

Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council



Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council General Meeting

March 10, 2010

Approved by the Board
April 14, 2010

MINUTES

Call to Order

A duly noticed meeting of the Board of Directors of the Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council ("GWNC") was held on Wednesday, March 10, 2010, at the Ebell of Los Angeles, 743 South Lucerne Blvd. President Charles Dougherty called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

Roll Call

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

The Secretary stated that a quorum was present.

Introductory Presentation

Anthony Tew, from the DWP, announced a major trunk line construction project that begins on April 12 at 3rd St. and Sycamore Ave. The line will go up to Melrose, then toward Sunset. The 36" trunk line will carry water to facilitate maintenance and to provide the ability to divert water from damaged water lines. The duration for both phases is 30 months and will include 12,000 feet of pipe with 9 large valves. Director John Gresham asked if the project described on the DWP website. Mr. Tew said it's not yet, but will be listed in the infrastructure improvements section soon, and he will let us know when it's posted. He also noted that DWP crews are already at work on Sycamore Ave., but not this project – they're just moving a smaller water main in preparation for the bigger project.

Nikki Ezhari, Field Deputy for City Council Member Tom La Bonge, made the

following announcements:

- They are aware that the Koreatown boundaries proposed on the City Council website are different than the ones that have been agreed to.
- Traffic calming measures will be instituted soon in the Miracle Mile area.
- Repaving Wilshire Blvd. will begin soon. Funding is tied to the Bus Rapid Transit project – if it passes, it will pay to repave the bus lanes...and we will get federal stimulus money to repave the center lanes. If the BRT is not approved, the City will have to find some other way to fund and complete it the project.
- Beverly Boulevard will be resurfaced by the end of the year.
- John Burroughs Middle School as been adopted by the Council office.
- Wilshire Crest Elementary School is participating in the Mayor's Day of Service on March 20.
- Big Sunday will be held on May 1-2.
- Criminal charges have been filed against the Larchmont Bungalow for zoning and permit violations.
- The CUP appeal for the property at 303 Highland has been denied...but the applicants have now filed a federal appeal
- There was major flooding on Rossmore Blvd. because of a storm drain problem. The City will try to fix the drains.

Judith Kieffer, from the Los Angeles Parks Foundation, introduced her organization, which is a 501c3 non-profit support organization, like the library and police foundations. The group does fundraising for parks. She recognized GWNC Board Member Margy Hudson and others from the area for their work on refurbishing Robert Burns Park. She said the group's mission is to enhance, expand and preserve parks, through sources the city doesn't have access to. She distributed further information and invited people to explore the group's website at <http://ww.laparksfoundation.org>

Jason Eugene Boarde, from Pedal Patch Community gardens, reported that his organization is negotiating with the owner of a vacant lot at 4141 Wilshire to install a garden that would grow food for local charities within a 5-mile radius. He asked for more information on Park Mile land use restrictions and GWNC President Charles Dougherty suggested he contact the City Planning Department and read the Park Mile Specific Plan, which is available online.

Myrna Gintel, representing the Windsor Square/Hancock Park Historical Society Garden Tour, thanked the GWNC for funding past garden tour events and the Frances Blend school garden project. She said this year's garden tour will be held on April 25, and will be honoring GWNC board member Margy Hudson. She distributed donation forms for people who would like to contribute to the event's tribute book, and provided information on ticket sales. She said funds raised this year will go toward beautifying John Burroughs Middle School. She and another project representative said the school will use the funds to purchase benches, plants, irrigation, and other items. LAUSD is providing some funding for the \$110,000 project, but they're seeking donations as well, and hope the GWNC might be able to contribute \$25,000.

Reading of the Minutes

Secretary Elizabeth Fuller presented the minutes of the last meeting. Director Jane Gilman moved the minutes be approved as written. Director Margy Hudson seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

NC Budget Update -- Acting Treasurer Elizabeth Fuller presented an update on our current year's budget allocation, showing we have \$32,844.42 of our original \$45,000 remaining, of which \$29,693.12 has been committed. Ms. Fuller reported that access to our \$100,000 in rollover funds has been frozen, which means we won't have extra money for things like office space, an assistant or funding of new community projects.

Office Space Update -- Ms. Fuller reported that a realtor who has been helping in our search for office space did find four properties that seem to meet our requirements. Of the four, she and President Dougherty liked two. One of the landlords, however, rejected DONE's standard lease agreement, so the realtor is presenting it now to the other landlord. A DONE representative has told us we could use a landlord's lease agreement instead, but it might add up to six months to the rental process, because the City would have to approve it. President Dougherty noted that our budget situation should not prevent us to continue to pursue office space right now, since the six-month lead time will put us into our next fiscal year, and we might be able to approve a new budget with a specific allocation for office space before then.

Quarterly Reconciliations -- Ms. Fuller reported that she has caught up on and submitted to DONE all our delinquent quarterly credit card reconciliations, so we should no longer be in danger of having our funding frozen over that issue.

