

BNC  
November Meeting  
Saturday – November 2, 2019  
10:00 am – 12:00 Noon

**TAREA HALL PITTMAN SOUTH BRANCH**  
**Berkeley Public Library**  
1901 Russell St.  
Berkeley, CA 94703

**Minutes**

Present: Shirley Dean, Gary Facente, David Ushijima, Tom Graly, Jane Graly, Toni Mester, Janis Ching, Jacqueline McCormick, Mari Mendonca, Willie Phillips, Alisa Foster, Michelle LePaule, Tony Corman, Steve Martinot, Jay Tharp, Lilana Spindler, Laura Menard

**Neighborhood Updates:**

2139 Oregon St. – Jane Graly – Neighbors concerned that this is a group living accommodation (GLA) and that they are demolishing a 3 bedroom, 1 bath home currently rented to a family to add only 2 bedrooms in that unit. This is probably an opportunity zone project. Discussion centered around the fact that GLA's are becoming more prevalent. Suggestion that zoning code needs to consider "bedrooms" instead of "units".

Friends of Adeline – Mari Mendonca, Willie Phillips, Steve Marinot: Concerns about the Adeline Corridor plan process and how it has ignored the neighborhood input.

2701 Shattuck – Solar panel shading, creek issues.

2128-2130 Ward – Gary Ficante: Another residential in-fill project that will shade solar panels. Owner also has acted in bad faith renting an illegal unit and building an illegal driveway. 12 bedrooms with 4 parking spaces.

**\*\*Important takeaway points:**

1. BNC can help to coordinate the efforts of all the neighborhoods.
2. Hazard issues such as liquefaction, fire, flood, etc. are often minimized in the planning process. Every neighborhood needs to put forward a land use consideration in terms of disaster preparedness. Need to require ZAB to consider these hazard issues.

**Debrief from the September 28<sup>th</sup> Forum on Opportunity Zones** – How can the City get our fair share out of this?

1. Is it really too late to de-certify Opportunity Zones?
2. Can we deny Opportunity Zone benefits? (there are both federal and state benefits)
3. Create Zoning Overlay's on the Opportunity Zones and give neighbors the right to ratify these. Ben Bartlett is currently working on this, but there are many legal questions.

**\*\*Important takeaway points:** Should there be qualifications for serving on ZAB?

**The City Finance Department uses unreliable data to determine tax assessments - Laura Menard and Lelana Spindler:**

1. Current process is convoluted and non-transparent. The City of Berkeley has an idiosyncratic way of calculating property taxes. In 1965 the City turned over all assessment responsibility to Alameda County. You can only challenge the calculation of the taxes within the past year.
2. Fairness – people are being under and over assessed because of incorrect data. Looked at houses on the market or recently sold which list sq footage and found large amounts of lost revenue.
3. City Auditor has pointed this out multiple times, but City Manager and City Council have not responded.

**\*\*Suggestions:**

1. Give an amnesty for people who have been under-assessed.
2. Meet with the Council subcommittee that is working on this. This is a fairness issue. Everyone should pay property tax on a level playing field
3. BNC can write a letter to Council demanding to hold a meeting about this issue. Get all neighborhood groups to sign onto this letter.

**JSISHL Report** – David Ushijima: We need objective standards in the zoning codes if we are going to get ZAB or Planning Dept to be able to enforce them. Last meeting was about shadows – there seems to be agreement around recommending a standard be added to the zoning code. Holding straw votes at these meetings help clarify where commissioners stand on an issue. Perhaps we should be requesting straw votes at all commission meetings.

**BNC End of the Year Report** – Janis Ching: Thanks in great part to the efforts of Dean Metzger and Shirley Dean, our financial situation is currently stable, but we need to raise money in order to do things like hold forums in 2020. We encourage people to go to the website [BerkeleyNeighborhoodsCouncil.com](http://BerkeleyNeighborhoodsCouncil.com) to join as members at \$5-10/individual, \$50/neighborhood group to support our work. We also encourage people to get more involved by volunteering to help with specific projects.

**Announcements -**

United Against Hate Week – Nov 17-23 Create networks to oppose hate in our communities. Grass root efforts to hold events throughout this week. This movement has expanded down to LA and San Diego. Asking BNC to hold an event.

Aquatic Park – Efforts have been successful at lowering the bacterial count in the water. There are state funds available, but municipalities need to apply for the funds. Request that people contact their councilmember to request a hydrologist to fill the Director of Public Works position to fix the tide tubes to stabilize I-80.

12:00 Adjourn

Meeting dates for 2019: December meeting CANCELLED

Meeting dates for 2020:

January 11, 2020

February 8, 2020

March 14, 2020

April 11, 2020

May 9, 2020

June 13, 2020

July 11, 2020

August 8, 2020

September 12, 2020

October 10, 2020

November 14, 2020

December 12, 2020