

## Elyse Eisenberg

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**From:** Elyse Eisenberg [eisenberg@earthlink.net]  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 03, 2010 1:23 PM  
**To:** WeHo Heights NA, Elyse Eisenberg  
**Subject:** Tower Records / 8801 Sunset - Meetings Summary

Wednesday, March 24th and Thursday, March 25th were neighborhood and Design Review meetings respectively with the developer of the Tower Records project. The following is a summary of those meetings.

### Neighborhood Meeting Wednesday, March 24

Approximately 35 people attended the meeting, including over twenty WeHo Heights residents, the attorney from IAC (which owns the buildings next door and across the street from the site - and joins the neighborhood in opposition to this project. Note: IAC is owned by Barry Diller), with the remainder being the developer, the architect and the developer's other representatives. No representatives from the city were in attendance.

Alternative 4 from the DEIR was presented (downloadable from here, Section 5.0 Alternatives, beginning on page 237 - <http://www.weho.org/index.aspx?page=187&parent=1149> )

Everyone agreed that the revised design was a great improvement over the previous vision. However, even with the addition of a neighborhood pocket park, the unanimous opinion of the residents was that the design of the building was not distinguished or sufficiently articulated, still was too massive and overwhelming for this intersection, served merely as support for how much off-site advertising it could hold, the number of the uses (retail, gym and office) was too intense, and the traffic and parking plan and trip generation was unmanageable.

It was also noted that there were almost 60 parking spaces less than required by code and using a shared parking analysis which apparently has not been used elsewhere in WeHo, was going to be all valet, and was going to use hydraulic lifts to stack some of the spaces. This was considered unrealistic and unmanageable for rush hour traffic for an office and gym combined.

Most of the discussion focused on the traffic the gym would generate, specifically adding over 550 cars/day to Horn and almost 400 cars/day to Larrabee, most all using those streets as turnarounds because no left turns would be allowed in and out from Sunset. There continued to be almost no support for this project, even with the pocket park which was not fully fleshed out in either the DEIR or presentation. Note: Gym hours would be from 5:30 AM - Midnight, seven days/week. There would be no respite from the traffic.

There was also great concern about the amount of electronic off-site advertising covering the structure, wrapping around to Horn - a residential street and visible into Shoreham Villas and Shoreham Towers residences, and glaring into the IAC building and for those coming up Holloway. The neighborhood may be aware that the Jumbotron that Tower Records had previously erected was removed due to its illegal status and the result of a lawsuit. This site currently does not have the legal right to include off-site advertising. These proposed billboards will be electronic although the developer claims they will not be not animated, just change on a frequent basis - which could be as short as under one minute. This frequency has not yet been determined.

In summary, the pocket park - while desirable, was considered less important than the size and mass, traffic impacts, and the lack of an architecturally distinguished vision for this important intersection on the Strip.

### Planning Commission Sub-Committee Design Review Meeting Thursday, March 25

About eight WeHo Heights residents, the neighborhood's attorney and IAC's attorney attended this meeting along with the developer and his representatives, and WeHo City staff. The Sub-Committee is composed of three of the Planning Commissioners and the city's Urban Designer.

The architect presented both the original project (five stories, including two levels of above ground parking), and Alternative 4, as the presumed preferred alternative. It was the first time the Commissioners were seeing either of the projects. They have also not been privy to the neighborhood concerns.

Each public speaker was allowed to talk. There was no restriction on time, but everyone was restricted to discussing the design of the project. The speakers repeated the concerns of the night before about Alternative 4. It was stated that the original project was rejected in its entirety by the neighborhood.

One Commissioner preferred the original 5-story project. The other two Commissioners' comments - with no foreknowledge of the neighborhood issues - reflected the same concerns as the residents: not an appropriate site for a gym given that there are seven other gyms within a one mile radius and this intersection is already unmanageable, the building is too massive, lacked articulation, is not distinguished, the plan for the park was merely a placeholder and the park needed to be more thoroughly thought out, and the off-site advertising on the building was not currently legal. One Commissioner remarked that both building designs were sub-standard and not up to the usual caliber of the noted architectural firm (Gensler, designer of the CAA building in Century City).

#### Next Steps

IAC's attorneys and the neighborhood's attorneys are submitting detailed and extensive comments on the DEIR, which is due by April 6th. Other concerned parties are also welcome to submit comments by that date and which may be addressed to Adrian Gallo [agallo@weho.org](mailto:agallo@weho.org) and John Keho [jkeho@weho.org](mailto:jkeho@weho.org) in WeHo's Community Development Department.

We do not know if the developer will choose to present either the original design, Alternative 4, or another proposal to the Planning Commission. We are awaiting notice and will keep you informed.

Best,  
Elyse

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