



Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council General Meeting
July 9, 2014
MINUTES
Approved by the Board, 08/13/14

1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance (Owen Smith)

A duly noticed Meeting of the Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council (“GWNC”) Board of Directors was held on Wednesday, July 9, 2014, at the Ebell of Los Angeles, 743 S. Lucerne Blvd., Los Angeles. President Owen Smith called the meeting to order at 7:02 p. m.

2. Roll Call (Jeffry Carpenter)

Secretary Jeffry Carpenter called the roll. Fourteen of the 21 Board Members or their Alternates were present at the Roll Call: Jeffry Carpenter, Ann Eggleston, William Funderburk, Michael Genewick, Karen Gilman (Alternate for Jane Usher), Joseph Hoffman, Fred Mariscal, Frances McFall, Robby O’Donnell (Alternate for John Gresham), Clinton Oie, Jason Peers, Owen Smith, Julie Stromberg and James Wolf. Jack Humphreville, Jeff McManus (Alternate for Dorian Shapiro) and John Winther arrived later. Board Members absent and not represented by an Alternate: Patricia Carroll, Patricia Lombard, Daniel Whitley and Greg Wittmann. The GWNC quorum (the minimum number of Board Members needing to be present to take binding votes on Agendized Items) is 13 (see <http://empowerla.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Greater-Wilshire-NC-Bylaws.pdf>), so the Board could take such votes. All 21 Board Seats were filled. No Board Seats were vacant (some Alternate Seats were vacant; see below). Also attending: 28 Stakeholders and guests. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Ms. McFall.

3. Approval of the Minutes (Jeffry Carpenter)

A. Approval of the Minutes of the June 11, 2014 General Meeting

MOTION (by Mr. Genewick, seconded by Mr. Carpenter): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council approves the Minutes of its June 11, 2014 General Meeting as written.

MOTION PASSED unanimously by a voice vote with 14 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions.

4. President’s Report (Owen Smith)

A. Board Vacancies.

Mr. Wolf noted the vacancies for Mr. Smith. Alternates are needed for: Area 2 (Citrus Square), Area 3 (Country Club Heights), Area 4 (Fremont Place), Area 9 (Oakwood/Maplewood/St. Andrews Square), Area 12 (Western-Wilton), Education, Religion and Non-Profit.

There were no nominations at this time.

B. Seating of Board Members and Alternates Elected or Volunteered But Not Previously Installed – if any Neighborhood Council Oath of Office (Owen Smith).

Mr. McManus already had been accepted (May 14th) as the Area 8 (Melrose) Alternate Representative. He read aloud the Oath of Office. Mr. Wolf invited him to be Seated with the Board. *[This made 15 Board Members (or their Alternate(s)) present (the GWNC quorum is 13).]*

C. Ethics & Funding Training

[The following is from the Agenda.] All Board Members and Alternates must complete Ethics Training in order to vote on funding motions before the Board. The course is available online at <http://ethics.lacity.org/education/ethics2007/?audience=done>. In addition to Ethics training, all Board Members and Alternates are also REQUIRED to take a new Funding Training course (about the new system of NC checking accounts that will be launched soon). The course is at <http://www.slideshare.net/EmpowerLA/nc-checking-account-training-62413>. The last page of the presentation contains a link -- <http://www.empowerla.org/Boardregistration> – to a completion form you can submit to register your attendance. Board members and Alternates MUST complete both trainings to be eligible to vote on funding-related matters. *[Tables are in the Agenda that show which Board Members and which Alternates have completed which trainings.]*

Mr. Smith noted the above.

Board Members Jack Humphreville and John Winther arrived at this time, making 17 Board Members (or their Alternate(s)) present (the GWNC quorum is 13).

D. Proposed resolution of official GWNC position on additional DONE-required training (sexual harassment, etc.) for NC Board Members

Mr. Smith read aloud the Motion

MOTION (by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Humphreville): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council very strongly opposes proposals for additional Board Member training requirements beyond the current ethics and funding training. All GWNC Board Members are valued members of our community whose time is valuable and limited. They also volunteer their time, often with some difficulty, taking time away from their businesses and their families, just to help the Neighborhood Council system work for the City of Los Angeles, and they receive little or no recognition of their considerable efforts.

