

Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council



Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council General Meeting

January 13, 2010

Approved by the board,
3/10/10

MINUTES

Call to Order

A duly noticed meeting of the Board of Directors of the Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council (“GWNC”) was held on Wednesday, January 13, 2010, at the Ebell of Los Angeles, 743 South Lucerne Blvd. President Charles Dougherty called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

Roll Call

The Secretary, Elizabeth Fuller, called the roll. Board of Directors members in attendance at the roll call were: Yigal Arens, Moon Chung, Charles Dougherty, Elizabeth Fuller, Jane Gilman, Rudy Gintel, John Gresham, Margaret Sowma (alt. Margy Hudson), Alex Jones-Moreno, Frances McFall, Clinton Oie, Shar Penfold, Owen Smith, Cindy Chvatal (alt. Jane Usher) and James Wolf. Director Patti Carroll joined the meeting at 7:10 p.m. Board members Jared Abrams, Charles Bergson, Sam Cunningham, Martha Schuur, and Russell Sherman were absent and not represented by an alternate.

The Secretary stated that a quorum was present.

Introductory Presentation

Christopher Koontz, Planning Deputy for City Council Member Paul Koretz introduced himself, saying code enforcement and maintaining services in the face of budget cuts are his office’s highest priorities. The office is also asking that all digital billboards be converted back to traditional signs, and have introduced a City Council motion that would allow immediate towing of trailer billboards, which Mr. Koretz believes are illegal. A letter Mr. Koretz wrote to City Planning Director Gail Goldberg about Accessory Dwelling Units is also on the GWNC agenda tonight – Mr. Koretz expects this issue to come back to life, and does not support using ADUs as a “back door” to adding density in single family neighborhoods. Finally, other things his office is working on include updating historic preservation laws, CEQA reform, and infrastructure audits (the city is not doing them and they are working to find funding to bring that process back).

Director John Gresham commented that things such as street repair, on the borders between our city council districts, often slip through the cracks, and said he'd appreciate Mr. Koontz putting in a word with Mr. Koretz on that subject. Mr. Koontz said he has a good relationship with Tom La Bonge's office and the other council offices in our area, and will work on that issue.

Reading of the Minutes

Secretary Elizabeth Fuller presented the minutes of the last meeting. Errors were pointed out in the draft date on page 1, the word "employs" on page 6, and in Director Clinton Oie's name on page 11. Director Jane Gilman moved the minutes be approved as amended. Director Owen Smith seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Acting Treasurer Elizabeth Fuller reported that she is behind on submitting our quarterly credit card reconciliation statements to DONE, but said she has all the necessary information and will make an effort to catch up as soon as possible. (DONE has announced it will freeze funding for all NCs that are not up to date on the audit forms.)

President's Report

Ethics Training -- President Charlie Dougherty read off the list of Board Members and Alternates who have completed DONE's required ethics training: Yigal Arens, Patti Carroll, Cindy Chvatal, Charles Dougherty, Elizabeth Fuller, John Gresham, Margy Hudson, Mike Genewick, Clinton Oie, Mary Rajswing, Martha Schuur, Owen Smith, and Jane Usher. Director James Wolf and Alternate Representative Frances McFall said they have also completed the training, but aren't showing up on the list for some reason.

Introduction -- Andrew Lachman, the former president of the Mid-City West Community Council who now works for Senator Curren Price, introduced himself and announced a community town hall meeting on January 31 at Southwest Law School, to discuss the city budget deficit and other issues.

DONE News -- President Dougherty thanked DONE representative Betty Wong Oyama for helping straighten out some lingering GWNC boundary issues, and she distributed copies of the new official map of the GWNC area. She reiterated President Dougherty's urging for board members to complete their ethics training, and confirmed that NCs that are more than two quarters behind in their quarterly reconciliations will not be able to issue Neighborhood Purposes Grants (which is the required method of funding for any non-profit group). She announced that the GWNC elections will be held on May 13, and distributed a time line of election-related events. She said election outreach begins on January 22, and all election announcements should include the election date, location and instructions for downloading information from the City Clerk's website.

Ms. Oyama reminded people that census forms are coming soon, and that we should remind friends and family members to complete the forms that come in the mail. The only information required is how many people live at the address – they do not require social security numbers, income levels or any other personal data. All actual census representatives will also carry official identification. The Mayor's office will be holding a Complete Count meeting on January. 27.

Ms. Oyama said that for the next fiscal year, there will be funding changes for Neighborhood Councils, including background checks and fingerprinting for new treasurers. Also, the treasurer will only keep the books; another member must pay the bills. (More information on that subject will be coming soon.) Currently, we are not sure what will happen with NC rollover funds. At the moment, if an NC's budget was approved with rollovers then it will be allowed to use the whole amount. If the budget was approved without rollover funds, the NC will only be allowed to use the current year's \$45,000 allotment. (*Note: the GWNC's budget was approved including rollover funds.*)

Ms. Oyama said DONE is also trying to standardize Neighborhood Council bylaws – an informational session on that topic will be held on Jan. 23 in El Sereno. She also reminded people to read DONE's e-mail blasts, because with budget cuts, DONE representatives won't always be able to attend our meetings. She said she would still be available to us via e-mail and phone, however, even if she cannot attend our meetings.

