



Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council Land Use Committee

September 23, 2014

MINUTES

Approved by the Committee 10/28/14

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, September 23, 2014, at Wilshire United Methodist Church, Assembly Room, 4350 Wilshire Blvd. Chairman James Wolf called the meeting to order at 6:44 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Secretary Barbara Savage called the roll. Eleven of the 17 Committee Members were present at the Roll Call: Patricia Carroll, Ann Eggleston, Mike Genewick, Karen Gilman, John Gresham, Joseph Hoffman, John Kaliski, Patty Lombard, Barbara Savage, Greg Wittmann and James Wolf. Committee Members absent: Alan Bernstein, Dick Herman, Jeff McManus, Caroline Moser, Dorian Shapiro and Julie Stromberg. 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: 27 Stakeholders and guests.

3. Approval of the Minutes

The following corrections to the July 22, 2014 Minutes were requested: page one, Item #3 “Mr. Genewick, seconded by Mr. Gresham” should be “Ms. Eggleston, seconded by Mr. Shapiro”; page two, Item #6 “720 Western” should be “720 S. Western.”

MOTION (by Ms. Gilman, seconded by Mr. Genewick): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council Land Use Committee approves the Minutes of its July 22, 2014 Meeting as corrected.

MOTION PASSED unanimously by a hand vote with 11 in favor, zero opposed and zero abstentions.

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

Recent land use applications received by the City were reviewed. Projects at 407 S. Gramercy and 3700 W. Olympic were flagged for research and possible committee attention.

5. Old Business

A. Development of five condominiums at 4806 W. Elmwood (Ronald Liu, Darrell Cheng, Alex Ma)

[This Agenda Item was addressed after Item #5. B.] Site diagrams were distributed. The site is one lot away from the corner property. At its highest the project is 38 feet four inches tall. They are not asking for any setback Variance. It was described that

landscaping was added on the earth, not on the structure, in front of each unit. Mr. Kaliski recommended bringing landscaping up to the first floor. Mr. Wittmann recommended reducing the planter wall height from five feet and using the wall as a sitting bench. They will modify the east side to accommodate air conditioning compressors. A trash dumpster would be kept in the no-parking area of the subterranean garage. There was extensive discussion of possible design improvements. Committee members had concerns about AC compressors under apartment windows, as well as garage vents and openings under or near windows of the living spaces. No Hearing date is set.

MOTION (by Mr. Gresham, seconded by Ms. Eggleston): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council Land Use Committee recommends that the GWNC Board oppose the current application to build five condominiums at 4806 W. Elmwood, but encourage the developers to return to the Committee with design revisions.

MOTION PASSED by a hand vote with no objection.

B. Development of 4-unit Small Lot Subdivision project at 421 N. Van Ness (Sam Trude/Kurt Gibbs)

Mr. Gibbs displayed photos and renderings and presented. The zoning is R1.5, not R3-1. He said five units could be built; they want to build four. The height limit is 45 feet; they want to build to 40 feet to the parapet. It would be “four units along the south with a green space” parkway. There would be one front door on Van Ness and three on the driveway side. He said “the actual site is about two feet above the street . . . the building projects over the garage around four feet . . . they’re three bedrooms, two baths . . . 2,000 square feet each . . . [in] four . . . short stories . . . technically three stories.” The garage is on the bottom, the sleeping quarters are above that and the living room is on top. Mr. Gibbs said “these buildings are right next to each other; the current code doesn’t allow that” while the City’s proposed Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance would allow it.

Mr. Kaliski was concerned that the five-foot side yard setback is too small. Charles D’Atri, President, Larchmont Village Neighborhood Association, was concerned that there is “a tremendous height increase . . . and it abuts single-family homes.” He asked “what precedent are we establishing?” and said “I don’t find the setbacks to be in keeping with the neighborhood.” Ms. Lombard wanted the project “to look like the architecture that’s already there.” There was extensive discussion of possible and desirable designs in regard to the Ordinance’s intent and nearby architecture. Mr. Genewick noted that “it’s 20 feet higher than the adjacent two buildings.” The Hearing will be October 1st.

MOTION (by Ms. Lombard, seconded by Ms. Gilman): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council Land Use Committee recommends that the GWNC Board oppose the Variance request for the 4-unit Small Lot Subdivision project at 421 N. Van Ness.

AMENDMENT to the MOTION (by Mr. Kaliski, seconded by Ms. Lombard): to add the wording “until the applicant meets setback requirements that would otherwise be required by underlying zoning; that the applicant better match the pattern of existing front yards of narrow width driveway apertures that minimize views of driveway areas and that the applicant reduce the overall height, mass, bulk and size of the individual units to better fit the scale and character of the existing community.

AMENDMENT to the MOTION PASSED by a hand vote with no objection.

AMENDED MOTION PASSED by a hand vote with no objection.

