

Questions/Comments for HPNA Board meeting November 9, 2015

Responses from HPNA Sign Committee Are In Blue

1. I've heard that the sign project has been in the works for years (4 or 5 depending upon who you talk with), yet the following is the earliest published information I was able to locate regarding the sign.

2-10-2014 Board Minutes under New Business: District 5 leadership forum: A few BODs attended. Discussed: 311, drought presentation (March meeting presentation), Barbara Falcon - how to set up a neighborhood watch. Won gift card to Office Max to be used for HPNA needs. **Seed Grant discussed idea. Will pursue application for HPNA sign/marquee.**

What led up to a discussion of the sign/marquee at this forum?

Response:

This meeting was the first time we discussed the current neighborhood sign project.

However, the idea for a neighborhood sign has been around for a very long time. The request for seed grant proposals seemed like a good opportunity to pursue it further.

We recently learned from neighborhood activist and former board member and president, Val Anderson that the first hint of a sign project was a tongue-in-cheek offering to paint stars and "Hollywood Park" on the fence facing Freeport. It was spurred by an earlier remark from our then-Councilwoman Lauren Hammond when she said our neighborhood did not get as much attention as others because no one knew we existed but us.

According to Val, "the painted fence idea died for lack of anyone with time to explore it, but the sign idea and other ideas for recognition were alive, but with no commitment to volunteer and find resources for accomplishment until the current project."

We would not be surprised to learn that even more previous HPNA Boards have explored the idea before as well.

Please see the following FAQ at <http://www.hollywoodpark95822.org/sign-sculpture-faqs/> for more about the purpose behind the project: *What is this I hear about a neighborhood sign for Hollywood Park?*

2. Considering the "sign/sculpture" is a permanent fixture to represent the Hollywood Park Community as a whole, were any efforts made to include the entire neighborhood vs. just HPNA members? If not, why not?

An example for community input: HPNA member from each street could have canvassed their neighbors to get input on a neighborhood sign - if they would like one, ideas for designs, would they be willing to donate if funding fell short? This type of short survey could have been included in a newsletter, on FB and ND, via email. This might have been an opportunity to also gain additional HPNA members, if that's what HPNA is striving toward.

Response: We sought input from all neighbors and even the larger community by announcing the project in the Fall 2014 newsletter and another request for input was in an article of the project in the November 2014 issue of Land Park News. We also requested further suggestions for designer, artist, and welder referrals through Next Door and Facebook from which we received several referrals. With regards

to the vote on the final design, we discussed several different options for conducting the vote and settled on asking the membership to vote at the September general meeting of the membership. This seemed appropriate because it would allow us to: 1) Inform a large segment of the neighborhood by delivering almost 1500 newsletters with an article announcing the artist and the vote on the designs; 2) Allow for a discussion with the artist; 3) Allow all neighbors to vote because all residents of Hollywood Park are eligible for membership; and 4) Ensure involvement in an Association sponsored project.

Please see the following FAQs at <http://www.hollywoodpark95822.org/sign-sculpture-faqs/> for more information: *How did the HPNA inform the neighborhood about the Neighborhood Sign Project? And Why wasn't more of the neighborhood included in voting on the design of the sign?*

Before answering the following, please do not refer to an article asking for design ideas when additional avenues for gathering input were available to the Committee:

3. Why was design choice limited to only 50's theme?

Response: We considered several different ideas for the design theme, but we settled upon a “googie” style that had its heyday in the era in which Hollywood Park was developed and is exemplified by several other signs and buildings on Freeport Blvd. The choice to go with a 50's theme was decided by the sign committee since no other design ideas came from the community; however, a number of neighbors who were not part of the sign committee but wanted to be involved also supported the choice of going with the 50's theme.

4. Is there a reason other design options weren't considered which effectively limited votes to only a 50's themed sign/sculpture?

Response: Other designs were considered. Please see response above.

5. When and why did the project go from a “sign” to a “work of art”?

Response: The sculptural elements of the sign were presented by Casey Marshall when he shared his ideas with the sign committee. Casey presented some ideas that included sculptural elements, and the committee was impressed by the thought and time Casey put in to the design. The sign committee was glad to hear ideas from a designer, since the committee members were not designers (nor very artistic). The committee quickly learned that other neighborhood signs in other cities were also more than just signs, but were artistic landmarks. Therefore the evolution of the idea for a neighborhood sign into one with sculptural elements and a landmark was a natural progression as the committee sought out designers and installers.

