

# Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council



## Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council General Meeting

**March 8, 2006**

Approved by the Board,  
as corrected, on 5/10/06

### FINAL MINUTES

A duly noticed meeting of the Board of Directors of the Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council ("GWNC") was held on Wednesday, March 8, 2006, at The Ebell of Los Angeles, 4400 Wilshire Boulevard. Charles Dougherty, President of the Council, called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

The Secretary called the roll, and Board of Directors members in attendance were: Yigal Arens, Chickie Byrne, Arnold Castaneda, Moon Chung, Cindy Chvatal, Charles Dougherty, Larry Eisenberg, Roy Forbes, Elizabeth Fuller, Tom Gibbons, Jane Gilman, Rudolph Gintel, Margaret Hudson, Lisa Hutchins, Shemaya Mandelbaum, Norman Murdoch, Susan O'Connell, Thomas Roe, Michael Rosenberg, Ruth Silveira, Jolene Snett, Jane Usher, Robert Wishart, and James Wolf. The following absent Directors were represented by their Alternates (noted in parentheses): Arlin Low (Frances McFall), Baruch Twersky (John Gresham), John A. Woodward III (Patty Lombard) and Gary Zeiss (Russell Sherman). Directors Carolyn Bennett, Van Dyke Parks, Mary Rajswing were absent and were not represented by an Alternate.

The Secretary stated that 28 of the 31 Directors were represented in person or by an Alternate at the beginning of the meeting and that a quorum was present. Mary Rajswing arrived subsequently.

The Secretary stated that the Minutes of the Council's General Meeting of January 11, 2006, had been distributed to Directors by e-mail and had been posted on the Council's *greaterwilshire.org* web site. Additional copies were distributed at the meeting. Next, upon a motion made from the floor and adopted without objection, reading of the Minutes was waived. The Minutes were approved as written.

Treasurer Susan O'Connell reported that three expenditures have been made to-date: two for photocopying and one for use of The Ebell, which is charging \$200 per meeting for the use of its facilities. She noted that two pending written agreements, one for the use of meeting space at The Ebell, and the other for sharing office space at the Larchmont Boulevard headquarters of the Junior League of Los Angeles (JLLA), both must be reviewed by DONE. Ms. O'Connell added that DONE accounting procedures

have changed and that the GWNC may now use a single account, instead of three. She added that proposed GWNC expenditures of \$5,000 or more must be placed on a meeting agenda and receive Board approval.

#### Report on Initial Organization and Meetings Postings

President Dougherty introduced Ms. Julie Guest, president of the JLLA, and thanked her on behalf of her organization for helping the GWNC find a “home” in the neighborhood. Mr. Dougherty then noted that the Bylaws establish a Grievance Procedure for Stakeholders to seek redress in disputes about procedural matters. He noted that panels to address such grievances are composed of non-Director and non-Alternate Stakeholders who volunteer to serve. Details are available on the web site.

Mr. Dougherty stated that he had appointed Roy Forbes to serve as the Board’s liaison to the office of Council District Four. Mr. Dougherty noted that Carolyn Ramsay, Councilman LaBonge’s CD4 Field Deputy for Windsor Square, Hancock Park, Koreatown, Miracle Mile, Larchmont Village, and Wilshire Center, was present in the audience. Mr. Dougherty reminded everyone that the GWNC’s mailing address, for the time being, remains 419 North Larchmont Boulevard, # 331, Los Angeles 90004. He also noted that the procedure for posting GWNC meeting notices is more streamlined under the revised Bylaws and that the widest possible audience is reached through use of the web sites of DONE and GWNC.

#### Report on Bylaws

President Dougherty then asked Jane Usher, as chair of an *ad hoc* committee on Bylaws, to make a report. She explained that a comprehensive packet of materials had been submitted to DONE in late January as attachments to DONE’s “Neighborhood Council Application To Change or Adjust Bylaws” form. Included were reports previously provided to the Board, the previous Bylaws, the adopted revised Bylaws, and Minutes of Board meetings. DONE reviewed the materials and, on February 9, 2006, approved the revised Bylaws, which are now effective. Ms. Usher offered thanks to all Board members for their participation in the process, especially to the hard-working members of her *ad hoc* committee.

