

# **Mar Vista Community Council Renters' Engagement Subcommittee (RES) Meeting Minutes**

**August 31st, 2019**

## **1. Call to order at 1:05pm**

- 1.1. Co-chairs in attendance: Annie Bickerton and Tyler Laferriere
- 1.2. Additional community members: Michael Millman, Kathryn Wheeler, Adriana De La Cruz, Stacey Shure, Ashley Zeldin

## **2. Announcements**

- 2.1 Co-Chair Introductions: Tyler Laferriere and Annie Bickerton
- 2.2 Board of Directors introductions, as necessary

## **3. Public Comment for Items NOT on This Agenda**

### **3.1. Question from Adriana de la Cruz: is there going to be an in person meeting or mixer with renters?**

Answer; we've had the idea of doing an in person focus group or information gathering, but nothing set yet. Want to understand the demographics of renters and their needs. Eg. UCLA grad housing in Mar Vista has its own tenant organizing effort. We don't know what we don't know so we'd like to know what kind of outreach to do and whether renters want to be engaged in the community at all. Desire to get more data about renter population. Best info we have is an LA Times article from 2010. Building reciprocity with renter community: want to reach renters but also want to hear how the MVCC can best serve community members.

## **4. Reading and Approval of Minutes – None**

## **5. Unfinished Business and General Orders – None**

## **6. New Business**

### **6.1 Renters' Engagement Subcommittee Mission Statement**

Proposed mission statement: The purpose Renters' Engagement Subcommittee of the Outreach Committee to maximize awareness of the activities of the Council and its committees among Mar Vista's renters and renter stakeholders; improve and reinforce renter engagement; and ensure renters' knowledge of and access to MVCC resources pertinent to their living situation.

Comments from attendees:

Comment from Michael Millman: The community has long felt that it has underserved the community known as renters. RES subcommittee has an opportunity to be broader and more inclusive. Could the subcommittee serve renters and housing providers? Believes the

subcommittee should be under PLUM. Suggests it be called something like Mar Vista Housing. Can hear landlord's perspectives as part of the conversation. 'Housing is essential to Mar Vista. In order to understand housing needs for renters, this committee is established to promote the exchange of ideas by both constituencies.

Adriana de la Cruz: How does he propose this get moved to PLUM?

Michael Millman believes that renters did not participate because they are transient, they are in buildings with security/gates and aren't reachable by leaflets, and most candidates come out of the homeowners associations. Renters engaged around the potential retrofit costs. Would be helpful to hear from landlords what their turnover is like.

A.C. do you see the role being to advocate or intermediate between tenants and landlords?

Michael: no, focus is on housing.

Tyler: The work of this ad hoc committee could end in a recommendation to create a housing committee under PLUM that engages renting community (occupants and landlords). AB: we see the need for info gathering before that conclusion is reached.

Michael: Homeowners want less congestion, less parking in front of their house, less homeless. They are already involved.

Ashley Zeldin: as a renter, I didn't know about MVCC until this year in spite of living in the community for 8 years. We need more channels to inform renters about how to get involved.

Michael: would like RES to be able to pass a resolution that PLUM can consider when an issues that specifically affects rental community.

AB: What I am hearing is that you are asking the MVCC to inform other committees about renters' needs. For example, Stacey Shure asked us to gather some information about renters.

Stacey: other NC boards have direct representation from renters. Eg. other councils have a position that is the renters board member. Given the proportion of renters, thinks it would make sense for Mar Vista to incorporate RES as a full committee. This is one of the few populations in MV that is affected by every committee. Want to see if this works as a way to increase engagement from the renter population. Wants our mission statement to reflect the representation we are providing in all the needs they have. We can't lobby but want us to be seen as representatives in the community.

Tyler: Michael's message is that engaging landlords could also be effective. Stakeholder owners. Landlords are hesitant to participate because of division around housing issues and they perceive themselves to be in opposition to NCs. Councilmember's office has been trying to bring landlords to the table to negotiate housing needs.

Stacey: is only under PLUM, we are limited to planning, land use, management. It would cause difficulties to house under PLUM. She thinks it is worthy of a committee of its own.

We need to let RES be innovators and explore. Suggest that we attend most committees to ask for renter-specific feedback on issues.

Add a mention of “those providing housing and utilizing rental housing”

“Housing is important to Mar Vista. To best promote outreach to and engage renters and housing providers,”

Michael: We don’t want to sound like we are from Oakland or Berkeley or Santa Monica or West Hollywood. Need to make this more vanilla.

Stacey: working with small landlords to propose a pilot project that is in collaboration. Would like to see renters and landlords working together to improve situation.

A.C.: what is the original intention?

Tyler: There is an obvious lack of representation from the renter committee. The best way to engage is through outreach. First effort is to understand who these people are and how to engage them. Step 1 is mission statement and step 2 is programs to engage.

