



Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council General Meeting
January 12, 2011
MINUTES

1. Call to Order

A duly noticed meeting of the Board of Directors of the Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council (“GWNC”) was held on Wednesday, January 12, 2011, at the Ebell of Los Angeles, 743 South Lucerne Blvd., Los Angeles. President Owen Smith called the meeting to order at 7:13 p. m.

2. Roll Call

Secretary Elizabeth Fuller called the roll. She noted that Kiki Gindler resigned as a Board Member but is interested to remain as an Alternate. James Wolf automatically ascended from an Alternate to a Board Member. Board Members in attendance at the roll call were: Patricia Carroll, Charles D’Atri, Elizabeth Fuller, Mike Genewick (Alternate for Alex Jones-Moreno), Jane Gilman, John Gresham, Jack Humphreville, Frances McFall, Clinton Oie, Fred Pickel, Mary Rajswing, Margaret Sowma (for Jane Usher), Owen Smith and James Wolf. Jane Usher and Yigal Arens arrived later.

Fourteen of the 20 Board Members were present at the beginning of the Meeting. The GWNC quorum (the minimum number of Board Members needing to be present to take binding votes on Agendized Items) is 13, so the Board could take such votes. One Board seat (Area 9) is vacant at this time. Also attending: 20 Stakeholders and guests. Board Members absent and not represented by an Alternate: Charles Dougherty, Barbara Kumetz, David Lunzer, Matthew Oldham and Benjamin Rosenberg,

MOTION (by Mr. Gresham, seconded by Mr. Wolf): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council appoints Kiki Gindler as the Alternate Board Member representing Hancock Park.

MOTION PASSED by a voice vote.

Mr. Smith asked for nominations for Vice-President to replace Ms. Gindler. Ms. McFall nominated Mr. Gresham, who declined. Mr. Wolf nominated himself.

MOTION (by Mr. Wolf, seconded by Mr. D’Atri): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council appoints James Wolf as Vice-President.

MOTION PASSED by a voice vote.

3. Approval of the Minutes

MOTION (by Mr. Gresham, seconded by Jane Gilman): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council approves the Minutes of its December 8, 2010 General Meeting as written.

MOTION PASSED by a voice vote.

4. President's Report (Owen Smith)

A. Board Vacancies

1. Resignation of Kiki Gindler (Hancock Park)

This Item was addressed in Item #2.

2. Confirmation of Alternate James Wolf as new Hancock Park Board Member

This Item was addressed in Item #2.

3. Nomination/Election of new Hancock Park Alternate Candidate: Kiki Gindler

This Item was addressed in Item #2.

4. Nominations/Election for new Vice President

This Item was addressed in Item #2.

5. Remaining vacancies (if no volunteers tonight, please recruit):

Area 2 (Citrus Square) – Alternate

Area 9 (Oakwood-Maplewood-St. Andrews) – Director & Alternate

Area 12 (We-Wil) – Alternate

Education – Alternate

Renter – Alternate

Mr. Smith indicated that there were no more nominations at this time.

B. Bylaws Conformation to DONE's new uniform Table of Contents (John Welborne)

Mr. Welborne reported that he is waiting for the latest TOC draft from DONE, and will have a further report next month.

5. Local Government Updates

A. CD4 Update (Nikki Ezhari)

Nikki Ezhari, Deputy District Director for L.A. City District Four Councilman Tom LaBonge (213-485-3337; 323-957-6415; Nikki.Ezhari@LACity.org), distributed a flier from the Councilmember about a six-week CERT [Community Emergency Response Training] course on Mondays 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at the Councilmember's Hollywood Field Office at 6501 Fountain Ave. that started January 10th. She also reported that the City's Operation Pothole last Saturday filled 1,300 potholes.

B. CD5 Update (John Darnell)

John Darnell, Field Deputy for L.A. City District Five Councilman Paul Koretz (310-289-0353; John.Darnell@LACity.org), encouraged signing up for the Councilman's newsletter

and reported that “as of January 1st mobile billboards are not legal in the City of Los Angeles” and “the Community Care [Facilities] Ordinance will come to the City Council soon.”

