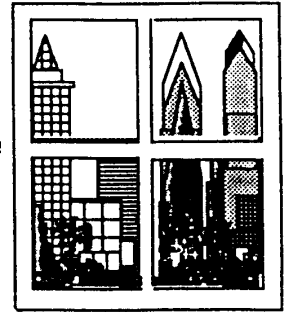


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S O S N A

**SOSNA Special Services Area Briefing (draft minutes)
July 6, 2004, 7:30 p.m., St. Anthony Senior Center
CAVA International Expansion Plans**

A record of those in attendance is on file at the SOSNA office.

Laura Blanchard, SOSNA Interim Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:32 PM.

Ms. Blanchard began the meeting by announcing the upcoming SOSNA Board nominations and elections and encouraged those in attendance to run for a board position if they qualify. Nominations will be taken at the September General Meeting with the election to be held on October 13, 2004 at the SOSNA General Meeting at Marian Anderson Recreation Center. The voting will begin at 7:30 PM and end at 8:30 PM sharp. To qualify or vote one must be a SOSNA member, be at least 18 years of age, have an interest in the NAC Service Area, and have attended at least four (4) SOSNA General Meetings or Special Service Area Briefings.

Ms. Blanchard introduced Michael Mazzolo of CAVA International to the audience and noted the presence of Kathleen Murray, Special Assistant to Council President Verna, and Terry Gillen, 30th Ward Democratic Leader. Mr. Mazzolo handed out a printed synopsis of the CAVA project and reviewed the plot plan of the project on presentation boards. The properties under consideration are bounded by 19th Street to the east, Washington Avenue to the south, 20th Street to the west and run through to Kimball Street on the north, encompassing League Street. He noted that 98% of the properties in the condemnation proposal are either vacant land or vacant structures. The proposed new building will house equipment and materials used in CAVA's marble and granite business. He noted that the construction would create about 25 temporary jobs and that there would be roughly 20 new permanent jobs created by the expansion.

Features of the development include a "buffer zone" between the new building and Kimball Street. This would follow a similar design to the rear of the Graduate Hospital parking lot in the 1700 block of Kater Street with trees and faux wrought iron fencing. A large parcel of property to the east end of the building will be used as a parking lot in the short term, however CAVA remained flexible as to the end use and had marked it "Potential Residential Site" on their plans. The new building will allow CAVA to pull their delivery trucks fully into the building before unloading them. Mr. Mazzolo noted that the proposed expansion is critical to CAVA's business and if they cannot expand in the area, they will have to consider moving the business outside the City. He commented that CAVA has been in business in the neighborhood for over 35 years and their preference is to stay in the community.

Kathleen Murray of Council President Verna's office reviewed the status of the condemnation proceedings and the condemnation process. She noted that condemnation is allowed by law in a designated Urban Renewal Area. The Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority uses independent appraisers to determine Fair Market Value. If the owner disputes the appraisal, he/she can select an alternate appraiser and the RDA will cover a portion of the cost of a second appraisal. If the RDA and owner cannot come to agreement on the Fair Market Value, the issue will be resolved through arbitration. Concerns were expressed that various condemnations in the community could displace

residents, especially senior citizens. Ms. Murray noted that Council President Verna is adamantly opposed to taking occupied properties.

A lively discussion of the project ensued with the following issues being of importance to the audience. Many residents felt that the property is more suited to residential development. Residents were concerned that:

- Truck traffic on 19th, 20th and Carpenter Streets would be a hazard to the community
- Truck traffic would block the bus stop
- Industrial use would continue to spread into residential areas – they did not want to set a precedent
- CAVA has not taken care of vacant lots they currently own and have allowed trash and weeds to take over adding to neighborhood blight
- Industrial expansion could decrease residential property values
- CAVA does not hire enough African American employees

Several residents questioned the environmental impact of the development, asking about pollution and noise. Mr. Mazzolo said that the facility would produce no pollution – all of the cutting is done under water and the dust is never airborne – and that the facility meets all OSHA standards for noise levels. In response to a resident’s question, he noted that they have roughly 50 – 70 containers of material delivered each year and they do not anticipate this increasing.

One resident commented that if CAVA incorporated League Street into their plans, they could increase the buffer zone along Kimball Street. Mr. Mazzolo expressed a willingness to make this change providing he could get all the necessary City approvals.

Several residents complained that CAVA had “cleared out” a lot that was a former community garden, destroying a large flowering Trumpet Vine in the process. It was noted that Mr. Mazzolo had agreed to save this vine at an earlier meeting. Mr. Mazzolo apologized for the situation and said that he would consider converting the property back into a community garden if he was able to acquire and use additional lots for parking.

Numerous residents repeated their strong feeling that the site was more appropriate for housing rather than industrial expansion and expressed their strong opposition to the project. One resident noted that this project highlighted the conflict between the City wanting to expand business while at the same time attempting to retain residents. He felt that the industrial expansion would hinder residential expansion.

Other residents expressed their support for the project commenting that the area may be zoned residential, but that it is severely blighted and that the CAVA development could solve a number of problems on the block. It was noted that the north side of the street would remain residential. Another resident expressed his admiration for CAVA’s decision to expand within the neighborhood rather than move the business out of the City.

Laura Blanchard reminded everyone to complete a ballot and turn it in before leaving the meeting. SOSNA will tabulate the ballots and send a letter to Council President Verna’s office indicating the results. She commented that SOSNA provides a mechanism for residents to voice their opinion, but is taking no stance of its own on the project. She adjourned the meeting at 9 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Hoskins-Brown