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

The representative was not present; it was agreed to TABLE this Item.

D. Density bonus for 46-unit apartment project at 729-743 N. Hudson (Eric Lieberman)

The representative was not present; it was agreed to TABLE this Item.

E. Construction of 4-storey, 22-unit apartment complex with density bonus at 5022-5026 Rosewood Ave. (Frank Afari)

The representative was not present; it was agreed to TABLE this Item.

6. New Business

A. Density bonus at 5036 Rosewood (Frank Afari)

The representative was not present; it was agreed to TABLE this Item.

B. Change of location for BRT bus stop on Wilshire Blvd. (Ginny-Marie Brideau)

Ms. Brideau, Community Relations Manager for Metro's Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project, passed out maps showing the current and proposed locations of nine local bus stops (at east- and west-bound Wilton, east- and west-bound Rimpau, west-bound Plymouth, east-bound Highland, east-bound Mansfield, east-bound Masselin and east-bound Curson), which Metro is proposing be moved from the near sides of intersections to the far sides, during rush hours. No stops will be eliminated, and the changes are for local buses only, to help prevent traffic back-ups, improve right-turn access for other vehicles and keep schedules more consistent.

MOTION (by Mr. Wittmann, seconded by Ms. Lombard): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council Land Use Committee recommends that the GWNC support Metro's plan to move the local bus stops to the far sides of the cross streets during rush hours at the named locations.

MOTION PASSED by a vote of 9 members in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstention (Eggleston) and 1 recusal (Kaliski).

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

The representative was not present; it was agreed to TABLE this Item.

D. Green space policing and possible CUP violations at Avalon Bay development (Savage)

Bill Funderburk, a GWNC Board Member and La Brea-Hancock Homeowners Association Member, said "the Avalon Bay apartment has resisted every attempt of the neighbors" for additional security. He described illegal activity there and said "the MOU calls for 24-hour security" and, of seven or eight lights in the open area behind the building, "only two are working." He said that Avalon claims that the 24-hour security promised in the MOU is not in the "Q" conditions. Stakeholder Fred Pickel described

project history dating from 1989; the green space was supposed to be maintained “to provide security” as per “a separate document agreement.” Air conditioning equipment was installed in what was to have been open space. Stakeholder Lesley Swanson described suspicious “constant activity” of many people going into and out of the building, as well as the burglary of her fiancé’s home, committed by a resident (or associate of a resident) of the Avalon Wilshire building. Mr. Funderburk requested that the Committee recommend that the GWNC board send a letter to city officials requesting enforcement of p.[Q]7, item #30, which would impose corrective conditions for the violations of the city agreements.

MOTION (by Ms. Eggleston, seconded by Ms. Lombard): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council Land Use Committee recommends that the GWNC Board write a letter to City Council District Four and City of Los Angeles Code enforcement agencies to enforce p. [Q]7, item #30 of the city agreement with Avalon Bay and ask the City Planning Department to impose conditions on the Avalon Wilshire Apartments at 5151 W. Wilshire Blvd..

DISCUSSION: Stakeholder Michelle Owen noted that access next to the open space only was intended for emergency access. Stakeholders Charles Brown and Philip Messina agreed that more lighting is needed.

MOTION PASSED by a hand vote with no objection.

7. Committee Member Comments and Reports

Ms. Lombard reported that letters need to be sent reaffirming the GWNC’s requests for “Q” conditions enforcement and in opposition to the three Variance requests of the Larchmont Bungalow (107 N. Larchmont Ave.).

Committee Member Greg Wittmann left at this time, making ten Members present (the Committee quorum is nine).

Ms. Lombard continued that, at a Hearing, “about ten employees” spoke on behalf of the Bungalow and that they indicated they had 4,000 signatures of support. Seven or eight “spoke in opposition,” including CD 4’s Renee Weitzer, that the “Q” conditions need to be enforced.

Committee Member Ann Eggleston left at this time, making nine Members present (the Committee quorum is nine).

Ms. Lombard encouraged writing to the City to reiterate points about the Bungalow’s parking impact and more.

8. Public Comments

There were no comments at this time.

9. Announcements and Adjournment

- A. Next meeting: Tuesday, October 28, 2014, 6:30 p.m. Possible future agenda items):
- Density bonus at 801-813 N. Hudson (Michael Cohanzad)
 - Development of parking lot into 22 townhouse units over subterranean parking at 612 Norton (Jared Sopko)

- Development of 5-unit Single Lot Subdivision project at 856 S. Wilton (Matthew Hayden)
- Change of use to non-profit museum at former Scottish Rite Temple, 4357 W. Wilshire Blvd. (Michael Gruber)

MOTION to ADJOURN (by Mr. Gresham, seconded by Mr. Genewick).

MOTION PASSED without any objection

The Meeting was **ADJOURNED** at 9:40 p.m.

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