



Laura McLennan <laura.mclennan@lacity.org>

Fwd: this is the article about the hearing

1 message

Debbie DynerHarris <debbie.dynerharris@lacity.org>
To: Laura McLennan <laura.mclennan@lacity.org>

Mon, Aug 22, 2016 at 3:35 PM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Martha Hertzberg**

Date: Mon, Jul 25, 2016 at 2:10 PM

Subject: this is the article about the hearing

To: Debbie DynerHarris <debbie.dynerharris@lacity.org>, mike bonin <mike.bonin@lacity.org>, Tricia Keane <tricia.keane@lacity.org>

this is a segment taken from an article by Howard Fine that was sent to me. apparently while you were emailing back and forth with me, a hearing was held where the city council gave their approval. (see bold below) Why didn't you tell me about the hearing in one of your email replies? Why have you been trying so hard to keep this a secret?

After months of behind-the-scenes talks, they agreed to include the Oceanfront Walk and buildings along Main Street in the district – 468 parcels stretching from the Santa Monica border south to Venice Boulevard. The BID would take in some Silicon Beach tech businesses, including several properties leased by Snapchat Inc. and the famed Frank Gehry-designed Binoculars building now home to Google Inc.

“We need additional security and we need cleanup crews,” Mark Sokol, co-owner and partner of the Erwin Hotel, just yards from the boardwalk, told the City Council’s economic development committee last week. “We need to supplement the insufficient resources we get from the city.”

The BID passed its first hurdle earlier this year, winning preliminary approval from property owners. Now **that the council has given its initial approval**, another property owner election will be held, where each property owner’s vote is weighted according to square footage. If property owners representing a majority of the fee assessments cast “yes” votes, the ordinance would come back to the council for a final hearing and vote later this year.



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Laura McLennan <laura.mclennan@lacity.org>

Fwd: Venice BID Proposal

1 message

Debbie DynerHarris <debbie.dynerharris@lacity.org>
To: Laura McLennan <laura.mclennan@lacity.org>

Mon, Aug 22, 2016 at 3:34 PM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Debbie DynerHarris** <debbie.dynerharris@lacity.org>
Date: Wed, Jul 27, 2016 at 3:42 PM
Subject: Re: Venice BID Proposal
To: Martha Hertzberg

Hi Martha. The main people working on this effort are Steve Heumann of Sidewalk Enterprises and Mark Sokol of the Hotel Erwin. There are others involved but I am not sure what roles they have. Carl Lambert has also been involved.

On Sat, Jul 23, 2016 at 1:14 PM, Martha Hertzberg wrote:
Hi Debbie,

You've referenced "the BID leadership" in your emails. Could you please identify to whom this refers? As far as I know it's not a "secret society", so I would appreciate knowing who you mean when you reference them.

Thank you,
Martha

On Fri, Jul 22, 2016 at 5:14 PM, Martha Hertzberg wrote:
Hi Debbie,

I'm sorry Mike remains unwilling to engage the residents in multiple public meetings. Like I said unilateral action on something of this magnitude is not right or proper—as with the ice rink and no doubt with issues in the future—it's a disservice to his constituents.

Martha

On Fri, Jul 22, 2016 at 4:33 PM, Debbie DynerHarris <debbie.dynerharris@lacity.org> wrote:

Hi. I feel like we are talking at cross purposes. The BID does not have the unilateral ability to do things like changing our boardwalk lighting, or anything else for that matter. As I said earlier, they can't do things in the public sphere (like additional trash cans, more lighting, etc.) without our say so. Also, the beach closes at midnight already and people head off at that time, if not earlier. The BID can't change that. While the BID may make it less comfortable to be on the boardwalk, they cannot push people off when they have the legal right to be there when the park is open, regardless of their housing status.

At night people are going to go where they are probably already going, the BID doesn't change that.

There will be another public hearing held at City Council in either August or September on the BID vote. People can come and speak on either side of the issue once again. I do hope that if the BID passes, you'll find that the positives are real and only serve to help the community at large.

Debbie

On Thu, Jul 21, 2016 at 11:39 AM, Martha Hertzberg wrote:
Dear Debbie,

Thank you for your email. I appreciate the time you are taking to communicate with me. But the explanation does not deal with some basic facts.

The BID will have the right to change the Boardwalk lighting in the evening and night. If we have lights, the people will come, and if we have thousands of people here in the evening and at night—thousands that we don't have now—then we'll have teenagers and young adults doing drugs up our streets, loud performers, no parking on Pacific for working people who don't have parking spaces, people up and down our streets at night going to and from their cars parked on Pacific, etc. All are things we deal with during the day but not in the evening.