City Budget Update -- Jack Humphreville, the GWNC's representative at the last Budget Day event, reported that the city is hoping to raise money by selling some of its parking assets. He said we still have a \$200 million+ deficit, will be laying off more employees, and deficits are still moving toward \$1 billion in the next few years. Pension funds are also dangerously underfunded. He said the situation is going to be very, very ugly...and morale in city government is horrible. There will be furloughs for city employees and citizens will be caught in the middle, with fewer city services (and we need city attorneys just as much as we need police officers). He suggested that people talk to the city council, talk to the mayor and "raise hell," because the loudest voices will be the ones heard. So if you have passions, you have to go downtown and speak up.

Budget Day Representative -- President Dougherty appointed Mr. Humphreville to be the GWNC's representative to the next Budget Day event.

DWP Oversight

DWP oversight representative Jack Humphreville said there are three things on the DWP table (other than rates, rates, rates). First, many neighborhood councils are pushing for an independent rate payers' advocate. Second, the City is pushing "Son of Measure B," which would involve installation and construction of 400 megawatts of solar power equipment. The DWP decided to do the work themselves, however, rather than bid it out...and their crews aren't qualified, so it will ultimately cost more than it would to use trained crews from outside the city ranks. He noted that voters rejected Measure B last year, largely on the grounds of openness, so people are now talking to the city council about more openness in the new proposal as well. The third issue under discussion right now is the Energy Cost Adjustment Factor (ECAAF). They voted to eliminate the cap on the ECAAF. But an independent fiscal review showed DWP's renewables program isn't really there – there's been little progress in developing the overall plan, there's no financial plan in place, and the department is overcommitting itself. And now they want to raise rates, which is becoming a huge issue of contention. Rates may go up 90-100%.

A stakeholder asked Mr. Humphreville if there's anything happening with solar rebates. Mr. Humphreville said the city did announce ideas for desert solar systems, but nothing's been done about it yet...though the intentions seem good. He said the DWP has good resources, fairly low rates and good employees...but the problem is political – particularly the amount of money that's been taken out of DWP to fund city hall.

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, and James Wolf. Board Members Alex Jones-Moreno and Frances McFall said they have also completed the training, but aren't showing up on the list for some reason.

Election Update -- Mr. Dougherty reported that candidate registration closes on March 15. Registration forms are available on both the GWNC and City Clerk's websites. We will be holding a Candidate Forum, to introduce registered candidates, at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 21. (Location TBA.)

Bylaws Change to Allow Monthly Meetings – Mr. Dougherty said that our increasingly long meetings do not work very well for either board members or stakeholders. GWNC Secretary Elizabeth Fuller said one thing that might help would be more frequent meetings...and the only reason we can't meet monthly is that our bylaws specify meetings every two months. She distributed copies of the relevant paragraph in our bylaws (Article VI, Section G.1):

*Frequency and Location: Regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held **every other month**, on the second Wednesday of the month, or at such other times as directed by the Board, and in no event shall occur less than once per calendar quarter. Special and emergency meetings shall be held as authorized by the Ralph M. Brown Act. Meetings of the Board of Directors shall take place at a location within the Council boundaries.*

Ms. Fuller said we would only have to strike the words “every other month” from the first sentence to allow for monthly meetings.

Director John Gresham asked if we would have to pay double for meeting space if we did this, and Ms. Fuller said we would. Mr. Dougherty pointed out, however, that there are only four months left in our fiscal year and we have no idea yet what our budget will be for next year.

Alternate Director Patty Lombard moved that we adopt the changes proposed by Ms. Fuller. Director Jane Gilman seconded the motion.

Director Jane Usher suggested that we also change “second Wednesday of the month” to “second Wednesday of *every* month.”

Ms. Lombard said she would be willing to amend her motion.

Director Yigal Arens asked if our new schedule would begin next month. Mr. Dougherty said it would be contingent on guaranteeing meeting space.

Ms. Lombard made a new motion that we adopt the changes proposed by Ms. Fuller and Ms. Usher. Director Frances McFall seconded the amended motion.

Director John Gresham asked if we have to let the change become public record for a month before acting on it, but Ms. Fuller said the issue was properly agendaized. Mr. Dougherty suggested we could do a second motion about when we’d like the change to take effect. Ms. McFall said she’s all for meeting once a month, but wondered if it would be contingent on whether or not we can afford the meeting space. Ms. Fuller said it would only amount to two extra meetings for the rest of this fiscal year, and we have enough money to cover that.

The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Fuller asked if anyone wanted to make a motion that we start in April, but Mr. Arens said we don’t need a motion, because we changed our bylaws.

Community Concerns

Leavitt Pavilion at MacArthur Park – Mari Riddle, representing Leavitt Pavilion, invited everyone in attendance to the free concerts in MacArthur Park that begin in July.

She and Sebastian Rein, president of the Pavilion's support organization, presented a video about the Pavilion and asked if the GWNC would be interested in underwriting one concert in the summer series, at a cost of \$5,000. She distributed a sponsorship packet, and invited board members to visit their website at <http://www.leavittla.org>.

