

MINUTES

TOWN HALL MEETING - CLUBS
SEPTEMBER 21, 1986
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
2:00 P.M.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Schulte at 2:15 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: Albert, Heilman, Viterbi,
Mayor Schulte

Also Present: City Manager Brotzman
City Attorney Jenkins
Mark Winogron
Paul Self
John McKinney
Captain Cook, Sheriff's Dept.
Business License Commissioners
Crane, Hirsch, Smith,
Forbes and Sweeney.

Mayor Schulte announced that this meeting was being held to attempt to provide a means to reduce tension and increase cooperation between the city's nightclubs and the residents of adjacent neighborhoods. He requested that each speaker limit his/her remarks to 4 minutes.

The staff report/overview was given by Paul Self, staff liaison for the Interim Business License Commission. His report centered on those clubs providing entertainment. The State Board of Equalization figures show that eating and drinking establishments provide the number one source of sales tax revenue for the City. The city's nightclubs and dance clubs average approximately 50 employees per establishment and generate an average of \$700,000 in gross sales.

Over the years, numerous complaints have been received from the residents in neighborhoods adjacent to many of these establishments.

Mayor Schulte announced that the Council was trying to get a good perspective on the tensions and relationships between the clubs and the neighborhoods and also, they are looking for potential solutions.

Coming forward to speak were the following:

Bud Siegel, Planning Commissioner: Not a new concern - long standing problem. Need to provide a separation between the entertainment and residential communities. (i.e. permit parking, business taking responsibility for the actions of their clients.)

Tony Melia, President, Chamber of Commerce: Aware of problem for quite some time. There was a meeting last week or so with many of the owners and they are willing and anxious to cooperate to solve the problems, but many of these are not under the control of the facilities. (i.e. drinking in cars, litter, many of the handbills which are passed out by the entertainers, not the owners.) Chamber is interested in setting up a hot-line to handle complaints and act as an intermediary.

Jeanne Dobrin, 9000 Cynthia: Cited the Ordinance pertaining to handbill posting. Tired of the city looking like a honky tonk. Also stated that permit parking may be the only way to go.

Anita Montella, 8535 West Knoll: Complained about The Speakeasy. Has talked with owner to no avail. Private parking might help. Owner could also provide free parking for their patrons.

Joyce Heftel, 8535 West Knoll: Also complained about the Speakeasy. No parking on the street, excessive noise and vandalism. Can't sell her condo because of the situation at this location.

Jim Kazokas, 1010 Hammond Street: Cited the arrogance of the people who park there. Felt that the owners should make announcements throughout the evening asking their patrons to please be quiet when they leave so as not to disturb the neighborhood.

Josh Feld, 415 Martin Lane, Beverly Hills (Owner of Peanuts): Major problem occurs at closing as everyone has to leave at the same time, 2 a.m. In some other cities clubs stay open till 4 with no sale of alcohol, which allows for a more gradual dispersment of the clientele. Can't always be responsible for acts of people who may park 1 or 2 blocks away. Willing to cooperate and feels there are things that can be done to help alleviate the situation.

Stacey Dancy, 1111 N. Hayworth (Manager of Peanuts): Aware as a resident and also as a manager. Wants to cooperate to ease the noise and parking situation.

Scott Forbes, 652 N. LaPeer Dr., Owner of Studio One: Most of the problems are not in the clubs per se, but are caused by the clientele leaving the clubs and/or parking. Wants to see open conversation between the clubs and the neighbors. All the problems are not the responsibility of the clubs.

Nancy Taylor, 1047 N. Crescent Heights: Gave an overview of an agreement that was developed between the residents and a club called Starwood in 1981. The Starwood had to comply with the terms and conditions of the County (that would be the City variances). The Starwood had to publicize the availability of free parking, through signs and published media displays; they not be allowed to charge for parking. That there be no re-admits (no hand stamping). No one be allowed in under the age of 18. Trash collection service between the hours of 2:30 a.m. and 3:30 a.m in an area 2 or 3 blocks on either side of the club, if there was a problem associated with the nightclub. A non-performance trust fund was set up by the nightclub (\$25,000), for the citizens of the community. If they failed to keep any part of the agreement, there was arbitration and the residents got some money out of it in order to fight them in court with lawyers. There is still \$3200 in this account at the present time. You do not have to let the clientele that come in just run free in the community. Also you have to restrict the type of advertising. They had also developed a reputation which had to be taken into account and changed. The Commission should scrutinize the past records of the owners and managers.

Lauren Kaye, 1222 Hilldale Ave: Located between the Roxy and Whiskey: Reported illegal parking, drinking in cars with radios on, urinating on residents lawns and sidewalks, glass bottles thrown over fences into yards, trash and garbage thrown all over the neighborhood and there is only 1 trash can by Whiskey. Suggested that no handbills be allowed as a means of advertising, only radio and newspapers. They should not allow them to be handed out at the clubs before and after the shows. There should be a clean-up crew working within a 3 to 4 block radius, including the side streets. Place more trash receptacles in the area, and see that they are emptied. Have a security patrol as people are leaving the clubs.