Ms. Usher elaborated on the Bylaws provisions streamlining the giving of notice of meetings, referring the Board to Page 5 of the Bylaws for details. Providing notice through the web site and by e-mail were discussed. Ms. O’Connell noted that she is working on establishing a Stakeholder list of those wishing to receive e-mail concerning GWNC activities. There is concern about personal privacy of the data that may be collected. Ms. Usher indicated that local groups that maintain e-mail lists could contact those on their lists to inquire who might like to be referred to the GWNC. Through electronic links, these Stakeholders could choose to “opt in” to be part of the GWNC’s list. The plan is to not collect e-mail and similar information at meetings because these

records would become public and privacy could not be provided. Ms. O'Connell will follow up on the database issue. It was noted that the Bylaws provide that the next GWNC Board of Directors election will be in March 2007 and that Election Procedures must be in place 180 days before the election. Therefore, the work of a GWNC Election Committee must be completed before September of 2006. It was noted that a DONE-provided election timeline and template has been received.

Establishment of *Ad Hoc* Zoning and Land Use Committee

President Dougherty said that he had asked Jim Wolf to chair an *ad hoc* committee to address zoning and land use issues affecting the GWNC. He noted that such a committee may only be composed of Directors and Alternates, but that the public may attend meetings of the committee. Such *ad hoc* committees are not subject to the Brown Act and posting requirements. Mr. Dougherty proposed that this *ad hoc* committee have a term of six months and that, later, consideration be given to making it a Standing Committee of the Board.

Ms. Chvatal made a motion, seconded by Ms. Byrne, to establish an *Ad Hoc* Zoning and Land Use Committee. Mr. Arens moved to amend the motion to give the *ad hoc* committee a term of six months. Ms. Chvatal accepted the amendment. The question was called, and the motion, as amended, was adopted unanimously. Mr. Wolf asked all Directors and Alternates interested in serving on the *ad hoc* committee to please contact him by e-mail.

Discussion of Proposed Melrose Place Development (aka "Dell Apartments")

At this point, Jane Usher left for the remainder of the meeting.

The President introduced Mr. John Mulkeen McCarthy, who presented an overview of the proposed condominium project from the viewpoint of its southern neighbor, the Los Angeles Tennis Club. Mr. McCarthy explained why the Club and so many of the residential neighbors opposed the developer's requested zone change from the "C1-1VL" (the designation that had been on the property for many years and that had been reviewed by the City as recently as 2001 during the updating of the Wilshire Community Plan) to the City's new "RAS-3" zone that would allow much greater density and reduced setbacks from adjacent properties. Mr. McCarthy indicated that the Club and most of its neighbors support redevelopment of the Dell property – but only in accordance with the rules of the existing C1-1VL zoning.

Mr. McCarthy noted that neighborhood groups joining in opposition to the requested zone change include the Hancock Park Home Owners Association, the Windsor Square Association, the Larchmont Village Neighborhood Association, and the Wilshire Country Manor Homeowners Association, along with the Tennis Club.

President Dougherty asked if there were anyone present representing the proposed development. There was no response. He asked for Board discussion.

Michael Rosenberg asked if the Wilshire Community Plan applies to this site. Jim Wolf advised that it does apply. Mr. Wolf noted that changing the established zoning would set a precedent that new development could go well beyond, in size and scope, what is currently the vision of the Wilshire Plan, most recently reviewed and re-adopted by the City Council in 2001. He said that there is a cascading effect from the potential zone change. Susan O'Connell stated that she does not see a compelling reason to make the zone change from a public policy standpoint. The only reason would be to provide a windfall profit for the particular property owner and/or developer.

