**Altadena Town Council**

**Community Standards Committee**

**Minutes: April 23, 2013**

**1. Members Present:** Dan Harlow, Don Kirkland, Meredith Miller, Jim Osterling, Marge Nichols, Jonathan Potter. Absent: Ed Meyers (travel), Tecumseh Shackelford. Peggy Taylor, George Jenkins, Mark Goldschmidt (travel). Regional Planning staff: Adam Thurtell, Brianna Menke, who will replace Adam in working with our committee since he has been transferred to Code Enforcement.

**2. Minutes:** MSC to approve minutes from April 9 meeting.

**3. Reports:** Nothing to report from Chair and Vice Chair. Secretary circulated proposed information to be posted on ATC website. Committee members prefer to use a common ATC email address on website or perhaps Chairman Ed Meyers’ ATC address, rather than their personal email addresses. The committee roster was circulated for updates or additions. It was noted that Ed Meyers’ name has been misspelled as “Myers” in previous committee material.

**4. Old Business:** Dan Harlow reported that he has not received any followup to Gene Detchemendy’s offer to arrange a meeting with Altadena commercial property leasing agents or property owners. He will follow up with Detchemendy.

**5. Presentation: Eric Duyshart, Economic Development Manager, City of Pasadena**

The Economic Development office facilitates business district activities, including Old Pasadena and a number of other districts including South Lake, Playhouse District and neighborhood commercial districts with looser associations such as La Manda, Washington and North Lake. The North Lake association includes residents as well as businesses.

Old Pasadena was developed as a joint effort among business owners and the city. Steps included defining the area, an association of business owners, formation of a Business Improvement District (BID), and the essential step of constructing parking using redevelopment funds. A BID may get funding from a business tax or a property owners tax, and covers city services such as cleaning and security. Where parking is shared among businesses, it usually involves a modest payment to owners of the parking lot for insurance, etc.

The Economic Development office does joint marketing for businesses, coordinates special events and uses outreach to businesses such as banks or restaurants to encourage them to locate in the city. Investment in improving older commercial buildings is the main issue businesses are dealing with, including changes needed to meet ADA requirements as well as alarms, sprinkler systems, etc.

Pasadena, like many cities, is “over-retailed” as big box, mid-box and online purchasing are pressuring small businesses. This causes vacancies in commercial districts. With Old Pasadena developed, the city is now turning to develop of adjacent neighborhoods to put residents within walking distance of businesses. This involves neighborhood-serving retail as compared to destination retail businesses that draw customers from greater distances. The goal is to “frame” the commercial core with residential areas, especially multiple family housing. However, this often results in pushback from homeowners in previously single-family neighborhoods. Fewer tools are available for development with loss of redevelopment funding, but for residential development money may come from private sources such as pension funds.

Duyschart distributed material prepared for Altadena, a Complete Demographic Comparison Report, centered on Mariposa and Lake Ave., showing demographic data for a radius of ½ mile, 1, 2 and 3 miles from this center location. Copies were available for all committee members. In addition he provided a copy of several Pasadena-centered reports for committee reference.

Pasadena prepared an extensive economic development plan with 60 recommendations, and then had a high level business task force boil it down to 20 points. The city wants to attract jobs, shopping and dining, and visitors. Trip counts and demographic data are used to analyze economic potential of the area. Pasadena is installing “wayfinding” signs to identify districts, such as Caltech.

Duyshart pointed out that to be successful, business associations need to have regular meetings, a consistent vision, and consistent participation. City planning is politics: everything has to be negotiated.

Enterprise zones is a state program, however, this is now defunct for Altadena. We need to find out if there are any opportunities to reinstate participation in the program, which provides credits to businesses for hiring veteran, points toward competing for state contracts, and fee waivers for permits. We should get in touch with the County Economic Development Commission: to find out how they could they benefit Altadena.

Questions:

* What is the leakage of business in Pasadena, with consumers going out of the area to shop? Duyshart noted that Pasadena is “oversubscribed” in food, restaurants and fashion businesses, but low in hardwares. Glendale pulls in a lot of business with their mall and commercial center. He commented that while new development pulls in consumers, eventually the newness wears off and businesses may decline, resulting in vacancies.
* How long does it take to get a business permit in Pasadena? He explained that permits are expensive and slow for new construction, but more rapid for renovated properties.
* What about playing on the theme of Altadena as the gateway to the mountains? He agreed that this is a strong point, and would like to work with us on attracting mountain-oriented businesses. He could include photos of Altadena in promotional materials to show Pasadena-Altadena as a point of entry to mountain trails.
* What are some possible areas to attract business to Altadena? Duyshart suggested the following possibilities:
	+ A gravity event to take advantage of Lake Ave incline – for example a soapbox derby with various categories of competition
	+ A marathon or other events that would draw people into the community
	+ Family activities
	+ Branding Altadena business districts, such as using street banners

The committee thanked Mr. Duyshart for his informative briefing and materials provided.

**6. Committee member reports and assignments:**

* Meredith Miller spoke to the owner of Mota's Mexican Restaurant on Lincoln, who was upset that he had to file for a CUP in order to obtain a liquor license.  The CUP requirement made it too expensive and difficult to pursue. ($8,000 for a permit, including a public hearing.) Adam Thurtell noted that the committee could ease requirements and change the CUP requirement for restaurants (but not liquor stores) in order to encourage restaurants. Instead, there could be a director’s review at $1,000 with mailing to addresses within 500 feet (or less), or specifying a higher number of letters of protest to trigger a hearing. *(or a plot plan less than…..???)*
* Mark Goldschmidt reported via email that he spoke with Steve Rudicel about speaking with the subcommittee briefly about setting up a restaurant in Altadena compared to doing so in Claremont. Parking, of course, continues to be the giant issue, but there are other things, and Steve might give us some ideas of what our subcommittee might be able to promote. He also spoke with Gloria Putnam about livestock issues in Altadena. She probably knows as much as anyone about this subject, and I think has a few suggestions we should hear. He will speak to her again at greater length this coming month and report back.
* Marge Nichols will send approved minutes and committee information to Brent Musson for posting on the Town Council website. She will retain materials provided in the briefing for future reference.
* We need to start actually marking up the CSD document in subcommittee sessions, using the Word document provided by Adam Thurtell earlier.

**6. Adjournment:** MSC to adjourn 8:30 pm.