Please see following FAQ at <http://www.hollywoodpark95822.org/sign-sculpture-faqs/> for more information on the purpose behind the sculptural elements of the sign: *Can't we just have the sign, and not the other stuff?*

6. Who made that determination and was input requested from the community before a final determination was made?

Response: Casey Marshall presented his three designs, all which included sculptural elements, at the July board meeting. An email was sent to the membership announcing that the board would be voting on Casey Marshall and his designs. Although the board was unable to vote that evening due to a lack of a quorum, the board voted at the August board meeting for the HPNA membership to vote on the three designs at the September general meeting.

Costs:

7. Was a budget discussed for the sign and approved by the Board? What is that figure?

Response: At the August 3 board meeting the board approved a budget of \$14,000 and any additional amounts from fundraising efforts. The \$14,000 included \$7,000 in City funds pledged from City Councilmember Jay Schenirer and \$7,000 in County funds pledged from County Supervisor Patrick Kennedy. The board also stipulated that all payments made from the HPNA for the sign would be contingent upon the receipt of pledged funds for that purpose.

8. Was data gathered to determine a cost analysis of a sign vs. art project? What was the cost difference?

Response: No. Such an analysis never seemed necessary. We were all very excited to be able to provide designs to the neighborhood of a project that, by being more than just a sign, would be far more successful in achieving what we originally set out to do, which was to show the rest of Sacramento who we are as a neighborhood and create a sense of community identity by using much more than just words.

9. Was a revised budget for the project discussed and approved by the Board?

Response: The approved budget from the August 3 meeting has not been revised. However, we are currently negotiating an agreement to build the sign with the artist which will be approved by the board. That agreement will include a detailed budget for the project.

10. Were ongoing costs for maintenance discussed and factored in? (cleaning, vandalism, continued upkeep of sign/sculpture parts, etc.)

Response: Since we have chosen a design that does not require continued upkeep, the only maintenance would be for cleaning and vandalism which would be handled by volunteers. The design lends itself to quick clean-up. If it were entirely covered in paint it would take approximately 60 minutes for someone to wash it down and remove the paint including setup and cleanup. We would initially be using equipment owned by neighbors but could investigate purchasing a pressure washer of our own. A pressure washer that would work for this purpose costs approximately \$200 but we do not foresee the need for the association to purchase one.

Please see following FAQ at <http://www.hollywoodpark95822.org/sign-sculpture-faqs/> for more information on how the sign would be built to address the risk of vandalism: *What about graffiti and attracting vagrants?*

11. How much money has been expended on this project to date and for what were the costs incurred?

Response: A payment \$2,000 to Casey Marshall for all design services rendered thus far was approved by the Board at the August 3 board meeting as described in the minutes. The payment was made contingent upon the receipt of the first installment of the County's contribution toward the project.

12. Has a contract with the artist been signed? Can the contract be posted online or made available to HP residents to review?

Response: No contract has been entered into with the artist. A final contract will have to be approved by the board. All board meetings are open to the HPNA membership for whom the board is accountable. No determination has been made whether the contract will be posted online. We will research the practices of other neighborhood associations to determine the standard practice for these types of matters.

13. “Super Secret Sign Committee” -- this caught my eye in Board meeting minutes after I discovered a vote on design was being taken without prior review of designs and has recently become a topic of discussion on social media:

If, in fact, there was not an effort to keep the sign project under wraps, why is the Committee referred to as the “Super Secret Sign Committee” in Board meeting minutes?

Response: The name of the committee as shown in public board meeting minutes from May and July of 2014 was the Super Secret Sign Committee. This was a poor attempt at humor by a volunteer board mostly used to putting on Ice Cream Socials and 4th of July parades. The sign project was something of a pipe dream at the time. The July 2014 minutes announced that there would be a meeting with City Councilmember Jay Schenirer’s office. At the August HPNA board meeting, the board was updated on the meeting with Schenirer’s office and a motion was passed to officially rename the committee more appropriately. Despite its regrettable sophomoric beginnings, the project has never been secret. The project was announced in the newsletter and updates were provided at every general meeting.