City Council District 4 News – City Council District 4 Field Deputy Nikki Ezhari reported that in 2009 we obtained stimulus funding for repaving Wilshire Boulevard (though it is tied to the Bus Rapid Transit project), money for new sidewalks west of Western Ave., Permit Parking Districts in a couple of areas, and speed humps on several streets (funding for speed humps has since been cut, so we're lucky to have done this when we did). Goals for 2010 include actually repaving Wilshire, installing cameras at several intersections, dealing with lunch trucks on Wilshire Blvd., finding more park space, spending Prop. K money on the renovations at Robert Burns Park, trying to get See's Candies to return to its original building on Western Ave., completing several other park projects...and providing prompt service when people call with new issues or problems.

Director Shar Penfold asked for more information about the Wilshire Blvd. repaving project, and Ms. Ezhari said if the funding goes through, it should start in July. The BRT funding will pay for the outside lanes, and separate stimulus money will pay for the center lanes.

Election Update – President Dougherty announced that candidate information meetings will be held on February 17 and March 6, for people who wish to run for seats on the board. Filing forms and other information will be available at the meeting. Mr. Dougherty said he is asking all current board members to run again. Also, if current Board Members are part of a neighborhood association, he asked them to help get the

word out and bring people in. City budget cuts mean staffing is going to become even more inefficient, so our Council may be able to exert more control in the future than we have in the past.

Director Frances McFall noted that she lives in an area with a lot of renters, who aren't really interested in the Neighborhood Council. She said election outreach time and money would be better spent on community projects. Mr. Dougherty said he understands – and neighborhood improvement projects are also a good form of outreach – but we do need to do other kinds of outreach as well. So people should start talking up the elections to their neighbors. Currently, our election “committee” is Mr. Dougherty and Alternate Director Cindy Chvatal...and they could use more volunteers.

Approval of New Alternate Board Members -- President Dougherty introduced Cynthia Markus (Citrus Square), Kay Martin (Brookside) and Bryan Christie (Renters), who have volunteered to fill three vacancies for alternate board members. Alternate Director Cindy Chvatal moved that the nominees be approved. Director Owen Smith seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Office Space Update – President Dougherty reported that he and Secretary Elizabeth Fuller are still searching for viable office space for the Council, which is necessary to have before we can hire an administrative assistant. City requirements such as ADA rules, a prohibition on subleases, and specific lease requirements have made the search difficult. He said we saw a good space on Seward recently, but the bathroom wasn't ADA-compliant, and couldn't be made so. And we can't rent from current board members, which has also ruled out a couple of other possibilities. Ms. Fuller said we are working with a realtor who will have more spaces to show us soon – we may end up in the Harbor Building, which does seem to meet all our requirements, though the office may not have windows or parking.

DWP Oversight

DWP Oversight representative Jack Humphreville said that during the last year, the DWP has imposed “unprecedented” rate increases for water and power, which particularly impact homeowners. The causes are shortage year water rates and other factors. And rates are going up, as a result of higher pension costs, wages and energy cost adjustment factors. But the DWP has not developed any plan, and is simply bidding up prices. He said there's a big difference between buying power on the spot market and generating the power that's going to be used.

Mr. Humphreville said this all leaves him interested in several things. First, a ratepayers advocate. He said most of the City Council supports this idea, and several members have even signed motions in support of it. Tom La Bonge has not...and the Mayor is also opposed, because IBEW opposes it. The second issue is a new solar plan – a.k.a. “Son of Measure B (SOB). Measure B was designed to eliminate competitive bidding. So now they're calling it “utility built” instead of “utility owned.” This would have two detrimental impacts – it will cost \$1 billion more because the workers involved

don't have the necessary experience and because of restrictive work rules. It will also create fewer jobs than if the work was done by skilled builders. Mr. Humphreville said we should talk to Mr. LaBonge and ask him to get behind a ratepayers' advocate...and also talk to friends and neighbors. This is real money, not a political issue. Finally, he proposed that the GWNC pass a motion saying:

The GWNC calls for the formation of an independent ratepayers' advocate, the selection of an experienced General Manager and competitive bidding for all work on the solar plan.

Director Owen Smith put forth the motion. Alternate Director Cindy Chvatal seconded it.

Director John Gresham asked if DWP ownership of solar facilities would be a part of the new solar plan. Mr. Humphreville said Measure B was going to create systems that would be DWP owned, but the new plan calls for them just to be DWP built.

