

Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council



Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council General Meeting

November 14, 2007

Approved by the Board
As amended 01/09/08

MINUTES

A duly noticed meeting of the Board of Directors of the Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council ("GWNC") was held on Wednesday, November 14, 2007, at the Ebell of Los Angeles, 743 South Lucerne Avenue. In the absence of President Charles Dougherty, James Wolf, Vice President of the Council, called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

The Secretary, Elizabeth Fuller, called the roll. Board of Directors members in attendance were: Patti Carroll, Elizabeth Fuller, Alison Hannon, Margaret Hudson, Alex Jones-Moreno, Shar Penfold, Mary Rajswing, Rudy Gintel (alt. Jolene Snett), Jane Usher, Robert Wishart and James Wolf. Board members Yigal Arens, Sam Cunningham, Moon Chung, Charles Dougherty, Roy Forbes, Jane Gilman, John Gresham, Thomas Roe, Martha Schuur, and Russell Sherman were absent and not represented by an alternate.

The Secretary stated that a quorum was not present. Vice President James Wolf opted to go ahead with the meeting, but announced that the board could take no votes or other actions without a quorum.

The agenda was shuffled to allow Carolyn Ramsay, Field Representative for City Council Member Tom La Bonge, to make her report first.

Ms. Ramsay presented new a City of Los Angeles Neighborhood Services Guide, which is now available for distribution.

She also reported that Council Member La Bonge made a motion on October 24 to direct the City Planning Department to impose a 35-foot height limit and 50-linear-foot frontage limit for all businesses on Larchmont Boulevard, and to maintain the current "Q" conditions and five-foot setbacks for that area.

Finally, she noted that Mr. La Bonge's office has been working with neighborhood groups on an improvement plan for Robert Burns Park, and that a retaining wall there has already been repaired. She distributed copies of the plan, which calls for new play equipment for children ages 2-12. Ms. Ramsay also said Quimby funds (money developers must pay into a fund for local park improvements), which might be able to

pay for some of the Burns Park work, must be spent within two miles of the developments that generated them...but because there's often no parks near the developments, many of the funds have been accumulating and going unspent (as was reported recently in the L.A. Times). Ms. Ramsay said Mr. La Bonge's chief of staff, Renee Weitzer, has requested a full accounting of the funds, so that we know how much will be available to spend in our area.

Director Mary Rajswing asked if new trees are in place yet in the park and Ms. Ramsay said no, but the plans call for adding four trees, which are indicated by the circles on the plan document, and the new play equipment will be shaded.

Director Shar Penfold asked what variety the new trees will be, and Ms. Ramsay said there will be jacarandas and possibly sycamores, though they'd prefer to find something with a shorter latency period. She said they'll break ground in February and the play equipment will be installed by summer, including a "porta-john" and handicap access.

Continuing her report, Ms. Ramsay said that an illegal conversion of a single-family residence to a multi-unit facility at 726 S. Mullen has finally been halted. The Department of Building and Safety, after a long campaign led by neighbor Jan Wieringa, overturned the project's permit, so the property owners will have to apply for a new permit before work can continue. Director Jane Usher, who called the outcome "remarkable," asked for a short history of the issue, and Ms. Ramsay recalled that even though the neighbors' first complaints were rejected, they persisted and finally won a judgement in their favor. Then the property owner missed a deadline to appeal, ensuring the decision will stand.

Returning to the Larchmont issue, Ms. Ramsay noted that Mr. La Bonge's motion came about very quickly, but there were three things everyone agreed on: it's important to move quickly, this is just the beginning of the process, and there will be a public hearing on the motion, so it would be nice if the Neighborhood Council could help get the word out. Director Shar Penfold asked if the motion means we'll be "protected" against bigger stores on the Boulevard, and Ms. Ramsay said it does – no one will be able to buy contiguous properties and knock out walls between them to create larger establishments.

