



Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council General Meeting  
February 9, 2011  
Approved by the Board, March 9, 2011

**1. Call to Order**

A duly noticed meeting of the Board of Directors of the Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council (“GWNC”) was held on Wednesday, February 9, 2011, at the Ebell of Los Angeles, 743 South Lucerne Blvd., Los Angeles. President Owen Smith called the meeting to order at 7:07 p. m.

**2. Roll Call**

Secretary Elizabeth Fuller called the roll. Board Members in attendance at the roll call were: Charles Dougherty, Elizabeth Fuller, Mike Genewick (Alternate for Alex Jones-Moreno), Jane Gilman, John Gresham, Jack Humphreville, Frances McFall, Clinton Oie, Matthew Oldham, Fred Pickel, Mary Rajswing, Margaret Sowma (Alternate for Jane Usher), Owen Smith and James Wolf. Patricia Carroll, Charles D’Atri, Patricia Lombard (Alternate for Barbara Kumetz) and Benjamin Rosenberg arrived later.

Fourteen of the 20 Board Members and Alternates 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 (Oakwood-Maplewood-St. Andrews)) is vacant. Also attending: approximately 83 Stakeholders and guests. Board Members absent and not represented by an Alternate: Yigal Arens and David Lunzer.

**3. Approval of the Minutes**

**MOTION** (by Mr. Pickel, seconded by Jane Gilman): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council approves the Minutes of its January 12, 2011 General Meeting as written.

**MOTION PASSED** by a voice vote.

**4. President’s Report** (Owen Smith)

A. Board Vacancies

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 nominations at this time.

B. Bylaws Conformation to DONE's new uniform Table of Contents (John Welborne)  
Mr. Welborne is working on correlating the Bylaws to DONE's [the L.A. Dept. of Neighborhood Empowerment's] Table of Contents.

C. Ethics Training –

Current: Alex Jones-Moreno, Owen Smith, James Wolf.

All others must take the training at

<http://ethics.lacity.org/education/ethics2007/?audience=done>

Mr. Smith gave this “notification” to the Board Members.

D. Office Space Update (Liz Fuller)

Ms. Fuller reported that another arrangement for office space “fell through again” and the two main problems of a lack of suitable office space within the GWNC area and the reluctance of landlords to accept the DONE rental guidelines.

Board Member Patricia Carroll arrived at this time.

## 5. **Special Presentation** – City Council District 4 Candidate Forum

A. Introduction by Moderator Kevin James

Mr. Smith and Ms. Fuller explained the Question Cards and other procedures. Mr. James explained the Candidate Forum rules and that the Candidates would be hearing the questions “for the first time” at this Meeting.

B. Candidate Introductions (5 minutes each)

Stephen Box (<http://www.StephenBox.com>) introduced himself and described some of his community activities and accomplishments. He's an “outsider . . . with a track record of working with City Hall to produce results.”

Board Member Charles D'Atri arrived at this time.

L.A. City District Four Councilman Tom LaBonge (213-485-3337; <http://CD4.LACity.org>) introduced himself and described some of his community activities and accomplishments. He's “prepared to serve . . . every day.”

Tomás O'Grady ([www.TomasOGrady.com](http://www.TomasOGrady.com)) introduced himself and described some of his community activities and accomplishments. He's “not a politician, but a public servant . . . with a proven track record of bringing people together and getting things done.”

C. Questions from Board Members & Stakeholders

The first question of what the Candidates' top priorities for next year are brought these responses: Mr. LaBonge: public safety, public works and public humanities; Mr. O'Grady: set the tone at City Hall, reform City employees' pensions, jobs and public schools; and Mr. Box: the City budget, public works projects, efficiencies, get in sync with the Governor, and confront the pension and healthcare crisis.

The Candidates answered the next question asking if they would abolish the CRA [Community Redevelopment Agency]. Mr. O'Grady “would abolish the CRA or reduce it incredibly.” Mr. Box would “abolish the CRA.” Mr. LaBonge stated that “the CRA has

transformed Hollywood” and other areas he described; “it’s a tool that has helped our City . . . I’m not going to abolish it.”

Regarding whether they would vote to allocate \$50 million toward a parking lot at the Eli Broad Museum, Mr. Box would “absolutely not” vote for the allocation; Mr. LaBonge said “it’s an investment; you’re going to see a transformation of Grand Avenue”; and Mr. O’Grady stated “you don’t need the CRA” and he would “absolutely not” allocate the money.

Mitigation of traffic being pushed onto other lanes by the BRT [Bus Rapid Transit]-only lanes proposed for Wilshire Blvd. was addressed this way by the Candidates: Mr. LaBonge would support peak-hour-only BRT lanes; Mr. O’Grady stated that “there will be inconveniences . . . we have to do something different”; and Mr. Box described bad street conditions and encouraged not selling City parking garages.

