

San Diego Reader



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Normal Heights planners vote on Barrio plan

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"The neighborhoods should have a say in their own affairs."

By [Marty Graham](#), [May 13, 2014](#)

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The Normal Heights Community Planning Group last week took a confusing vote of 4 ayes, 0 nays, and 11 abstentions on whether or not to support the Barrio Logan community plan — which would finally create a planning group for the area of San Diego that lies adjacent to industrial shipyards.

The vote came after presentations from both sides in the Port of San Diego Ship Repair Association's big-money push to overturn Barrio Logan's community plan by getting the whole city to vote on it.

The Normal Heights planning group vote is essentially a “no” vote, since the majority of people there abstained, city staffers confirmed. The planning group's decision to not take a stand resembles what a number of other community planning groups — including San Ysidro and Rancho Peñasquitos — have done after similar presentations, according to city documents.

It's ironic, since the association push to overturn Barrio Logan's community plan strikes at the heart of local control, members noted.

"I like local input and local control over planning," said John Hartley, one of four who voted to support Propositions B & C. "The neighborhoods should have a say in their own affairs."

Even deciding to vote was challenged by group member and former deputy city attorney Marianne Greene, who called the call for a vote "totally inappropriate" and tried unsuccessfully to table the motion.

The vote came after presentations from Georgette Gomez, from the Environmental Health Committee, and Derry Pence, from the ship-repair association. The two opponents have been appearing — and will continue to appear — at local planning and church groups, stumping for votes on the June 3 ballot.

Background: Years ago, the San Diego City Council appointed a group to try to write a follow-up to the existing 1978 Barrio Logan community plan. After five years of battle and compromise, the appointed group approved a plan in 2013 that would group commercial and industrial uses away from residential areas. Right now, they're side-by-side. No existing business or home would be forced out, but future homes and businesses would be required to follow the plan. Barrio Logan doesn't have its own planning group, though one would be established under the plan the shipyards hope to overturn, Gomez said.

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Caroline McKeown · San Diego, California

This is a complicated issue. And at this point, it's not about "standing by" the people of Barrio Logan, and it's not even about whether we like the plan or not. What this is about is the planning process, and the fact that the process was completely bypassed. Personally I don't want the whole city voting about what happens in my community and I don't think we should be voting about the Barrio Logan Plan. Therefore the YES on B and C will keep the plan that the residents and business owners in Barrio Logan chose for themselves. But bringing this before the planning groups is a complicated issue and making the issue clear to the groups is not straightforward.

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