C. 42nd Assembly District Update (Nicole Carcel)

Nicole Carcel, Field Representative for State 42nd District Assemblyman Mike Feuer (310-285-5490; Nicole.Carcel@asm.ca.gov), introduced herself, distributed a “Runaway Health Insurance Rate Hikes” flier and reported that former Field Representative Haeyoung Kim is now working in Washington, D.C. The Assemblyman authored Assembly Bill 52 which “would require insurance companies to submit increases to the legislature for approval.” Ms. Carcel encouraged contacting her with any questions.

D. 26th Senate District Update (Andrew Lachman)

Mr. Lachman could not attend and there was no report at this time.

Mr. Gresham requested and Mr. Smith agreed to add a City Council District 10 Representative report to future Agendas.

6. Guest Speakers – GWNC-area School Principals (15 minutes)

a. Dr. Steven Martinez, John Burroughs Middle School

[This Agenda Item was addressed after Item #6. C.] Ms. Rajswing introduced Mr. Martinez, Burroughs principal, who started there as a Teacher 11 years ago. He distributed a slide presentation handout, noted that The School has around 2,000 students and encouraged looking them up at www.BurroughsMS.org and www.lausd.net. Their API [Academic Performance Index] is 829 and they “are doing everything they can to . . . prepare” students for high school. A recent community collaboration “raised \$30,000” for landscaping improvements. They “are very sensitive to the concerns of the neighborhood” regarding traffic and pedestrian safety and are working to clear students more quickly after school “to have less impact on the neighborhood.” Dr. Martinez encouraged to “please give them a call” [(323) 549-5000] if you have concerns. “Approximately 517” students attend the magnet school; “that’s the cap.” Burroughs is “one of three [LAUSD] Schools” that has an aeronautical program. The School has a reputation for a lack of drugs; they “have a zero tolerance” for drugs. Around 80% of their funding is for salaries and overhead; almost all of the remainder is used for maintenance and construction.

b. Dr. Suzie Oh, Third Street Elementary School

Dr. Oh was unable to attend this Meeting.

c. Joan McConico, Wilshire Crest Elementary School

[This Agenda Item was addressed after Item #5. D.] Ms. Rajswing introduced Ms. McConico, Wilshire Crest principal, who reported that the School has approximately 300 students and that they’re “working with their very diverse student population . . . programs for . . . hard-of-hearing . . . visually impaired . . . theatre and drama . . . [and] have made great strides in their API . . . increased 78 points . . . [to] 758 . . . [The] goal this year . . . [is] to increase [the] API to 800.” She thanked Ms. Fuller for her help and invited everyone to tour the School.

Ms. Usher arrived at this time.

In response to a question from Ms. McFall, Ms. McConico said the school has considered adding a sixth grade, but the request was denied by LAUSD. She also said that while most students come from within the Wilshire Crest boundaries, some come from other neighborhoods via Open Enrollment.

7. Community Concerns

Senior citizen concerns (Joan Taylor): Ms. Taylor distributed a letter and article regarding high-speed rail and encouraged the GWNC to work with the Mid-City West Neighborhood Council to ask the Governor to use high-speed rail funding instead for “alternative mass transit.”

8. Treasurer’s Report & Budget Items

A. Monthly budget report/approval (Elizabeth Fuller)

Ms. Fuller reported that Treasurer Matthew Oldham could not attend this Meeting. She distributed and reviewed the “Monthly Spending Report – December 1, 2010 – January 11, 2011.” She reported that we received an invoice for the first \$225 toward the \$1,800 commitment the GWNC made to the La Brea Walk event.

MOTION (by Mr. Gresham, seconded by Mr. Pickel): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council approves the “Monthly Spending Report – December 1, 2010 – January 11, 2011.”

MOTION PASSED by a voice vote.

Ms. McFall requested information regarding year-to-date spending as it relates to the adopted GWNC budget and Ms. Fuller agreed to present it at the next [February 9th] General Meeting.

8. DWP Oversight (Jack Humphreville) [The second Agenda Item #8.]

Mr. Humphreville reported that “the DWP has selected a new General Manager, Ron Nichols . . . The DWP Oversight Committee met with him.” Mr. Humphreville said he’s “cautiously optimistic” and the last eight months with Austin Beutner “were very productive.”

9. City Budget Issues (Jack Humphreville)

A. Mr. Humphreville reported that “next year’s budget [deficit] is expected to be \$350 million.” He opposes the proposed City parking garages sale because “it’s a one-time gimmick . . . poor fiscal policy . . . \$3½ billion in operating profits [would] be left on the table versus \$53 million in one-time profits” and there’s been “no outreach” about this. “The City hasn’t looked at any alternatives . . . There’s no long-term solvency plan.”

