

Kentwood Home Guardians
Monthly Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 28, 2021 @ 7:00 p.m.

**** Zoom Meeting ****

Call to Order by Aaron Torrence

First Vice President Alyssa Bost greeted attendees and introduced the Board. She described meeting procedures and invited questions in the chat for this zoom meeting. Advised that the meeting is being recorded strictly for purposes of the minutes and the recording will not be retained.

Present: Aaron Torrence, President; Alyssa Bost, 1st Vice President; Tracy Thrower Conyers, Secretary; Deborah Wettstein, Treasurer

Absent: Audrey Melton, Office Manager

1. Guest Presentation: KHG Member George Festa to describe Lot 87 history

a. Lot 87

- i. George has lived in Kentwood for 30+ years and watched the evolution of Lot 87. He says KHG member Linda Kokelaar (also in attendance) knows a lot about the history of lot 87, as well
- ii. Tract 43416 (where lot 87 sits) was totally empty when George moved here and neighbors used it all the time. It was part of the reason he purchased in the neighborhood
- iii. UCLA bought the tract to develop faculty housing in the mid-to-late 1980's
- iv. UCLA promised as part of the construction permitting process to keep lot 87 empty and available as an open space with public access "in perpetuity" after negotiations with KHG and the neighbors
- v. The agreement was fully documented and the city placed 25 extra conditions on Lot 87's deed in addition to the KHG restrictions for the tract
- vi. Homes were built, but UCLA later decided to get out of the landlord business and sold the homes (selling was not their plan previously)
- vii. UCLA put Lot 87 up for sale for \$25k and nobody wanted it
- viii. One guy approached KHG and was told about the restrictions by a member who also happened to be an attorney, but bought it anyway; he

was also advised about potential liabilities related to public usage of the property

- ix. One improvement on the lot prior to sale was a spiral decomposed granite walkway leading to a viewing area with unobstructed views overlooking the bluffs and LA Basin. UCLA had a detailed Landscaping Plan intended to preserve the lot as a natural setting for community use
- x. A General Covenant & Agreement (“GCA”) was signed between UCLA and the original buyer of Lot 87
- xi. Fences went up following the sale in contravention to the GCA and deed restrictions. A huge chicken coop with a lot of chickens was also added in contravention to deed restrictions. A 20’ bush was present, also in contravention to the deed restrictions. Coastal sage was supposed to be the only vegetation allowed on the lot.
- xii. KHG’s Manager, Tina Hackanen (ph.), worked with George to gather documents to fight the new owner and the changes made to the property
- xiii. LA Dept of Building and Safety (“LADBS”) was approached about the deed restriction violations by George and the neighbors. LADBS dragged their feet and finally sided with owner and told Tina and George to “quit bothering the new owner”
- xiv. At one point, the neighbors discovered bulldozers on the property and discovered the new owner was starting to build a pool. The neighbors were able to stop the pool
- xv. The new owner tried to get restrictions lifted with new zoning; a public hearing was held, lots of neighbors showed up, and the new owner withdrew the application
- xvi. Councilman Mike Bonin and before him, Councilwoman Ruth Galanter, were very helpful to the neighbors on this topic
 1. Galanter wrote a detailed letter in support of the restrictions
 2. Bonin suggested a §12.26(k) (ph.) appeal with the Planning Department to overrule LADBS’ position there were no violations of the deed restrictions on the property
- xvii. The appeal was made and the Planning Dept denied it
 1. Neighbors spent two years and \$1K in fees preparing the appeal
 2. There was a 33-page report denying the neighbors’ appeal, saying the current owner wasn’t the purchaser from UCLA and therefore restrictions don’t apply to him (but the report had a contrary document in it acknowledging the restrictions were “in perpetuity”)
 3. George called the Director of Planning to ask how the Department arrived at its conclusion