Rossmore/Clinton Flooding – David Podemski, who lives at 585 N. Rossmore, reported that there was a flash flood on the lower level of this condo building during the rains on February 6. He showed security camera video of the flood, and described how water flowed into the building's garage, totaled all 243 vehicles parked there, crashed through a fire door, filled a hallway to the ceiling and filled both elevators. The water stayed 8 feet deep for 36 hours. Luckily, he said, this happened on a Saturday; if it was a work day, people might have been trapped in the garage.

Mr. Podemski said the cause was a bad storm drain, which has been on the city's agenda for repair several times since 1980, but keeps getting deferred, even though a city engineer has said the flooding will happen again. Mr. Podemski said the issue keeps disappearing from repair agendas, but we can't let it go away...or someone's going to die.

Another resident of the building said the city has had a repair plan ready for several years, but can't get it approved. And President Obama does have a new funding program available for storm drains, which just passed yesterday. She said the building's residents would like the Neighborhood Council's support in getting the problem fixed.

Alternate Director Patty Lombard asked how the residents got rid of the water in the garage. The resident said they hired a private service, which took four days. Luckily, the building has fire exit doors one story up, so they could get in and out. It is a condo building – but when the residents bought their units, they didn't know about this problem.

Mr. Dougherty said he was glad the residents came to us, and that we will write a letter to the City Council and mayor, saying something needs to be done. The stakeholders asked if we would also send copies to County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky and LA County as well, and Mr. Dougherty said we would.

Hancock Park Tree Program – Director James Wolf said Hancock Park residents would like to ask the GWNC to write a letter to the County and other agencies, supporting the Hancock Park neighborhood's efforts to get more trees. He emphasized that this is not a request for funding, just for organizational support. Director Rudy Gintel moved that we write the requested letter. Alternate Director Patty Lombard seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Metro Westside Subway Extension Optional Crenshaw Station – Director Jane Usher said GWNC board members receive a great many notices from Metro about planning meetings for many projects, and we usually receive them far in advance. But we didn't receive notice of the next meeting on this subject, which is right in our back yard, until just last week. The meeting will be held on March 17, at the Wilshire United

Methodist Church, at 6 p.m. Ms. Usher urged people to attend, saying it will be a good forum to voice people's opinions. She said we have been good neighbors to Metro, but their lack of notice for this meeting was "very disappointing."

Koreatown Boundaries – Director Jane Usher introduced Chang Lee, from the Koreatown Foundation, who explained that the original petition submitted to the City to officially name the Koreatown area did include a western boundary that extended west of Western Ave., the traditional eastern boundary of the Greater Wilshire area. He said, however, that the boundary has been redrawn in the last few months, after discussions with GWNC stakeholder John Welborne and other representatives of the area. Mr. Change presented a map, showing the re-drawn border along Western and Wilton Avenues, which the Koreatown NC and other groups have approved.

Mr. Chang noted that in 2009, Koreatown did apply to the federal Preserve America program to be recognized as a Preserve America community, and the boundaries used in that application were slightly wider, as were the boundaries on a state-level application for recognition. Most shops and retail organizations, however, do fall within the narrower boundaries of the more recent city application.

Director Margy Hudson asked what the Preserve America program is. Mr. Lee said it was begun by First Lady Hillary Clinton, then continued under Laura Bush and Michele Obama. He said several other Los Angeles communities – including Chinatown, Little Tokyo and others – have also been included. Ms. Hudson asked how the designation relates to our local HPOZs, but Mr. Chang said it doesn't; they're separate entities. Neighborhoods designated by Preserve America have distinctive signage with salmon-colored backgrounds, and receive funds to promote their areas and heritage.

Mr. Change presented a map, showing the different sets of boundaries used in the various applications being discussed. Director John Gresham said he hasn't seen any formal amendments to the city-level naming application, but Mr. Lee said they're in the works and the City Council does have the final map showing the new boundaries, which have been approved by both the Council and Koreatown representatives.

Alternate Director Mary Rajswing noted that page 3 of the city naming application was dated February and March of 2009. She asked if the application was forwarded to residents of the area since then. Mr. Lee said the application was held in the City Clerk's office, because articles about it appeared in local papers, and discussions began about where the boundaries should fall.

Alternate Director Patty Lombard moved that we approve the naming petition application with the western boundary as Western Ave. (the current and historic western boundary of Koreatown).

Director Rudy Gintel asked about the northern boundary of the area, and Mr. Chang said it's mostly Beverly Blvd., with a small strip that goes up to Melrose. Ms. Lombard restated her motion that: *"We support the application showing the Koreatown*

boundaries as Western Ave., Beverly Blvd., Vermont Ave, and Olympic Blvd., plus the portion of Western Blvd. only, between Beverly and Melrose. This preserves Western Ave. as the current and historic boundary between Koreatown and the Greater Wilshire area.” Director Jane Gilman seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Stakeholder Henrietta Cosentino commented that it would be even better for the community if the two areas (Koreatown and Greater Wilshire) could share Western Ave.

Land Use Committee

Approval of New Committee Members – Land Use Committee President James Wolf reported that Bryan Christie, the Alternate Representative for the GWNC Renter seat, and Karen Gilman, a stakeholder from Larchmont Village, have expressed interest in joining the GWNC Land Use Committee. Director Jane Gilman moved the new candidates be approved. Director Rudy Gintel seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously.