14. Were there any attempts to keep the sign/sculpture designs a secret until time to vote?

Response: No. The artist had requested he be given the opportunity to reveal the designs at the general meeting. He wanted the opportunity to explain them in person at the meeting and present them in three dimensions. There was no effort to keep them secret. We were not given copies of the designs in any form (digital or paper).

15. Do you believe it appropriate to refer to any HPNA committee as “Super Secret”?

Response: No. We regret naming it that.

16. **Lack of communication:** [We respectfully disagree with this statement. There was no lack of communication. We have outlined our attempts at communicating with our neighbors through newsletters, social media (NextDoor and Facebook), flyers, word of mouth, announcements at HPNA events and via our website. While not everyone may have received the messages, we were doing our best to put them out there.]

Why weren’t ongoing progress reports regarding the sign posted on FB or ND by the Committee to keep the community informed on the status of the project? (i.e. Committee met with so-and-so. We discussed the following design ideas.)

Response: We updated our membership at our general meetings about the funds being pledged and about how we were continuing to meet with artists and sign companies. We also described our direction of a googie style type of architecture during those updates. Approximately 1500 residences receive our newsletter announcing our general meetings. We also announce the meetings on Next Door and Facebook. We were very much in the search phase so there was not much to share until we were ready to recommend a designer/fabricator.

17. The three designs were presented and had to be voted on during the same meeting. Considering some members voiced concerns about the sign/sculpture and wanted to postpone the vote to a subsequent meeting, what was the reason the vote was rushed through anyway?

Response: A motion was presented by a member at the September general meeting to postpone the vote. The membership voted against the motion in favor of going forward with the vote on the designs.

18. This is the explanation given for excluding non-HPNA residents from voting:

From HPNA web site FAQ's:

Why wasn't more of the neighborhood included in voting on the design of the sign?

At the start of the Hollywood Park Neighborhood Sign Project, the HPNA Sign Committee wanted to have the entire neighborhood vote on the sign design. The logistics of how this would occur would prove to be far more difficult than just conceiving the idea. We simply did not have the resources to conduct such a vote. The HPNA board decided that the next best option was to ask HPNA members to vote on the designs at the general membership meeting on September 16, 2015.

There were two justifications for the decision to have the vote at the HPNA meeting and not at the Ice Cream Social/Movie Night: First, a presentation that occurred immediately prior to the movie would not allow for any discussion; and second, **the entire Hollywood Park Neighborhood Sign Project had been spearheaded by the elected board of the HPNA and, therefore, the board thought that it would be appropriate for the HPNA membership to make the final decision-after all, all neighbors are eligible for membership.**

If the Board truly wanted more HP residents to vote on the sign, why does it blatantly suggest if residents want input they can join the HPNA? I take that statement to mean we don't care that you live here or what you want or think if you're not an HPNA member.

Response: The Hollywood Park Neighborhood Association exists for the entire neighborhood of Hollywood Park. All of our activities benefit the entire neighborhood. However, by law, we are ultimately accountable to our members, as the membership's dues and participation fuel the Association. All residents have the choice of being a member or not. While we would like neighbors to support our efforts by becoming a member, there are many other ways of improving the neighborhood and we are 100 percent supportive of all of those efforts.

19. From Fall 2015 newsletter article on the sign voting:

"Marshall will present three designs for **all HPNA members** to vote on at the September 16, general meeting."

The Board had the opportunity to include non-HPNA residents in the voting, but deliberately chose to exclude them from the vote. The article could have easily been written with the sentence above changed to include all HP residents. Social media could have been utilized to inform non-HPNA residents of the upcoming vote.

Correct me if I'm wrong, but aren't the HPNA's various events and functions open to all Hollywood Park residents - 4th of July Parade, Ice Cream Social, Mega Garage Sale, etc.? And, are these events often times used as a way to advance HPNA membership? Why wasn't this philosophy of community involvement used for the sign project and design voting?

Response: Your statement above regarding social media is incorrect. In addition to delivering the newsletter article mentioned to almost 1500 residences in Hollywood Park, the general meeting and the sign design vote was announced on Next Door and Facebook.