4. The director told George to “appeal” if he was unhappy with the outcome
 5. George believes the next step is to submit an online form with LADBS called a “customer service request” requesting that LADBS require the owner to maintain the lot as required by the restrictions with examples of the restrictions being violated
 6. George hasn’t done this himself yet because he wants more people involved, preferably KHG in its official capacity
- xviii. Five years ago, George was able to get a copy of Landscape Plan UCLA prepared and it does in fact depict community access
- xix. Tracy asked George about the Lot 87 litigation
1. George reported that he and a couple of nearby neighbors sued over the deed violations
 2. Their lawyer sued the owner instead of the city, which apparently was procedurally incorrect
 3. The judge told George and his group off the record that a Writ of Mandamus should have been filed demanding that the city enforce the restrictions on the public’s behalf
 4. The judge limited the remedy solely to other tract owners, not the community at large, by ordering keys to the gate be given to those tract owners so they could access the lot (without comment on the fact the fence wasn’t even supposed to be there)
 5. There was a public meeting in connection with the litigation and a room full of people showed up to support George’s group
- xx. In response to a question regarding original ownership, George said there are two lots abutting Lot 87. He said the original owner decided he didn’t want the lot after all and “gave” it to the other abutting owner, who retains ownership today and is using Lot 87 as his private backyard.
- xxi. George was thanked for his presentation and members were advised that further steps will follow later from the Board

2. Aaron called for Community Comment from the bottom of the agenda

a. Linda Kokelaar stated concerns:

- i. Office manager needs a new envelope opener
- ii. Feels that not enough complaint letters are being sent from KHG to property owners
- iii. Outreach Committee should not be allowed to submit their budget question to the attorney and feels the committee should do their own legal research

- iv. Thinks somebody needs to figure out why new Kentwood owners are receiving DPRs with racial restrictions still in them, despite actions taken by KHG to have them stricken
- v. Wants Board to set the May 2021 Annual Meeting date
- vi. Wants KHG to buy an “HOA program” and stop using QuickBooks (didn’t say why)
- vii. Believes that DPR Restatement project is being pursued with inadequate planning
- viii. Has concerns about LMU’s requested amendment to its Master Plan to build a new Arena and believes KHG isn’t doing enough to let people know about the proceedings
- ix. Tracy responded to the Outreach Committee concern, explaining that the request by the Committee is very narrow and shouldn’t be expensive
- b. There were no additional questions and Aaron said he would call again at the end of the meeting for questions

3. Officer Reports

- a. Secretary’s Report – review & approve Dec 9 regular board meeting minutes
 - i. Tracy presented the draft minutes and reported that previous suggestions had been made except for one request by Deborah that Tracy didn’t understand
 - ii. Discussion was had
 - iii. Tracy moved to approve as presented, Aaron seconded
 - iv. Deborah objected that she wanted one of her comments from the meeting recorded. Tracy asked for her language
 - v. Alyssa moved to approve the minutes with the amendment to include Deborah’s comment, Deborah seconded, motion approved 4-0
- b. Treasurer’s Report - review & approve Dec 2020 P&L and Balance Sheets
 - i. Deborah stated Audrey had not yet forwarded the revised report
 - ii. Aaron asked if we need another meeting to approve the financials to keep us on track with budgeting process
 - iii. Tracy raised concern that Audrey is the only person with QB access - Aaron said he will reach out to Audrey and discuss