The security will have as its mission a clean and safe Boardwalk. Saying, "we will not tolerate an approach that sweeps people off the Boardwalk and onto your neighborhood" sounds good on the surface but makes no sense. Why create a new problem that needs fixing? It is a very likely outcome of the BID, with BID decisions focusing on BID problems. The homeless population that wants to stay near the beach currently stays close to the commercial areas. When it's clear the Boardwalk is not as welcoming for them, they'll move up the block—something they've refrained from doing thus far. It's not great that they're at the end of our block near the boardwalk, but it would be far more difficult if they were directly in front of our homes. This does not take much imagination to figure out—it will be a by-product of private Boardwalk security. Everyone I've spoken with believes this. And we all know that the only solution to fewer homeless people on the Boardwalk or near the beach is housing and serious resources.

Still, an issue of great concern to us is the evening and nighttime activity. You showed zero concern for the negative fallout to residents regarding the ice rink with 10pm hours. You have excluded us on the BID discussions. Mike was always a great honest broker, someone who could take all constituents' concerns under advisement, and, with transparency, work through to find common ground. It's apparent that has changed.

Yes, controversy is better than inaction, but unilateral action is not. And indeed if there is admitted controversy, then by all means let's discuss it in multiple public forums over many months. The fact that this is not happening says volumes about who will shoulder the downsides.

Again, thank you Debbie for your email and your time.

Martha

On Thu, Jul 21, 2016 at 10:03 AM, Debbie DyerHarris <debbie.dynerharris@lacity.org> wrote:

Hi Martha,

I thought I'd try to clarify this a little bit more, and elaborate on some BID details and characteristics. Below, please find a more detailed explanation.

First, some context and explanation of what business Improvement Districts are. Business Improvement Districts are a group of people voting on whether or not to assess themselves to generate revenue for a specific purpose. For instance, in the state of California, that is how streetlighting is paid for. Property owners determine whether or not they want streetlighting, and if they vote that they do, then each house which benefits from that light directly is assessed on their tax bills the amount of money to pay for it. Pedestrians and drivers also benefit peripherally as they get more lighting when they pass by, but since it is not direct and every single day, they are not assessed.

For example, a couple of years ago, property owners in a Mar Vista neighborhood voted to assess themselves money to do curb and gutter repairs in their neighborhood. Only those who front those streets and live with them every day are asked to vote and then pay the additional assessment fee, even though all sorts of vehicular drivers, pedestrians and bicycle riders also may use the streets and would benefit from the improvement.

Under state law, businesses and property owners are allowed to use assessment district to create a Business Improvement District and assess themselves money to pay for certain services, such as maintenance, security and promotion. This allows residents of LA to benefit from private funding added on top of public funding for public purposes. There are business improvement districts throughout Los Angeles, including in Downtown LA, Hollywood, Canoga Park, and four in CD11- Pacific Palisades, Brentwood, and two in Westchester.

It is important to note that BIDs do not take over, manage, govern, or control public property. They are, however, allowed to use their assessed fees to purchase or provide additional services for public areas. In the case of the Venice BID, that could be for more frequent restroom cleaning, maintenance of the boardwalk, or additional security. The goal is not to push the problem elsewhere, but to provide a safer community for everyone. We will not tolerate an approach that sweeps people off of the Boardwalk into your neighborhood, and the goal here is to provide a safer and cleaner neighborhood for **everyone** to enjoy.

I understand and appreciate your concerns and that the idea of forming a business improvement district for Venice Beach has created controversy, but Councilmember Bonin has said repeatedly that "controversy is better

than inaction." As you are very, very well aware, despite considerable attention and resources directed to the area, Venice Beach is still in dire need of the kind of extra attention that a BID could provide.

The Venice BID has gone through the exact same public process as each and every BID and other assessment district in Los Angeles that I mentioned earlier in this email, and Councilmember Bonin believes that it will result in a cleaner, safer Venice Beach for everyone.

Thanks for allowing the dialog between us to continue.

Debbie

On Wed, Jul 20, 2016 at 2:44 PM, Martha Hertzberg

wrote:

Dear Debbie,

Residents are becoming better educated about the negative consequences that a BID poses to surrounding communities. Sadly, it just doesn't work to give the commercial interests a kind of dictatorial power—a power that has no override, no equal in the community. The boardwalk is also our neighborhood and it impacts us, but you're taking away any voice we might have. What is good for commercial interests is not always good for residents. This is civic responsibility 101.

