



## Mar Vista Community Council



### Special Meeting of the Board of Directors

Wednesday, September 21, at 7:00 P.M.  
Mar Vista Recreation Center Gymnasium  
11430 Woodbine Street, Mar Vista, CA 90066

## MINUTES

1. **Call to order and Welcome** – Chair (1 min)

Meeting called to order at 7:06 P.M.

Quorum present: Rob Kadota, Melissa Stoller, Robin Doyno, Sherri Akers, Michelle Krupkin, Holly Tilson, Susan Klos, Paola Cervantes, Ken Alpern, Sarah Auerswald, Damien Newton, Greg Tedesco, Joseph Galloway

2. **Presentation of flag and Pledge of Allegiance** (1 min)

3. **Public Comment & Announcements** - for items not on the agenda (max 1 min each unless waived by the Chair)

Sherri Akers: Community lost treasured community leader this week: Susan Kiern.

Melissa Stoller: We're transitioning to MailChimp; encouraging email signups

Sarah Auerswald: Can sign you up tonight.

Rob Kadota: Acknowledged using time to honor someone who has passed away.

4. **Presentation: Neighborhood Conservation (Mansionization) Ordinance**

Presentation by Patricia Keane, Director of Land Use & Planning for Bonin

Two separate programs. 1:-amend city code (BMO Baseline Mansionization Ordinance; and BHO Baseline Mansionization Ordinance); 2: Interim Control Ordinance (ICO)

Concern that existing BMO ordinance is not controlling building size.

For Mar Vista, ICO is a little more restrictive than current city code; for other areas, a lot more restrictive. ICOs expire in March, 2017. Neighborhood can default to citywide rules or can select a new R1 Variation Zone. R1V/R/F—major difference is where you can put massing on second story.

City code changes apply regardless of zone selected. Garage & patio components are part of definition of floor area; applies regardless of zone. Floor area currently excludes 1<sup>st</sup> 400 sq. ft. proposed amendments to citywide BMO includes the following exemptions: 400 sq. ft. if rear garage or entry, 200 sq ft if at front, excluded. Justification is to be less auto-centric. Patios (front or back) are excluded if uncovered; if covered and enclosed on three sides, no exemption. Exemption for accessory structures: 200 sq. ft. per structure, up to 400 sq. ft. Other bonuses are gone. ICO: .5 without bonuses; current BMO: .5 with bonuses. Overhangs don't count as floor area. Lot coverage determines if need to build 2<sup>nd</sup> story. Height limit is from the grade.

How does this fit in to general & community Plan? Community plans don't tend to get into size, more characteristics of neighborhood. Mar Vista community plan is 20 years old.

New zones will rollover into recodeLA.

Planning Department staff did analysis. Zoning consultants (professional planners) did zones. Believes they reached R1V2 recommendation by analysis of floor area ranges in Mar Vista. Recommend something a little large than current average. Existing BMO is like R1V1. ICO is closest to R1V2.

Zoning code defines what is front, what is back. What if impossible to put garage in back? New rules will apply to new development. Threshold for what is changed applies for remodel.

Land use decisions are not based on property values. Planning Commission will consider planning recommendation and community input. If there are areas that have different concerns within Mar Vista, can

have different codes. If no community consensus, may need to determine if need to rezone, or perhaps lean more on professionals.

5. **Policy Motion: R1 Variation Zone** (Directors motion submitted by Rob Kadota)

The Mar Vista Community Council recommends that the Los Angeles Department of City Planning adopt the R1V2New zone for Mar Vista.

Motion to approve by Sarah, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Melissa.

**Public Comment** (max 1 min each unless waived by the Chair)

Susan Klos: See Attachment A. Note: Susan left room after reading comment.

Karen Sandler: Lives on Stuart Ave. (Mar Vista flats); 1650 sq. ft. home. Huge amount of remodeling and development. Neighborhood character is changing, not for better. Recommends V2.

Ken Hayton: Supports V1 or New. V2 will restrain growth. New provides some compromise but prefers V1

Mike Marans: 1500 sq. ft. home. Prefers R1VNew. How do they get away with small lot subdivision. \ at 3660 Beethoven?

Bob Elliott: Home on Ashwood near Mark Twain; 4900 sq. ft. lot. Supports R1VNew; V2 is too restrictive for area. If have crawl space, it takes up 21 inches of height.

Kent Alvis: Lives across from Little League field. Does't think we are ready to vote, make statement. V2 is too restrictive.

Ameen Aminat: Redeveloping at Grandview & Victoria. For people new to neighborhood, paying more per sq. ft., so have less money to work with as developer. This is reason for ugly new developments.

