

Kensington Talmadge Planning Group  
December 14, 2022 Meeting Minutes

**I Parliamentary Items**

Via Zoom: meeting called to order at 6:30 pm by Chair David Moty.

Board members present: Moty, Heuter, Baer, Lindahl, Isaak, Sinclair, Spano, Satter, Irwin, Laman.

Board members absent: Helmich, Utt, Sharpe, Krueger, Teyssier.

Members of the community & public present: Bruce Coons (SOHO), Priscilla Berge, Jim Kelley-Markham, Gustav Swanson, Louise Guarnotta, Bill Adair, David Roth, DeLayne Harmon, Lisa Stone, “Concerned Citizen”, Phillip Linssen, Lucero Maganda, Francisco Peralta, Jan Bart, Sean Harrison, Don Taylor.

Adoption of the agenda & approval of Nov 9, 2022 meeting minutes approved without objection.

Treasurer’s Report: \$142.98.

Meeting Format – Approval of Zoom meeting format due to public health emergency through Feb 28, 2023 motion Isaak, 2<sup>nd</sup> Satter, approved by Board.

**II Community Forum/Non-Agenda Public Comment**

**Community Forum –**

Mayor’s office representative Lucero Maganda referred to the Mayor’s office website for holiday hours. There is a staffing shortage to be aware of when contacting the office. City is hiring electricians.

District 9 Sean Elo Rivera’s office representative Francisco Peralta said the framework continues for tenant protections. Peralta verified Measure B passed, raising the height limit in the Sports Arena, and, that D9 was working through the community changes with the recent re-districting.

Questions asked of our D9 Councilman:

-please share details behind the logo for D9 – what was the cost and was this a proposal put out to bid?

-When will canyon / open space palm trees be trimmed?

-Aldine Dr. has weeds that require clearance from the roadway to prevent wildfire.

-Why is the term “eviction” being used for the tenant protections policy, when, as proposed, the tenant protection applies to the end of a lawful lease and not to an eviction?

- Who exactly was at the table to form this policy & can members of the community can be part of the framework discussion?

-What is the response from Councilman Elo-Rivera re: the many questions KTPG asked of him in the Nov 9 planning group meeting re: the KH#2 circuit upgrade and the lack of CEQA compliance for the original streetlights?

**Non-Agenda Public Comment – None**

**III Subcommittee Items**

A. Kensington MADs, Chair: Carolyn Satter

**Action Item:** Disapprove the following motion of the Kensington Heights MAD subcommittee. Satter made the motion, Baer 2<sup>nd</sup>, approved by Sinclair, Spano, Satter, Baer, Moty; disapproved by Heuter, Lindahl, Isaak, Irwin, Laman. A 5/5 split = the motion does not pass. Alternative motion requested by Jim Kelley-Markham: KTPG chair states an alternative motion must be taken by the Kensington Heights KMAD subcommittee; a quorum of that subcommittee is not present tonight (Sharpe absent and Don Rosenkranz absent). Top items to include in a revised

motion: (1) can circuitry be separated from the light fixtures; can de-coupling happen (2) CEQA process to be included (3) Cost of restoration v. cost of replicas.

Motion as proposed that failed to pass:

“To request the Kensington Talmadge Planning Group (KTPG), alert the City to halt the current Kensington Heights #2 Series Circuit Conversion project and engage with Street Light Restoration Specialists to do an inspection of the in-place original (not replica) Empire lights and luminaires in the Kensington Heights area and report the findings. In addition, request that the City decouple the Circuit #2 Conversion from the replacement of the street lights, followed by a cost analysis of restoration versus replacement of the original Empire Lights. Upon receiving said report, the KTPG will arrange a community meeting to present the findings and discuss further action.”

Presentation of this motion

Satter: The City is still working on appropriating MAD funds, and the costs are still to be determined. MAD funds are not being used on the circuitry upgrade; this is a ‘fully funded’ \$1M capital improvement project. The recommendation to ‘de-couple’ the project has to be referred to City Engineer Luis Schaar. “Not sure” if restoration, or storage, is part of engineers report. Can circuitry & street light posts & lamps be separated? Cost to KH KMAD is under \$180k, although there is no line item in the KH budget allocated for this KH#2 upgrade. Image shows 44 lights will be paid by City; 3 are fully funded by the KMAD, 9 will be funded by both City & KMAD.

Discussion of this motion

Jim Kelley Markham: Lead-based paint on the street lights is NOT an issue – these can be restored and repaired in place at far less the cost & time of replacement. The amount of what the City is paying for has changed. There are over 55% of the streetlights in Kensington Heights that are not working. KMAD has the money to hire a private contractor to repair the lights. The project as outlined in 2018 was revealed in Oct 2022 to include the demolition of the streetlights – prior to the Fall 2022 notice to the public, there are not any meeting minutes of KTPG nor KMAD that identify the light demolition. Restoration of the existing light fixtures will meet code. The comments from the City and Don Taylor, are designed to instill fear that we have no lights. Yet, with a short staff of electricians, as noted by the Mayor’s rep at this meeting, has delayed the repair of lights. Retired City Parks & Rec employee John Tully indicated there are 6-8 street lights that have been replaced in the past several years which are replicas - yet the City still has plans to remove & demolish those as part of the 56 identified in KH #2? Why?