MOTION (by Mr. Humphreville, seconded by Mr. D’Atri): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council adopts the following Resolution:

“Whereas, the City is considering a Public Private Partnership Concession & Lease Agreement for the City's parking garages.

Whereas, the City has budgeted a contribution of at least \$53 million from the upfront proceeds generated by this transaction as well as a possible contribution to the City's Reserve Fund.

Whereas, this transaction is poor fiscal policy as the City is essentially selling revenue producing, capital assets to pay operating expenses, not dissimilar to the controversial sale of the State's office buildings that was condemned by State Treasurer Bill Lockyer.

Whereas, the proposed sale price per parking space is less than 50% of the sale price that Chicago received in the sale of its parking facilities.

Whereas, the City is foregoing \$4.3 billion in revenue and \$3.5 billion in operating profits over the next 50 years based on the projections of the City's parking consultant, Desman Consulting.

Whereas, the City has not analyzed the impact of the higher parking rates on the local communities.

Whereas, the City has not had met with the impacted communities, including, but not limited to, local businesses, homeowner associations, and the Neighborhood Councils.

Whereas, the City has not seriously considered or investigated other alternatives, including the retention of an experienced private operator.

Whereas, the City has not held public hearings on this proposed transaction.

Whereas, the City Council continues to meet in closed sessions, denying the public access to basic information.

Whereas, the City has refused to release any pertinent information pursuant to a California Public Records Act request.

Whereas, the City has not developed a long term solvency plan that would help analyze the proposed transaction.

Therefore, the Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council opposes the Concession & Lease Agreement or any other similar transaction until the City develops a long term solvency plan, releases detailed information

regarding the operations and finances of the parking facilities, investigates alternatives to the proposed Concession & Lease Agreement, holds extensive public hearings, and determines that this transaction is in the best interests of the City and its citizens.”

DISCUSSION: Mr. Humphreville explained how the projected numbers are calculated. Mr. Gresham noted that the Cinerama Dome is “just becoming profitable.” There was discussion regarding the profitability of City parking garages and the City’s financial situation. Mr. Gresham suggested and it was agreed to strike the phrase “despite the May 5, 2010 Wall Street Journal opinion piece by Mayor Richard Riordan, ‘Los Angeles on the Brink of Bankruptcy’” from the original proposed Resolution’s next-to-last paragraph.

MOTION PASSED by a voice vote; Ms. Usher recused herself from this vote.

Stakeholder Karen Gilman announced that the City intends the “elimination of the graffiti paint-out budget line item . . . [and Councilman] LaBonge will fight to save this part of the budget.” She suggested that the Board may want to write a letter to the City about this. Ms. Usher encouraged the GWNC to participate in the Neighborhood Councils Budget Advocates work. She announced that the City Attorney sent a letter to all outside legal contractors asking them to reduce their fees by 15%; their fees dropped \$37 million to \$12 million. Ms. Usher added that “the City Attorney’s Office can’t believe that the City hasn’t sent [such] a letter to all outside contractors.” Stakeholder John Kaliski announced that City engineers were sent such a letter and did agree to a budget cut. Mr. Humphreville described the Budget Advocates’ work.

10. Outreach Committee

A. CD 10 Candidate Forum – Jan. 23 (Liz Fuller)

Ms. Fuller distributed a “CD 10 Candidate Forum” flier and announced the January 23rd Forum to be held at the Vantage Sports Bar & Grill. Stakeholder Federico Mariscal already volunteered; Mr. Gresham also did. The GWNC will have a table and distribute literature.

B. Saturday/Sunday GWNC-sponsored events (Federico Mariscal)

Mr. Mariscal was unable to attend and there was no report.

C. Upcoming meeting speakers/events:

February 9 – CD4 candidate forum (Liz Fuller)

Ms. Fuller announced that all six City Council District Four Candidates have accepted invitations to speak at a February 9th Candidate Forum including City Councilman Tom LaBonge. She described the Forum format and encouraged publicity and outreach. Mr. Gresham suggested Kevin James, KRLA 870 AM broadcaster as the Moderator. Mr. Humphreville offered to extend the invitation to Mr. James.

March 9 – LAPD Vice (Patti Carroll)

Ms. Carroll said that LAPD Sgt. Martinez may speak.