Doug Weston, 9079 Santa Monica Blvd.: Owner of the Troubadour at the corner of Doheny and Santa Monica Blvd. for 29 years. Have had problems in the past and have dealt with them. They are not getting complaints now. The clubs can not handle all of the problems 100%, but they can do a great deal. They can discipline the clientele, and choose the clientele by the way they conduct the club. Took serious and stringent steps and would hate to see the lists of rules and regulations that have been proposed adopted.

Robert White, 2133 1/2 S. Bentley Avenue, Los Angeles: Spoke in defense of gay bars.

Norman Flowers, 1014 N. Larrabee: Stated that liquor stores are a problem because patrons head there after the clubs close. Feels that coming down with a heavy hand on small businesses is not the answer. The Chamber suggestion for a hot line is a good idea and also clubs could pay into a fund to help pay for people to pick up trash. Permit parking would also be a help.

Tony Fox, 1114 N. Clark Street: Owner of the Central Nightclub, 8852 Sunset Blvd. Aware of problems. Would like to have monthly meetings or have a hotline set up. If it means that they have to ban fliers, set up security in the parking lots, inform their patrons that they are expected to leave quietly and clean up their area, they can and will do it.

Roy Lahr, 944 Hammond: Agree that people like entertainment, the problem is the patrons coming and going to the establishment. Has had to have his windshield replaced, his car repainted, his garage gate repaired. Something has to be done when people flood into residential areas.

David Curtin, 8531 Santa Monica Blvd.: Owner of the Speakeasy. Stated he would help set up a Chamber of Commerce committee to focus on restaurants and drinking establishment problems. He stated that these establishments should not be compared with Starwood.

Herbert Steidle, 1200 Laurel, Apt. 103: Manager of Peanuts. Aware of problems and are working to correct them. Make announcements about being quiet in the neighborhood and send employees outside at closing to try and monitor and control the people as they leave.

Marshall Anders, 1006 N. Doheny Dr., No. 13: Resident manager. Cited trash and illegal parking from the Troubadour. No employee parking at Scandia, they park on side streets. Presented pictures to the Council of what the area looks like during and after Friday and Saturday night.

David Bisno, 9035 Shoreham, Los Angeles: Lives near Gazzari's. Suggested that any solutions be integrated with Los Angeles and with Los Angeles Police Department. Also need to control package liquor sales.

Lester Hirsch, 1020 Hilldale Ave: Turned his time over to Jeanne Dobrin. Jeanne spoke about the past permissive attitude of the County which has allowed many of these things to occur. Sign situation is terrible. This tax money may make it a better place for some people, but is making it intolerable for others. Send out a message that we want the entertainment business but we want them as good citizens and neighbors. Asked about the decibel meter.

Walter Schlosser, 1013 Hancock Avenue: Cooperation is definitely needed. Parking for patrons and Employee parking are needed. Signs could be required over the exits asking patrons to leave quietly.

Alexander Scharfer, 8975 Shoreham Dr.: Lives near Roxy. Require club to hire 25 armed guards between 1 a.m and 3 a.m. to patrol the streets. Construct parking structures solely for the use of residents.

Budd Kops, 969 N. Larrabee: This city was not formed to guarantee anyone a profit. Learn a lesson from Starwood. The community is up in arms.

Mrs. Avery Rennick, 1201 N. Hilldale: Owner of property on which Scandia is located. Stated there is ample parking for patrons and employees. No solutions until there is ample parking at all the clubs.

Betty Rees, 8967 Shoreham Dr. (above the Sunset Strip): Gets the residue of all the clubs. Problems include litter, parking and the violent, abusive and ugly patrons of today. Past patrons were not this way.

James Fabe, 1133 N. Clark: Transportation Commissioner. Lives near Whiskey. Agreed with the recommendations with an emphasis on increased foot patrol and vehicle patrol. Also perhaps an increased tax for club regulation.

Joe Rosen, 1000 N. San Vicente: Cited problems with Le BelAge. Noise, pollution, parking, etc. Implementation and enforcement of the laws is necessary.

Joyce Hundal, 9002 Rangely: Asked why there were only 2 parking enforcement officers on Friday and Saturday night. Nighttime businesses should be limited to Commercial Zones. Check to see how many bathrooms the clubs have.

Sia Amiri, 8911 Santa Monica Blvd: Owner of Rage. Problems exist because of closeness of business and residential. Suggested that a nightclub committee be formed to study and try to solve the problems.

Deniel Edwards, 915 Wetherly Drive: Musician who has played clubs but can see the problems as a tenant. Has had his car vandalized and sees the trash and changing lifestyles of the patrons. Would like to do anything he can to help.

Ken Rice, 1018 Hilldale Ave: Turned over his time to Jeanne Dobrin to summarize the speakers' concerns. She stated that cutting down on time would be the quickest way to lower insurance rates and increase property values in the city. We must have an orderly carrying out of business. We do not want to be a one-business city - entertainment and nothing else.