Director Jane Gilman asked what kind of power a ratepayers' advocate would have. Mr. Humphreville said the person wouldn't have legislative power, but would have the "power of information" – the right to review and analyze the finances and management of the DWP, including their long-term plans and other matters. He said companies like ConEd are publicly held, which means lots of information is available. But DWP does not make nearly as much public.

Ms. Gilman asked about the role of TURN and other advocate groups. Mr. Humphrevill said there are several such groups (YouCan is another), and he has talked to them, but they have "no interest" in Los Angeles; they focus exclusively on investor-owned utilities.

Director Yigal Arens, in an effort to better understand "DWP built" vs. "DWP owned," recalled that under Measure B people could choose whether or not to build solar collectors on their property. He said it sounds like the new proposal would be the same, except that building owners won't own the collectors. Mr. Humphreville said there would be a difference between collectors on city property, DWP property and private property. DWP is talking now about building collectors on its own properties. It would have to make other kinds of deals if things were built on private property. So this measure would be talking mostly about DWP or city property.

President Dougherty asked if the City could be in on the bid process. Director Owen Smith said a law was passed a few years ago to limit that practice, because people want to get these kinds of jobs out for competitive bids. It doesn't stop the city from doing emergency work. Mr. Smith said putting things out for bids, so people can see prices of the systems and get the best bang for their buck, is a great idea. Also, there should be limits and schedules to make sure builders don't get into penalties for overruns, etc.

Mr. Arens asked about maintenance issues related to the systems DWP would build, and Mr. Humphreville said DWP maintains its own facilities. Director John Gresham said the DWP wants the exclusive right to build everything, without competition, and that part of the reason we need to get rid of the secrecy is because everything is handled within the department and a lot of things are handled behind closed doors, without transparency.

Mr. Humphreville said we also need to look at DWP rates vs. other public and private utilities. Yes, DWP rates are better than some, but they haven't funded a lot of pension liabilities, and they still rely on lots of coal. DWP workers are also paid about 40% more than other city workers for comparable work. Mr. Arens asked if that means private utilities would be interested in the demise of the DWP, and Mr. Humphreville said that if it came up for sale, Edison would probably love to buy it. He said we do have a good deal with DWP – their rates are lower than Edison's...but on the other hand, they don't use as many renewables. Mr. Gresham reiterated that the DWP also wants the exclusive right to build with its own workers, without opening bidding to outside companies.

The motion carried 15-1 (Mr. Arens voted no).

City Budget Process

Budget representative Jack Humphreville distributed an article on the budget he wrote recently for Citywatch, as well as other budget-related items. He said the City accounting process is tough to figure out. The City is "both broke and broken." The budget was going to be about \$700 million short, and then after various cuts was going to be about \$100 million short. Then we heard salaries are over budget, and revenues are down. So now the deficit is about \$258.2 million, with no clue how to fill it. Cash reserves are down too. So we have a 25 billion dollar problem .

There are several components to the issue: deficits now and in the future, unfunded pension liabilities, and deferred maintenance and infrastructure issues. The Mayor has conducted a budget survey to figure out where the money should come from. This is better than it's been done in the past, but there are a few problems: the survey is "loaded." For example, the police are not an option on it, and neither are 46 other city departments. Also, it doesn't talk about costs associated with some potential cost-cutting maneuvers – such as if you cut staff, how much does it cost to buy them out? Also, the Mayor is thinking of selling off the city's parking assets – for \$100-200 million. It seems wrong to sell off capital assets to pay operating expenses. Chicago did that, and a billion dollars disappeared into the operating budget.

Mr. Humphreville said there are several actions we can take to help the situation. We can demand pension reform. We can demand a balanced budget. We can demand civilian oversight. People did that when New York went broke in 1975 – they made sure the budget was balanced and services continued.

Mr. Humphreville said part of the Mayor's plan is to raise taxes and fees. But some of those moves will require our votes. And we can vote no unless there's real civilian oversight to make sure the books are balanced. People have also talked about bankruptcy – but that's easier said than done.

Mr. Humphreville proposed that the GWNC make the following motion regarding the sale of the city's parking meters and structures:

The GWNC opposes the Public Private Partnership agreement for parking structures, or parking structures and parking meters, as discussed in the Mayor's Los Angeles Budget Challenge.

Director John Gresham put forth the motion. Director Owen Smith seconded it.

Mr. Humphreville explained that under the Mayor's proposal to sell the parking assets, the money from the sale would go into the General Fund, which he opposes. Mr. Gresham said the General Fund would receive a lump sum payment, but the buyer would receive a revenue stream forever (in Chicago, it was 99 years).

President Dougherty asked who would issue tickets for parking violations if the meters were sold. Mr. Humphreville said the City would still be in charge of performing that service. Director Shar Penfold asked if the City would forfeit the revenue from parking. Mr. Humphreville said that if they sell the assets for \$200 million, they'd get that much money today, but nothing after that.