Approval of Hancock Park HPOZ Board Member – Mr. Wolf reported that Hancock Park resident Jen DeVore has been nominated by the Hancock Park HPOZ Board to fill a seat with that body. This nomination has not previously been reviewed by the GWNC, but does require GWNC approval. Alternate Director Patty Lombard moved we approve the nomination. Director John Gresham seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously.

[Directors Jane Usher and Alex Jones-Moreno left the meeting. (Ms. Usher is required to recuse herself from specific Land Use discussions, and Mr. Jones-Moreno had a family emergency.) President Dougherty announced that we had lost our quorum, so any votes required from this point forward will have to be tabled until next month. All comments made on various issues under discussion will remain part of the public record.]

Yeshivath Torath Emeth Academy (7002 W. Clinton) – Land Use Committee Chair James Wolf introduced Robert Smith, from the law firm Latham and Watkins. Mr. Smith said the school in question has 940 students, 600 of whom live in the community near the school. He said the school is planning to replace its existing preschool and kindergarten building with a new, 8,300 square foot building. Mr. Smith acknowledged there have been community concerns with parking at the school, but said school officials are working with the City Council office, even though most of the traffic is from the school’s four other buildings, which aren’t part of this project. The school has pledged to honor its parking commitments at those other locations.

Mr. Smith noted that school personnel were unable to attend last week’s Land Use Committee, because it was held at a church, but he introduced a large group (about 100 people) present tonight.

Director Margy Hudson asked what the school has done for community outreach

regarding this project. Mr. Smith said there have been four community meetings, the first at the City Council office, the second two weeks later (with written notice sent to all residents within a 500-foot radius of the project site), a third this week at the City Council office again, and then, finally, the public hearing at the GWNC Land Use Committee meeting last week.

Ms. Hudson asked if there are any petitions people have signed in favor of the project (since neighbors have presented petitions opposing the application). Mr. Smith said he can provide a list of the people who are here tonight to speak in favor of it. Ms. Hudson said people who live within the radius area should have signed a petition in favor of it as well. Mr. Smith said about 600 of the school's students live in surrounding area, and their families support the project, though he doesn't have a signed petition from them.

Ms. Hudson asked how many students attend the school. Mr. Smith said 940, and enrollment will not increase after the new building is built. The Kindergarten and preschool enrollment will be capped at 120. He noted that the original application specified 180 students, but that number was trimmed back to address neighborhood concerns.

Ms. Hudson asked if the school has considered a busing plan, and Mr. Smith said it has, but kids come from all over the city, so it would be very expensive. He said the school has also considered an alternative pickup/drop-off area not in the alleys (as it is now), but they haven't been able to find suitable spot. Ms. Hudson said that if they go through the public hearing process for this project, they may be required to institute a bus program, which doesn't require much space...just a bus stop. And that would help the traffic mitigation problem.

Director Jane Gilman asked for confirmation that the school will be doubling the square footage and adding students at the preschool site. Mr. Smith said they will not be adding students – just moving students from elsewhere in the school complex. Ms. Gilman asked if there will be only classrooms in the new building, and Mr. Smith said yes, along with play areas and other facilities.

Director Yigal Arens noted that the new building will be 8,300 square feet, while the old one was just 3,700 square feet...and the original plan called for 180 students, which has now been reduced to 120, based on comments from neighbors. Mr. Smith confirmed that information. Mr. Arens pointed out the potential extra space created by the reduction in students, and asked if anything would prevent the school from increasing enrollment in the building at a later date. Mr. Smith said it would require a change in the conditions of approval, and the school wouldn't want to go through that lengthy process. Mr. Arens asked if it would be more cost-effective, in that case, to reduce the size of the new building, but Mr. Smith said the extra space would improve the students' experience.

Alternate Director Mary Rajswing asked why a variance is needed to place a school in the residential area, when the site is already a school. Mr. Smith said school

construction is by right, but they're seeking building and fence height variances.

Director John Gresham asked if the neighbors have met yet with City Council Member Paul Koretz's office. Mr. Smith said they've met with Mr. Koretz's staff twice, and two representatives from that office are here tonight.

Director Rudy Gintel asked if the building, without the three-foot height variance being requested, would be restricted to two stories. Mr. Smith said it would be. A residential building on the site would be allowed to be three stories tall, but not a school building.

Land Use Committee Chair James Wolf asked if the reduction in number of students from 180 to 120 might be an opportunity to reduce the planned height of the building, so a variance wouldn't be needed. Architect Todd Erlandson said that option hadn't been studied, but there are minimum space requirements for preschool and kindergarten-aged children. Mr. Wolf said a reduction in square footage might help the project achieve "by right" status so variances wouldn't be needed. He said the architects could also change the fence configurations by cutting down the square footage, and still meet the per-child space requirements for the reduced number of children. Mr. Smith said that might be difficult without moving the play yard to the other side of the building, closer to adjoining residences. Mr. Wolf said they also might be able to create a transitional height, without building right to the edge of the sidewalk. Also, he noted, if the building didn't cover as much of the lot, and the siting of the building on the lot were reconsidered, there could be more room for parking and drop-offs. Mr. Smith said the architect did consider that kind of re-design, but didn't feel he could do it. Mr. Erlandson added that it's a narrow site, and there are many restrictions for traffic flow.