Captain Jim Cook, L. A. Sheriff's Department: When you look at nightclubs and restaurants you need to be selective. There are many that have no problems and have not had for several years. If you look at a breakdown of the tax rolls, you will probably find that those clubs that are the problem and take the most out of the community pay the very least. Have been involved in the closure of nightclubs when it is the proper thing to do. One thing the department does not like is "papering", when a club

owner gets several small groups in different parts of the County and hands out free tickets in order to make money from the sale of drinks. This brings in loads of people from all over who are not familiar with the area and do not care about anything but a night of free fun. One possible solution is to require that the cost of parking be included in the price of the ticket.

John McKinney, Sr. Code Enforcement Officer: Encouraged that the club owners are banding together on their own, and would like to tap into that organization, to pass on the city's concerns. In process of hiring a second code enforcement officer which will give 7 day code enforcement, from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., with evenings to be covered on a basis to be determined in the future. Clubs should have a clause in their contracts with performers that prohibit them from passing out handbills. Working on ordinance that would allow people to be cited for putting up handbills after the fact. The noise problems can be handled by requiring problem clubs to soundproof the premises.

Mark Winogron, Director of Community Development: One of the reasons the club owners sound as conciliatory as they do is that they know how serious the Council is, and they are spooked by the possible regulations that will be imposed.

To summarize:

This is not a new problem.

Many of the problems are outside the control of the clubs. The Chamber and the clubs are committed to working with the neighbors through a task force and other methods.

Even permit parking will not help without enforcement.

The attitude and noise of the club visitors are the real problem, and the owners and neighbors must recognize that.

"When people leave at 2 O'clock, you're closed, but they are not closed."

"The problem is not the clubs, the problem is with the patrons of the clubs."

Faithful performance bonds.

Fliers are a significant problem.

Chamber hot-line.

Hours of liquor stores plays a major role.

Clubs and City hire clean-up crews.

Rock and Roll has a conscience - raises money for needy causes.

Many club employees are residents of West Hollywood and are aware of the problems and want to help resolve them.

Integrate efforts with the City of Los Angeles.

Police are overwhelmed.

We are hurting the lives of the residents in order to help the businesses that give us the money to fund our social service programs.

Nothing is going to happen until the clubs have ample parking.

Property owners also pay city revenue.

Great deal of support for the proposed action steps in the staff report:

1. Monthly community meetings between residents adjacent to nightclubs and nightclub owners. These could be divided regionally (e.g. Sunset Blvd. Clubs, West Santa Monica Blvd. clubs, East Santa Monica Blvd. clubs, etc.).

2. Increased foot patrol activity by the Sheriff's Department along Sunset Blvd. between 12 p.m and 2:30 a.m. on Friday and Saturday evenings.

3. Sheriff's complaint log of violations specific to each club.

4. Increased enforcement of rules prohibiting handbill posting. This may require nighttime code enforcement by the city's code enforcement staff and the Sheriff's Dept.

5. Requirements that club patrols not park in adjoining residential neighborhoods; enforcement of these regulations by the Sheriff's Department. This could be accomplished by establishment of Permit Parking in adjacent neighborhoods.

6. Patrons re-entering night clubs between the hours of 12 p.m and 2 a.m on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings must pay the required door charge each time they re-enter (i.e. no hand-stamping) unless the club's business license specifically allows such re-entry privileges.

7. Parking validations required to enter clubs unless persons parking can show proof of residency within a one-half mile radius.

8. Monitoring of decibel level outside of club to determine if club is violating noise ordinance; determination of appropriate decibel level is necessary to effectively monitor noise output.

Simply adding ordinances will not solve the problems.
Kids need an outlet.

Mayor Schulte then called for Council comments.

John Heilman: The problems are not new and will not be solved overnight. A number of good suggestions were made, among them are parking restrictions, teeth to ordinances and enforcement. Suggest a second session in one month.

Helen Albert: Session productive. Wants to look at the Chamber hot-line in one month to see if it is working. Hopes that talking will solve a lot of the problems.

Alan Viterbi: Appreciate attendance today. Hears willingness to work together. List of 10 points:

1. Enforcement of existing parking and noise regulations.
2. Look at closing liquor stores at earlier time than clubs.
3. Develop a street cleaning program with cooperation of clubs.
4. Look at regulations prohibiting anyone under 18
5. Stricter enforcement of "no posting of fliers" rules.
6. Develop public owned kiosks in vicinity of clubs
7. Entrances of clubs be on Commercial thoroughfares.
8. Expand permit parking areas.
9. No in-and-out rule.
10. Develop quiet zone areas around clubs.

Mayor Schulte: Meet back in month with suggestions from the public and staff. Does not feel the proposed regulations are too tough but would like to see the owners and chamber work toward self-resolution of many of the problems. Have Legislative program ready and be prepared to take action at the meeting of November 3, 1986.

Mayor Schulte adjourned the meeting at 4:15 p.m.