We are deeply saddened and angered by the patronizing way our concerns have been handled. Take a step back, put the BID on hold for a year and schedule multiple public meetings with impacted adjacent neighbors. We have homes here, we've made our lives here, we've been a part of making Venice the vibrant community it is today.

You didn't engage the public at all for the ice rink with hours to 10pm. Please don't make the same error in judgement and discount our voices once again. We are simply asking for you to be transparent and for the downsides of your BID proposal to be discussed publicly, at multiple public hearings over a several month period. We know this isn't something Mike wants to do, but it's the right thing to do.

Sincerely,
Martha

On Mon, Jul 18, 2016 at 4:14 PM, Debbie DynerHarris <debbie.dynerharris@lacity.org> wrote:

Hi Martha. I'll start with your earlier email first. In the manner that BIDs work, the non-commercial properties do not have a say in the process of forming a BID. That decision is solely in the hands of the commercial property owners who will be assessed. As residentially-zoned areas are not assessed, they do not participate in the vote.

Please know that the City will still continue to manage and operate the beach and Ocean Front Walk, and remain the permitting body for all activities, whatever they may be. The money raised through the assessments on the commercial properties will be used for a variety of things, but they all will operate on public property. Thus, they will need to work with the City. For instance, if the BID wanted to add cleaning services or hold a special holiday event, they'd have to work with the City to implement that. The City will look at each proposal and evaluate it for its appropriateness. There may be special events once in a while that benefit the community that may be at night, just like there are occasionally now. The Councilmember is open to hearing what those are.

And the Councilmember does care very much, and he believes that this BID will bring positive contributions to the community. It's a chance to increase the amount of spending in the public sphere, something we have not been able to do as much as we'd like.

In terms of encampments, of course the Councilmember and all of us here take very seriously any negative consequences of a BID, and will work to ensure that there are none. I understand your concerns that BID security might push encampments into your neighborhoods, and no one wants that. We will do our best to ensure that does not happen.

Debbie

On Mon, Jul 18, 2016 at 1:55 PM, Martha Hertzberg

wrote:

Dear Debbie,

I have spoken with several residents and they have echoed the concerns I shared with you. They are also concerned about another point made in the petition regarding the homeless population. With a private security force and a BID, homeless people will be encouraged to move off of BID property. But the beach is the attraction, so the tents and encampments will move away from the commercial areas and up into the adjacent residential walk streets.

Currently the encampments are off the walkstreets and on the Boardwalk or in the small area between Speedway and the Boardwalk. We are all concerned that the BID security will encourage encampments to move onto the walkstreets, creating a new problem for residents. This is not "an unintended consequence". We have noted it as a likely outcome, you are well aware of it—there is nothing unintended about it, so please do take our concerns seriously. Not doing so is in effect accepting this as a likely outcome and considering it acceptable.

I cannot tell you how many people who live down here are livid at Mike for not holding multiple public hearings about something that will have such a great impact on them.

Sincerely,
Martha

On Thu, Jul 14, 2016 at 6:42 PM, Martha Hertzberg

wrote:

Dear Debbie,

This is terribly disappointing news. I would have thought Mike would care what his constituents think about something that will impact them so greatly, and that he would seek their input before making a unilateral decision.

Sadly, this is emblematic of what happens all the time in the circles of power—officials stop consulting the people

Re the nighttime at the boardwalk, if you brighten the lights which now dim to nearly nothing at dusk, the people will stay and slowly but surely we'll have a nighttime boardwalk. Further, it is terribly disingenuous to say you have no intention of making it an evening destination. Again without input from impacted area residents you pushed through an ice rink with hours to 10pm.

If you are serious about "no intention" then please make a commitment that the dim lights will not be changed and that no actions will be taken to encourage evening activity at the boardwalk. Can you make this commitment? From your email I worry that you cannot because it sounds as if the Bid leadership is our new area dictator—they answer to no one but themselves. Seriously, you should read your email and hear how it sounds. It's as if none of us exist.

Sincerely,
Martha

On Thu, Jul 14, 2016 at 4:36 PM, Debbie DyerHarris <debbie.dyerharris@lacity.org> wrote:

Hi again. There is no general public outreach required for a BID other than what is required to connect with commercial property owners whose properties are within the boundaries. The Councilmember is supportive of the BID, and is eager to see the community benefits that come from partnering public and private money in a shared effort. The BID leadership has not stated any intention of changing the nighttime use of the boardwalk, so at this time we do not anticipate any changes such as you refer to in your petitions. It is something that one day may be of interest to the leadership, but who knows, and if it does arise we'll have an opportunity to weigh in.