The next question of how the Candidates would fix City streets using the currently allocated \$45 million instead of the recommended \$285 million was answered these ways: Mr. O’Grady: would cut City Council staff by 50% and give back half his salary to the City; Mr. Box stated that “the funding is there . . . what’s missing is political will”; and Mr. LaBonge is “working . . . to get things fixed.”

Board Member Benjamin Rosenberg arrived at this time.

“If revenues didn’t recover, which revenues would you cut?” was the next question. Mr. Box “would cut [City] Departments . . . [and] cut costs”; Mr. LaBonge would “try to stretch the tax dollar . . . want[s] an aggressive City Attorney’s Office . . . [and would] reorganize Public Works”; Mr. O’Grady “would cut the Tweeter . . . [and] the Facebookers . . . [we] need to computerize our City . . . [and] need . . . Community Plans.”

Alternate Board Member Patricia Lombard arrived at this time.

The next question for the Candidates was whether they support the current proposal for a downtown football stadium and how the stadium would benefit the City’s General Fund. Mr. LaBonge: “There’s no proposal yet . . . I don’t want to see taxpayer money used . . . [would want] 1% for the rights and 1% for athletics . . . it’s up to the 32” [other NFL team owners]; Mr. O’Grady: “if it doesn’t cost a dime . . . to the taxpayer, then build it”; Mr. Box: “developers are already trying for variances and to spend \$350 million of taxpayer money for a non-existent team in a non-existent stadium with a non-existent plan . . . [he’d want] a guarantee that it’ll improve revenue and the quality of life in [the City].”

“What would you do to improve the bike lanes for bicyclists?” was answered these ways: Mr. O’Grady: connect the bike lanes; Mr. Box emphasized safety for all, including cyclists, pedestrians and drivers; Mr. LaBonge described his accomplishments in helping to get bike paths installed around the City and bike racks on buses.

The City Police and Fire Departments take more than 80% of the City’s budget; the Candidates were asked whether, if there’s no revenue increase, they would support keeping the Police and Fire budgets at that level. Mr. Box would help the Police and Fire Departments focus on their services and have a discussion regarding their pensions; Mr.

LaBonge “would work to keep [the budget] at the level it is”; Mr. O’Grady would “lead by example” and cut City Hall staff and salaries.

The Candidates were then asked whether they support a “do on sale” sidewalks fix law mandating that it be at each homeowner’s expense before the time of sale. Mr. LaBonge “will look at” reducing overhead to “meet the needs of the people”; Mr. O’Grady said that government is broke so “we’re going to have to pay for it . . . yes, I would support it”; Mr. Box is “opposed to the ‘do on sale’ proposal . . . the funding is available.”

The final question to the Candidates was about their vision of Los Angeles looking in the future like Manhattan, vertical or like it is now: Mr. O’Grady said “we need to have the will . . . [and] have to update . . . Community Plans”; Mr. Box stated that “our primary responsibility . . . is to protect the neighborhoods we have”; Mr. LaBonge said “neighborhoods is what we have to preserve . . . like they are now.”

Mr. James noted his show is on radio station KRLA 870 AM five nights per week focusing 100% of the time on Neighborhood Councils.

The Candidates made closing statements. Mr. O’Grady stated that “we need someone . . . who will do what it takes . . . it’s all about character . . . and straight talk”; Mr. LaBonge expressed that he’s “a public servant . . . [and has] the experience it takes”; Mr. Box believed that the City “can’t afford four more years of going in the wrong direction . . . [he’s] absolutely and completely accountable.”

## **6. 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), reported receiving many calls and e-mails about a water main removal project; Greg Bartz, Neighborhood Council Liaison, DWP (L.A. Dept. of Water and Power) (213-367-2800, Greg.Bartz@ladwp.com), indicated that it’s on Ninth St. from Muirfield to LaBrea and the finish date has been moved up to April 8th. Work will be between 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. and 24 hours’ notice will be given of service shutoffs. There will also be a dedication ceremony for the Wilton Green Islands project on Thursday, February 17.

### **B. CD5 Update (John Darnell)**

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

### **C. 42nd Assembly District Update (Nicole Carcel)**

Ms. Carcel could not attend and there was no report at this time.

### **D. 26th Senate District Update (Andrew Lachman)**

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

## **7. Community Concerns**

### **A. Presentation on Ballot Measure L – Chris Parsons (Librarian, Wilshire Branch Library) and Natasha Ang (Librarians’ Guild)**

A “Public Library Funding Charter Amendment Measure L – Fact Sheet” was distributed. Mr. Parsons said they’re “helping people to find jobs . . . [and] read books.” He described

Measure L as “a reallocation measure.” Stakeholder Erica Silverman supports Measure L and described uses and needs for libraries. Stakeholder Jim Sherod supports Measure L and described libraries’ roles in assisting students. Board Members also spoke in support of Measure L.