Should these additional training requirements be imposed, many of our Board members would find these increased demands by the Neighborhood Council an unmanageable burden. As a result, Board seats could go unfilled and the continued viability of our Neighborhood Council could be jeopardized.

While the current training topics are recognized as needed to insure the integrity of the public decision-making process, the additional topics are not. They

insult, impugn and unreasonably burden the entire body of Neighborhood Council Board Members with the mis-behaviors and personality conflicts of a few. It is the responsibility of the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners to institute processes for promptly identifying alleged instances of conflict and mis-behavior and to institute procedures that diligently and intelligently respond to and remediate such instances as they occur.

In our opinion, additional training requirements represent a serious failure of the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners to recognize and properly shoulder their own responsibilities in overseeing the Neighborhood Council system. We urge the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners to withdraw the proposals and to actively pursue more intelligently-focused, constructive approaches to issues of conduct and behavior within the Neighborhood Council system.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Smith described extensive work and experience dealing with the above in his business career. He believed that it is better to “deal with the people doing it” than to require more training.

MOTION PASSED unanimously by a voice vote, with 17 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions.

- E. Official endorsement of GWNC co-sponsorship of new Neighborhood Prosecutor introduction event (July 31, 7 p.m. at CD 10 Field Office, 1819 S. Western Ave.). [Note: no funding is currently being sought for the event...just official sponsorship and publicity help.]

Mr. Smith noted the above.

- F. Appointment of two GWNC City Budget Representatives (current representatives are Jack Humphreville and Fred Mariscal)

MOTION (by Mr. Funderburk, seconded by Mr. Hoffman): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council reappoints Jack Humphreville and Fred Mariscal as its two GWNC City Budget Representatives.

MOTION PASSED unanimously by voice vote, with 17 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions.

5. Local Government Updates

A. CD4 Update (Ben Seinfeld)

Mr. Smith reported for Ben Seinfeld, Field Deputy for L.A. City District Four Councilman Tom LaBonge (213-485-3337; cell 213-804-2388; Ben.Seinfeld@LACity.org; <http://CD4.LACity.org>), on local events. Mr. Winther clarified that the City “earmarked the money” for the North Larchmont Median Dedication.

B. CD5 Update (John Darnell)

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

6. Community Concerns and Public Comments

Hebel Rodriguez, new LAPD Wilshire Division Senior Lead Officer (office 213.473.0476; mobile/text phone 213.793.0715; 35738@LAPD.LACity.org), introduced himself and encouraged contacting him with questions. His Basic Car 747 coverage area is roughly north to Olympic and south to Venice, and west to Redondo and east to Crenshaw. (Parts of our Sycamore Square neighborhood, north to 8th St. and west to Mansfield, are also included.)

Nooshi Bahiri, L.A. City Deputy Attorney, Neighborhood Prosecutor Program (310.732.4600; Nooshi.Bahiri@LACity.org;

<http://atty.lacity.org/CRIMINAL/NeighborhoodProsecutorProgram/index.htm>), introduced herself. She is “stationed at the Wilshire Division” and encouraged contacting her with problems. She is “going to work very closely with the Senior Lead Officers” and “covering all of Wilshire.” Mr. Funderburk reported there has been drug dealing at the Avalon Bay Apartments on Wilshire at Citrus; Ms. Bahiri will work on it.

A. Presentation of GWNC Citizen Recognition Award: Jocelyn Duarte (Fred Mariscal)
Mr. Mariscal described Ms. Duarte’s background as an involved parent, volunteer and arts funding advocate for Wilshire Crest School, and presented the Award. Ms. Duarte thanked the GWNC for the Award and for supporting Wilshire Crest Elementary School.