Mr. Gresham said that when there's a monetary crisis, people with political power tend to grab for solutions that look good, but aren't really measured actions. And we need measured action – they're trying to solve the budget crisis this year, but not looking at the long term.

Mr. Arens noted that it is dangerous for us to take one person's opinion and say we're for or against something like this...and we don't know all the details yet. Mr. Dougherty clarified that Mr. Humphreville is our representative to the DWP, and that he and Alternate Director Margaret Sowma are our city budget representatives.

Mr. Dougherty re-read the motion. It passed unanimously.

Mr. Humphreville recommended that the Board put forth a second budget related motion:

The City budget for the current year is not balanced. Recent projections of \$98.2 million deficit have been increased to \$258.2 million because of higher than budget payroll and lower than expected revenues. The Reserve Fund is being depleted. The City is projecting a Budget Gap of over \$3 billion for the four year period beginning in July 2011. The City's unfunded pension liability as of June 30, 2010 is \$11.5 billion. The Deferred Maintenance for our infrastructure has been estimated to be at least \$10

billion.

As such, the GWNC calls for increased civilian oversight of the City's finances as well as its operations and organization.

Director Owen Smith put forth the motion. Director John Gresham seconded it.

Director Yigal Arens asked for the meaning of "civilian oversight." Mr. Humphreville said he's not sure yet, which is why it's not more specific. He wants to get people involved who know something about what's happening, so the process isn't so obtuse and arcane – it's almost impossible to figure out now.

Mr. Arens asked if all parties involved aren't "civilians," and said that if we don't make it clear what we're requesting, we don't know what we're voting for. Mr. Humphreville said he's using "civilian" to mean people who are not elected officials. Mr. Arens suggested that we revise the motion to call for an independent commission. Since no one involved is in the military, everyone is a civilian.

Mr. Gresham said we haven't heard any new ideas for solutions from the City, and the best way to get there is to involve people who are new to the process – which has no power and no teeth as it is now. So we definitely need a citizens' advisory committee.

Mr. Arens suggested we amend the motion to call for an "independent citizen's budget advisory committee" instead of "civilian oversight." Mr. Humphreville suggested we extend the oversight beyond just the budget to various organizations. He said a lot of city employees are leaving, and with them goes a lot of organizational knowledge.

President Dougherty proposed changing the last sentence of the motion to:

"...independent citizens' oversight committee to review and analyze the city's finances as well as its operations and organization."

Mr. Smith moved we amend the motion. Director Jane Gilman seconded the amendment. The amendment passed unanimously.

Mr. Dougherty called for a vote on the amended motion. It passed unanimously.

Land Use Committee

Larchmont Bungalow (107 N. Larchmont) – Capri Maddox, the Neighborhood Prosecutor from the City Attorney's office for the Wilshire area, reported that the business may be in violation of Building and Safety regulations, there is an ongoing investigation. She said the matter has been submitted to the City Attorney's office, but a case has not been filed yet, so she can't make too many comments...though she said she knows the timeline of the events involved and that the community is familiar with the

issue.

Ms. Maddox said that once a case is sent to the City Attorney's office, it is assigned to a deputy. It takes 3 or 4 weeks for a decision on whether to file a case, and then it's assigned to a courtroom for a court appearance. The delay is to give adequate notice to all parties involved. At the first court appearance, there's a reading of charges (an arraignment), and the defendant can plead guilty or not guilty. She said most of these cases last 6 months to a year.

Director Rudy Gintel said we keep talking about Building and Safety violations, but many people are concerned with zoning and Q conditions. The owner says the Q conditions haven't been enforced and shouldn't be enforced against him unless they're enforced against others who are also in violation. He asked Ms. Maddox if she's talking about the Building and Safety violations because the City doesn't want to face zoning questions. But Ms. Maddox said her office can only deal with the case presented, which involves the Building and Safety violations.

Director Jane Gilman asked what the timeline would be if a case is filed. Ms. Maddox said that if a case is filed it would happen in a few weeks -- just enough time to notify all parties. She said the first court appearance is usually held in a courtroom adjacent to the county jail.

Alternate Director Cindy Chvatal asked why, since the Bungalow has had its permit and Certificate of Occupancy revoked, it has been allowed to continue operating without those necessary documents. Ms. Maddox said that's a good point, but at this time, her office is presented with a potential criminal case, so that's what they're acting on. She said businesses usually are not shut down unless there's a fire or life safety hazard.

So Ms. Chvatal asked, if it takes weeks to file a case and up to a year to resolve, if the business would be able to continue operating without permits or a Certificate of Occupancy? Ms. Maddox said again that is a valid point, but it's still a fluid situation. She said the deputy assigned to the case may see if they can move to shut it down, but that hasn't been determined yet. She also promised that she would let the neighborhood know when a decision has been made.

