



Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council General Meeting

February 13, 2013

MINUTES

Approved by the Board, 03/13/13

1. **Call to Order** (Owen Smith)

A duly noticed meeting of the Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council (“GWNC”) Board of Directors was held on Wednesday, February 13, 2013, at the Ebell of Los Angeles, 743 S. Lucerne Blvd., Los Angeles. Vice-President James Wolf called the meeting to order at 7:04 p. m. and noted that, “as a safety precaution, our Ebell hosts have requested that all GWNC meeting attendees please use the Ebell’s porte cochere entrance off of the parking lot on the west side of the clubhouse. This lot will be open for parking as well, and is accessible from 8th Street, at the south end of the Ebell complex. The porte cochere entrance is the northernmost entrance off the west parking lot.”

2. **Roll Call** (Jeffry Carpenter)

Mr. Carpenter called the roll. Board Members in attendance at the roll call were: Jeffry Carpenter, Ann Eggleston, William Funderburk, Michael Genewick, John Gresham, Fred Mariscal, Frances McFall, Jeff McManus, Caroline Moser (Alternate for Jack Humphreville), Clinton Oie, Jason Peers, Jane Usher, Briana Valdez, Greg Wittmann and James Wolf. Patricia Carroll, Jack Humphreville and Patricia Lombard arrived later. Board Members absent and not represented by an Alternate: Betty Fox, Joane Pickett, Owen Smith and Daniel Whitley. No Board Seats were vacant (some Alternate Seats were vacant). Also attending: 15 Stakeholders and guests.

Fifteen of the 21 Board Members or their Alternates were present at the roll call. 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.

3. **Approval of the Minutes** (Jeffry Carpenter)

The following correction to the January 9, 2013 General Meeting Minutes was requested: page five, Item #17: “The next General Board Meeting will bed” should read “The next General Board Meeting will be.”

MOTION (by Ms. Usher, seconded by Ms. McFall): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council approves the Minutes of its January 9, 2013 General Meeting as corrected.

MOTION PASSED without any objections.

4. **President’s Report** (James Wolf)

A. Board Vacancies.

Mr. Wolf noted the vacancies and encouraged recruitment. Alternates are needed for: Area 1 (Brookside), Area 2 (Citrus Square), Area 6 (La Brea-Hancock), Area 9 (Oakwood-Maplewood-St. Andrews), Area 12 (We-Wil), Other Non-Profit, and Religion.

B. Confirmation of candidate for Business Alternate: John Winther.

Business Alternate Candidate John Winther described his background and community service.

MOTION (by Ms. Usher, seconded by Mr. Gresham): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council nominates John Winther as the Business Representative [Alternate] Board Member.

MOTION PASSED by a voice vote.

Mr. Winther read aloud the Oath of Office and Mr. Wolf invited him to be seated with the Board.

C. Ethics Training

All new Board Members and Alternates (along with returning Board Members whose certification is more than two years old) must complete the course at <http://ethics.lacity.org/education/ethics2007/?audience=done>.

Mr. Wolf noted the above. Mr. Gresham described occasional in-person workshops available for taking the Training.

Board Member Patricia Carroll arrived at this time.

5. Local Government Updates

A. CD4 Update (Ben Seinfeld)

Ben Seinfeld, Field Deputy for L.A. City District Four Councilman Tom LaBonge (213-485-3337; cell 213-804-2388; Ben.Seinfeld@LACity.org), reported that three of four suspects were apprehended regarding a recent burglary. Regarding illegal activity on Western Ave., the Councilman proposed allowing the autos to be impounded of people arrested within the last three years for the same offense or for illegal dumping. Copper wire theft is still a problem. CD4 is working with the DWP on emergency preparation. Ms. Eggleston reported on lights out in Sycamore Square and Mr. Seinfeld will work to get lights repaired.

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), reported that the Ralph's at 3rd and La Brea had a grand opening; soon they'll open another at Pico and Robertson. The Highland to Fairfax Melrose Ave. BID (Business Improvement District) development is progressing. On two areas of Citrus, illegal business parking was addressed and Parking Enforcement was notified and is enforcing the law.

6. Treasurer's Report and Budget Items (Patti Carroll)

A. Monthly Budget Report/approval

Ms. Carroll distributed and reviewed the "Monthly Spending Report – Jan 1 2013-Feb 13, 2013." There were "no Purchase Card purchases" this month. She awaits further action from DONE [the L.A. Dept. of Neighborhood Empowerment] on some Demand Warrants that have been submitted but not yet paid.

FUNDING MOTION (by Mr. Gresham, seconded by Ms. Moser): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council approves its “Monthly Spending Report – Jan 1 2013-Feb 13, 2013.”

FUNDING MOTION PASSED by a voice vote.

