu shared his thoughts on transparency for Chavez and suggested continuing for one meeting, and communicating with the City regarding their zoning plan for the site. As a member of the South Whitter community, he agrees with what the previous commenter had to say about no apartments/townhomes. He also shared that there was a Project Room Key hotel that was made in his community that was left abandoned and now there are homeless people who need help roaming the streets. He feels that market rate homes would be in the best interest of the El Camino community. Rob summarized Joseph's suggestions and pointed out the City's role. The Committee needs current zoning information to make a recommendation and it's already been established that the zoning for Chavez is as we thought. Joseph responded saying that it's in the purview of the Committee to know if it will be rezoned in the future and to decide based off of that. He asks that the Committee go back to the City and ask clearly if they plan at any time to rezone this area and states that the Committee could make a better, more informed decision when they know that information. Rob noted that the recommendation of the Committee is to create green space. There may be future plans the City will turn it into green space as indicated by the Heart of Norwalk documents. That aligns with the recommendation of the current Committee Report.

c. Jesse Torres shared that he knows that the Committee is looking at the best economic uses for these spaces and so for Chavez, he wanted to stress the economic benefits of a walkable park space. According to Smart Growth America's 2019 Foot Traffic Ahead Report, on nearly every level, analysis shows there are economic benefits to walkable communities. High walkability often correlates to improved social mobility, so there's an equity component to that which would fit well with the surrounding Chavez site community; which is lower income and higher renters. That same research shows that 6 of the top 10 cities, in terms of social equity rankings, are also the ones with the highest percentage of walkable urban spaces. According to the Engineering & Design Firm ARUPs Report, Cities Alive, walkable environments are not just healthier but also wealthier. Research has shown positive correlations between improved walkability, raised local retail sales, enhanced value of local services and goods, and the creation of more jobs. In the same report there is also research

showing that a dense walkable urban network helps with foot traffic for local businesses and if it's decided to use Chavez as a mixed park space, it could help with that. Besides all of these economic benefits, there's also academic benefits for the District's students. Park space can offer opportunities for outdoor learning, which has shown to have measurable emotional academic and well being benefits. With outdoor programs and learning opportunities, he believes this will lead to long term economic benefits which is good reason to have a park at the Chavez Elementary site.

With no further commenters, Rob advised that the Committee may discuss the input from the Public Hearing. Sonia asked if the colleges and/or universities mentioned previously would be contacted to give notice of the possible lease or sale of these properties. Rob stated that it is not planned for at this time. He mentioned that a presentation of the final report would be made for the Board to show what the Committee has done and their recommendations, which will be publicly noticed. He mentioned that the recommendations are not binding on the Board but they will consider them carefully and at some point, decide what they want to do. Sonia mentioned giving adequate notice so that potential users may be able to bid for or show interest in leasing the site. Rob said that he would communicate with the District's Public Information Officer to publish on social media, the webpage, and others as said in the Ed Code.

Rob declared the Public Hearing section closed.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Anthony Armendarez motioned to adjourn and Sonia Linares seconded the motion. All were in favor.