Joel Rosansky, who lives at 617 N. Citrus, said he has lived in the neighborhood, for 13 years, has two children who attend the school, and two more that graduated from it. He said all four children attended the preschool in question, which is very small, and current students would benefit from a bigger building. Mr. Rosansky said the new building would be a positive addition to community, and would encourage new residents to move in. He said his kids do walk to school and he is concerned about traffic, but there are many sources of traffic (nearby theaters, restaurants, etc.), at all times of day – and that's just part of living in an urban environment.

Rabbi Jacob Krause, the director of the school for the past 33 years, said the school serves a valuable function for the community, and is a catalyst for growth. He said the school has made a consistent effort to upgrade its facilities in the last few years, and all buildings are now updated except for the preschool building – which is old and poses a health hazard to students. He said school officials are sensitive to community concerns, especially for safety, which is important to everyone. Rabbi Krause said the school has also made an effort to sensitize its families to the needs of the community, and they do have carpool systems in place, and have met with and listened to the neighbors, trying to address as many concerns as possible. He said the school doesn't have rights of eminent domain, so they definitely do have to be answerable to the neighborhood and this

project has taken a lot of that into consideration. It will have its own subterranean parking. The building will house not only regular classes, but a music room and other facilities. He asked that the Council take the school's record in the community into consideration and support the application.

Ken Alter, who lives at 117 N. Highland and used to live on Detroit St., behind several of the school's buildings, said he's a parent of five children, four of whom have gone to the preschool so far. He said his wife is speech therapist and works at the school. Mr. Alter said the current preschool facility is antiquated and doesn't keep pace with the neighborhood. He said the height of the proposed building matches other nearby structures, and that his family uses the alley carpool system. He said he sees school administrators out there monitoring the traffic flow every morning and afternoon. The neighborhood's needs and the children's needs have to go together, and seeing them develop together is a wonderful thing.

Danny Phillips, who lives at 525 N. Sycamore, said that contrary to the school's claims, it has included the existing carpool and traffic mitigation plan in its application, so they should be considered. He said the number of children involved at the school site – more than 1,000 students – should trigger a traffic study and the case should not be heard until the study is done.

David Rosenbloom, who lives at 513 N. Orange Dr., said traffic congestion has reached epic proportions, and the school's traffic plan is not used by many parents, who use driveways and red zones instead, twice daily. He said carpools also clogs the alleys – there is no on-site loading space, and it all occurs in the alley, blocking residents and emergency services. He said the existing program is not working, and it's a safety and liability issue. He asked that the CUP be denied until an alternate program can be devised and approved.

Lucinda Keller, who lives on the 500 block of N. Sycamore, noted that the school's initial application specified 8,300 square feet for 180 students. Since the student count has been reduced by 33% to 120, so she would like the building to be reduced by 33% as well. She also said she believes the variance should not be granted, and asks that the project be reduced by 1/3 in size and height.

[Director Frances McFall left the meeting at 9:40 p.m.]

Drew Hallman, who said he has lived in the neighborhood for five years, said he thinks it's wonderful to have the school there for the community, but he has always feared the traffic situation is an accident waiting to happen. He said he thinks the best solution would be a busing program, which other schools in the area have done successfully. And he thinks nothing should be approved or built until the school has looked at busing as alternative.

Lloyd Solly, who lives on Detroit St., said numbers are important. There isn't a school on the site now, just a daycare facility. He said there's a big difference between

the two...and they're seeking to build school on a residential street. Mr. Solly said he opposes the establishment of a new school. The proposed size exceeds the school's needs by 33% (as evidenced by their 33% reduction in students for the site). There are four other buildings in the complex that are in violation of their CUPs and certificates of occupancy. He said the school doesn't provide the parking it has promised, and there are only 12 viable spaces for the entire campus. He said any conditions promised will need to be honored. And the current day care license is only for 76 kids. In the last week, residents have been given three different numbers for the total enrollment of the school complex – and it gets lower each time. This is interesting because if there are more than 1,030, the Department of Transportation will ask for a traffic study. Finally, he expressed concerns with the plan's aesthetics, saying the six foot wall and the large stairwell facing the residential street don't fit in with the residential neighborhood. He said he would like to see the same kind of landscaped setbacks as the school's other new building across street has.

Lori Karny, who lives in the 500 block of N. Sycamore, requested that – because of the documented violations at the school's other buildings -- any CUP approval include a condition requiring an annual compliance review for all school facilities. She said the applicant should be held responsible for the violations and for getting parents to comply with parking and traffic requirements.

Jillian Greane, who lives at 528 N. Sycamore, said she loves the school's kids and the sense of community the school creates. But this issue is about safety. She said congestion is so bad it's an accident waiting to happen. She saw a child on a bike get hit by car just recently. Over 30 parking spaces at the school are not being used for parking...which means there are 100,000 square feet of facilities with only 12 parking spaces in use. She said the other spaces are being used as play areas...and some school parents even offer to buy residents' parking passes. This morning, she said, she saw a school security guard help one mother drop off her kids in a red zone.