Brian Selem: Mar Vista is too broad an area. Favors V1. Big loss of value.

Harriet Natsuyama: Not in favor of mansionization. Leaning toward V2. Prevent mansionization.

Joseph Treves: Loves Mar Vista. Concerned we're over reacting to new large homes. Different needs than in past: offices, parents, grown children.

David Altemus: In Mar Vista since 1948, bought house in 1972. Home prices are based solely on sq. ft. Likes R1V1.

Jeff Rapport: Lived in Mar Vista since 1948. Is very eclectic neighborhood..Some people have built boxes. This is crazy. Penalizes people for putting more garages in. Supports V1.

Saeed Ali: R1V2. Need to consider height with crawl space. Decision is being made much too fast, without enough community involvement.

Patti Oblath: Wade St. No longer has southern exposure or privacy in back yard. R1V2 or R1New.

Neil Kritzinger: Why creating another alphabet soup? If legislating sloped roof, would need to build 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.

Andrew Galambos: Born in Mar Vista. Architect. Encroachment will deal with massing. R1V2 or New. It's hard to look at the zones in isolation from new BMO.

Additional Comments: see Attachment B.

**Board Comment**

Sarah Auerswald: Comments deadline is Sept. 24. Patricia Keane: Influence declines after deadline; may be possible to extend deadline for Mar Vista. If have comments after date, submit directly to Planning Commission; it votes on recommendation for City Council.

Damien Newton: Comments at last BOD meeting addressed character of community, 12224 Venice development. Community character is within neighborhoods, not what's on Venice. Has heard "I like V1, but could go with New; I like V2, but could go with New." Would be comfortable with R1VNew.

Holly Tilson: wanted to ask a friend who is an expert in the field, if motion is written properly but didn't have the opportunity because it was not presented at a T&I meeting. For her, whole thing started with mansionization. Feels that residents need to write their own letters.

Michelle Krupkin: City planning had meetings over the summer; everyone wanted V2, it wasn't small enough. Don't know if VNew is good compromise

Melissa Stoller: Mar Vista is too large an area to be covered by one zone. Doesn't want more boxes.

Robin Doyno: Very concerned about mansionization. Probably VNew is best way to go; needs more time. Could have several plans if done cogently.

Greg Tedesco: Leaning toward VNew, good compromise, need to get things under control.

Sherri Akers (via email): 'm not qualified to evaluate the specifics of this ordinance. But my concern is that most of us have a high likelihood of needing to expand the typical Mar Vista home. Many may need to accommodate up to 3 generations. For many, if not most, long term care is unaffordable. To bring parents into our homes and maintain quality of life may be best achieved by adding another master suite. Many of us will need a live in caregiver. Again, we want to accommodate that while still having some privacy. Many adult children can't afford to live in LA and are moving back with their parents - often with their own children. My primary concern is that we not be prohibited from improving our homes so that we can care for our families and ourselves.

Friendly Amendment by Paola Cervantes: R1VNew, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Robin Doyno. Rob Kadota accepts amendment.

Friendly Amendment by Damien Newton: Urge Planning to take 2<sup>nd</sup> look. Are they looking at too large an area. Sarah Auerswald: how would we vote on it we break Mar Vista into smaller areas? Rob Kadota: suggests we take stand now, community can keep commenting. Damien: Motion withdrawn.

Motion carried as amended: 6 ayes, 2 nays, 0 abstentions, 1 recusal (Susan Klos), 1 absent (Sherri Akers).

Note: Susan Klos returned to room following vote.

6. **Policy Motion: Venice Blvd Relinquishment** (submitted by Great Streets and Transportation Infrastructure committees)

Whereas the LA City Council is ~~due to vote on~~ approved Council File 16-0147 ~~in October 2016~~ on August 31, 2016,

Whereas the Mar Vista Community Council supports the relinquishment of Venice Blvd between Lincoln and Cadillac from Caltrans to the City of Los Angeles,

Therefore be it resolved that the Mar Vista Community Council supports Council File 16-0147 and encourages the City of Los Angeles to work with the Mar Vista Community Council on utilizing a portion of the \$14,500,000 payment from Caltrans to the City for the relinquishment for improvements along Venice Blvd between Walgrove and Sawtelle.

Motion to approve by Michelle Krupkin, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Damien Newton.

Board Comment

Michelle Krupkin: Friendly amendment: Council voted August 31.

Damien Newton: Lots of people have done great job on our Great Street, main roadblock has been CalTrans.

Motion carried as amended: 9 ayes, 0 nays, abstentions, 0 recusals,, 1 absent (Sherri Aker).s

7. **Public Comment**

8. **Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 8:53 P.M.