Reading of the Minutes

The Secretary presented the Minutes of the previous meeting, which had been distributed to Directors by e-mail and posted on the Council's *greaterwilshire.org* web site. Additional copies were distributed at the meeting. The Secretary reported that two small changes had been requested:

- Lucille Saunders, from the Melrose Neighborhood Association, asked that the description of her neighborhood, on page 11, be changed from "wildly diverse" to "religiously diverse."

- Director Jane Gilman asked that the date of the home tour reported on page 14 be corrected to October 7.

No other changes were requested, but approval of the minutes was tabled due to the lack of a quorum required for a vote.

Treasurer's Report

There was no Treasurer's Report.

President's Report

There was no President's report.

Million Trees Project Report

Director Mary Rajswing reported that the Million Trees Committee staffed three booths at the Larchmont Fair, and gave away 193 of the 200 trees that were available. Ms. Rajswing said the Hollywood Beautification Team made it easy, and Director Robert Wishart walked around the Fair with a sandwich board, helping to draw people to the booths. The team also distributed our new GWNC informational flyers at the booths. Ms. Rajswing said neighbors seeking trees have contacted her Committee, and that the Hollywood Beautification Team has gone out to mark pockets and distribute door hangers. The Committee has prepared a GWNC letter to be tucked inside the door hangers, and is also looking at local business corridors as planting sites...particularly the stretches of La Brea between Third Street and Wilshire, and 8th Street and Olympic (skipping Wilshire to 8th because of the large new development proposed for that block). Ms. Rajswing said the HBT has funds to cut tree wells in the cement on these stretches and will seek promises from the businesses along the street to care for the trees. She also reported that Director Jane Gilman has resigned from the Million Trees Committee and said they could use a replacement if anyone's interested.

Next, Ms. Rajswing introduced Sharyn Romano, from the Hollywood Beautification Team, who said the Million Trees project is "extremely significant" to our environment and that it's truly a grass roots effort. She said the Team has an "enormous" amount of money, but can't plant trees unless people promise to care for and water the trees (or hire the HBT to do it for them). The HBT is also turning to Neighborhood Councils to help connect with businesses and convince them that it's an opportunity to adopt the free trees. She presented the Million Trees door hanger that Director Rajswing mentioned, which includes a permission form to plant trees and an agreement to water them. She said the Team will also include our GWNC letter, and further noted that several Neighborhood Councils have given money to help the planting efforts, in ways such as targeting a specific planting area, or doing a memorial planting. (One such planting was in honor of 9-11 victims, and included a map of the trees, so people can visit those planted for specific victims). She noted that the HBT has also been granted funds

by Neighborhood Councils for graffiti removal, which is an ongoing challenge since there's been no raise in city funds for that work for several years.

Director Margy Hudson asked if the HBT could include our GWNC informational flyer in the door hangers, and Ms. Romano agreed. Ms. Hudson also asked if there's a Business Improvement District on the stretch of La Brea that Ms. Romano mentioned, and Ms. Romano said there is not. Vice President James Wolf asked if Director Rajswing had a copy of the GWNC letter that will be included with the door hangers, and Ms. Rajswing said it's still in her computer, but she can circulate it to the Board Members.

Finally, Mr. Wolf noted that the Board could not act on the HBT's funding request (for tree planting or graffiti removal) at this meeting, because of the lack of a quorum.

Robert Burns Park Improvement Project

Stakeholder Yolie Moreno and two other stakeholders showed large versions of the Robert Burns Park Plans that Carolyn Ramsay had mentioned earlier. Ms. Moreno said the plans call for a complete overhaul of the play area, and that Ms. Ramsay and Tom La Bonge have been a big help in making it happen. Three Windsor Square mothers have led the efforts to revamp the "dismal" park. Ms. Moreno said there are some Quimby funds available to pay for the project, but they don't pay for the whole thing. For example, they'd like to install a historic marker, which they've asked the local neighborhood associations to fund...and they're asking the Neighborhood Council to pay for fencing improvements.