B. YTD Budget Review

[*This Agenda Item was addressed after Item #6. d.*] Ms. Carroll distributed and reviewed the “[GWNC] Budget for Fiscal Year 2012-2013” through February 13, 2013.

FUNDING MOTION (by Mr. Gresham, seconded by Ms. Eggleston): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council approves its revised “[GWNC] Budget for Fiscal Year 2012-2013.”

FUNDING MOTION PASSED by a voice vote.

C. Motion: [see below]

[*This Agenda Item was addressed after Item #6. a.*] Ms. Carroll described that some funds were reallocated from the Administrative Assistant category toward community projects and event sponsorships. Stakeholder Elizabeth Fuller explained that because we have not yet hired the assistant, we won’t be able to use all of the funds there before the end of our fiscal year. The reallocation will made additional funds available to pay for our recent Mayoral Forum and to fund additional community grant applications.

FUNDING MOTION (by Mr. Gresham, seconded by Ms. Moser): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council reallocates \$750 in its Fiscal Year 2012-2013 Budget from the Administrative Assistant category to the Event Sponsorship category and authorizes allocations for expenses including the venue, banner and print ad for the February 10, 2013 Mayoral Candidate Forum that it co-sponsored.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Fuller elaborated on Forum expenses.

FUNDING MOTION PASSED by a voice vote.

D. Motion: [see below]

FUNDING MOTION (by Mr. Carpenter, seconded by Mr. Gresham): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council reallocates \$4,250 in its Fiscal Year 2012-2013 Budget from the Administrative Assistant category to the Community Projects category and reopens the call for Neighborhood Purposes Grant applications, to be reviewed at the GWNC’s March meeting (in time for June 30th fiscal year-end paperwork).

FUNDING MOTION PASSED by a voice vote.

Board Member Jack Humphreville arrived at this time, replacing his Alternate Caroline Moser. Board Member Patricia Lombard arrived at this time.

7. Community Concerns / Public Comments

A. Request for support for Windsor Square letter regarding uses of Getty House.

Ms. Moser distributed copies of a draft “Getty House, Los Angeles” letter written by the Windsor Square Association and explained that there have been long-time problems with large and loud parties at the house, which was intended as the Mayor’s residence, not an entertainment venue in a residential zone.

MOTION (by Ms. Usher, seconded by Mr. Humphreville): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council supports the position expressed in the attached draft letter regarding the Getty House at 605 S. Irving Blvd., Los Angeles.

DISCUSSION: Board Members would like to know where the money from these events goes. Ms. Moser indicated that the parties appear to be a Foundation’s responsibility. Ms. Usher volunteered to assist.

MOTION PASSED by a voice vote.

B. Naming petition for Peru Village.

Milagros Lizarraga distributed literature regarding a proposed Peru Village neighborhood designation. She explained that an amended boundary description was submitted to the City Council this morning. As amended, the southern boundary of the proposed neighborhood area is now the north side of Melrose Ave., rather than the south side, as indicated in the original application. She explained the history of Peruvian-heritage people settling in that area. Tanya Tapia described the intended use of the area for economic growth and expansion. Identifying placards would be installed. Mr. Mariscal expressed concern with Peru Village encroaching upon Larchmont Village. He clarified that the GWNC northern boundary includes only the south side of Melrose Ave. There was discussion of signatures by residents both in support of and opposition to the Village. Mr. Wolf was concerned that the GWNC will “lose our voice” if the Village extends to Melrose. Ms. Lizarraga and Ms. Tapia said they’re “in communication” with neighboring Neighborhood Councils and will talk with Paramount.

MOTION (by Ms. Usher, seconded by Mr. Mariscal): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council, whereas there is a lack of substantiation of boundaries, lack of Stakeholder and other Neighborhood Council input, and an overlap with GWNC boundaries, opposes Peru Village unless its southern boundary is moved one block north of the GWNC boundaries at Melrose Ave. and east of Wilcox Ave.

DISCUSSION: Barry Stone, Project Coordinator, DONE (213-978-1551; Barry.Stone@LACity.org; www.EmpowerLA.org), explained that a City Council Committee will review the project before the City Council considers it. Board Members expressed concern with any possible “dilution” of the Hollywood name and brand. Ms. Lombard encouraged the project presenters to reconsider how the project would affect iconic Hollywood-related venues within the proposed Peru Village boundaries. Mr. Seinfeld offered to ask Councilman LaBonge if he would extend public comment on the project for 60 days past the scheduled March 1st end date. Mr. Genewick was concerned that Sunset Studios and Paramount Studios would be “isolated” from nearby film industry businesses. Ms. Tapia expressed support for Hollywood identity and said they’re “not taking anything away”; they’re “adding” to Hollywood and want to bring more business.