B. Community Q&A with Michael Cortez - METRO Construction Relations/Purple Line Subway Extension Project

[This Agenda Item was addressed after Item #6. C.]

i. Introductory remarks

Copies were distributed of a “Purple Line Extension” handout and slides were presented. Mr. Cortez, Metro Construction Relations Officer, East Segment (direct 323.900.2145; CortezMic@metro.net; 24-hour information 213.922.6934; Bus Rapid Transit 24-hour hotline 213.922.2500+1; PurpleLineExt@metro.net; www.facebook.com/PurpleLineExt; www.Twitter.com/PurpleLineExt; www.metro.net/PurpleLineExt) described the project and encouraged contacting him about anything. Kasey Shuda, Construction Relations Manager, said the work “will change rapidly as we go through different phases.” She said “the majority of our work on the street will only be for about two years, then we’re going underground.” She stated that “no work is happening in” or “outside of that yard” at Wilshire and LaBrea; it is being used “as a staging area . . . we are putting up a 20-foot wall around the entire area of the yard . . . we have a noise Permit at Wilshire and LaBrea for six months; then we have to go back” to renew it. They have to demonstrate that they are being responsive to the community. Ms. Shuda said the current Bank of America lot “will be a staging area” with “a 20-foot sound wall around it.” Also, “for demolition we can only work 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; we won’t be doing any night work.” She described “ten weekends in a row” of full weekend closures of Wilshire; “it’ll only be closed block by block” and “we’ll be working around the clock.”

ii. Pre-submitted Stakeholder questions

See below.

iii. Q&A

Mr. Cortez and Mr. Shuda answered many questions about construction noise mitigations, the work timeline and more.

C. Other public comments

Oscar Winslow, City Council District Four Candidate (www.OscarWinslow.com), described his background.

7. Fiscal Year Budget Package, Treasurer's Report & Budget Items (Patti Carroll & Elizabeth Fuller)

A. Neighborhood Council Self-Assessment for FY 2013-14

GWNC administrative and communications consultant Elizabeth Fuller presented the Assessment, which will need to be approved with the rest of our 2014-2015 budget package in August.

B. GWNC Strategic Plan for FY 2014-15

Ms. Fuller presented the Strategic Plan, which will need to be approved with the rest of our 2014-15 budget package in August.

C. GWNC Budget for FY 2014-15

[*This Agenda Item was addressed after Item #7. D.*] Ms. Fuller described proposed Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Budget allocations and funding arrangements, which will need to be approved and submitted in August. Noteworthy Specific Expenses:

- i. Administrator & website services
- ii. Minutes writing services
- iii. Meeting venue: Ebell
- iv. Meeting venue: Wilshire United Methodist Church
- v. Advertising: Larchmont Chronicle
- vi. Advertising: Larchmont Buzz
- vii. Advertising: Bus benches
- viii. Unpaid grant request from 2013-14: St. Gregory Nazianzen School
- ix. Storage locker
- x. P.O. box
- xi. Wilton Islands maintenance

D. Monthly Budget Reports/Expenditures Approvals for the month of June

Ms. Fuller distributed and reviewed the "Monthly Expenditure Report for June 2014"; the GWNC "Budget for Fiscal Year 2013-2014 APPROVED by the Board on July 10, 2013 / Revised Dec. 11, 2013"; the "Monthly Spending Report – Fiscal Year 2013-2014, as of 7/9/14"; a list of "Invoices/Grants/Demand Warrants Paid" and "Automatic Deductions"; and the GWNC "Budget for Fiscal Year 2014-2015."

FUNDING MOTION (by Ms. Eggleston, seconded by Mr. Funderburk): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council approves its “Monthly Expenditure Report for June 2014.”

MOTION PASSED unanimously by a roll call vote of the 14 eligible voters present with all 14 in favor (“Yes” or “Aye”) (Carpenter, Eggleston, Funderburk, Genewick, Gilman, Hoffman, Humphreville, Mariscal, McFall, O’Donnell, Oie, Peers, Smith and Wolf). There were 0 opposed and 0 abstentions.

FUNDING MOTION (by Mr. Genewick, seconded by Ms. Gilman): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council approves the individual expenditures it made in June 2014.