Stacey: we should engage all committees that deal with the landlord and rental community. Goal is to engage rental community in matters of the MVCC.

Tyler proposes: “The mission of the Renter’s Engagement Subcommittee of the Outreach Committee is to best encourage and promote outreach to and engagement with the rental community (renters and housing providers) in the Mar Vista Community Council and its committees.”

Tyler moves to amend, Ashley seconds

Abstain: Kathryn Wheeler

Motion passed 6-0-1

Tyler moves to pass: Adriana seconds

Abstain: Kathryn Wheeler

Motion passed 6-0-1

**6.2 Development of Mar Vista Renters’ Questionnaire** – Discussion and possible action regarding the creation of a Mar Vista Renters’ Questionnaire, including the types of questions and plan for deployment. Development of this tool should consider sampling biases, especially in the scope of its deployment.

Examples of questions could include:

- a) What renters know about the MVCC;
- b) Why they do/don't engage;
- c) How we can make the MVCC more engaging (accessible) to renters;
- d) How they'd like to hear from us;

e) What their greatest concerns are in the community that relate to the MVCC's responsibilities.

Discussion:

Stacey: Created a digital questionnaire link, emails from MVCC chairs, posted to social media including Twitter, FB, NextDoor. Four months to provide input and continue to accept ongoing input. Considered making signs, wishes they did. Cannot make it compulsory to provide name or address.

Michael: How do you know that someone isn't pretending to be a renter?

Stacey and Mary set up tables at Vons and Ralph's and stood in front of supermarkets to hand out questionnaires. Ask for volunteers but may not get help.

Tyler: it seems clear that everyone present is interested in the idea, but wants to know about execution.

Stacey: suggest we prepare the questionnaire, then pass a motion to approve in its form at the next committee.

Some NCs provide childcare on occasional Saturdays. Read a recent article about low civic participation because of lack of childcare.

Discussion topics of interest from others:

- AZ: concern is that it could be too long, don't want people to tune out
- SS: what times/locations would be more accessible
- MM: add some engaging questions to motivate engagement? Qs about housing
- SS: transportation
- AZ: term of lease?
- SS: would you like to remain as a MV resident? Why or why not?
- AZ: child care needs? Is transportation a barrier? LA Now availability for meetings?
- TL: asking about rent burden - do you pay 30% or more of income?
- AZ: What kind of apt do you live in and with how many people?
- SS: have a disability?
- MM: have pets?
- MM: parking sufficient?
- AC: do you know what a neighborhood council is? Do you know about MVCC? Then explain in next question.
- AZ: would you be willing to answer some questions about your housing situation? Sign up here.
- AC: perhaps provide a cover page to give back story on the reason for the questions. And provide info on the next meeting of the subcommittee to request participation.

MM: the #1 question is how do we get Mike Bonin recalled?

SS: could have a place on the website to seek feedback.

MM: should request money to put an ad in the Argonaut or elsewhere to promote responses.

SS: moves that funds be appropriated by the board not to exceed \$500 for the placement of an ad to inform the community about an RES questionnaire.

Seconded by Tyler.

Passed 6-0-1

AZ: Submit an article to neighborhood associations also

6.3 Renters' Preferences Survey – Discussion and possible action regarding potential collaborative survey between the RES and the Mar Vista Community Council (MVCC) Planning and Land Use Management (PLUM) committee regarding renters' preferences for building amenities. The sorts of information included in this survey would include, but not be limited to, mobility amenities; green or ecological amenities; proximity to certain types of retail, etc.

SS: Survey goal is to help establish design guidelines for rental housing in MV. PLUM gives developers the community preferences. Would go to the board as either a motion in Outreach or a co-motion. Asking us to help inform a questionnaire. Working committee on weekends to develop questionnaire. Flow to PLUM to be included in their design guidelines

No vote required. RES invited to attend.

AC: can email feedback be provided? Yes, as long as it is not consensus building via email.

Tyler and Annie are on board to participate.

SS: when a developer comes forward before plans and permits, want to give clear guidance.

What size for spaces in rental units is more important? What are the #1 features you want to see?

Activation of community on ground floor vs. rooftop space.

Questions about parking: how many spaces per unit

Bike rooms

Storage in or out

Mail delivery space

Permit parking

Dishwasher

Laundry

Sustainability features

EV car charging - required in new developments

Drought resistant landscaping

Choice of commercial amenities on ground floor that you would use

Outdoor space

Likelihood to take stairs vs elevator

Recycling - containers

Compost

SS: Collapse of recycling market in China and domestic recycling services in NJ and NY has led to need for increased local recycling infrastructure.

MM: Tenants are more cognizant of utilities when they are required to pay for them (including water, trash, etc.)

Tyler and Annie will report this request from participation from PLUM to the Outreach Committee and collect feedback during the course of this process.

Meet at picnic benches if can't secure a room.

7. Adjournment at 2:55pm.