[The following two Motions were made during Item #7. B.]

**MOTION** (by Mr. Humphreville, seconded by Mr. Gresham): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council sets aside the rule regarding not voting if an Item is not Agendized.

**MOTION PASSED** by a voice vote; Mr. Genewick opposed.

**MOTION** (by Mr. Humphreville, seconded by Mr. D’Atri): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council supports Measure L.

**MOTION PASSED** by a voice vote.

B. Proposed Resolution on Transportation Funding (Joan Taylor):

“Be it resolved that the GWNC urge Gov. Jerry Brown and the State of California to reallocate money set aside for high speed rail service to transportation projects that are more useable and feasible.”

Ms. Taylor urged everyone to “tell the Governor not to support any high-speed rail projects . . . because they take money away from . . . local” projects. [This Item was continued after the two Motions in Item #7. B. were voted upon.] Alternate Board Member John Kaliski encouraged studying the Resolution before voting on it, saying it would “essentially reallocate funds that the voters approved . . . we have to have some vision.” Ms. Taylor “could agree” with more study, but the Wall Street Journal estimates a project will cost three times more than estimates. No board members chose to move the proposed resolution.

**8. Treasurer’s Report & Budget Items**

A. Monthly budget report/approval (Elizabeth Fuller)

Ms. Fuller distributed and reviewed the “Monthly Spending Report – January 1, 2010-February 8, 2011” and “[GWNC] Budget for Fiscal Year 2010-2011 Approved by the Board 8-11-10.” She reviewed credit card purchases and described research that led to the rental of three microphones for tonight’s candidate forum event. She also described how the LaBrea Art Walk expenditures were processed.

**MOTION** (by Mr. Gresham, seconded by Mr. Pickel): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council approves the “Monthly Spending Report – January 1, 2010-February 8, 2011.”

**MOTION PASSED** by a voice vote.

B. DONE payment delays (Elizabeth Fuller)

Ms. Fuller related that the employment agency of the Minutes Writer strongly requested the GWNC to pay for the Minutes Writer’s services; she explained to the agency that DONE is responsible for making those payments, not the Neighborhood Councils. Mr. Gresham urged and it was agreed that the GWNC will write a letter to DONE demanding that they pay their bills, with copies to the City Attorney’s Office (Carmen Trutanich, 213-978-8100; <http://atty.lacity.org/index.htm>) and L.A. City District Two Councilman Paul Krekorian,

Chair of the City's Education and Neighborhoods Committee (213-473-7002;  
CouncilMember.Krekorian@LACity.org; http://CD2.LACity.org).

C. YTD spending update (Elizabeth Fuller)

Ms. Fuller reviewed the Budget and explained that Items must be listed in the Budget before funding is allocated for them. Regarding the GWNC renting office space, she said the problem is the City requires various things that most landlords can't or won't follow. Mr. Wolf recommended finding a City facility; Ms. Fuller replied that "there's no public spaces within our area except for Fire Station 29 and three libraries, none of which have space.

9. **DWP Oversight** (Jack Humphreville)

Mr. Humphreville reported that new DWP General Manager Ron Nichols gave a "very impressive" presentation at the last LANCC [L.A. Neighborhood Councils Coalition] meeting and also discussed the Integrated Resources and Water Management Plans. Mr. Humphreville said "there will probably be substantial rate increases."

10. **City Budget Issues** (Jack Humphreville)

Regarding City Budget-related ballot measures, Mr. Humphreville reported that the City "will have a very hard time" balancing the Budget; "the Budget deficit next year is \$350 million" and he thinks the deficit "is more like \$1 billion" when pensions and other obligations are counted. The Mayor's Budget is due April 20<sup>th</sup>.

11. **Outreach Committee**

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

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

B. Upcoming meeting speakers/events:

March 9 – LAPD Vice (Patti Carroll) and LAEDC (Jack Humphreville)

April 13 – DWP Recycled Water Program (Jack Humphreville)

May 11 – More school principals? (Mary Rajswing)

June 8 – MTA or Pedestrian Safety?

Ms. Carroll indicated that LAPD Sgt. Espinoza will speak on March 9<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Humphreville described water recycling and conversation plans that will be presented on April 13<sup>th</sup>.

12. **Board Member Comments/New Business**

There were no additional comments or new business.