MOTION PASSED unanimously by a roll call vote of the 14 eligible voters present with all 14 in favor (“Yes” or “Aye”) (Carpenter, Eggleston, Funderburk, Genewick, Gilman, Hoffman, Humphreville, Mariscal, McFall, O’Donnell, Oie, Peers, Smith and Wolf). There were 0 opposed and 0 abstentions.

E. YTD Budget
See above.

F. Progress report on contracts (Ebell, WUMC, E. Fuller are all paid, need renewal as above)
Ms. Fuller noted this.

G. Other Finance Issues/Expenditures
There were none at this time.

8. DWP Oversight (Jack Humphreville)

Mr. Humphreville described the issue of a disputed \$40 million in two DWP-controlled trusts. He said that “no rate increases are planned” at this time.

9. City Budget Issues (Humphreville)

Mr. Humphreville reported that “next year [2015-2016] the City is looking at a \$165 million shortfall.” He described City employee pension concerns.

10. Old Business

There was no old business at this time.

11. New Business

A. Motion of support to stop abuse of handicap placards (Carpenter)

Suggested motion: The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council wishes to endorse the need to address the abuse of handicapped placards as expressed in letters to Councilmember Koretz by the Westwood Village Improvement Association on May 14 and more recently by the Central City Association of Los Angeles on July 3. We respectively encourage the City Council to pursue appropriate and equitable remedies with

the State of California to significant abuses of the current handicapped placard system that reasonably treat the needs of the truly impaired, the driving public at large and of local businesses and residents.

Mr. Carpenter described the issue and encouraged feedback, but asked that a vote on the matter be tabled pending further discussion with members of the Melrose BID, which originally raised the issue.

12. Transportation Committee (Julie Stromberg)

A. Update on GWNC Submission for BSS Neighborhood Council (pothole repair) Blitz
Ms. Stromberg reported that 15 repair requests were made to the City Bureau of Street Services.

B. Other issues

Ms. Stromberg reported that the Mayor's "Save Our Streets" Initiative "will no longer be on our November ballot." Projects "throughout L. A. County" may be interrupted due to "possible Highway Trust Fund insolvency on or about August 1, 2014."

13. Outreach Committee (Mariscal)

A. Western Ave. street improvement survey/visioning walk – Saturday, August 9 (Greg Wittmann)

Mr. Mariscal noted this. Ms. Fuller relayed that the date will be changed pending further planning.

B. GWNC Fall Forum: ReCode LA (date, location, speakers, etc. TBA)

Mr. Mariscal reviewed this.

C. Still seeking "Top 10 Issues" lists from our neighborhood associations (have La Brea-Hancock, Sycamore Square, St. Andrews Square, Wilshire Park, Citrus Square...need others; Joe Hoffman collating submissions)

Mr. Mariscal noted this.

D. Discussion of 33rd Congressional District candidate forum possibilities – LANCC?

Mr. Mariscal noted this.

14. Board Member Reports and Comments

Mr. Funderburk requested to have Agendized the GWNC contacting the LADOT and the Police Commission regarding the possible extension of Metro construction hours.

15. Land Use Committee (James Wolf)

[Each Item's Issue/first paragraph is directly from the Agenda.]

A. Appeal of Certificate of Compatibility for condo project at 853-859 S. Lucerne

Issue: A proposal for a 15-unit condominium project at this address has been in the works for several years. The local HPOZ Board began reviewing the project in early 2013. That body raised concerns about the style, size and massing of the building as well as compatibility within the context of the historic Windsor Village neighborhood. In November, the HPOZ Board scheduled a vote on the project, but right before the vote, the

City requested (without saying why) that the one neighborhood representative on the Board recuse herself from the vote. The Board's vote after the recusal was a tie. Later, the Director of Planning approved the project, and the requested Certificate of Compatibility was issued. Neighbors are appealing this decision, however, based on the forced recusal of the one neighborhood representative from the HPOZ Board vote, their position that the project violates the HPOZ's adopted Preservation Plan (which governs the development process even without a decisive Board vote), the fact that CD4 officials also expressed their opposition to the project and the fact that the Planning director addressed none of the Board's or CD4's stated concerns in her approval report. **LUC recommended Motion:** [see below].