Ron Friedman, who lives at 6930 Clinton St., said the school's original proposal was for a six foot wall, but then neighbors heard for the first time tonight that it would be a fence instead. He said nothing else in the neighborhood has a massive barrier in front of it, and it doesn't match the setting in the rest of the neighborhood. He requested that the CUP application include a site map. Also, he said, comparing the proposed new structure to another new school building across the street, the other one is much nicer, with larger setbacks, etc. He said it seems like the school is offering lots of patches to the proposal when objections are raised – but the major issues, especially parking and safety, are not being addressed in a substantial way. Finally, he said there was very little notice before the community meetings, and neighbors found it hard to rearrange their schedules to attend.

Kathy Manolopoulos, who has lived on the 500 block of Sycamore since the mid-1980s, said that she believes the current use needs further investigation. She said the proposed "expansion" may not be true – rules for expansions apply only to schools being upgraded and this may not actually be classified as a school right now. She said the

neighborhood team hasn't been able to find documentation that it is a legal school on the site, which may be in violation of applicable codes. Ms. Manolopoulos asked that the application be denied until any violations are remedied. She said she personally likes and welcomes the school and a new building, and she said this is a beautiful design...but not appropriate for our neighborhood. And the parking situation is a safety hazard.

Michele Atkins, who lives on the 500 block of N. Sycamore, said she represents almost 100 neighbors who oppose the development. She asked that the CUP application be denied until the school's current violations are remedied. Ms. Atkins, too, said this is a new school, not an upgrade. She also said many schools have instituted bus transportation with a common stop, and many do so in during their negotiation of CUP conditions. She asked that busing be implemented as a condition of approval, with a two-year period to implement the program. She said she has spoken to transportation administrators at other schools who are willing to provide input and help. Finally, she acknowledged receipt tonight an offer from the City Council office of several "lipstick" concessions, which fall far short of a solution.

Guy Smith, who lives on Sycamore, said his biggest concern is traffic and safety. The temple and school are wonderful for the neighborhood, but people are not adhering to drop-off plans, which is especially dangerous for children of this age. He said lots of congestion and traffic spills throughout neighborhood.

Sarah Lyons, who lives at 543 N. Sycamore, said that when the school is built, it will obscure her view of the Hollywood Hills, and she will lose the natural light in her apartment. She is also concerned about people using the building after hours, looking into her apartment. She said she doesn't want to have to park blocks away – which always happens during construction projects. This is a safety issue, especially at night. Finally, she said rent values will go down, especially during the construction phase. She said she likes the school as it is, and would love to keep it at one story.

Megan Shlock, who lives at 541 ¼ N. Sycamore, said no one has mentioned noise from the proposed building, and kids are noisy. She said she lives on the alley where the school's kids play, and it's really noisy. She also said residents won't walk their dogs at drop-off times, because too many have almost been hit by cars. Parents have hit residents' cars, too...and she just doesn't think this is the right location for the project.

Alternate Director Mary Rajswing asked, after hearing statements that the school is an integral part of the community, if it has a community room and whether or not that room is open to those outside the school. Mr. Smith said there isn't (and won't be) one at the location in question, but he doesn't know about rooms at the school's other buildings.

Alternate Director Patty Lombard noted that Directors were told at last week's Land Use Committee meeting that the school's enrollment was 1125, while Mr. Smith said tonight that it's 940. Mr. Smith said 1125 is the number allowed by current permits, but that figure has never been met and the current enrollment is 940. Ms. Lombard also asked about the stakeholders' claims that the location in question has only a daycare

permit at the moment and not a school permit, so this application would in fact create a new school. Mr. Smith said no permit is required at the current building because it's old enough for its status to be grandfathered without one. But the current use is as a nursery and preschool...and the new building will add a Kindergarten.

Director Yigal Arens recalled a question raised at the Land Use Committee meeting, about how parking spaces at the school's other buildings have been fenced off and are being used for other purposes, and asked if this is true. Mr. Smith said he has been exploring that issue with the City Council office, but the focus right now is on the proposed building, not the older ones. He said he is looking into the prior building permits and how many parking spaces are required, and promised to follow up and commit to providing the recommended number of spaces.

President Dougherty closed discussion for this issue.

Land Use Committee Chair James Wolf told the Board that the Committee did recommend that the Board oppose the current proposal and encourage further dialogue between the school, stakeholders, and City Council office to craft conditions that will make this a well operating facility that works for all groups. He said looking at the code-required parking at the school's other buildings should be reviewed for how expectations have been set and met (or not) in the past, which does affect the current request. He noted, however, that if all the school's requests are denied, there may not be an opportunity to fix anything...but reconfiguring the plans for the parcel presents an opportunity to satisfy many of both the school's and community's needs...and other schools have been able to do this.

Because there was no quorum, a vote on this issue was tabled until our next meeting.

