



Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council Land Use Committee

July 22, 2014

MINUTES

Approved by the Committee 08/26/14

1. Call to Order

A duly noticed meeting of the Land Use Committee (“LUC”) of the Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council (“GWNC”) was held on Tuesday, July 22, 2014, at Wilshire United Methodist Church, Assembly Room, 4350 Wilshire Blvd. Chairman James Wolf called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Secretary Barbara Savage called the roll. Ten of the 17 Committee Members were present at the Roll Call: Ann Eggleston, Mike Genewick, John Gresham, Joseph Hoffman, Patty Lombard, Caroline Moser, Barbara Savage, Julie Stromberg, Greg Wittmann and James Wolf. Patricia Carroll and Karen Gilman arrived later. Committee Members absent: Alan Bernstein, Dick Herman, John Kaliski, Jeff McManus and Dorian Shapiro. The GWNC Land Use Committee quorum (the minimum number of Committee Members needing to be present to take binding votes on Agendized Items) is nine, so the Committee could take such votes. Also attending: 26 Stakeholders and guests.

3. Approval of the Minutes

MOTION (by Mr. Gresham, seconded by Ms. Lombard): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council Land Use Committee approves the Minutes of its May 27, 2014 Meeting as written.

MOTION PASSED by a hand vote with no objection.

MOTION (by Mr. Eggleston, seconded by Mr. Gresham): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council Land Use Committee approves the Minutes of its June 24, 2014 Meeting as written.

MOTION PASSED by a hand vote with no objection.

4. Review of Recent Notifications for Possibility of Further Study/Action (GWNC Mail and Early Notification Report).

Copies of the “07/22/14 June-July Early Planning Report Summaries for GWNC Area” of recent land use applications received by the City were distributed and reviewed. GWNC administrative and communications consultant Elizabeth Fuller reported that she is in contact with several projects’ representatives. Mr. Wolf noted that a number of other projects are in HPOZs.

5. Old Business

A. Zone Change, Variance and CUP application for the Larchmont Bungalow. (Ann D'Amato)

Ms. D'Amato, an owner's representative, "provided 25 copies" of the "Zone Change, Zone Variance, Conditional Use" Permit application for the 107 N. Larchmont Ave. restaurant. Albert Mizrahi, the owner, stated that "I'm here today to make amends; I'm sorry" for previous events; "I take responsibility for everything that has happened."

Committee Member Karen Gilman arrived at this time, making 11 Members present (the Committee quorum is nine).

Ms. D'Amato described the Applications and said "he is requesting an entertainment Permit."

Committee Member Patti Carroll arrived at this time, making 12 Members present (the Committee quorum is nine).

Ms. D'Amato said that the City Planning Dept. indicated today that "we may have to modify the Application again." The Variance Hearing will be August 12th; it may need to be delayed. The project would have 92 seats, including 44 indoor where there now are forty-six. Jerry Neuman, another owner's representative, indicated that the main change would be putting a bar where the coffee roaster currently is; "there's very little change that's actually going to happen." He said they "will probably . . . do additional back spaces." There was extensive discussion of Variance options per the representatives' discussion with the City. They acknowledged that "there is no full alcohol service on Larchmont currently . . . beer and wine is being requested." There was discussion of parking capacity and availability. It was said that the Application is from "a desire to come into compliance" and it was acknowledged that an "Order to Comply" prompted the Application. There was extensive discussion about that the City decision on the Application will affect the outcomes of pending civil and criminal cases. They are "asking for an additional restaurant" beyond the "Q" conditions and offered to re-present if their Application needs to be changed.

MOTION (by Ms. Savage, seconded by Ms. Lombard): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council Land Use Committee recommends that the GWNC Board support the application of the Larchmont Bungalow takeout business, 107 N. Larchmont Ave., Los Angeles, for a Zone Change from [Q] condition two of ORD 168334 to allow a change of use from Takeout/Retail to Restaurant with 44 indoor seats and 48 outdoor seats. Restaurant is 2,474 S.F. Hours of operation are 7:30 AM to 9:30 PM.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Fuller was concerned that, if the City approves the Zone Change, it would be "zoning by exception" that is "always troublesome" because of the precedent it can set. She described the difference from the Flywheel Application. She said "this is a clear exception to the number of restaurants . . . on Larchmont" and would "open the door" to other applications for full service alcohol. Ms. Moser believed that the Application "is inadequate . . . so vague." Mr. Wolf was concerned that the Application was an attempted to "expand" the "Q" conditions.

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

MOTION FAILED by a hand vote with one in favor; ten opposed; one abstained.

MOTION (by Ms. Eggleston, seconded by Ms. Lombard): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council Land Use Committee recommends that the GWNC Board oppose the application of the Larchmont Bungalow takeout business, 107 N. Larchmont Ave., Los Angeles, for a Conditional Use Permit to allow on-site sale of alcoholic beverages at a restaurant with 44 indoor seats and 48 outdoor seats with hours of operation from 7:30 AM to 9:30 PM.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Wolf noted that “nowhere else on Larchmont is there full service” of alcohol and this would set a precedent.