Copies were distributed of an Appeal from the Windsor Village Association to the [L.A. City] Central Area Planning Commission. Mr. Wolf described the issue.

MOTION (by Mr. Wolf, seconded by Mr. Humphreville): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council supports the Windsor Village neighborhood's appeal of the City's Certificate of Appropriateness for the Morumbila condo project at 853-859 S. Lucerne, based on the Director's Decision, Findings and Certificate of Compatibility dated May 29, 2013. This appeal, and the GWNC's support, is based on the belief that the Project violates the Windsor Village Preservation Plan because the size, height, bulk, massing, scale and design of the project are not compatible with the historic fabric and character of the neighborhood, as the Plan requires.

In addition, we support the position of the Appeal that "The City Planning Commission actively caused a prejudicial irregularity in the HPOZ vote regarding the issuance of a Compatibility Certificate, by forcing a member of the HPOZ Board to recuse herself, without justification...", which resulted in a tied vote on the Board, and left the Board without an official position on the project.

Finally, we agree with the Appeal that "The cumulative negative effects of the actions and omissions of City Planning in allowing the selective and discriminatory enforcement of the Preservation Plan against the interests of Windsor Village, the forced recusal of an HPOZ Board member (who is a long-time resident of Windsor Village) without justification, and the Director's Determination and issuance of a certificate of Compatibility to a project which dishonors and violates the Windsor Village Preservation Plan has caused and will continue to cause irreparable and irreversible harm" to the neighborhood. And we concur that "the Director's determination will serve as a dangerous precedent which will erode the substance and spirit of the Windsor Village Preservation Plan."

MOTION PASSED unanimously by a voice vote, with 17 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions.

[Note: the following items are presented for information only. No Board action is requested or required at this time.]

B. Conversion of the historic Gilmore gas station to a Starbucks drive-through at 859 N. Highland.

Issue: The GWNC Board voted to support this application at its June meeting, on the conditions that 1) the existing unused curb cuts on both Highland and Willoughby be filled in, and 2) that the developer return with her new exterior drawing (presented for the first time at the June GWNC Board meeting) to the LUC for further discussion. The project representatives did return to the June Land Use Committee meeting, as requested, but there were no further requests for modifications from the Committee members...so the Board's June vote of support (with the curb cut condition) will stand and will be reported to the Zoning Administrator for the case.

C. Development of a 4-unit Small Lot Subdivision project at 421 N. Van Ness

Issue: Developers presented their request for a tract map and reduced setbacks for a 4-unit Small Lot Subdivision project at this address. The units would be 2,000-2,500 square feet each, with a maximum height of 38-42 feet. Committee members and neighbors present expressed concerns regarding the building style, materials, setbacks and other issues. The developers have held one informational meeting with neighbors, but both Land Use Committee members and the neighbors present urged that more outreach be done – especially through the Larchmont Village Neighborhood Association. The developers said they would meet with the LVNA and return to the LUC for further discussion and input before their City hearing (no hearing date is set yet).

Potential agenda items for future LUC meetings:

- 30-unit development at 4180 W. Wilshire (at Crenshaw)
- Conversion of existing recreation space to a living unit with garage, office and attic at 118 S. Gramercy
- Density bonus at 807 N. Hudson
- Larchmont Bungalow variance/CUP application
- Development of a 5-unit single Lot Subdivision project at 856 S. Wilton
- Development of parking lot into 22 townhouse units over subterranean parking at 612 N. Norton
- Change of use to non-profit museum at the former Scottish Rite Temple, 4357 Wilshire Blvd.

16. Announcements and Adjournment

Mr. Smith noted the next General Board Meeting date: Wednesday, August 13, 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Smith declared and the Board agreed to **ADJOURN** the Meeting at 8:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
David Levin, Minutes Writer
Edited by GWNC.