Mr. Dougherty asked which office – the City Attorney or Building and Safety – is responsible for dealing with the situation when a business is operating without a C of O or a valid permit. Ms. Maddox said it's usually a combination of the two. She said she did speak to a Building and Safety person about the matter, as well as the person in her office who deals with Building and Safety issues. But it usually takes a fire and life safety issue to shut down a business. She said she can't guarantee at this time that a case will be filed...but she also can't guarantee the owners will be allowed to keep the location open.

Ms. Chvatal said she heard that the Bungalow's owner is working with Building

and Safety to submit new plans, and asked if Ms. Maddox knows anything about that effort. Ms. Maddox said that Building and Safety has presented its case for criminal filing...and new plans don't usually get submitted at that point.

Director Patti Carroll said she has also heard that the owners may sue the City, and wonders what will happen if they do. Ms. Maddox said there is a "firewall" between civil and criminal cases, so the case she's working on would still move forward.

Alternate Director Bryan Christie said that if the operating documents have been revoked, the business is operating illegally. But the patrons don't know that, and there's no recourse. He said operating illegally (without a safety risk) may not be enough basis to shut the business down, but it's also not a good basis for keeping it open, and there should be some way of informing patrons that they're going there at their own risk if the business is not operating under permit. Ms. Maddox said that's a good point, and she'll convey it to her office...but we do also have to be realistic – she's worked on shutting down bars in the past, and it can take nearly a year to do so.

Alternate Director Patty Lombard said people fighting to enforce the permits and conditions believed they'd won a procedural victory when the permits were revoked...but now they see the business still open and are asking why. She said we need an answer...and we'd also like to know what comes next. Is there anything further we can do? Allowing the business to continue operating without permits undermines the whole idea of zoning. Again, Ms. Maddox said she'd take these ideas back to her office and would look into administrative remedies. She said, however, that the question of a criminal case is their main focus at the moment.

Director John Gresham asked if signs have been placed on the business, stating that its permits have been revoked...and whether it isn't the responsibility of Building and Safety to do something like that. He said lack of enforcement by Building and Safety is a big issue in our area. Ms. Maddox noted that in this case, Building and Safety inspectors have been proactive. Mr. Gresham said posting is something they're also supposed to do, and Ms. Maddox said again that she would bring that message back to her office.

Early Planning Notifications – 400 S. Western Ave & 303 S. La Brea – Director Patti Carroll reported that a 198-seat restaurant at 400 S. is applying to renew its CUP for liquor sales. Ms. Carroll said she has driven by the restaurant, but hasn't investigated further yet.

[Director Jane Gilman left the meeting at 9:18 p.m.]

Director Elizabeth Fuller reported that CVS is planning to build a new drug store at the SW corner of 3rd & La Brea, and has applied for a CUP to allow sales of a full line of alcoholic beverages for off-site consumption. It would be the third such permit on the four corners of that intersection. Stakeholder Charles Lindenblatt, who also sits on the Land Use Committee of the Mid-City West Community Council, said CVS has come to

that group with its initial plans. The committee made some requests for design changes, and the company will probably return at some point with revised plans.

Director Rudy Gintel asked what the committee's concerns were, and Mr. Lindenblatt said that initially the general design and look of the building didn't fit in with the neighborhood, and the company did come back with something more compatible. The committee also had issues with access, parking and lighting.

Mr. Gintel asked if they were concerned about the sales of a full line of alcoholic beverages, and Mr. Lindenblatt said that such sales would be about 15% of the store's total, and that some people were concerned. Ms. Fuller asked if the MCWCC has taken any formal position yet on the CUP application, and Mr. Lindenblatt said it has not, but he expects the matter will come up again and we would be welcome to attend their meetings – agendas are posted on their website.

Director John Gresham asked if the MCWCC committee had taken into account the fact that both Ralph's and Trader Joe's, at the same intersection, have full-line liquor permits, and that parking in the area is already a big problem. Mr. Lindenblatt said that was also a concern of some members and these issues have definitely come up. They've also made efforts to contact people living in the area, to see how they feel about it.

Medical Marijuana 7th Draft Ordinance – Land Use Committee Chair James Wolf said we haven't heard the results of yesterday and today's City Council discussions on this issue, but the Land Use committee recommends the GWNC pass a motion supporting the City Attorney's recommendation that the City Council pass the 7th draft resolution now under consideration. Director Owen Smith made the motion. Director Elizabeth Fuller seconded it.

Director Yigal Arens noted that he opposed the motion at the committee meeting, because the limits set forth in the 7th draft would allow dispensaries in only two places within the Wilshire Plan area...which is too onerous a restriction. Ms. Fuller said the restrictions were designed to allow dispensaries in two places in each of LA's 35 Community Plan areas, which would put the total number in the city at 70...still far more than other cities have. Mr. Arens said at least one of the two targeted areas in our part of town just isn't realistic.

