

# Agenda Report

**DATE:** SEPTEMBER 20, 1999  
**TO:** CITY COUNCIL  
**FROM:** CYNTHIA J. KURTZ, CITY MANAGER  
**SUBJECT:** NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS LEASE AGREEMENT

**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council authorize the City Manager to:

- A. Secure a lease agreement for Neighborhood Connections under the terms described in Attachment A. The Lease shall be for occupancy in the Walnut-Hill Center, located at 1384 E. Walnut Street, Pasadena. Said lease to be contingent upon;
- B. Successful negotiation of a lease at Hen's Teeth Square for approximately 2,000 square feet for Police Department programs consistent with the general terms discussed in Attachment D.

**BACKGROUND**

The Neighborhood Connections program was created in July of 1986 to foster better communications between City residents and local government, and to help facilitate resolution of neighborhood issues. As a program of the Human Services, Recreation and Neighborhoods Department, Neighborhood Connections currently serves over 80 neighborhood groups. The goal is to promote communication and foster participation among neighborhood organizations, elected representatives, City staff and community-based organizations. As such, Neighborhood Connections operates as a neutral liaison to facilitate resolution of neighborhood problems.

This Program has three full-time employees and an annual budget of approximately \$200,000. Two of the staff positions dedicate much of their time out in the Pasadena community working with neighborhood groups, assisting with and participating in neighborhood meetings, planning and facilitating neighborhood events and activities and linkages, helping resolve neighborhood problems, developing and supporting neighborhood leadership, and related work. The third position is a full-time, on-site Staff Assistant who is available throughout the business day to

respond to walk-in and telephone requests for information and referrals, provides access to the on-site Resource Library, assists with the preparation of various neighborhood newsletters and other communications, schedule on-site neighborhood meetings, etc. To assure the availability of services during the prime hours of most neighborhood meetings and requests for assistance, the Neighborhood Connections office hours are weekdays from 9am to 7pm, and Saturdays by appointment.

Since 1987, the Neighborhood Connections office has occupied approximately 800 square feet in Hen's Teeth Square, a commercial property located at Woodbury Road and Los Robles Avenue in Northwest Pasadena. Selection of the Hen's Teeth location was due to various factors, including a commitment to locate Neighborhood Connections out from "under the dome" of City Hall, and advantages in the co-location with other City offices over the years (including the City cable television channel KPAS, CDBG and Enterprise Zone). Originally, Neighborhood Connections' occupancy was negotiated as part of the K-PAS agreement comprising some 5,600 square feet.

Throughout these 12 years, the Office and staff have worked to serve neighborhoods citywide from this location. In reviewing the history and activities of Neighborhood Connections, it appears that for much of the first decade there was a primary focus on addressing neighborhood issues, leadership and the growth and development of neighborhood organizations in Northwest Pasadena. Accordingly, this location (at the northern City border) worked very effectively during that time.

### **CONSIDERATION TO RELOCATION AND SITE SEARCH**

In the past two years, Neighborhood Connections has received significant customer feedback suggesting that a more centralized office location would encourage and facilitate greater citywide use of the resource library, meeting facilities, staff support services, joint meetings among leadership from multiple neighborhoods, etc. In addition to a more centralized Pasadena location, it has been suggested that Neighborhood Connections secure a site with good north-south and east-west public transportation access, good street and pedestrian visibility, ample unobstructed parking with good lighting to comfortably accommodate evening meetings, and handicapped accessible restroom facilities within or directly connected to the office work space.

In June, 1999, after twelve years, Neighborhood Connections came to the end of its lease term for the approximately 800 square feet of office space occupied at Hen's Teeth Square. Approaching the end of this lease, Department staff worked with Housing and Development Department real estate personnel to identify and research potential space available in or near central Pasadena which best met the size, configuration, and other criteria outlined above, at a rate affordable within the current Program budget.

Preliminary consideration included some 38 locations. In the first review phase, the following eight locations were eliminated from consideration due to various cost, space, parking, or other issues:

- Raymond/Orange Grove Shopping Center - fully occupied at the time of investigation

- Los Robles/Orange Grove Shopping Center - nothing available at the time of investigation; concerns re: parking and mixed use (use compatibility)
- Washington Blvd./Fair Oaks Ave. - extensive work and expense required to renovate space for this use
- Orange Grove/Fair Oaks - Renaissance Plaza - only second story space available for this use (access issues)
- Jackie Robinson Center, 1020 N. Fair Oaks Ave. - available space (former Health Clinic area) already committed to accommodate expanded senior programs and relocation of Human Services Coordination from 234 E. Colorado Blvd. Following complete of renovation
- Villa Parke Community Center, 363 E. Villa - no unused space available
- North Lake Avenue - various sites inspected but found to be in poor condition requiring significant work and expense, and/or had limited parking
- Mountain Ave./Lincoln Blvd. (236 W. Mountain) - issues of visibility, no walk-in traffic, cost to configure space if available (per discussion with Coalition for a Non-Violent City re: their space)

There were follow-up contacts and/or a search of the 30 remaining sites identified for potential consideration (see Attachment B).