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**ATTACHMENT A: Susan Klos Public Comment and Recusal**

I have conferred with the Office of the City Attorney and since this issue impacts my primary residence there is an exception under the law found at California Code of Regulations section 18702.4(b)(1)(A) that allows me to speak as a member of the public.

I request that the committee's minutes reflect that I am being disqualifying myself as a committee member, but speaking as a member of the public under California Code of Regulations section 18702.4(b)(1)(A).

(I sat in the audience at this point)

Public comment - I'm an At-Large Director of the MVCC speaking not as a committee member of the MVCC, but as a member of the public under California Code of Regulations section 18702.4(b)(1)(A). I have obtained advice from the Office of the City Attorney regarding my ability to speak as a member of the public on this matter.

(I left the room for the vote)

## **ATTACHMENT B: Public Comments submitted to PLUM Committee**

a. John and Jill Skinner

Like many in our community, we are tired of builders who have been able to take advantage of loopholes and erect glorified boxes that have rooftop decks, etc. We are fine with eliminating loopholes that would cut down on this trend and would support the R1V1 or R1V New proposals.

However, the proposed R1V2 zone for Mar Vista is a complete over-reaction to the overzealous builders and will not only hurt the regular homeowner but it also fails to take into account the future of families in Los Angeles. Frankly, we are shocked such strong restrictions are even being proposed and we would NOT have bought our current home in Mar Vista if something like R1V2 was in place.

A few points we would like to make:

**\*\*Based on talking with neighbors, many people in Mar Vista still think the area would fall under the R1V1 proposal. They don't understand that R1V2 is what has been recommended for Mar Vista. Most people seem to be fine with 50% FAR with no bonuses but further restrictions are getting a big thumbs down. Many of these people might be silent because they don't understand the restrictions of R1V2 compared to R1V1.**

Caring for elderly parents/grandparents/children living at home: People are living much longer. Even though society is having less kids then they did 20+ years ago, the size of families living together is INCREASING. Due to medical and health advancements, some households will have four living generations in them. "By 2025, as many as 25% of the U.S. population will be in multi-generational households and the demand for a different kind of residential property will accelerate over the next decade to meet this demand" (Strategic Advantage Real Estate newsletter). When you combine this with astronomically high rents forcing children to live at home longer than ever, does it really make sense to further restrict a homeowner in regards to what they can do with their property?

More people are working from home: More people are working at home and need dedicated work space in the house. Reducing the options to have a work space at home doesn't make much sense as we move into the future.

Discriminatory toward larger families: As a father and someone who grew up with five siblings, I have a serious problem with many of the proponents for the new proposal arbitrarily telling people they can make due in smaller houses. They don't know the specific needs of a certain families that might require more space, etc. We all have different needs and that needs to be respected. What about families with special needs children?

Why make the ugly boxes even more valuable?: By passing the proposed ordinance, it will have the unfortunate impact of making those unsightly/over-built shoe boxes even more valuable. They will never be torn down since the homeowner would have to build a significantly smaller house. Since these homes will not have any competition, their value will end up trading at premium prices...so the people with the homes that everyone loves to hate will be in an even better financial position.

Attached Garages: Since when would an area in which you park your car be counted against the livable square footage? It is NOT fair to assume that everyone uses an attached garage as extra living space. Attached garages are essential for safety, especially when a spouse is a frequent business traveler. Attached garages allow for people to build a home that creates a larger backyard which is an essential component for maximizing California living and one's own land value. I have yet to hear a rationale argument as to why an attached garage should be counted against the allowable floor area of a lot especially when non-attached garage square footage is considered exempt.

Thank you for your time and we appreciate all that you do to make Mar Vista such a great place to live. We sincerely hope a recommendation more along the lines of the R1V1 is made to the City Council.

We are happy to speak with anyone about this topic if needed.

All the Best,

John and Jill Skinner  
12624 Indianapolis Street

b. Tod Jerry

I am writing to comment on the proposal of the RI Variation Zone (RI V2) for the Mar Vista Neighborhood.

I believe that the proposed further reduction of Floor Area Ratio ("FAR") under the R1V2

Variation zone is overly restrictive and unnecessary in combination with the new massing rules under the updated Baseline Mansionization Ordinance ("BMO"). RIVNew should be considered as an option as massing guidelines are much more important than FAR.

I am the Chief Operating Officer of Marmol Radziner. Marmol Radziner is a leading architect and contractor that has been in business for over 27 years in Los Angeles. The company has designed and built hundreds of homes throughout Los Angeles over the last several decades, and has been widely recognized as a leader in residential architectural design.

I have also been a resident of Mar Vista since 2002. While growing our family, my wife and I

have remodeled two homes and I am in the process of building a third house in Mar Vista.