John Gresham said that there had been a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) prepared in connection with the environmental review of the proposed project and that he and others object because there had been no notification made as required for an MND.

Rudy Gintel stated that he has been involved in considering the project for two-plus years and that he likes the project. He stated that the developer has offered a view easement and a parking easement to the Los Angeles Tennis Club. Mr. Gintel said it is very valuable to have 54 new investors (condo purchasers) in our community. The project will increase the property tax base for the City. He stated that there are others in the neighborhood who are for the project, including other commercial owners like him and some nearby condo owners.

Jolene Snett stated that she sees huge ramifications if the zone change were to be approved. This development is adjacent to single family homes. What is being proposed could start this portion of Melrose Avenue being turned into what is on Third Street across from The Grove -- a "nightmare," she said.

Roy Forbes moved that the GWNC take a position in opposition to the request for a zone change for the Melrose Place development. Susan O'Connell seconded the motion. There was further discussion.

Shemaya Mandelbaum said that he agrees with Rudy Gintel.

Mr. Gintel reiterated that he thinks that the Board should be very careful -- if this particular project is defeated, the Board does not know what the next development proposal could be (and he cited The Marlowe as an example). He said that the Board needs to hear what are the safeguards proposed to control this development.

Lisa Hutchins said that she agrees with Jolene Snett.

Jim Wolf stated that the zone change request before the City will result in a whole new set of entitlements being allowed. Mr. Wolf said that the City's new RAS Zone is the

popular “development tool *du jour*” because builders see it as a means of getting density, setbacks, and height that otherwise would not be allowed. In many areas, around transit hubs and on wide, busy streets, this new zone can be appropriate. However, the local community became very cautious when a zone change to RAS was introduced in connection with the Dell Apartments because it so expands opportunities for the site.

Michael Rosenberg recommended tabling the discussion and letting the new *ad hoc* Zoning and Land Use Committee deal with this project.

A question was raised as to why the developer was not at the meeting. Mary Rajswing stated that he or his representatives certainly could have attended and presented his side because the meeting and its agenda are widely and publicly noticed.

John Gresham proposed an amendment to the motion on the floor to ask that a full Environmental Impact Report be prepared for the proposal. The amendment did not pass.

Bill MacNeil reported that there are many people in Hancock Park’s “Quadrant 1” near the project who are opposed to the proposed zone change. He said that there is a multitude of “no zone change” signs throughout the quadrant.

The question was called, and the motion carried (18 in favor, 4 opposed, and 3 abstentions).

#### Discussion of Proposed Variance for 936 Crenshaw Boulevard

Gary Ishihara, the Zoning and Land Use Chair for the Wilshire Park Association, and Robbie O’Donnell, President of the Association, were introduced. Mr. Ishihara gave a presentation as to why the association is opposing the request for a zoning variance for the expansion of the existing office building at 936 Crenshaw Boulevard. The City has a requirement for transitional heights of buildings adjacent to lower-density zones, such as here. The developer’s variance request is for relief from the transitional height restrictions. Ms. O’Donnell said the requested variance would be inconsistent with the adopted Wilshire Community Plan and that there should be adherence to the Plan.

Jane Gilman recommended that this matter could be referred for analysis by the *ad hoc* Zoning and Land Use Committee

Margaret Hudson moved that the GWNC oppose any variances for the project at 936 Crenshaw and that GWNC advocate that its developer be required to adhere to the current zoning (CR-1VL) and the Wilshire Community Plan. The motion was seconded by Chickie Byrne who stated that the GWNC should trust the judgment of the Wilshire Park Association on this issue.

There being no further discussion, the question was called, and the motion carried

(20 in favor, 3 opposed, and 2 abstentions).