MOTION PASSED by a hand vote with 11 in favor; one abstained.

MOTION (by Ms. Gilman, seconded by Ms. Lombard): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council Land Use Committee recommends that the GWNC Board oppose the application of the Larchmont Bungalow takeout business, 107 N. Larchmont Ave., Los Angeles, for a Zone Variance to allow 7 on-site parking spaces instead of required 25 on-site parking spaces for a 2,474 sq. ft. restaurant.

DISCUSSION: There was discussion of City parking requirements. Ms. Moser noted that the Applicant had not referred to doing any parking studies.

MOTION PASSED unanimously by a hand vote with all 12 in favor.

MOTION (by Ms. Eggleston, seconded by Ms. Moser): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council Land Use Committee recommends that the GWNC Board oppose the Master Land Use application of the Larchmont Bungalow takeout business, 107 N. Larchmont Ave., Los Angeles.

DISCUSSION: There was discussion of City parking requirements. Ms. Moser noted that

MOTION PASSED by a hand vote with 11 in favor; one abstained.

Mr. Wolf indicated that “some documentation” will be prepared.

- B. Variance and Development of 5-unit Single Lot Subdivision project at 856 S. Wilton.
(Matthew Hayden)

Mr. Wolf reported that the Applicant could not attend this Meeting, so the item will be tabled

- C. Development of 4-unit Small Lot Subdivision project at 421 N. Van Ness. (Sam Trude)

Ms. Gilman described the project. Mr. Wolf reported that Mr. Trude requested that further action on the item be tabled until more community outreach is done.

D. Single Lot Subdivision Ordinance Design Guidelines. (Kaliski, Lombard, Fuller)

Copies of the City’s proposed Small Lot Subdivision (SLS) Ordinance amendments were distributed. Renee Weitzer, Chief of Staff for L.A. City District Four Councilman Tom LaBonge (213-477-2343; Renee.Weitzer@LACity.org), described that the Councilman “is the father of the Mansionization Ordinance” and that he is trying to amend the SLS Ordinance. She said “the Zoning Administrators are paying attention to the guidelines . . . more than ever before.” She reported that the City Council will vote July 29th and wanted support. She indicated that, if the amendments are approved, “this is just the beginning.” Current projects “will be grandfathered in . . . to the existing Ordinance.” Ms. Weitzer described that “developers must come in with site plans and elevations when then come to a Hearing” so that neighbors can see what the project will look like.

Don Hunt, President, South Hollywood Neighborhood Association (SHNA), said they are “fully in support” of the Councilman’s Motion and request GWNC support. Stakeholder Lucille Saunders of the La Brea - Willoughby Coalition distributed copies of a Coalition letter “Re: Council Offices and MWC PLUC Protocols for SLS Essential” and relayed that the Coalition and the Mid-City West Neighborhood Council support the Councilman’s Motion. She described SLS plans she has seen that would greatly increase density and vehicles and not provide for good emergency access. Ms. Fuller noted that many SLS projects in the Greater Wilshire area are being built where single-family homes were – which means that even if the lots are zoned R1.5 or R2, people have experienced these areas as single-family neighborhoods for 80 years or more. There was discussion that much of the opposition to SLS projects is because their typically “modern” design is out of character with other architecture in neighborhoods. Ms. Weitzer clarified that the Ordinance contains “guidelines”; State law bars prohibiting SLS projects. There was extensive discussion of the reality of small lot histories and project designs being very different from that envisioned by government officials.

MOTION (by Mr. Genewick, seconded by Ms. Eggleston): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council Land Use Committee recommends that the GWNC Board support the City of Los Angeles’ Single Lot Subdivision Ordinance Design Guidelines.

AMENDED MOTION (by Mr. Gresham, seconded by Ms. Moser): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council Land Use Committee recommends that the GWNC Board support the City of Los Angeles’ Single Lot Subdivision Ordinance Design Guidelines and send copies of a letter expressing that support to all City Councilmembers, the City Planning Commission and the City Planning Department.

MOTION PASSED unanimously by a hand vote.

There was discussion that the Coalition letter is “informative and insightful.”

6. New Business

- A. Residential Floor Area (RFA) Overlay Zone for La Brea-Hancock neighborhood. (Savage)
Copies of a draft Motion (see below), a City Council Motion “to update and improve the Small Lot Subdivision Guidelines” and a “La Brea Hancock Homeowners’ Association –

Pro RFA Signatures/McMansion Map” were distributed. Ms. Savage described developers “tearing down” single-family homes and “building mansions.” She said “none of the developers in that area are following the BMO” [Baseline Mansionization Ordinance] or “listing the floor area in their ads.” She reported that developers are dumping trash, including asbestos, ahead of inspections. She described typically “big, boxy” designs with small setbacks that tower over small adjacent homes. She said “we’re asking to . . . not allow attached garages” and “they’re not replanting the sycamore trees that they’re tearing down.” She indicated that she and some neighbors believe that much unpermitted work is being done. Ms. Weitzer agreed that garages should not be counted in Floor Area calculations or filings. Bob Eisele, Vice-President of the La Brea-Hancock Homeowners Association, described increasing mansionization which approximately 70% of nearby homeowners oppose; at a community meeting all approximately 70 people present opposed mansionization.