Mar Vista has seen significant growth over the last 20 years for a number of reasons. Most importantly, the real estate has been relatively affordable in comparison to Venice, Santa Monica, Pacific Palisades, and other Westside neighborhoods. Additionally, the environment to remodel or build new homes has been generally less restrictive and easier to manage compared to the neighboring communities. This has attracted a diverse group of residents and driven tremendous growth and property value appreciation.

The sense of community is wonderful and has grown stronger as new residents have come to our neighborhood. Schools have improved, restaurants and retail have thrived, and the Farmers' Market has become a Westside destination.

Many residents and neighbors react negatively to new development when the architecture appears out of scale or character to the neighborhood, which is understandable. The main problem with many new homes is a lack of sensitivity to the massing of the new building in relation to the neighborhood and surrounding streetscape, often without considering the relationship between interior living space of the home and the exterior garden and lighting.

It is difficult to build "good architecture" into a city zoning code, so the common reaction is to restrict size, and thus reduce FAR. This is the incorrect approach. **The focus should be on the massing of the new building.**

The newly proposed BMO does address massing in several important ways. While FAR is reduced and bonuses are removed, a complex set of new rules is introduced to guide setbacks, building articulation and shape (encroachment plane, front facade, side wall articulation). The new massing rules will start to address the most critical concern with new construction. However, also reducing FAR at the same time is effectively a "double whammy". FAR has no context without having rules on shape. A large house that is well proportioned can have a more attractive presence than a smaller house that is poorly designed.

The City of Santa Monica utilizes many of the same concepts as proposed in the new BMO. However, **Santa Monica also allows a 61% FAR** in most neighborhoods. The rules in Santa Monica have historically been viewed as restrictive in comparison to Los Angeles.

Interestingly, Pacific Palisades is recommending the adoption of R1V1, which has a less restrictive allowable FAR (55-65%) than the new BMO. The Palisades neighborhood has historically been subject to various local CCR's (such as Tract 9300), which have similar massing rules (encroachment plane for example) as the new BMO.

From a planning perspective, the restrictive massing rules in Santa Monica and in Tract 9300 could be viewed as historically effective despite relatively large allowable FAR.

If Mar Vista adopts the R1V2 zoning variation, it will be significantly more restrictive to build in Mar Vista as compared to Santa Monica or Pacific Palisades.

I would encourage the Mar Vista Community Council, local leaders, and residents to further evaluate the potential variation zones as compared to the new BMO and consider other options,

including the proposed R1 VNew. The new massing rules under the BMO are significantly more restrictive than current code and will be very effective in addressing the most critical concerns of newly constructed homes. There is no need to also significantly decrease FAR at the same time.

c. Michael Poloukhine

Based on the newly published proposed code revisions, in addition to my previous recommendations, I recommend the following additional revisions to better assure the intent of the changes is met without the potential for negative effects on design excellence in our community.

Section 1: Floor Area, Residential definition, Section 12.03

Covered porches and over-in-height ceilings are useful design tools used to create indoor/outdoor transitions and shape spaces in creative and interesting ways. Excluding only some of their floor area may be rational where there is no direct massing control, however, in the R1 zone's encroachment plane their discouragement is not only no longer necessary but actually detrimental to design excellence and variety in home designs. In the R1 zone, with the encroachment plane introduced, open porches and double-counting of over-in-height areas can, and in the interest of better design should be excluded entirely from RFA.

Section 12: Subdivision 1 of Subsection C of Section 12.08:

The added language for front facade modulation is the same language from the current code already shown to be ineffective as interpreted by LADBS Staff to preclude variations in the setback across stories. Greater design flexibility can be introduced while still providing for massing control by relying on a home's cumulative facade area rather than building width: "The cumulative aggregate area of the exterior walls facing the front lot line, equal to a minimum of 25 percent of the front facade area, shall be stepped back . . ."

Additionally, tying the degree of setback to building depth unnecessarily penalizes narrow lots that require longer buildings to achieve the same building area, while also ignoring the overall neighborhood street facade context which may be negatively affected by too deep a building facade setback. There is no rational reason a building on a 40' wide lot should have a deeper facade setback than the same area building on a 50' or 60' wide lot directly adjacent to it, and to require this by code will only encourage disjointed and oddly proportioned street facades. A more contextual and rational determinant of front facade setback would be the front yard depth: ". . . shall be stepped back a distance of at least 20 percent of the required front yard setback, (up to 20 percent of the building depth) from a plane parallel to the lot width . . ."

I believe the above recommendations would help encourage design excellence without detrimental impact to the intent of the revisions and urge you to consider their incorporation into the ordinance.