4. Committee Reports

- a. Architectural Committee – update & report
 - i. Aaron made the report

- ii. Aaron reported Stuart Blashill forwarded a list of construction projects he recently observed in the community
 - iii. One set of plans came in and at first glance they look compliant
 - iv. Aaron says he's shifting more time to Board and away from ARC; has advised the Committee he's "pausing" his contributions
 - v. Tracy asked if anybody currently on the Committee is willing to step into the Coordinator role; Aaron said no
 - vi. Tracy asked if the Outreach Committee can move forward to solicit another volunteer; Aaron said yes
- b. Outreach Committee – update & report
- i. Alyssa made the report
 - ii. Since the last meeting, the committee prepared a proposal for the Listening Sessions Program, promoted tonight's presentation on Lot 87 and prepared one question for legal review in preparation for next year's outreach budget
 - iii. The committee is asking for authorization to submit a question to counsel regarding legally required mailings
 - 1. Tracy explained the committee is looking at ways to lower the amount of money spent on USPS mailings and that we need attorney input into which of our historical mailings are legally required and whether there are any required mailings we aren't currently sending
 - 2. Deborah asked why we aren't doing our own legal research; Tracy responded that we have gone as far as we can and need legal confirmation from our attorney regarding our research
 - 3. Aaron asked if we're giving our list to the attorney for comment; Tracy said no, there may be required mailings we're not aware of; the Committee is looking for a list of required mailings to evaluate and bring back a recommendation to the Board for future mailings
 - 4. Tracy moved to present the committee's question to our attorney with a cover question asking whether it can be answered within 30 minutes, Alyssa seconded, motion approved 4-0
 - iv. Alyssa explained the committee's proposed Quarterly Member Listening Sessions to be moderated by the Committee
 - 1. No motion asked for on this program tonight, just feedback
 - 2. Discussion:
 - a. Aaron likes the idea
 - b. Member Stuart Blashill is concerned we will only hear from one portion of our community with this style of program and

is concerned our heavy reliance on technology will be a deterrent for other parts of our community

- c. Deborah asked how the information will come back to the Board and Alyssa explained the process
 - d. Aaron wanted topics beforehand but Tracy pointed out that topics are not being defined by the committee. There will be an occasional guest speaker (to be determined), but the point of sessions is to listen on any topic community members want to be heard on
- c. DPR Restatement Committee – update & report
- i. Aaron reported
 - ii. Deborah and community member Dena Vatcher to lead the committee
 - iii. Aaron says the process of participation by members in the ultimate vote is a challenge and should be the first order of business
 - iv. Aaron is encouraging the committee to create a timeline and budget as the first order of business
 - v. Deborah says the committee should look at Operating Rules first to fill gaps with DPR's and bring a recommendation back to the Board
 - vi. The Board agreed to have the committee focus first on Operating Rules and to rename the committee to the Operating Rules Committee in the interim to set the right expectation as to the committee's outcomes
 - vii. Community member Stuart Blashill reminded us that we will need the enforcement component started a couple of years ago
 - viii. Also discussed was the DPR comparison spreadsheet prepared last year by Stuart when he was the Architectural Review Committee Coordinator
 - ix. The goal is to see if we can work within the existing DPR's with the addition of Operating Rules to save the expense and time of formally changing the DPR's

5. Operation Manager's Report - No report (Audrey was absent)

6. New Business

- a. Alyssa makes a motion to incorporate a statement of historical recognition of racial covenants be included on the KHG website as part of our history, on our FB page and as part of the program for our Annual Meeting
 - i. Alyssa read her proposed statement (appended to these minutes)
 - ii. Tracy stated that she isn't comfortable with how the statement is worded, giving the impression the Board has actual knowledge of 80 year old facts

- iii. Tracy also pointed out that these types of covenants were not limited to Kentwood and existed throughout the entire city
 - iv. Tracy also stated that she is aware that KHG took formal action in the 1980's to expunge the restrictions from out DPRs, but doesn't know the details or formal outcome
 - v. Alyssa pointed out that the statement puts the blame squarely on the US government with its mortgage rules, not the residents of Kentwood
 - vi. Aaron agreed the statement shouldn't be on behalf of the association and Alyssa agreed to change that reference to "the Board"
 - vii. Alyssa will do the research about what the association did in the past regarding expungement and bring the information back to the Board before a final vote on her motion, in case we need to revise anything in light of that outcome
 - viii. Community member Tommy Roys added that our DPRs came from oil company developers, not homeowners
- b. Alyssa made a motion to change the Board's standing agenda format for its regular monthly meeting to invite members to submit questions via a Google Form that can be addressed at the beginning of each succeeding regular Board Meeting as the first Agenda Item, limited to 10 minutes; if more time is needed then the question can be continued to be addressed during the Community Comments at end of meeting; questions from residents not submitted via Google Form before the meeting will wait for Community Comments time at end of meeting
- i. Tracy objected because rearranging the agenda to have community comment first prevents diving into Board business. She likes the form idea for members who can't make the meeting, but thinks all community comment should be reserved for the end of the agenda
 - ii. Aaron disagrees with Tracy's objection - community members want questions answered upfront
 - iii. Alyssa moved to change the agenda format, Aaron seconded, motion approved 3-1
- c. Alyssa proposes that we include a direct link to Zoom for board meetings in our meeting notices, Facebook page and KHG website
- i. Deborah stated we didn't prevent people from attending physical meetings
 - ii. Tracy stated that we did approach people at physical meetings we didn't recognize to find out who they were
 - iii. Aaron and Deborah want to make it easier for members to join
 - iv. Tracy commented that past friction with zoom links was more from internal issues getting meetings set up in a timely manner