Cell Phone Tower at 535 S. Gramercy – Peter Shubin, representing T-Mobile, the applicant in this issue, said that the GWNC Land Use Committee called this project (which would involve installing cell phone antennas and other equipment atop a landmarked apartment in a residential area) “precedent-setting,” but this kind of facility has been installed on buildings - including historical buildings - throughout the city. Mr. Shuban said this was recognized by members of the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission in their approval of the project. He said they found it appropriate, and requested that we do the same. Director John Gresham asked if the precedent has already been set, and Mr. Shubin said it has, many times.

[A brief sidebar discussion took place here about how to proceed without a quorum and what kind of discussion procedures we will have for issues tabled until our next meeting (e.g. will issues be-reopened for public comment, will public comments be closed, etc.) President Charlie Dougherty said public commentary on issues discussed tonight will be closed, and we will have a brief recap in our agenda and minutes. He said we will also make sure our Land Use Committee's vote totals are noted in the agenda, along with the committee's recommendations.]

Stakeholder Henrietta Cosentino said it's a shame we lost our quorum, because the Planning Commission hearing on this issue comes before our next meeting. She said it's true the CHC didn't object to the proposal, but their criteria was very different from ours. She noted that the Zoning Administration denied the application on all four counts, as well as noting that the applicant had made no good faith effort to look for a by-right location in the area.

Ms. Cosentino said T-Mobile also applied for to locate equipment on a building four blocks north of the current location and was also denied there. She said this is not a matter of closing the door on cell phone users and providers – there are many other companies circling the area, and many antennas already in place within 3-block radius (just search <http://www.antennasearch.com> for the locations).

Ms. Cosentino said there are many complications in this issue, but one thing is very simple: almost everyone in the area already has good cell phone coverage. So people have to start getting smart about what's going on. She said the company is just trying to be competitive...but we don't have to believe everything they say. People should beware and do their research. It's too late for meaningful action on this application, but others coming.

Also, she said, there's a difference between commercial and residential locations – commercial locations cost more, so it's not surprising cell providers are looking at residential locations now. She also said that at the city hearing on site north of this one, there were many cell phone issues on the agenda...and all involved T-Mobile.

Land Use Committee Chair James Wolf said the public is often ignorant about the issues involved with cell phone installations, but in areas with well written plans (such as the Park Mile), installations don't just sail through. He said as people become more aware of the issues, however, there will be increased scrutiny and people will have different attitudes than they did before.

Mr. Shubin said that in both areas being discussed, there was much misrepresentation of the proposed installations...and T-Mobile did look for by-right locations. The problem is there aren't any because it's a residential neighborhood. He said the nearest T-Mobile sites are at a parking garage at Wilshire and Western, at the St. Charles apartments at Western and 3rd, at 3rd and Irving, in the public right of way, and at the Harbor building at Wilshire and Crenshaw. Other carriers have installations on those buildings too...but there are no commercial areas surrounding this residential location. Mr. Shubin said the City recognizes that installations in residential areas are going to be necessary and it is becoming common. And, yes, there are 500 cell phone antennas within a 3-mile radius...but engineering data that shows there still isn't enough coverage to meet demand. And building codes often require companies to locate equipment on buildings – they're not allowed to build new structures, so they have to use residential buildings if that's all that's there. Finally, he said, the burden of notifying occupants is on the city, not the cell companies...and asked that the Board not uphold the Land Use

Committee recommendation, and that we do support the CHC's position in support of T-Mobile's application.

Cell Phone Pole at 3rd & Irving – Land Use Committee Chair James Wolf noted that this issue was not heard at last week's Land Use Committee meeting, because the meeting went too late and was forced to wrap up before all items on the agenda could be covered. He said this particular issue is a lightning rod of sorts, because cell phone companies are allowed to locate equipment on utility poles by right...but have also started replacing traditional poles with more substantial structures that can hold both cell equipment and power lines. The concern is that if this trend continues, the spirit of putting antennas on poles is being violated. He said we will continue to work on this issue at the committee level.

Director Elizabeth Fuller noted that this particular installation has been in place for more than a year now, so it's not new.

Cia Parker, representing T-Mobile, said this installation has actually been in place since, and that she brought pictures and more information for those who would like it. She also introduced Jason Hafer, who works on these kinds of installations for T-Mobile.

Alternate Director Patty Lombard said it would be useful if Ms. Parker and Mr. Hafer could speak to our Land Use Committee about how these installations work – we shouldn't have to learn about them through zoning administrators. Ms. Fuller asked Ms. Parker to provide her contact information, and Ms. Parker said she'd be happy to provide as much information as possible -- her territory extends out to the Valley and even beyond Los Angeles.

Director Rudy Gintel reminded everyone that we're not just talking about ordinary cell phones – today's communications devices are small computers that require tremendous bandwidth and infrastructure, and people need them for business and personal use. He said he supports historic preservation too, so when they put antennas on historic buildings, he'd like them to do it in the right way.

Mr. Wolf suggested that our cell phone subcommittee might want to attend one of Ms. Parker's meetings in another area as well. He also agreed with Mr. Gintel about historic buildings, noting that the Park Mile Design Review Board has reviewed lots of installations on the Harbor building, and he would challenge the casual observer to find them. But the Gramercy building installation would have been visible. He said there are design solutions that would work, however, and when dealing with historic buildings in historic neighborhoods there are special considerations.