MOTION PASSED by a voice vote.

Mr. Wolf encouraged CD4 through Mr. Seinfeld “to pursue the 60-day extension.”

C. Beverly and Norton streetlight banners.

Ms. Fuller reported that Stakeholder e-mails were received questioning new banners at this location; the presenters did not attend. Mr. Seinfeld clarified that “banners in R-1 zones are permitted” as well as in R-3 zones...but he clarified that it is the custom of the City to remove them if objections are raised by local residents. Mr. Wolf recommended and it was agreed to TABLE this Item.

8. DWP Oversight (Jack Humphreville)

Mr. Humphreville reported that the DWP and the City’s Chief Legislative Analyst will report on proposed electricity rate increases. Mr. Humphreville described some of \$750 million in DWP “pet projects.”

9. City Budget Issues (Humphreville)

Mr. Humphreville reported that the Mayor’s Budget Challenge is available. He described the proposed Proposition A half-cent sales tax and other Budget elements. All Board Members, Alternates and Stakeholders are urged to take the survey at <http://la.budgetchallenge.org/pages/overview>.

10. Old Business

Ms. McFall reported that Stakeholder Karen Gilman was honored by the City Council as the “Social Worker of the Year.”

11. New Business

There was no new business at this time.

12. Transportation Committee (Gerda McDonough)

Ms. McDonough reported that the City’s General Plan Transportation Mobility Element comment period was ending.

13. Outreach Committee (Fred Mariscal)

A. Mayoral Candidate Forum wrap-up.

Ms. Lombard described and thanked the organizing team for their effort to schedule all five Mayoral Candidates for the Forum, along with media coverage. Ms. Lombard was applauded for organizing the Forum.

B. Inviting City Attorney and City Controller Candidates as guest speakers in March/April.

Mr. Mariscal described the above.

C. Presentation of GWNC Citizen Recognition Award to Elizabeth Fuller.

Mr. Mariscal presented the Award to Ms. Fuller, who was applauded for her long-time work for the GWNC and the community.

14. Board Member Comments

Mr. Carpenter distributed copies of the “NC Plan Review and Reform Initiative Update – February, 2013” and a flier for the February 16th Review event, described the DONE / BONC [L.A. Board of Neighborhood Commissioners] Initiative through May and encouraged participating.

15. Public Comments

Mr. Stone explained that he is the DONE representative for the GWNC and 16 other NC's. He described upcoming Ethics Training options, including February 21st and on March 4th at 6:00 or 6:30 p.m. at the City Council District Ten Office, 1819 S. Western. RSVP to attend. Board Members must complete the Training at least every two years.

Board Member Jane Usher had to leave at this time and was replaced by her Alternate Karen Gilman.

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

[Each Item's "issue" and "recommendations" are directly from the Agenda.]

A. Legalizing unpermitted garage conversion by previous owner (317 N. Van Ness).

Issue: Applicants recently purchased a house without the required two covered parking spaces. The house has a garage in the rear that was turned into a home office. Driveway access is blocked by a deck built over a decade ago and by a pool excavation made by the current owners and permitted by the City. The applicants requested a variance allowing them to satisfy parking requirements by placing one parking space under their porte cochere and another in front of the porte cochere but behind their driveway gate. Because the driveway gate and hedges appear to be over-height in the required front yard, this second proposed parking space would appear to encroach on the building line, which is not permitted by code. Committee Members' discussion acknowledged the hardship to the owners if the garage/office application is not approved but also pointed out a need to officially deal with the over-height fence issues.

Recommendations:

1. That the GWNC Board support the Zoning Adjustment application for the project at 317 N. Van Ness with the condition that the tandem parking spaces be located to the west of the existing 35-foot building line, and based upon the circumstance that existing conditions of the property do not have a garage and that an excavation is moving forward for a swimming pool that was approved by the City.
2. That the GWNC Board support the Zoning Adjustment application for the project at 317 N. Van Ness with the condition that the owners will seek a Variance for the front yard over-height fence and gates.

Charles D'Atri, President, Larchmont Village Neighborhood Association, described issue history and is "100% opposed" to the conversion. The LVNA wants the owners to correct all unpermitted and non-conforming uses on the property before recommending that the GWNC support the conversion, especially an over-height fence. Jeff Jacobberger, representing the owners, described that the owners did what the City requested. Mr. Wolf further described project details.

MOTION (by Ms. Lombard, seconded by Ms. Valdez): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council supports the Zoning Adjustment application for the project at 317 N. Van Ness with the condition that the tandem parking spaces be located to the west of the existing 35-foot building line, and based upon the circumstance that existing conditions of the property do not have a garage and that an excavation is moving forward for a swimming pool that was approved by the City.