Director Margy Hudson noted that it's great to have a grass roots effort by residents, and said outreach to the Neighborhood Associations is a significant effort. She requested that at our next meeting, when we have a quorum, we take action on the funding request.

Director Jane Usher asked how much money the group is asking for, and Ms. Moreno said the fence improvements have been estimated at \$15,430 for 314 feet of iron perimeter fencing at \$40-50 per foot.

Ms. Usher noted that the City Council collects Quimby funds, and asked why if they're holding \$10 million, as has been reported, that money can't cover the new fence. Director Hudson said that's the reason behind Council Member La Bonge's request for a complete accounting of the funds, but it hasn't been done yet. Ms. Moreno noted that Council District 4 has requested \$150,000 in Quimby funds, to pay for parking spaces, toilets, ramps, trees and other items in the improvement plans. Ms. Hudson said Ms. Usher's question is a good one, however, and that she will talk to Carolyn Ramsay again to find out the status of the Quimby Funds and report back at our January meeting.

Ms. Usher said the common speculation is that there is more money than park

space, so it's logical to wonder why the full amount needed isn't available. She also asked about the status of the GWNC's Funding Guidelines Committee, which was formed at our previous meeting. Director Elizabeth Fuller noted that the committee hasn't met yet, and said President Dougherty asked her to make a motion to refer this funding request to the Committee (though that won't be possible without a quorum). Ms. Usher concluded by saying this does sound like the kind of request we'll decide to support once our funding guidelines have been established.

Ad Hoc Outreach Committee Report

Director Margaret Hudson, chair of the Ad Hoc Outreach Committee, distributed the Committee's report, and pointed out several items for attention:

- Director Elizabeth Fuller recently noticed that several website domain names we'd been interested in (including gwnc.org) were available for sale, so she contacted Treasurer Russell Sherman, who authorized payments for five new domain names, for 10 years each. (We now own greaterwilshire.com, greaterwilshire.org, greaterwilshire.net, greaterwilshire.info, greaterwilshire.us, gwnc.org and gwnc.us.) Ms. Fuller said the new names have all been pointed to our current website at greaterwilshire.org, which eliminates confusion if anyone should type one of the other names by mistake. Ownership of the other URLs also prevents other organizations from using names that would commonly be associated with the GWNC.
- There might be value in setting up a MySpace and/or Facebook page for the GWNC, to facilitate networking with users of those communities, and we could include the address in our informational flyers.
- Ms. Fuller has contacted two website designers and requested proposals for a redesign of our website. We should be able to come back at our January meeting with a cost estimate and recommendation for a designer choice.
- Outreach is the responsibility of all our Directors. We have been working to get addresses for all our neighborhood associations from our Directors, so we can start pushing information out to stakeholders through those groups.
- Guest speakers at every GWNC meeting would help to draw attention to our meetings and increase stakeholder turnout.

Adding to Ms. Hudson's report, Director Elizabeth Fuller distributed her notes from an outreach workshop at the recent Congress of Neighborhoods. She directed people's attention, in particular, to the long list of outreach techniques being used by the Venice Neighborhood Council, whose representatives recommended inviting guest speakers to Council meetings...and making sure there's at least one controversial issue on the agenda at each meeting.

Stakeholder Joan Taylor added that another good outreach element would be to post our agendas at the Hollywood Senior Center and other senior-focused organizations...and noted that our City Council representative, Tom La Bonge, heads the City Council's committee on aging.

Ms. Fuller added that she agrees with the note in Ms. Hudson's report that recommends we continue to pursue dedicated office space and a paid assistant. To illustrate the need for such a person, she reported her experiences posting the agenda for this meeting, which could much more easily have been done by an assistant whose job description includes such tasks as developing a list of public posting sites, and actual delivery of the agendas every two months. Ms. Hudson asked if we have a committee to address the office and assistant issues, and Ms. Fuller said we do not.

