

LA JOLLA LIGHT

VOL. 103, ISSUE 41 • OCTOBER 8, 2015

ENLIGHTENING LA JOLLA SINCE 1913

ONLINE DAILY AT lajollalight.com



Christopher Beach, la Jolla Music Society theater and development consultant, introduces the new performing arts complex, 'The Conrad,' at the la Jolla Community Planning Association meeting Oct. 1. PHOTOS BY ASHLEY MACKIN / RENDERING BY DENNIS ALLAIN/EPSTEIN JOSLIN ARCHITECTS

Planners OK The Conrad, Conger Project, Prestwick speed limit

BY ASHLEY MACKIN

The excitement was palpable at the Oct. 1 La Jolla Community Planning Association (LJCPA) meeting, when 100 people filled La Jolla Rec Center to hear whether the board would approve blueprints for the 44,000-square-foot, \$65 million Conrad Prebys Performing Arts Center (aka The Conrad) at 7600 Fay Ave.

La Jolla's traffic & transportation (T&T) committee, Development Permit Review (DPR) committee and Planned District Ordinance (PDO) subcommittee each unanimously approved plans for the facility — and new home to La Jolla Music Society — during their respective monthly meetings. Each sends its recommendations to LJCPA for a vote, before projects proceed to the city for approval.

Continuing the streak, LJCPA voted unanimously to ratify the findings of the DPR committee that the project conforms to the La Jolla Community Plan for a coastal Development Permit and Site Development Permit. Construction on the 500-seat concert hall, 150-person cabaret/multi-use space, rehearsal rooms, large open courtyard, and offices for La Jolla Music Society will begin next spring for a grand opening in January 2018. Philanthropist Conrad Prebys, who earned naming rights after making a \$15 million donation, was in attendance at LJCPA meeting.



Conrad Prebys (right) and Debbie Turner attend the Oct. 1 LJCPA meeting at the La Jolla Recreation Center. He earned the naming rights for The Conrad Prebys Performing Arts Center (aka 'The Conrad') after making a \$15 million donation.

Christopher Beach, la Jolla Music Society theater and development consultant, introduces the new performing arts complex, 'The Conrad,' at the ...

Christopher Beach, former president and artistic director of La Jolla Music Society, currently working as theater and development consultant, introduced the project.

"When we started this project, our directive to the architects was very clear: keep it simple. We asked them to design a project that conformed to the PDO and is consistent with the La Jolla community Plan. Happily, the folks down at the city told us we have done that," Beach said. "We believe we have created a beautiful performing arts center that is worthy of its location in the heart of La Jolla. It complies with all the technical requirements, as well as with the spirit of those requirements, and we are particularly proud that your subcommittees have voted not only in favor, but unanimously in favor, of our project."

Citing the myriad ways the project conforms to the La Jolla community Plan, Ray Porfilio of Epstein Joslin Architects explained that several recommendations influenced the design, such as: use transitions in bulk and scale to create visual interest and create a sense of enclosure for pedestrians; reduce actual or apparent bulk with the use of building articulation; provide landscaping to add texture to blank walls, soften edges, and provide a sense of pedestrian scale;

use curbside planting and street trees to separate pedestrians from parked vehicles; and more.

Several LJCPA trustees sang the facility's praises, calling it "beautiful," "exciting" and an elevation for the community.

LJCPA trustee Dolores Donovan congratulated the Music Society on its attention to the La Jolla Community Plan. "Certain (community members) have said the PDO is broken and should be repealed. You have proved that the opposite is the case."

With a handful of trustees citing concerns over parking, presenters explained the parking plan, which beach said the team spent more time on "than most things put together." Originally presented (and approved) at the T&T meeting in July, parking plans include purchasing spaces from the nearby bank of America parking structure, and "sharing" commitments from surrounding parking at The Bishop's School, La Jolla Presbyterian Church and the Merrill Lynch and Charles Schwab buildings. The latter two house businesses that close at night, so the lots are mostly vacant evenings. each of these facilities is within three blocks of The Conrad.

When issuing concert tickets, beach said patrons would be informed about where they can park, the location of which might change to avoid scheduling conflicts with other events.

In other Planning Association news

- **Dolphin Place residence:** After nearly an hour of discussion, LJCPA trustees voted to send the Kaplan-Gaston residence at 5606 Dolphin Place back to DPR for discussion.

The permit reviewers determined findings could not be made for a coastal Development Permit and Site Development Permit for a first and second story addition to the existing single-family residence because the project does not transition or relate well to other neighboring houses.

Of chief concern was a carport and whether it was included in the floor-area ratio, and its relation to the house immediately to the east. The neighboring home is a mid-century modern William Kesling-designed house that uses a glass wall to create an indoor/outdoor effect. Residents expressed concern that with the addition of a second story on the Kaplan-Gaston residence, their view of the sky would be eliminated.

At the LJcPA meeting, trustees raised questions about the project that could not be answered by the applicant or his legal representation, and determined DPR would be the more appropriate place to discuss the concerns.

- **Prestwick Drive speed limit:** Ratifying the findings of the T&T advisory board, LJCPA voted to keep the speed limit of Prestwick Drive between Calle de Oro and Dunaway Drive in La Jolla Shores at 30 miles per hour, even though it means losing radar enforcement. During a speed study of the area, the city found 85 percent of cars were going 35 miles per hour — or faster.

To keep radar enforcement, the limit would have to be raised from 30 to 35.

T&T voted to retain the 30 mph speed limit, pending residents provide a petition indicating majority support. With such petition in hand, Prestwick Drive resident Pat Miller told LJcPA that several residents are concerned with the fact that drivers are already speeding on their street, and raising the speed limit would worsen the problem.

- **Gas station to become condos:** LJCPA also voted to ratify the DPR recommendation on the planned redevelopment at 801 Pearl St. at Eads Avenue (The Conger project), where there is currently a 76 service station.

DPR determined findings can be made for a Coastal Development Permit and Site Development Permit and Tentative Map (Process 4) to remove the station and construct a new, mixed-use project with four retail units and 12 residential units with a subterranean garage.

After years of revisions and modifications to the project, it earned DPR approval at the September meeting. However, with the approval comes the request the city conduct an environmental study and investigate adding designated left turn lanes to Pearl Street and Eads Avenue.

— LJCPA meets 6 p.m. first Thursdays at La Jolla Rec center, 615 Prospect St. The board encourages the public to attend and participate in subcommittee and advisory meetings before an item or project is considered.

A list of LJCPA committees, meeting dates and times, agendas and project review flow chart can be found at lajollacpa.org