April 13 – DWP Recycled Water Program (Jack Humphreville)
Mr. Humphreville will work on getting a speaker.

May 11 – More school principals? (Mary Rajswing)
Ms. Rajswing will work on this.

11. Board Member Comments/New Business

Ms. Fuller relayed that DONE has announced the need for all board members and alternates to make sure they have completed the required ethics training. Those who do not complete the program may be prevented from participating in board votes. Also, Mr. Wolf thanked Ms. Gindler for her service as GWNC Vice-President.

Ms. Usher had to leave at this time.

12. Land Use Committee (LUC) (James Wolf)

[The text in each lettered paragraph in this Item is directly from the Agenda.]

The following items were presented for information only. The Land Use Committee did not meet in December:

A. Café Gratitude Wine & Beer CUP Application – 639 N. Larchmont Blvd.

Issue: In December, GWNC voted to support the CUP application on the condition that the Larchmont Village Neighborhood Association also supported it. Public hearing was January 5.

Mr. D’Atri announced that the LVNA “passed a Motion to support Café Gratitude.” Also, Mr. Genewick said “there’s very little support” for a proposed wall around the Mayor’s house.

B. Ogamdo Café CUP Application – 838-844 S. La Brea Ave.

Issue: In 2006, the restaurant filed a CUP application requesting a full line liquor permit, extended nighttime hours (until midnight 7 days a week), leased off-site parking in lieu of the required on-site parking, and legalization/use of a previously unpermitted outdoor dining patio behind the restaurant. After objections by the neighbors – whose yards and bedrooms are separated from the restaurant property by only a fence and small wall – the requests were denied by the ZA. Two years later, in 2009, the restaurant re-applied for a new CUP, with all the same requests as in the earlier application. The neighbors still objected and the GWNC voted to support the neighbors. Because the restaurant bounced a check for the application fees, however, the case was put on hold and a hearing was never held. Recently, just prior to the City terminating the application, the restaurant did pay the fees, and a hearing is now scheduled for January 24. The GWNC will make sure a letter is on file in support of the neighbors, whose objections have not changed.

[This Agenda Item was addressed after Item #12. C.] Ms. Fuller described the above.

C. Zoning Violations at 221 S. Manhattan Pl.

Issue: The residentially-zoned property has recently undergone a use change and is now operating – in violation of its zoning -- as a business (meditation center). Neighbors have complained about the increased foot traffic and parking issues, and the city cited the property owners with an Order to Comply by November 29. The GWNC voted in

December to send a letter to Building & Safety and the City Council Office stating that we support the existing zoning and the City's efforts to enforce compliance at 221 S. Manhattan Place.

Stakeholder Rory Cunningham thanked the GWNC for sending the above letter, though the problems are still happening. He described that "tonight there were nine cars in the driveway and one car on the front lawn . . . Doug Mensman [Assistant Planning Deputy for L.A. City District Four Councilman Tom LaBonge (213-485-3337; 323-957-6415; Doug.Mensman@LACity.org)] [thinks] four of their five locations are operating under the City's radar."

Potential Agenda Items for January 25 LUC Meeting (in addition to those above):

- City ordinance on Community Care Facilities
- Variance to Legalize "Residential" (Office) Use of Accessory Building (Garage) at 4714 W. 8th St.
- Update on cell phone poles proposed for 1st/Wilton & 9th/Mansfield.
- Update on Eastern Presbyterian Church Renovations (4720 W. 6th St.)
- Presentation and discussion of next draft of a possible new GWNC policy on wireless telecommunications installations
- Condo conversions at 838 N. Mansfield

[There was no Item #13.]

14. Public Comments

Stakeholder Karen Gilman represented the LVNA at the LAPD Olympic Division CPAB Meeting. One topic of discussion was the use of security cameras. "The more surveillance cameras there are . . . the more it helps catch criminals and prevents crime." She distributed a "Tribute Booklet Order Form" for and announced and described the April 17th Windsor Square -- Hancock Park Historical Society's sixth annual Garden Party and Tour.

15. Announcements and Adjournment

Jane Gilman announced that the Wilshire Community Police Council is having a sports memorabilia sale January 27th at the Museum.

A. Next meeting: Wednesday, February 9, 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Smith declared and the Board agreed to **ADJOURN** the Meeting at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
David Levin
Minutes Writer