Alternate Director Rudy Gintel said he has a potential office space, in a building he owns, but that we'd need money to make it ADA-compliant. Vice President James Wolf said the costs might be higher than one might think, especially if there are no handicapped-accessible bathrooms. Mr. Gintel said Mr. Wolf would be welcome to take a look and help estimate the renovation costs, as the space is still available.

Ms. Hudson asked Director Shar Penfold (a Realtor) if she could work with Director John McIntyre to look for an acceptable space. Ms. Penfold agreed and asked how much money we have to spend. Ms. Fuller said our budget is \$18,000 for the year...and Mr. Wolf noted that the space does have to be ADA-compliant.

Traffic Committee Report

There was no Traffic Committee Report, but stakeholder Joan Taylor asked that we address the issue of senior citizens' taxi coupon books. Currently, she said, senior citizens are allowed to buy one \$84 book of taxi coupons per quarter...but a 2005 taxi rate increase has significantly reduced the value of the coupons. She requested that the GWNC ask the City Council to allow seniors to buy two coupon books each quarter (instead of just one), which would only cost the city \$500,000. She asked that this item be put on the GWNC's agenda for a vote at our January meeting.

Ad Hoc Land Use and Zoning Committee Report

Vice President James Wolf reported that the representatives from BMW and Sonic Automotive have been invited twice to speak to the GWNC about their plans for a new BMW service center at the site of the current Bob's Big Boy restaurant at Wilshire and Highland, but they have so far declined.

He also said that no other developers have approached us to discuss new

projects.

DWP Report

Jack Humphreville, the GWNC representative to the DWP Oversight Committee, noted once again that the DWP has filed for an increase in both power and water rates, which the Oversight Committee does not support because it believes the percentage of the increase has been misstated, and the increase is not as “modest” as it has been billed. He said the Committee is making a push to get an independent rate-payers’ advocate, and the GWNC can help by asking Tom La Bonge to oppose the increase.

Director Jane Usher asked if the Oversight Committee weighed in on proposed tiered water rates, and Mr. Humphreville said “yes and no” – the committee is trying to stay out of the issue because it “stirs the pot” and “we don’t have a ‘win’.”

Director Margy Hudson suggested we table Mr. Humphreville’s request until we have a quorum, but Vice President Wolf said that, as individuals, we don’t need a motion to voice our own opinions to our City Council representative. Mr. Humphreville agreed, noting that the GWNC is a participant in the DWP MOU and voted at its last meeting not to recommend the rate action...so now he’s asking individual council members to say, “Dear Tom – No.” Mr. Wolf recommended that people send letters or faxes, since Mr. La Bonge does not read e-mail.

[At 8:39 p.m. Alternate Directors Erick Garcia and Charles Bergson, who had recently arrived, were seated, creating a quorum.]

Public Comment

Anthony Simons, from the Archeon Group, introduced himself as a representative for Brian Kim, who wants to build a 27-unit condominium project at 728 S. Plymouth Blvd. He said plans have been submitted to the City and the neighborhood design review board.

[At this point, Director Jane Usher left the meeting to avoid a conflict of interest with her role as head of the City Planning Commission.]

Director Shar Penfold asked what’s on the site now, and Mr. Simons said it’s a 1950s multi-family building, with no historical significance, which occupies three of the four lots at the site. Ms. Penfold asked if Mr. Kim has already purchased the homes, and Mr. Simons said he has owned them for several years. He also said Mr. Kim is very aware of the HPOZ in the area, but developed his plans before the HPOZ was in place. He said he has the designs for council members to review, if they wish, and that plans meet all “Q” conditions for the

site, and it is a “by right” development, with “higher end” units.

Director Margy Hudson asked if the property is in Windsor Village, and whether there’s an Interim Control Ordinance (ICO) in place. Mr. Simons said the term of the ICO is two years, but Mr. Kim submitted his plans prior to the ICO, so he will be allowed to proceed. Ms. Hudson also asked if the property is in Herb Wesson’s district (Mr. Simons said it is), and what the landscaping will be like. Mr. Simons said he can’t comment on the landscaping yet, but that it will be designed by a landscape architect, will be in realm of the Park Mile Specific Plan and will exceed minimum requirements. He further noted that he had hoped to be on our official agenda for this meeting, so the Board could vote on the proposal, but it didn’t work out that way.