- v. Aaron moved to include the links, Deborah seconded, motion approved 3-1
- d. Alyssa asks if we have confirmed our Election Inspector and if we need to start conversations about getting that process going.
 - i. Deborah stated that Linda [Kokelaar] had done a terrific job for years and if Linda is interested, Deborah recommends we go that direction
 - ii. Deborah asked Linda if she was interested in being the inspector again this year
 - iii. Linda stated "things were so horrific last year she needs to think about it" with so much time on the phone with the attorney. She wants a guarantee she won't have to go through that again
 - iv. Tracy pointed out the last election was held under early COVID stay at home orders (still in effect) and it's still too early to know what conditions we'll be holding the next meeting under and can't make any promises yet about what the Inspector will asked to do
 - v. Lengthy discussion had about disclosure package and election mailing/annual meeting deadlines coming up; Aaron to forward proposed dates before the next Board meeting

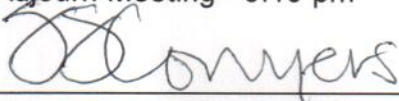
7. Unfinished Business

- a. Zoom recordings - Tracy asked who is drafting the Board policy for zoom recordings
 - i. Deborah thinks the President should record meetings and destroy recordings when minutes are approved
 - ii. Alyssa will draft a protocol regarding destruction of meeting recordings and bring to Outreach Committee for refining and back to Board next month for approval

8. Community Comments

- a. Aaron called for additional questions from the community
- b. Community member Tommy Roys believes Davis Stirling says recordings needs to be deleted after minutes are approved

Adjourn Meeting - 9:19 pm



Tracy Thrower Conyers, Secretary

(minutes approved at February 17, 2021 Board meeting)

Proposed by Alyssa Bost on Jan 28, 2021 for inclusion on our KHG website and FB page and to be announced as part of Annual Mtgs

A Statement on Racial Injustice from the Kentwood Home Guardians Board of Directors

We, the Kentwood Home Guardians Board of Directors, would like to acknowledge the Tongva people living today and in the past who were the original caretakers of the land where our homes reside. We recognize that their tribal lands were stolen through settler colonialism and that that theft contributed to our ability to own this land today.

We also acknowledge that KHG was created in 1943 to enforce our Declarations of Protective Restrictions known as DPRs to maintain a standard of aesthetic and uniformity to our neighborhood, which still benefits us and our home property values today. However, those DPRs also mandated that homes were only to be sold to white buyers as required by the Federal Housing Authority of the United States government, which would not insure mortgages unless such racial covenants were in place. Although these heinous restrictions were outlawed by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1948, we recognize the long term, devastating impact this housing segregation has had on families of color in Los Angeles and across the country for many generations. In light of this history, we as a homeowners association board of directors will do whatever we can to ensure that Kentwood is a neighborhood welcoming and inclusive of all people. Alyssa Bost, the Vice President of KHG, highly recommends the book "The Color of Law" by Richard Rothstein for more information on de jure housing segregation in the US. Rothstein specifically mentions Westchester in his book.

If you have suggestions of how to further address these racial injustices, please complete this Google form: <https://forms.gle/c3dXTuaFJAW6VrFv5>