Discussion of Proposed Hancock Park HPOZ

Megan Hunter from the Community Planning Division of the City Planning Department was introduced. Ms. Hunter gave an overview to the GWNC of the current status of the Hancock Park Historic Preservation Overlay Zone proposed for the area between Melrose Avenue and Wilshire Boulevard, From Rossmore Avenue to Highland Avenue. Ms. Hunter indicated that a survey of the neighborhood's historic resources had been completed and circulated. The survey, which indicates that the required criteria are met and that approximately 90% of the properties within the zone are "contributing" properties, was certified by the Cultural Heritage Commission on March 2, 2006. On March 23, there will be an Open House, and on March 30, there will be a Public Hearing. Both events will take place at Third Street School.

The President asked if there were any members of the public who might wish to comment on this agenda item,

David Trainor asked for the support of the GWNC. He stated that there is massive neighborhood support for the HPOZ as evidenced by the green lawn signs.

Grace Fritzingler also asked for the support of the GWNC.

There being no other Stakeholders wishing to comment, President Dougherty asked for Board discussion.

Larry Eisenberg said that the Orthodox Community is against the HPOZ and stated that other communities outside Hancock Park have problems with HPOZs. He believes the HPOZ in Hancock Park should be put to a vote.

Jolene Snett stated that Hancock Park is a real asset to the City of Los Angeles, an "irreplaceable gem." She then moved, and Cindy Chvatal seconded, that GWNC support the City's adoption of an HPOZ for Hancock Park.

Shemaya Mandelbaum stated that not all houses fall under historic designation and that replacement requirements are too restrictive. He said that, whenever there are proposals affecting a house, the view of an HPOZ Board always prevails.

Thomas Roe commented that the restrictions in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards are too onerous.

Michael Rosenberg stated that there is no danger that the neighborhood is threatened. The HPOZ should be tabled and brought to the *ad hoc* Zoning and Land Use Committee. The community should vote. It is not proper for the GWNC to rule on this

without a proper presentation. Personal property rights are at stake.

Larry Eisenberg stated that there are other methods to preserve architecture.

Chickie Byrne stated that the GWNC would be remiss not to vote on this. Hancock Park is an endangered neighborhood. The real issue for neighbors has been personal property rights. But people have seen that if we don't have standards, adverse things happen. Property rights people now support the HPOZ. This has been reviewed for six years. There has been enormous change and more than the majority is in favor.

Rudy Gintel stated that he has been for the HPOZ ever since the "Naked Davids" appeared on Muirfield Road.

Cindy Chvatal said that a Preservation Plan will address specific issues based on the input of the neighborhood. Megan Hunter said that the Preservation Plan (when completed) will supercede the strict Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

Larry Eisenberg offered a substitute Motion that GWNC support the City's adoption of an HPOZ for Hancock Park only if the HPOZ specifically not apply to landscape and paint or to construction work in back yards, side yards, and less than 50% of the front façade. The substitute Motion failed (4 in favor, 20 opposed).

Bill MacNeil said he believes there should be a vote on the proposed new Zone.

Rudy Gintel proposed an amendment to the Motion to provide that the HPOZ would only be effective after a Preservation Plan is approved. Following some discussion of the proposed amendment, Mr. Gintel withdrew his proposal.

The President then called the question, and the motion that the GWNC support the creation of an HPOZ for Hancock Park carried (20 in favor, 3 opposed, 1 abstention).

#### Discussion of La Brea / Hancock Preferential Parking Proposal

Russell Sherman presented a motion to support the immediate establishment of "Parking Permit District 114" for the area from Third Street to Carling Way along Sycamore Avenue, Orange Drive, Mansfield Avenue, Citrus Avenue, the west side of Highland Avenue, and Fourth Street between La Brea and Highland Avenues. The motion was seconded and adopted unanimously.

Board Member Comments / New Business

Ruth Silveira observed that the zoning in the R-1 portion of the 200 North Gramercy Place block needs to be enforced, as there now is a board and care home there. Stakeholder Ralph Cataldo also spoke about his objections to this illegal use.

Announcements

President Dougherty reminded the Board that the next regular bi-monthly meeting will be on Wednesday, May 10, 2006, at The Ebell of Los Angeles at 7 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Jane Gilman  
Secretary