Ms. Parker said she wants to work with communities to find solutions. T-Mobile is not trying to be a bad neighbor, and she'd like to get more input from the community and find out what people would like.

Finally, Chris Koontz, from City Council Member Paul Koretz's office, noted that

there are changes to cell phone regulations pending with the city council.

City Council Member Paul Koretz Motion on Code Enforcement – Mr. Koontz reported that a motion made by Council Member Koretz on code enforcement fees will be heard by the Budget and Finance Committee in the next couple of weeks. Currently, he said, if a property owner is cited by the Department of Building and Safety for a complaint, they get a notice to comply and are charged a non-compliance fee. If they don't pay, the matter is referred to the City Attorney's office, which can file a criminal case.

But, he said, judges don't like taking up court time for cases like these, and the City Attorney can't handle the workload either. So Council Member Koretz has proposed the same solution used by many other cities: enforcement through fines. Hand the fines go up if an offender doesn't pay, until it become a lien against the property. This can prevent many court cases and also ease the burden on inspectors.

Director John Gresham said code enforcement is the bane of our existence, and usually consists of varying degrees of hand slaps through minimal fines. In other cities, people are ordered to take down illegal structures, then reapply for proper permits. Mr. Koontz said this can't be sold as a money-maker for the City, because that's an illegal way of enforcing codes. But if you're out of compliance, it's a myth that you pay the fine and you're done. The fines do escalate. Also, the City Council wouldn't support asking people to tear things down, as they do in Beverly Hills, but he hopes they will have enough votes for this proposal. And the City Attorney is drafting the final language, which should help. He asked they are, however, turning to constituents to ask for help and would appreciate the GWNC's support.

Director Margy Hudson asked if Mr. Koretz's motion is supported by Tom La Bonge and Herb Wesson (the two other Council Members in the GWNC area). Mr. Koontz said they do have support from Mr. LaBonge, Mr. Rosendahl and Mr. Kirkorian. Some people who opposed the idea say it's unfair to the poor, but it's just like a speeding ticket – if you break law, you have to pay. Ms. Hudson thanked Mr. Koontz for his work on this issue. Mr. Koontz said the current system doesn't pay for itself, which means it's subsidizing people who are breaking the law.

Alternate Director Mary Rajswing asked what measures would be taken to collect the higher penalties, and Mr. Koontz said if the amount owed is small, the matter would go to a collection agency; large amounts would result in a lien against the property. And liens always catch up to the owner at some point. Ms. Hudson asked when this matter will go to the full city council, and Mr. Koontz said he doesn't know, but it will definitely be within the next couple of months.

City Council Member Paul Koretz Motion on Digital On-Site Signs – Mr. Koontz said this motion started out as a proposal to ban all digital on-site signage, but Mr. Koretz was asked by other Council members to do it only within his own district. He noted that the exception to all digital signage regulations is that on-site ads are still allowed. But

Mr. Koretz doesn't want to see them in his district, so he proposed a temporary ban. They've been told, however, that they wouldn't get a hearing on the issue, and other Council members would prevent it from coming to a vote.

Director John Gresham asked if on-site super graphics are illegal, but Mr. Koontz said they are completely legal today. A stakeholder asked why the motion was only for the 5th district, and Mr. Koontz said certain City Council members, especially in downtown districts, wouldn't support a city-wide ban, or at least one that would also affect their districts. On the other hand, some Council Members have asked for their districts or parts of their districts to be included. Tom La Bonge has expressed some degree of interest, but hasn't made a request one way or the other.

Dubai/Cordon Bleu Restaurant (4653 W. Beverly) – This issue was tabled until our next meeting.

Potential Preschool at Van Ness & Elmwood – Director Elizabeth Fuller reported that we have received a letter from stakeholder Thomas Meyer, outlining his plans to purchase a house and open a preschool – enrolling 30-40 students – at this location. Stakeholder Karen Gilman said she lives just three houses east of this corner, and the house in question is currently vacant and zoned R3. She offered to look into the zoning and try to figure out whether it's OK to run a business in a house there without living there. She also said the position of the Larchmont Village Neighborhood Association will be determined after Mr. Meyer finds out whether his purchase of the house (in a short sale deal) will be possible. Ms. Fuller said Mr. Meyer has offered to make a formal presentation to the GWNC also at that point.

Updates on Previous Land Use Issues – Tabled.

Board Member Comments/New Business

There were no board member comments or new business.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Announcements and Adjournment

Director Elizabeth Fuller announced a Mayor's Day of Service gardening and painting volunteer event that will be held at LA High School and Wilshire Crest Elementary School on March 20. She said volunteers are needed for painting and gardening projects at Wilshire Crest, and there will be an e-waste collection, open to the community, at LA High.

President Dougherty said the next meeting of the GWNC will be held on April 14, and the Land Use Committee will meet on the Tuesday a week before that.

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The meeting was adjourned at 11:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Fuller
Secretary