Stakeholder Kathy Roberts described “extremely aggressive” tactics by real estate agents to get homeowners to sell. Stakeholder Diane Eisele believed that neighborhoods are “under assault.” She said that demolitions happen on a Saturday and that “asbestos is not managed in a correct manner.” She indicated that State law makes it illegal to remove a “native” sycamore tree; developers have been cutting down sycamores before it could be determined whether they were native or non-native. Their “arborist” explained that after a sycamore is cut down “it’s impossible to know if it was a native or non-native sycamore.” Jim O’Sullivan, President, Miracle Mile Residents Association, supports the Overlay Zone and noted that there are YouTube videos of drones surveying properties.

MOTION (by Ms. Lombard, seconded by Ms. Savage): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council Land Use Committee recommends that the GWNC Board thank Stakeholders and support L.A. City District Four Councilman Tom LaBonge’s Motion that the Los Angeles Dept. of City Planning be directed to study the La Brea Hancock neighborhood to develop a Residential Floor Area (RFA) overlay zone to improve the compatibility of new development with existing development, etc.

MOTION PASSED unanimously by a hand vote.

Ms. Fuller added that four letters of support were received from neighbors.

B. Density bonus at 801-813 N. Hudson. (Michael Cohanzad)

Mr. Wolf reported that the Applicant could not attend this Meeting, so the item will be tabled

C. Construction of 30-unit apartment building at 4180 W. Wilshire. (Matt Dzurec)

Mr. Wolf reported that the project is at the southeast corner of Wilshire and Crenshaw and that the Applicants spoke to the Park Mile Design Review Board (DRB). The DRB will meet August 7th and the applicants will come to the GWNC after that process is complete

D. Development of 162-unit, 7-story apartment complex at 700 S. Manhattan Pl. (Jared Sopko)

Mr. Wolf reported that the Applicant could not attend this Meeting, so the item will be tabled. Ms. Fuller reported that Stakeholder Frances McFall and neighbors are aware of the project.

7. Committee Member Comments and Reports

A. Transportation Committee Report (Stromberg)

Ms. Stromberg reported that the Federal Highway Trust Fund voted on funding and is solvent until May 15th. The Committee invited and Metro representatives presented at the last GWNC Board Meeting. The Committee also followed up on Stakeholders' questions.

8. Public Comments

Ms. Lombard recommended purchasing a projector to view project images as a group; Ms. Fuller will discuss it with Treasurer Patti Carroll, for inclusion in the GWNC's proposed budget for FY 2014-1015. Mr. Wittmann believed that some projects that increase density may be worth supporting. Mr. Gresham noted that Single Lot Subdivisions are being built without enough supporting infrastructure. In response to Ms. Eggleston's comment about a new second unit recently built on a single-family lot in the Sycamore Square area, there was discussion of the "granny flats ordinance," AB1866. Ms. Moser reported that the possible code violations at 610 S. Van Ness "went to court . . . they have an Order to Comply." [The GWNC voted October 10, 2012 to "strongly urge[s] City Council District Four to investigate apparent building and zoning violations at 610 South Van Ness, and requests that appropriate legal actions be taken for any violations of Orders to Comply." Stakeholder Jack Humphreville reported that the Appeal from the Windsor Village Association to the L.A. City Central Area Planning Commission regarding the proposed 15-unit Morumbila condo project at 853-859 S. Lucerne has an August 12th Hearing date. Ms. Weitzer offered that building and safety issues can be reported to Jonathan Brand (Deputy Chief of Land Use Planning for Councilman LaBonge; 213-485-3337; Jonathan.Brand@LACity.org).

9. Announcements and Adjournment

- A. Next meeting: Tuesday, August 26, 6:30 p.m. Possible future agenda items:
- Application for CUB renewal and extended business hours at Jajungguh Café at 4653 W. Beverly
 - Conversion of existing recreational space to second dwelling unit at 118 N. Gramercy
 - Development of parking lot into 22 townhouse units over subterranean parking at 612 Norton
 - Density bonus for 46-unit apartment project at 729-743 N. Hudson
 - Development of 5 condominiums at 4806 W. Elmwood
 - Change of use to non-profit museum at former Scottish Rite Temple, 4357 W. Wilshire Blvd.
 - Single Lot Subdivision project at 665 S. Rimpau

Mr. Wolf noted the above.

The Meeting was **ADJOURNED** at 8:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
David Levin, Minutes Writer
Edited by Land Use Committee.