Debbie

On Thu, Jul 14, 2016 at 3:14 PM, Martha Hertzberg

wrote:

Hi Debbie,

Thank you for your reply.

As you know nearly all of the impacted walk street residents know nothing about this—other

than the 40 or so I contacted door to door one weekend. All but one are against it.

Can you please tell me if there will be any attempt to solicit our input with multiple and well publicized public events?

Also, can you please let me know if it's legal to move forward without informing and getting input from property owners who are adjacent to and impacted by the Bid? And if it's legal, is it Mike's opinion that it is right and propeo refrain from reaching out regarding this enormous change for residents?

I have heard that Mike supports the Bid and has committed hundreds of thousands of dollars to it.

We are mostly concerned about the Bid turning the boardwalk into an evening destination—bringing thousands of people who will be down here at night, a situation we've never had— noise from performances, and teens and young adults coming into the walkstreets to do drugs as they do during the day. This is a destination they know well and they will flock to hang out to see and be seen at night too if indeed it is well lit and activity is encouraged. My petition of course describes the concerns in more detail.

Please let me know.

Martha

On Thu, Jul 14, 2016 at 2:31 PM, Debbie DyerHarris <debbie.dynerharris@lacity.org> wrote:
Hi Martha, we are not quite there yet, but getting closer. What happened a few weeks ago was that the petition drive was completed and confirmed by the City, which allows the BID leadership to officially initiate the BID process. The petition drive was required to ensure that there was written support from property owners who represent more than 50% of all proposed assessments in the district.

Now that the petition drive is confirmed, the next step is the BID leadership has 6-8 weeks to complete the election process. That should be completed by the end of August, at which time a City Council hearing on the election will be held, and ballots will be counted. If the majority of the ballots received by the closure date are in favor of the BID, then it will pass.

I hope this clarifies. Please let me know if you have any questions,
Debbie

On Thu, Jul 14, 2016 at 11:11 AM, Martha Hertzberg
Dear Mike,

wrote:

I heard that the BID for Venice was approved. Is this true?

thank you,
Martha



Debbie Dyer Harris
District Director
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Laura McLennan <laura.mclennan@lacity.org>

Fwd: Hearing on the BID

1 message

Debbie DynerHarris <debbie.dynerharris@lacity.org>
To: Laura McLennan <laura.mclennan@lacity.org>

Mon, Aug 22, 2016 at 3:34 PM

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From: **Martha Hertzberg**
Date: Tue, Aug 16, 2016 at 1:47 PM
Subject: Re: Hearing on the BID
To: Debbie DynerHarris <debbie.dynerharris@lacity.org>

Dear Debbie,

You can't have it both ways. It is clear to so many of us that you intentionally didn't share the information about the hearing to allow the vote. I am well aware of the Aug. 23rd meeting. I will do my best to juggle my job and children to make it there.

Many of my neighbors have a bit too much on their plate to try to influence our Councilmember to represent them properly.

It's a sad day in Venice.

Best,
Martha

On Wed, Jul 27, 2016 at 5:20 PM, Debbie DynerHarris <debbie.dynerharris@lacity.org> wrote:

Hi Martha. First, let me clarify- the hearing was not an approval of the BID. As I have said in previous emails, the BID has not been approved. That will happen (or not) through the vote that is ongoing at this time. The hearing that took place in June, and I am sorry that I didn't notify you of it, was to allow the vote to take place. I did not inform people of the hearing for a variety of reasons, including that we are not doing community outreach for the BID, either for or against. That is not our role as has been communicated to us by the City Clerk at the direction of the City Attorney. Again, I am sorry I did not notify you, but I will be sure to notify you of the next public hearing. I do not have a date as of this time.

There is no plot on my behalf or the Councilmember's to keep this from anyone.

Debbie

On Sun, Jul 24, 2016 at 8:12 PM, Martha Hertzberg wrote:

Dear Debbie,

Given the communication I've had with you over the past many months, why didn't you inform me of the hearing? This is truly unbelievable. I've just now learned there was a hearing and the City Council approved your BID. The lack of shared information, the privileging of the business community and the fact that you kept this information from residents because it didn't suit your agenda is beyond troubling. It's unethical.

Martha

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