The Hollywood Park Neighborhood Association is established to help the entire neighborhood and we believe the events you referenced and the sign sculpture adheres to our mission statements.

Just like those events you mentioned, the neighborhood sign will be "open" to the public and will not be kept behind a curtain unless someone is a HPNA member. However, membership in the HPNA allows you to help govern the direction the neighborhood association takes. While we welcome feedback

from all neighbors, as mentioned in the previous response, the Neighborhood Association must be accountable to the membership.

The philosophy you mentioned was indeed a goal of the sign project. We hoped it would foster community interaction and generate new membership.

20. Number of Votes:

This is all I could find regarding the sign voting results on the HPNA web site:

- “I am ecstatic to announce that we have a winning sign design for the Hollywood Park Neighborhood sign! As announced in the Fall 2015 Hollywood Park Herald, Casey Marshall, of FABRITYPE, presented three of his designs to the Hollywood Park Neighborhood Association for a membership vote Wednesday evening. **71% of the votes were in favor of one of the three designs (34 out of 48) and almost half of those voted for the winning design dubbed “Front Yard” (16 out of 34).** The plan is for the sign to be located at the corner of Freeport Blvd., Shielah Way and Stacia Way”

I understand an option to write in “None” was given to those at the meeting who wanted HPNA to start over with design options. Based on the information above, it appears that 14 of the total votes were for “None”. Is that correct? Why was that information not included in the above excerpt from the “latest news” on the sign/sculpture?

Response: Yes. 14 members chose none of the designs on their ballots. By describing that 34 out of 48 members were in favor of one of the design options, we believe that the converse was clear that the other 14 were not in favor of the design options. Of the 48 total votes, 16 chose the “Front Yard” design, 13 chose the “Flamingoes” design, 5 chose the “Living Room” design, and 14 did not clearly choose any of the designs.

21. How many HPNA members are there? What is the total number of households in the neighborhood? The total number of votes submitted at the meeting was only 48, why do you believe that is a representative number for Hollywood Park residents in the neighborhood -- or HPNA members for that matter?

Response: We have approximately 1,500 households covered by the Hollywood Park Neighborhood Association. The Association has 150 members. We do our best to inform all neighbors of our meetings and hope that they can attend.

23. A small amount of votes was cast during only one meeting of HPNA members and a good number of residents are not happy with the way the project was handled. With that in mind, why does the Board indicate voting is over, it's a done deal? Why is the Board so opposed to the idea of revisiting the project and holding another vote with members and non-members in attendance?

Response: A motion of the membership was made at the September General Meeting to postpone the vote and the membership chose to move forward. Two thirds of the members in attendance voted for one of the designs presented when they had been presented the option of writing in “none.” Out of respect for those actions, the Sign Committee would recommend that we move forward with negotiating an agreement with the designer/fabricator for the design that was approved by the membership. While we acknowledge that there is some dissatisfaction with the design, the process followed by HPNA, and the idea of carrying out the project at all, it would set a precedent detrimental to carrying out HPNA business to go through the process again to appease a vocal but small group of neighbors.

Please note that there is no done deal. The board will have to vote on a final agreement at a board meeting open to the membership.

24. The HPNA Mission Statement reads as follows:

Mission Statement

- To enhance the livability of the HPNA neighborhoods by establishing and maintaining open lines of communication and with various government agencies, businesses, and other organizations.
- To act as liaison for the HPNA neighborhoods with various government agencies, businesses and other organizations.
- To provide an open process by which all residents of the HPNA neighborhoods may involve themselves in the affairs of the neighborhoods.
- To promote greater cooperation, communication, understanding, and mutual support among residents of the HPNA neighborhood.

Given that the current mantra of the HPNA Board seems to be ‘if you don’t like what we’re doing become a member, run for a Board position’ when a resident has an opposing view, do you truly believe you represent the Hollywood Park community as a whole? Do you believe such a mantra promotes acceptance of the HPNA?

Response: This is not the “current mantra” of the HPNA. A more accurate articulation would be, “if you have an idea for improving the neighborhood, let’s partner with you to make it happen. Even better, run for the board at our December 16th general meeting and spearhead it yourself with our help.”

The purpose of membership is for the mission that you state above. So we continue to volunteer and strive toward those ends as best we can. Opposing views accompanied by constructive suggestions are always welcome.