Director Frances McFall said she has a personal dilemma: she has watched the City Council hearings on this subject, and is generally in favor of legal medical marijuana, but she also thinks the City has "more important" matters to deal with, and that our elected representatives should just take a stand and deal with this issue -- we shouldn't have to be involved. Mr. Wolf said we're going to help give them a nudge.

Stakeholder Karen Gilman noted that just a year ago, there was a murder at a dispensary on La Brea, which has since improved its security. But it would still be nice if the new law went so far as to mandate dispensaries remain 1,000 feet from residences. And, she said, Neighborhood Councils have to be involved because we can help gain

greater safety and regulation.

Ms. McFall said she's not saying it's not important...but simply that it shouldn't take several years to resolve – there are other important issues these days, and we as a Neighborhood Council don't really have all that much power.

Mr. Arens said the second identified location in our area is near the Beverly Center and Cedars-Sinai Hospital, which also isn't viable, so there isn't really a single place to locate a dispensary in our part of town.

Mr. Gresham said that if we simply legalize marijuana, it could be taxed heavily and we'd solve our budget crisis. Mr. Gintel said he doesn't think this problem is going to be solved until we do "get our hands in their pockets," and the solution is a \$100,000 permit fee, per year, payable in advance. He said proliferation of the dispensaries would then go down, and we'd also increase revenues for the City.

The vote was 11 in favor of the motion, 2 opposed and one abstention. The motion carried.

Cell Phone Tower Legislation – Committee Chair James Wolf said the issue here is that new cell phone towers are proliferating, with approval of installations based on a variety of very old legislation that hasn't been reviewed recently. He reported that Director Patti Carroll and Alternate Director Patty Lombard have volunteered to form a new ad hoc subcommittee to study this issue and provide policy recommendations for the GWNC. They could use a few more volunteers to join the effort.

Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance – Mr. Wolf reported that state legislation puts the burden on cities to regulate Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), which could result in a de facto increase in density in single-family residential areas. He said the Land Use Committee recommends that the GWNC pass a resolution asking the City to pass ADU legislation that would uphold our existing zoning and protections for single family neighborhoods. Director Owen Smith put forth the motion. Director Cindy Chvatal seconded it. It passed unanimously.

Cell Tower at 535 S. Gramercy – Director Patti Carroll reported that at yesterday's appeal hearing on this case, four people from the community spoke, as well as Lambert Giessinger and Doug Mensman, from our City Council office. The next hearing will be on March 23, before the Planning Commission. Before then, the company will present revised plans to the Historical Resources Commission and the GWNC. The major issue involved is the placement of such equipment on a landmarked building. The bigger picture is that by right, the company can put towers on commercial buildings, but they need to prove an installation is necessary (i.e. get a CUP) for installations on residential buildings...and the cell companies don't think they should have to prove that need. Ms. Carroll said we're hoping to come up with a policy to guide us in future cases...and we'd love to have Owen Smith on the committee to advise us about construction issues.

Mr Wolf said in this case the proposed design solution is being modified, and we wanted to take the position that the city can assist us by forcing the applicant to come back to us with new plans instead of skirting the process and presenting those plans at the appeal hearing. This reinforces the genuine influence we have on specific cases. There is also the bigger picture we need to get our arms around...and other NCs are facing similar dilemmas.

Mr. Wolf asked if someone wanted to make a motion on the case. Director John Gresham asked if federal guidelines allow cell towers on Mills Act buildings. Ms. Carroll said that's one of the issues that need to be addressed – currently federal guidelines require only that the building's appearance would remain unaltered after the equipment was removed. Director Elizabeth Fuller said we probably don't need a motion today because the new hearing date gives the company time to come back to us with revised plans before the next hearing. Mr. Wolf said it would be good to get a letter into the case file stating our position (previously voted on), and there was general agreement that we should do so.

345 S. Las palmas driveway – Mr. Wolf described this issue -- in which a resident in the Hancock Park HPOZ received a permit to replace a driveway apron...and constructed a new driveway with a 23' apron. He said the City later realized the permits had been issued in error, however – without review by the HPOZ board -- and asked the resident to restore the driveway to its original size. Director Cindy Chvatal moved that we send a letter to the case file, supporting the City's decision. Director Rudy Gintel seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously.

Bricks & Scones – Mr. Wolf said this Larchmont Boulevard restaurant has applied for a CUP for liquor sales and live entertainment. Jinah Kim, who owns the business with her parents, spoke to the Land Use Committee, which asked her to meet with neighbors and the neighborhood association, and to propose a list of specific conditions for the permit. Ms. Kim asked if it would be possible for her to get a ruling from the GWNC before its next meeting. Director Elizabeth Fuller explained that our meeting schedule is bound by our bylaws and that because of the Brown Act, we can't conduct business – except for special or emergency sessions – outside our regular meeting schedule. She asked if Ms. Kim has a hearing date scheduled yet, and Ms. Kim said she does not.