Ms. Hudson said it would be valuable to put the project on our agenda for a formal vote at some point, and Mr. Simons said he hopes to also bring it up at the next meeting of the Park Mile Design Review Committee. Vice President James Wolf said that group has not discussed it yet, so there’s been no ruling on it. Ms. Hudson asked if Mr. Simons should meet with our Land Use committee and then be agendized at our next meeting, and Mr. Wolf said that would be a good idea. Mr. Simons said he’d return in January, with design sets and business cards to share with the Directors.

Stakeholder Karen Gilman (who said her last name was misspelled “Gillman” in the draft minutes from our previous meeting) had three requests/questions for the Council:

- That the GWNC weigh in on SB1818, and send a letter to City Council Member Tom La Bonge stating our concerns. As with the DWP issue, she said, individual Board Members may write letters stating their personal opinions without an official Board action.
- Has the GWNC has sent a letter, as promised, to Tom La Bonge on the issue of the cumulative effects of development in her neighborhood? (She said that while there used to be about one new development every year there now seems to be one every few weeks.)
- Will any GWNC board members be attending the Wilshire Corridor Forum tomorrow? She said most people at the event will be on the commercial end of the development issue, but it’s important that neighbors attend too. (Vice President Wolf said Directors John Gresham and Elizabeth Fuller were planning to be there, and Ms. Gilman said she’d love to hear how the event goes.)

On the subject of SB1818, Mr. Wolf said City Council Member Tom La Bonge has made a motion to the City Council addressing the issue. While no one can change the law, he said, governmental groups do have the ability to weigh in administratively, and Mr. La Bonge’s motion attempts to address the unintended consequences of the legislation.

[Director Jane Usher returned to the meeting at 8:59 p.m., after the land use discussions. A quorum was once again present.]

Stakeholder Jared Abrams brought up the state of disrepair of the sidewalks on the north end of Larchmont Boulevard, between Beverly and Melrose. He said it's a safety issue, especially for pedestrians, and we need to create a "safe passage" for people. Director Jane Usher asked if Mr. Abrams has called the City Council office, and he said he has not because he assumed he'd be redirected to the Bureau of Street Services, which is inundated with such complaints. Ms. Usher said liability for broken sidewalks lies with property owners, so it pays to be aggressive about this.

Mr. Abrams said he could easily pull a permit and do all the repairs himself, and it would take only about a month if someone provided the funding. Director Margy Hudson asked if he has spoken to the Larchmont Boulevard Association yet, and he said he has not, assuming it wasn't their territory.

Director Patti Carroll said that if a property owner registers a sidewalk complaint and gets a reference number, the city shares the liability...but that even then repairs are a long, difficult process.

Again, Mr. Abrams (who's a contractor) said he could do it on his own, in less than a month, especially if the GWNC provided funding. Ms. Hudson asked about the City's "50/50" program for sidewalk repair, but Mr. Abrams said this project wouldn't qualify. Ms. Carroll noted that the Larchmont businesses were very willing to fund the new median on the Boulevard, but haven't been willing to take care of the trees that were planted there.

[Because this item was not on the formal agenda, no board action could be taken.]

Alternate Director Charles Bergson raised the issue of neighborhood character, saying many neighborhoods in our area have no design guidelines, and mansionization is a big problem. He said the City has been telling people to talk to their Neighborhood Councils about this, but he hasn't seen it on our agenda, and people are concerned.