13. **Land Use Committee** (LUC) (James Wolf)

*[Each section's first paragraph is directly from the Agenda.]*

A. Condo Conversions at 838 N. Mansfield Ave.

**Issue:** Owner has applied to turn four rental units (three one-bedroom and one two-bedroom) into condos. Currently, the owner occupies one unit, two are rented, and one is vacant. The two renters are interested in buying their units. The owner is requesting permission to have seven parking spaces in lieu of the required eight. No other special privileges are being sought; no construction is planned as part of the conversion.

**LUC Recommended MOTION:** [see below].

At this Meeting, Mr. Wolf introduced and Ms. Fuller described the project, including the Committee's recommendation indicated in the below Motion. Stakeholder Noel Weiss was

concerned that tenants' rights be protected, especially whether they can buy the units or receive relocation money.

**MOTION** (by Mr. Genewick, seconded by Mr. D'Atri): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council supports the application of the property owner of 838 N. Mansfield Ave. with the provision that a covenant be included to maintain four condo units and seven parking spaces on the property in perpetuity.

**MOTION PASSED** by a voice vote.

B. Over-height Fence at 846 S. Longwood Ave.

**Issue:** About a year ago, the owners renovated the property and built a large wall in the front and side yards. They applied later for a permit for the wall, which was originally said to be about 7' high. After an inspection showed the height to be closer to 12 feet, the first application was withdrawn and another was filed to legalize the 12' wall. The owners did not respond to an invitation to present the project to our Land Use Committee.

**LUC Recommended Motion:** [see below].

At this Meeting, Mr. Wolf described the project and that the applicant is seeking after-the-fact support. Mr. Gresham suggested the wording beginning with "and immediately requests" at the end of the below Motion. Mr. Wolf emphasized the need for landowners' compliance. There was discussion regarding holding property owners accountable.

**MOTION** (by Mr. Wolf, seconded by Mr. D'Atri): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council opposes the application of the property owners of 846 S. Longwood Ave. on the grounds that it was presented after the wall was constructed, with no mitigation measures taken, and immediately requests that the wall be brought into compliance with existing City codes.

**MOTION to CALL FOR THE QUESTION** (by Mr. Gresham); there were no objections

**MOTION PASSED** by a voice vote.

Mr. Wolf noted that the following Committee items are presented for information only. No action is requested or required at this time:

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. As of January 25, the violations were still evident.

D. Ogamdo Café CUP Application – 842 S. La Brea.

**Issue:** In 2006, the restaurant applied for a CUP that would allow sales of a full line of alcoholic beverages (their current permit allows only wine and beer), later night-time hours, use of an outdoor dining patio behind the restaurant that was built without permits by the previous owner, and leased off-site parking in lieu of the required number of on-site parking spaces. Based on complaints from neighbors, many of whose back yards are immediately

adjacent to the restaurant property, almost all the requests were denied. In 2009, the restaurant submitted a new CUP application, which once again included all the requests originally denied in 2006. Neighbors' objections were still the same, however, and the GWNC voted at that time to support the neighbors in opposing the application. After a delay caused by non-payment of the application fee, a hearing on the matter was finally held on January 24, 2011. Based on letters filed by neighbors and the GWNC, and requests by Renee Weitzer and the restaurant's representative, for more time to study the case, the case file was left open for input until February 22. The representative, King Woods, has asked to visit the GWNC Land Use Committee on that day. The Sycamore Square Neighborhood Association is also attempting to schedule a meeting with Mr. Woods before the 22nd.

E. Code Simplification Core Findings Ordinance/Citywide Design Guidelines/Community Plan Overlay Districts (CPIO) Ordinance.

**Issue:** These new planning-oriented ordinances, presented by the Planning Department as part of an ongoing effort to streamline the city's codes and permitting processes, have triggered much discussion among stakeholders and activist groups. The issues have been reviewed individually and together by members of the GWNC Land Use Committee, and they have been discussed in depth at several of the Committee's meetings. While the LUC has made recommendations (previously presented to the GWNC board) regarding the timing and review process for these and similar ordinances, it has chosen not to take action on the individual ordinances themselves, and has tabled further discussion indefinitely.

**Potential Agenda Items for February 22 LUC Meeting** (in addition to those above):

- Variance to legalize "residential" (office) use of an 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
- CUP application to convert a 9-unit apartment building at 901 S. Wilton to a 26-bed board and care facility with 6 parking spaces
- LA Tennis Club parking/loading zone

**14. Public Comments**

Mr. Weiss suggested that the GWNC encourage the City to start appointing Neighborhood Council Board Members to City Commissions such as for the proposed football stadium and encouraged forcing the City to address fraud, waste and abuse.

**15. Announcements and Adjournment**

Mr. Smith declared and the Board agreed to ADJOURN the Meeting at 10:04 p.m. Next meeting: Wednesday, March 9, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
David Levin  
Minutes Writer