Ms. Kim asked if we could give her a better idea of what we're looking for, and Mr. Wolf suggested she specify the kind of music and events they're seeking permission for, the hours, number of occupants, and comments on things like amplification and lighting. He also noted that the CUP goes with property, not the owner, so a written list of conditions ensures that the conditions don't change if the business is sold. He said that if she needs help crafting the list, City staff can help.

Ms. Kim asked why she was being asked to do all this, since she did explain her plans verbally to the Land Use Committee. Ms. Fuller said she should just put the same

suggestions in writing. President Dougherty said also that if she does receive a hearing date before our next meeting, we'll work with her...and that if she does put her specific conditions in writing, it will look good to the city and help speed the permit process. Director Patti Carroll said the Larchmont Grill just went through the same process, and it was a very positive for their business, and presented it a good light to the community.

Director Rudy Gintel said he doesn't have any objections to Ms. Kim's plans, but the GWNC tends to support what the residents and business owners of the area want. So that's why we suggested she speak to the neighbors and the Larchmont Village Neighborhood Association and the Larchmont Boulevard Association – if she gets their support, she'll probably get ours. Stakeholder Karen Gilman, who lives in the Larchmont area, thanked Ms. Kim and reiterated that these are natural steps that will help endear Ms. Kim to the neighbors. Ms. Gilman said the community will have the same questions about hours, amplification, etc...and will be grateful that Ms. Kim cared enough to seek their input.

[Director Cindy Chvatal left the meeting at 10:17 p.m.]

Sycamore Square Naming Petition – Director Elizabeth Fuller reported that an application and petition forms to finalize the neighborhood's official name have been submitted to the City Clerk, and are now being presented to various City agencies – including the Neighborhood Council -- for review and approval. Director Owen Smith moved that we approve the naming of Sycamore Square. Ms. Fuller seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

City Controller Audit of Planning Department – Ms. Fuller reported that the Controller's office recently issued a 105-page audit of the Planning Department. Several people have asked if the Neighborhood Council is going to weigh in on the report, so Director Patti Carroll and Alternate Director Patty Lombard have volunteered to read and summarize the report for our review and discussion. The issue can be deferred until we get their recommendation.

Outreach Committee

Committee member Elizabeth Fuller distributed copies of three potential website designs recently completed by our website designer. She said the Committee will review the designs soon and pick one to move forward with.

Other Committee/Project Reports

Memorial Library Landscaping – Director Owen Smith reported that the neighborhood group is seeking funding of up to \$10,000 for plants and benches for this project. Director Frances McFall said she supports the effort.

Director John Gresham asked how much money we have available for such projects. President Dougherty noted that the project does seem similar to projects we've

supported in the past, such as the one at Robert Burns Park, and people have seemed in full support of that project. Treasurer Elizabeth Fuller said we have about \$64,000 left “unassigned” for community improvements.

Director Clinton Oie said he’s not opposed to the project, but does want to point out that when we’ve considered funding other such projects, we’ve been given specific plans, which we don’t have for this one. Mr. Smith said he passed out plans at our last meeting for people to review in the interim...but many members said they did not receive, or did not review, the packet.

Director Jim Wolf echoed Mr. Oie’s suggestion that we should be more informed before voting on the matter, and that Mr. Smith be very specific that the money will be going toward the landscaping items and not design fees for professionals. Mr. Smith said the neighbors will be doing most of the work, and the planning was done by architects in the neighborhood at no charge.

Director Yigal Arens said he, too wants to see specific plans...and Director John Gresham said his concern in other projects was the expense of specific items, as well as going to sources that were farther away than necessary. He said he wants to make sure that we’d be doing as much of the business as possible within the community.

Ms. McFall said she does think it would be well spent, and we don’t often get to see – as we would with this project – where our money goes. (In fact, she said, she’d like to see more transparency in our spending process...like an itemized list of our expenditures.)

Mr. Oie asked where the \$10,000 request amount came from, and Mr. Smith said the neighbors did some research on costs a couple of years ago, but prices may have gone up since then. Mr. Wolf said he didn’t see a landscape plan in the project packet – only an estimate of \$5,000 for site preparation. Mr. Arens also said the packet didn’t seem like a proposal to this group, and looked like copies of an old Community Beautification Grant application – but we’d rather see a current plan, prepared for our group. Mr. Wolf agreed, saying the old application mentions plants for people’s homes...even though Mr. Smith says the current project focuses exclusively on the library.

Mr. Arens said he supports the plan in principle, but would like to see more specific and more current information. Director Elizabeth Fuller said she’d like also like to see specific estimates from vendors. President Dougherty agreed, saying if we get more specific information about the current plan, the funding request will probably be approved. Mr. Smith agreed to withdraw his request until our next meeting, when he will bring more specific information.

La Brea Walk Update – Event liaison Owen Smith had no news on this project. Treasurer Elizabeth Fuller asked if we can get invoices from the planners, so we can pay our promised contribution. Mr. Smith said he would make sure that we do.