DeLayne Harmon: I have a replica light installed in front of my house. I voted for the KMAD to 1<sup>st</sup> repair & restore before replacing – yet that has not happened. I request a full environmental impact report in order to save these historic lights.

Ken Baer: What was D9 Councilman Elo-Rivera’s reply to the list of concerns presented to him from the Nov 9 KTPG meeting about the KH#2 project? (No reply offered from D9 rep present at this meeting). Why are all the streets in Kensington Heights neighborhood (Hilldale north to Palisades) marked with contractor markings (on street & curbs and parkways) when the KH#2 project only runs Hilldale north to Bedford Dr.? The very first notice to the Kensington community of demolition was Oct 2022. When was the notice, which the KTPG voted to spend \$1000 to send out to residents, mailed out? The total financial responsibility of the KH KMAD for this project is unknown, “to be determined” as the City says, despite a contract that has been signed with the City and the contractors.

Don Taylor: KMAD was created to keep our street lights on, and it was not designed as a restoration district. The safety of the community depends on this lighting project to go through. The decision to remove 56 street lights and replace with replica lights was a City decision to streamline the circuit upgrade. The community and the public had the opportunity to learn about these projects by attending KTPG and KMAD meetings; the ability to meet during Covid (2020-2021) was limited.

Fred Lindahl: Talmadge restored existing street lights and at the same time replaced the circuitry, so there is precedent. We did 170 street lights. There are so many components to a replacement project and it requires a lot of community oversight & input to make it happen.

Geoff Heuter: Can the circuitry upgrade be separated by the street lights restoration?

Sean Harrison: Several D9 office holders have worked on this project. The majority of residents don't care about the historic lights.

Priscilla Berge: This motion makes no mention of the City's CEQA problem. The fact the Notice of Exemption makes no mention of demolition of Kensington's historic streetlights requires the City to return to the CEQA process and address.

Bill Adair: It is unclear how this happened. There is NO record of any community meetings or any meetings between the City and Kensington community representatives. We only ask for a pause to this project & re-visit the important issue of restoring the street lights versus removal & demolition.

Ari Isaak: Color of light is important. 2200 Kelvin is appealing; 3000 Kelvin is too bright.

Bruce Coons / SOHO: Agree that 2200 Kelvin is appropriate for ambient lighting. The Empire streetlights can be very important as they contribute to the elements of an historic district, which the community is working to establish.

Lisa Stone: The City's reasonings for having to demolish the lights is 'baloney'. The fact is the contract for the KH#2 circuit upgrade has a cause for termination. The City has failed to comply with CEQA, and has not allowed the community a voice in this process once the demolition of the street lights was made public.

Gustav Swanson: Has the City bound together the circuit upgrade with the street lights?

Lisa Sinclair: Jim Kelley Markham is extremely knowledgeable and informative so we should be appreciative for his input. Safety is a concern but it is a City liability, not a KMAD liability. I totally disagree: the majority of residents DO care about restoring the street lights. The City needs to provide CEQA status documents – how & why was the Notice of Exemption approved in 2018 with no notice to the KMAD? The City's EIR defers to State & Federal guidelines – does that require streetlights to be restored, and how exactly did Talmadge do that? I was told only 3 of the original street lights are required for establishing an historic district - but it turns out that is not confirmed.

Lucero Maganda: will follow up with Project Engineer for clarification on these issues, including restoration vs replacement & the CEQA process. This motion if passed is only a recommendation. The City has received a litigation letter on this project.

Vito Spano: What is the harm in approving this motion as it stands?

**Action Item:** Accept/Not Accept KMAD Chair's reports for November 28 and December 6, 2022 which records the activity and actions of the November 28, and December 6, KMAD subcommittee meetings. Laman made the motion, Baer 2<sup>nd</sup>, approved unanimously. **NOTE: KMAD meeting notes included as attachment to Dec KTPG meeting minutes.**

IV **Non-subcommittee Items**

Action Item: Approve/Disapprove formation of the ad hoc Elections Subcommittee for the March planning group elections with chair, and other members as appointed. Heuter chair, Moty, and Gustav Swanson. Motion by Moty, seconded by Heuter, approved unanimously.

Information Item: Zoom format for January 11, 2023 KTPG meeting.

V **KTPG Liaison/Committee Reports** (8:15 – 15 min)

a. Historic Resources Division 45 year review liaison – D. Moty

Review of previous month's recommendations to the Historic Resources Division. The following houses were reviewed for historical significance:

4429 Braeburn Rd

4754 Vista Lane

4562 Edgeware Rd

4787 51<sup>st</sup> St

4339-4343 46<sup>th</sup> St

4055 Meade Avenue

None were recommended to the HRD as historically significant.

b. Community Planners Committee – no report (Sharpe absent)

c. Talmadge Maintenance Assessment District – no report (Helmich absent)

d. Board Member updates regarding other groups/organizations relevant to the KTPG area.

Chair Moty said he had a discussion with a resident of the Eastern area where so many groups to rent out joint use fields in that area that they are rarely available for the general public.

VI **Possible Agenda for the next or future KTPG Meeting(s)** January 11, 2023

VII **Adjournment** – 8:49 pm