

ACONA Meeting March 29, 2011 Meeting Notes

Introductions and Welcome

Elliot showed a motivational film promoting neighborhood in Altadena.

Sussy Nemer, Sr. Deputy for Supervisor Michael Antonovich

Liquor stores: All the liquor stores in Altadena are grandfathered in, so they don't require a conditional use permit. Question about the size of signs: There are limits on the size of the signs that can be put up, but the county has to receive a complaint. First comes a warning, then a letter that threatens them with fines or imprisonment.

Q&A

Q: are the laws keeping up with the times, and is the reason why the law was created in the first place still valid? A: health and safety issues are non-negotiable, but there's an Altadena Community Standards District (CSD) that contains the codes and ordinances for the area. There has been fairly recent discussion about updating the codes for Altadena. There will be community meetings to get input, partnered with the Town Council and the Chamber of Commerce. Website: lacounty.info --- right hand column -- regional planning for more information.

Q: Is there a master plan somewhere. A: Some of that is in the CSD. SB148 (Scott) would have regulated liquor stores, but it was so watered-down by the time it passed that it was not effective.

Q: Are there problems with people loitering around liquor stores? A: Not lately. There used to be a lot regarding R.J.'s liquor store on Woodbury, but that was cleaned up during re-licensing of the business.

Q: are there meetings that this community should be aware of? A: There are public hearings when someone applies for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). Complaints can be addressed to Supervisor Antonovich's office.

Q: Why can't Altadena have a planned community like Escondido? A: That would take a concerted community effort -- might not fit this community. There are some beautification programs, and there are loan programs.

Concern: 403 Figueroa: still some issues with kids trashing the area. By the time the sheriffs show up, the kids are gone. Response: Talk with the Altadena Sheriff's community relations officers, who are at this meeting.

Carolyn Seitz: Nuisance abatement is her area of expertise. She often acts as the complainant when people are afraid to complain themselves because they fear retribution. Sussy and Carolyn both emphasize that they are not proactively looking for problems. Diana Marcussen Altadena Town Council member: Altadena Town Council has meetings every third Tuesday of the month that people can attend to find out what's happening in the community. She pointed out that the Town Council members are also conduits for complaints. Carolyn: Knowing the right person to call is very important. Carolyn has handled hundreds of complaints. Carolyn's number: 626-345-1233 Supervisor's Pasadena office: 626-356-5407.

La Crescenta sheriff's office complaint: not very responsive. Captain McLean: when the Altadena Sheriff's Station construction is complete, 911 complaints will be able to go there. McLean says complaints about the Crescenta Valley station have diminished. You can always ask for the Watch Commander if you feel dissatisfied with the response you're getting.

Carolyn: Important when you call the sheriffs: give name, address, enough info to know what your concern is. Call Crimestoppers if you have a tip about a crime.

Q: Why doesn't the sheriff's station have a Twitter account? A: Sheriff's Station just opened up a Facebook account but it had to be shut down.

Q: What's happening with the property between Ralphs and Eliot MS? A: Stuff is being done about it regularly, but the property owner can't make up his mind about what to do with it. Originally was supposed to be an upgraded Ralphs, but the property owner had a falling out with them. Owner complies sometimes, sometimes not, regarding code violations.

Q: Conditional Use Permit (CUP) and Coffee Gallery--concerned as a musician with the issue. A: Coffee Gallery has a long history with the county. Sussy helped them through the CUP process initially. Neighbors on Morada were opposed to Coffee Gallery having live entertainment, mainly concerned about parking issues. After a long process the Coffee Gallery was able to get the CUP but never got a business license for live entertainment. There's a meeting set up to try to resolve the issue.

Q: Payday cash in advance shops. A: They're in the same category as liquor stores. No one has been complaining lately. Carolyn: They are a standard permitted used in C1-C2-C3 zones and they just need to get a permit for their signs. There's a 30-day limit on use of banners and pennants for new businesses.

Q: Is it possible to amend the Community Standards District (CSD) codes to prohibit payday shops? A: Yes. Community Standards Districts can either soften the county's regulations or make them more stringent. The Altadena CSD has special call-outs for Lake Avenue and the West Lincoln business districts.

Concern: Car wash noise Harriet and Fair Oaks, loud car music, lights. Carolyn: County has a noise standard, 7a-10p daytime noise standard. Light ordinance: Light can't go beyond your property line. LA County Health Dept enforces noise violations. They will do a noise test if you call them to come out.

Carolyn: hears a lot of complaints about loud parties. Some properties have a loud party almost every weekend. People often complain once, the sheriffs come out, the music goes down for a while, then goes back up again. Solution: Call the sheriffs again. And again, if necessary.

La Canada noise ordinance: county officials feel that most such ordinances wouldn't hold up in court. County feels its ordinances are as strong as they are allowed to be. Social hosting ordinances: allow law enforcement to go after the parent or the property owner, but again they probably wouldn't hold up in court.

Q: Vehicles: vans and RVs that park around Altadena. Gino Sund, Town Council: There's an oversize vehicle ordinance in the works. Public Works Dept. is working on it now. Regional Planning Office has no control over public right of way. Dept of Public Works, CHP, sheriffs have jurisdiction.

Update on crime in Altadena: Capt. McLean: Violent and property crimes are both down. Elliot: Altadena Blog gets the crime reports from the Sheriff's Department every week as soon as they come out. The Blog also posts the monthly report that's delivered at the Altadena Town Council meeting.

Dick Smoak: Likes the potential for neighborhoods to get together and solve problems locally. Likes the potential for neighborhood watches helping each other for emergency response. Wants to know about CERT. Carolyn: CERT training has been available in Altadena, along with refreshers and drills. No one seeing what happened in Japan doubts the importance of good emergency response training and disaster preparedness. Encouraged everyone to participate in CERT.

Natalie Salazar: NET -- Neighborhood Emergency Training -- is a shorter version of CERT. Does the actual training and a train-the-trainer course. NET also acts as a marketing device for CERT.

Q: What's happening at Lincoln and Altadena? The liquor store wants to move across the street. A: If you want to move a liquor store you need to get a CUP which requires a public hearing. The empty building: violated a couple of building codes, and the project is in bankruptcy.

Concern: Environmental protection laws -- are they being waived? How do people find out if people actually have permits, and have filed environmental impact reports? A: Building and Safety in Arcadia knows about permits.

Next meeting: In May, date to be announced.