Door-to-Door Senior Transportation Program

Stakeholder Joan Taylor said her proposal – to shift funds away from a city-funded senior van program to extra taxi scrip for seniors – would save the city up to \$10 million, and that she has a letter from former City Controller Laura Chick praising the proposal. Ms. Taylor said she'd like to propose the following motion – similar to one passed by the Mid-City West Community Council:

The GWNC urges the City of Los Angeles to review the Department of Aging Door-to-Door Transportation Service to determine whether the program should be eliminated because it does not serve the transportation needs of seniors in a cost-effective manner. If the program is reduced or eliminated, some portion of the cost savings should be applied to increase funding for other senior transportation services, while some should be applied to address the City's budget shortfall.

The GWNC requests that the relevant departments provide us with a written response with any justification for continuation of the program. We request that the review be completed as soon as possible, and certainly before the next budget cycle.

The GWNC is directed to send letters to appropriate City officials, including the Mayor, the Controller, the Departments of Transportation and Aging, our 3 Council offices and the Council Budget and Transportation Committees, requesting review of this program.

President Dougherty asked if anyone would like to make the suggested motion. Director Yigal Arens said he would want to remove any mention of using this to reduce the City deficit. Alternate Director Margaret Sowma said the minutes of our last meeting, and letters from City officials submitted by her at that last meeting, explain that the proposal wouldn't be effective. She said the manager of the Department of Aging told her that Ms. Taylor's suggestion has been made before, with little support. She said the City is cutting senior services, and there's no more for new programs.

Director Elizabeth Fuller explained that the letters from the city officials say the van program is designed for frail seniors who can't use taxis, buses or subways, and cutting the program would cut services for those people who can't use other forms of transport. Both the Department of Aging and the Department of Transportation do not support the proposal. Mr. Dougherty said he agrees that taxis are not a good option for people with disabilities. But Ms. Taylor said the van drivers report that only about five out of every 100 passengers use walkers.

Director Clinton Oie suggested we take the motion up to the word "manner," and drop the rest. Mr. Arens cautioned against making such a motion on the opinion of just one person, and recommend we take no action.

Mr. Dougherty asked if others would support Mr. Oie's version of the motion, asking only for a review of program. Ms. Fuller said the DOT has reviewed the idea, and a letter submitted at our last meeting outlines their review and discussion. Director James Wolf noted that the DOT letter is three years old and said it might be worth asking the City to revisit the issue and give a more current opinion – if nothing's changed, that's fine and we can put it to bed for a while.

Director John Gresham asked if the Neighborhood Council is the right body to be dealing with this issue. Mr. Wolf said we are a recommending body. Mr. Arens said he doesn't see the need to revisit the issue. Ms. Taylor said this particular proposal is new, and the Department of Aging and Department of Transportation have not reviewed it yet. She said four committees she has presented it to have voted in favor of it, though Tom La Bonge has not. She suggested we ask the Department of Aging and DOT to come and show the costs for their current programs, saying that one thing that should come from this is a request to ask taxi companies to work better with seniors – there are extra concerns with walkers and wheelchairs. She asked that the Board not disregard the request, saying the van program is wasteful and needs to be dealt with – the current cost of \$70 per ride is not reasonable. And not only the frail use it – everyone does. She said the Dept. of Aging doesn't want to lose money, and City would like to realize some savings...so there has to be a better way to do that.

Director Frances McFall said that in the future, she'd like to see Ms. Taylor placed higher on our agenda, and Mr. Dougherty agreed. He also thanked Alternate Director Margaret Sowma for the work she did in researching this issue.

Board Member Comments/New Business

Director James Wolf said the City is taking on the issue of sober living houses, with up to six people in each home. He said at least one neighborhood association in our area is dealing with this issue, and he'd like to put it on a future Land Use Committee agenda for discussion.

Director John Gresham asked what happened with the Dubai/Cordon Bleu restaurant issue discussed at our last meeting. Director Patti Carroll said there is no news yet.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Announcements and Adjournment

Secretary Elizabeth Fuller said DONE has delivered new City parking passes for Neighborhood Council use. She, Mr. Dougherty and Mr. Wolf each have one, and Directors may borrow them for trips to City Hall.

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Director Frances McFall asked if we can do anything about the increasing length of our meetings. Mr. Dougherty agreed the meetings are long and said one alternative would be monthly meetings. Ms. Fuller said that would require a bylaws change. Director John Gresham said the City will soon mandate that we meet monthly.

Director Elizabeth Fuller announced a Martin Luther King, Jr. Day event sponsored by Assembly Member Mike Davis, saying the Assembly Member has asked that a representative from each Neighborhood Council attend. Ms. McFall said she would attend, so Ms. Fuller gave her the event information.

Mr. Dougherty announced that our next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 10.

Ms. McFall suggested that we say the Pledge of Allegiance at the beginning of each of our meetings.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Fuller
Secretary