

City Lights Citizen SRO Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes October 2, 2008

Meeting Called to Order: Meeting called to order at 4:05 p.m.

Members Present: William McGarvey III, Paul Andresen, Glenna Axe, Gayle Berggren,

Members Absent: Vacant Developer-Appointed Position

Staff Present: Linda R. Morad, Housing Programs Supervisor
Steve Alvarado, HCR Inspector
Kim Radding, Clerical Assistant III

Project Management: Brenda Ruiz, Regional Manager, Solari Enterprises, Inc.
Cynthia Orozco, On-site Manager, Fullerton City Lights SRO
Rishi Dhurandar, Assistant Asset Manager, ADI, Inc.

A. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairman McGarvey called the meeting to order, conducted a brief roll call and confirmed that a quorum was present.

B. Approval of Minutes

A MOTION was made by Member Berggren to APPROVE the Minutes of August 7, 2008 as written. The MOTION was SECONDED by Member Axe and CARRIED unanimously by the members present.

C. Discussion of Work Program/Activities

1. City Staff Report

Ms. Morad reviewed the requirements outlined in Conditional Use Permit 914 and related Resolutions and Planning Commission determinations that regulate the frequency of inspections conducted at the Fullerton City Lights SRO (SRO) site. She explained that the City Inspector must conduct two semi-annual inspections each year. At present, this is being carried out, as well as two additional semi-annual inspections that are conducted by the Committee members each year. Ms. Morad recommended that the City inspections continue semi-annually with a written report provided for Committee review and Committee members may choose to accompany the Inspector to the site.

A discussion was held concerning various options for modification to the current quarterly inspection schedule. Member Axe expressed concern that despite the current frequency of site visits, issues continue to arise between inspections. She feared that reducing the quarterly inspections to semi-annual may lead to more significant corrections and deterioration of the overall building condition. Chairman McGarvey inquired about what months the City conducts inspection and was advised by Inspector Alvarado that he inspects the SRO in April and October each year. Inspector Alvarado added that he conducts a secondary visit 30 days after each inspection in order to confirm that corrections have been completed.

Member Andresen arrived at this time.

Chairman McGarvey stated that he felt it was of great importance that Committee members visit the site in order to make personal observations. Member Axe spoke in agreement and added that the members may tend to observe different types of issues than the City Inspector. Ms. Ruiz then suggested that the Committee members consider a joint approach to the semi-annual inspections. Member Berggren wondered if the joint inspections would also include representatives of property management. Ms. Orozco confirmed that property management assists with all inspections to insure security for the residents.

Member Andresen expressed his support for reducing the frequency of site inspections and felt that it could be educational for the Committee members to collaborate with the City Inspector. He suggested that a joint semi-annual inspection be tested for one year.

Chairman McGarvey asked Ms. Ruiz to share her thoughts about how the joint approach would be favorable. Ms. Ruiz responded that she felt that the current quarterly inspection schedule actually results in pre-inspections conducted by property management and in some cases follow-up inspections in order to make and confirm corrections. She felt these numerous inspections can be an unusual imposition upon the residents and may be construed as a privacy issue by some residents. Ms. Ruiz added that (in situations that involve personal housekeeping), property management follows policy to work with the residents. This often takes more than three months to resolve; an eviction due to unsanitary conditions requires additional time. Ms. Ruiz remarked that overall she feels that the condition of the SRO has improved during the past year.

Inspector Alvarado concurred that significant improvements have been accomplished during the past year. Ms. Ruiz closed her remarks by suggesting that two Committee members could join the City Inspector on each day of the inspections, which are typically conducted over the course of a three-day period.

Chairman McGarvey proposed a MOTION that Committee members participate in conjunction with the City Inspector to conduct joint semi-annual inspections for the upcoming twelve months, at which time the program effectiveness will be reviewed. A vote was held among the members with UNANIMOUS agreement to support the MOTION.

Ms. Morad then proceeded with discussion pertaining to the items reviewed during a recent meeting with the management staff of Solari Enterprises, Inc. (Solari). The concerns included appropriate calculations for rent to be collected for the units at the SRO. Chairman McGarvey asked how the rents are established. Ms. Morad explained that each year maximum rents are established based upon the median rent for the County of Orange. The City provides this data to Solari and rent increases are administered within these guidelines. Ms. Morad continued to describe a specific circumstance involving Section 8 funding, in which she was questioning legal practice and will refer the matter to the City Attorney for review.

Ms. Morad advised the Committee members that the Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions calls for limitations to the security deposit that may be collected from incoming residents. The rental occupancies "shall not require the tenant to pay a one-time security in total cumulative amount greater than twenty percent (20%) of the monthly rent of the Restricted Unit being rented." Ms. Ruiz is currently reviewing the leasing practice pertaining to this restriction and will advise the City regarding the result of her research.

Chairman McGarvey added that on various occasions he has had informal conversations with residents of the SRO during which they have expressed concerns over rising rent cost. He will be interested to learn the outcome of the investigations discussed. Ms. Morad responded that the City administers an annual audit of rents charged and that Solari has submitted all required documentation in compliance with the September deadline. Ms. Ruiz stated that the rent being charged at the SRO is below the threshold of what is allowed for restricted units in Orange County.

2. Emergency Responses

Chairman McGarvey shared that he recently attended an informative meeting for all committee and commission members. He spoke with the Chief of Police who commented to him that prior law enforcement concerns with the SRO were now much improved.

Ms. Morad then reviewed the data regarding the calls for service during the past two months and it was noted that fewer reports were taken during this period.

D. Public Comment

No public comment.

Mr. Dhurandar summarized the progress with painting the SRO building exterior and reported that the final phase will involve scaffolding being constructed in the interior courtyard area to complete the exterior walls inside the courtyard.

Ms. Morad advised that the number of calls received by City staff regarding matters related to the SRO has diminished. She remarked that most of the recent calls have involved concerns about increased rent within the scope of today's broader economic concerns.

E. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be conducted as scheduled on Thursday, December 4, 2008.

F. Adjournment

With no further business, Member Berggren MOVED that the meeting be adjourned, Member Andresen SECONDED the MOTION, and with all in favor Chairman McGarvey adjourned the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

KIM RADDING
CLERICAL ASSISTANT III