#### **SITE RECOMMENDATION**

The outcome of this process is the recommendation to lease 850 square feet in the property at the corner of Walnut Avenue and Hill Street, in central Pasadena, for the new location of Neighborhood Connections. This property best addresses the visibility, public transportation, parking, restroom facilities, space configuration, budget and related considerations for the Program and our customers. The proposed Walnut/Hill location provides improved accessibility for neighborhood organizations in the development stage seeking the leadership, support and assistance that Neighborhood Connections provides. Key amenities within the proposed unit include a favorable combination of office space, meeting rooms, materials display space, flexible work space, and private restroom facilities. The proximity of the Walnut-Hill Center to educational opportunities like Pasadena City College, job training (Women At Work), other social services (One-Stop Career Center) and related businesses further promotes the association of Pasadena neighborhoods to these opportunities and advances these services throughout the City.

While Neighborhood Connections' staffing, allocation of resources and commitment to Northwest Pasadena will not change, approval of staff's recommendation will enable Neighborhood Connections to provide all Pasadena residents and community organizations its services in an advantageous, centralized location.

Since notification of the proposed relocation, the management of Hen's Teeth has proposed to reduce the rental cost at the current location, which would save approximately \$3,120 per year. However, this option would not address the need for a centralized location, nor provide an in-office or directly-connected restroom facility (including handicapped accessibility).

**POLICE DEPARTMENT**

The Hen's Teeth site is available and provides an excellent location for Police Department uses as some of them involve combined City and County efforts and Hen's Teeth is adjacent to the County area. Staff is requesting authorization to negotiate a lease with the property owner based on the criteria established in Attachment D. Staff has had discussions with the agent for the property owner and these criteria appear acceptable.

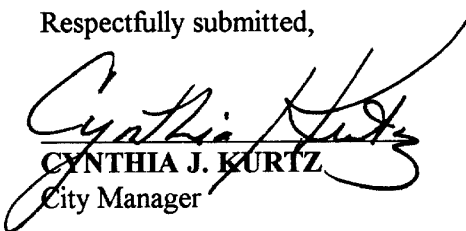
**FISCAL IMPACT**

Funding for this lease is currently available in the approved Neighborhood Connections budget. The cost of the proposed new facility is \$1,275 per month for 850 dedicated square feet, as compared to the proposed rate of \$990 per month for 800 dedicated square feet at Hen's Teeth. In addition, the proposed site requires capital costs for ADA restroom compliance of \$6,500. Providing comparable private restroom facilities at Hen's Teeth will require constructing new restrooms at an estimated cost in excess of \$15,000. A comparison of these sites is included as Attachment C to this Report. Furthermore, analysis of the rent being paid for comparable mid-Pasadena space discloses that the rental rate at the proposed location is advantageous (see Attachment B). Funds have been identified in the Neighborhood Connections budget to meet this expenditure.

It is noted that the City currently holds a \$176,000 deed of trust on the Hen's Teeth Square property. The monthly payments are \$1,200. Loss of rental income at this site will negatively affect the owner's ability to make payments on this obligation. Accordingly, relocation of Neighborhood Connections operations is contingent upon the Police Department lease. This arrangement provides the Police Department desirable space for program activities and maintains the City's collateral interest under the trust deed. In addition, Staff will use its best efforts to locate appropriate City and private sector organizations to the Hen's Teeth Square property.

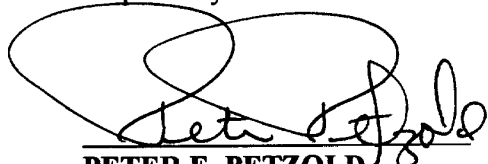
Accordingly, approval of both recommendations will provide optimal locations for Neighborhood Connections and the Police Department, while maintaining the stability of the City's deed of trust at Hen's Teeth Square.

Respectfully submitted,



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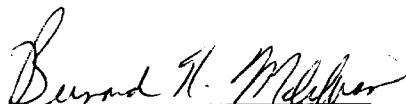
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