MOTION PASSED by a hand vote with 13 in favor; three opposed.

MOTION (by Ms. Lombard, seconded by Mr. Gresham): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council supports the Zoning Adjustment application for the project at 317 N. Van Ness with the condition that the owners will seek a Variance for the front yard over-height fence and gates.

MOTION PASSED by a hand vote with 11 in favor; five opposed.

Mr. Wolf clarified that the “intent” of the Committee is to officially notify the owners that the over-height fence and gate is an issue.

B. Master sign program at Wilshire/La Brea development (5200 Wilshire).

Issue: Applicant BRE seeks approval for a sign program for the mixed-use development at Wilshire and La Brea. The materials distributed to the Land Use Committee lacked sufficient clarity for the Committee to discuss the sign program: colors-codes were used inconsistently, dimensions were ambiguous, sign size limits were unclear, and awnings appeared to obstruct projecting signs. Also, there was no indication of how the proposed signs do or do not fit in with guidelines for the Miracle Mile Community Design Overlay zone. [Note: The applicant will present a revised proposal document at the February 26th Land Use Committee meeting.]

Recommendation: Whereas the application as presented is incomplete and contradictory, the Land Use Committee recommends not supporting the signage program as presented.

Mr. Wolf described project concerns and previous Committee consideration.

MOTION (by Ms. Lombard, seconded by Mr. Funderburk): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council does not support the signage program for the mixed-use development at Wilshire and La Brea, whereas the application as presented is incomplete and contradictory

MOTION PASSED by a voice vote.

C. Waiver of public hearing for garage adjustment at 358 S. Mansfield.

Issue: The applicant seeks an adjustment to build a zero-setback two-story garage over the footprint of the original one-story garage. After the applicant garnered support from neighboring property owners, Renee Weitzer from Council District 4 requested that the Zoning Administrator waive the public hearing pursuant to relevant Zoning Code provisions. The second story of the proposed garage is to be used as a recreation room.

Recommendation: That the GWNC Board support the application for a Zoning Adjustment to allow construction of the garage.

Mr. Wolf described the project and City Council approval.

MOTION (by Ms. Lombard, seconded by Ms. Eggleston): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council supports the application for a Zoning Adjustment to allow construction of the garage at 358 S. Mansfield.

MOTION PASSED by a voice vote with 12 in favor; three opposed.

D. Recommendation on illegal hostel at 265 S. Gramercy.

Issue: A single-family dwelling zoned R-1 appears to be operating as an illegal hostel, openly advertising as "Hosanna House" on several hostel websites. Online reviews from hostel patrons suggest the existence of health and safety hazards such as bedbugs, cockroaches, overcrowding, nonfunctional toilets, and turning away patrons with reservations at night. Since last August, Members of the Land Use Committee have been in contact Council District Four and the Department of Building and Safety, as well as numerous other departments and agencies. Despite seven months of efforts to address the situation, the hostel still appears to operate.

Recommendation: Whereas the Land Use Committee of the Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council is concerned that there is a possible noncompliant commercial hostel use in an R1 zone, and a building that neighbors have repeatedly complained to City departments about potential fire, health and business violations to no avail, we recommend the Council office immediately intervene with neighbors and property owners to resolve these issues.

Mr. Wolf reviewed issue history, saying "the community is asking us to help them" with "a non-compliant operation . . . and investigate as appropriate."

MOTION (by Mr. Gresham, seconded by Ms. Lombard): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council resolves that, whereas its Land Use Committee is concerned that there is a possible non-compliant commercial hostel use in an R-1 zone, and a building that neighbors have repeatedly complained to City departments about potential fire, health and business violations to no avail, we recommend that the City Council office immediately intervene with neighbors and property owners to resolve these issues.

MOTION PASSED by a voice vote.

Mr. Wolf thanked Ms. Fuller for her Committee assistance.

Potential Agenda Items for the February 26th LUC Meeting:

- Application for full liquor license at restaurant (La Brea Bakery) at 468 S. La Brea.
- Application for beer and wine license at restaurant (Tinga) at 142 S. La Brea.
- Application for extension of ABC License-permitted hours (until 2 am) for Jajungguh Cafe (Bicycle Club), 4653 W. Beverly.
- Further discussion of proposed Wilshire/La Brea development sign program
- Harold Henry Park improvements
- Review of So Cal Gas Advanced Meter equipment and locations
- Application for Flywheel fitness studio on Larchmont Blvd.
- Review of recent Early Planning Notices in the GWNC area.

17. Announcements and Adjournment

Ms. McFall encouraged efficient Meetings.

The next General Board Meeting will be Wednesday, March 13, 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Wolf declared and the Board agreed to **ADJOURN** the Meeting at 9:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
David Levin
Minutes Writer