Director Margy Hudson reported that the Mid-City West Neighborhood Council area has an Interim Control Ordinance (ICO) in place, and it would be interesting to know how those work and whether they're done for specific areas. Director Jane Usher said there are two types of ICOs – those used in proposed HPOZ areas (such as Windsor Square, Hancock Park and Wilshire Park) as an interim control measure before the HPOZ goes into effect...and those designed to stop mansionization (as in Sunland/Tujunga) by imposing limits such as transitional heights between commercial and residential areas. She said Tom LaBonge has introduced a City Council motion on Neighborhood Character,

which unfortunately has been reduced to some fairly generous limits on overbuilding on a lot. But she said there is an “array of forces” aligned against preserving neighborhood character, which is very powerful and well heeled (including architects, builders, engineers and libertarian individuals.) She added that the Planning Commission is having its annual retreat next month, and neighborhood character will be one issue on the agenda at that event.

Mr. Bergson asked if there is anything the Neighborhood Council can do to weigh in on the issue, and Ms. Usher said the best thing is to just keep turning out at public hearings, and maybe the GWNC can put it on the agenda for a future meeting. She noted that the outreach suggestions mentioned by Directors Hudson and Fuller earlier in the meeting were good ones, especially scheduling guest speakers and controversial issues for our meetings...and this could be a good example of such an issue. Ms. Hudson asked who might be a good guest speaker on this topic, and Ms. Usher suggested County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky and/or City Planning Director Gail Goldberg, among others. She also said there are at least two dozen powerful single-family neighborhoods in the city and they'd be even more powerful (and reflective of the city's diversity) if they joined together on this issue. Lots of people feel the same way about this, she said, but they've never joined forces. DWP Oversight Committee Representative Jack Humphreville agreed with this, saying he saw the power of this kind of unity on the DWP issue when neighbors joined together.

Ms. Hudson moved that the Land Use Committee create a statement on neighborhood character that our Council can make available to developers. Mr. Bergson said he'd like it to go to everyone who pulls construction permits in our area...and Stakeholder Karen Gilman added that it should be a generic statement that would cover all cases, and which could be used at public hearings. Director Robert Wishart seconded the motion, noting that this is an issue that keeps coming up for us, and it would be good to have a general statement so we don't have to keep having the same discussions case by case. The motion carried unanimously.

Review for Board Action

At this point in the meeting, with a quorum present, Vice President Wolf returned to several earlier agenda items that required board action.

Reading of the Minutes: Alternate Director Rudy Gintel made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Director Robert Wishart seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

Funding request for the Hollywood Beautification Team: Director Elizabeth Fuller made a motion to refer the request to the new Funding Guidelines Committee. Director Jane Usher asked if this should also include the funding request for the Robert Burns Park improvements, and Ms. Fuller said yes.

Director Mary Rajswing pointed out that this creates a timing problem for the projects in questions, so Ms. Fuller withdrew her motion.

Ms. Rajswing made a motion to provide the Hollywood Beautification Team with \$2,000 for support for one or more 9/11 memorial tree plantings in the Greater Wilshire area, including mapping and event protocols such as flags. Director Margy Hudson seconded the motion. Director Jane Usher asked if we can be sure the money will be spent in the Greater Wilshire area, and Ms. Rajswing said it is up to us to specify the area where the money gets spent. The motion passed unanimously.

Regarding the Robert Burns Park funding request, Vice President James Wolf asked for clarification: are the requested funds to be used just for the fence surrounding the playground and not the park as a whole? Director Margy Hudson said it is just for the playground fence. Director Robert Wishart asked if the park committee requested a specific amount, and Mr. Wolf reiterated the \$15,000+ figure quoted earlier. Mr. Wishart asked why this wasn't paid for from Quimby funds, as discussed earlier, and Mr. Wolf said that's why we asked the committee to research this and come back with more answers about the Quimby funds.

Mr. Wishart made a motion to defer action on this item until our January 9 meeting, while the various parties get more information about whether or not Quimby funds will be available. Alternate Director Rudy Gintel seconded the motion. Director Jane Usher said it would also be good to defer a request of this magnitude until such time as our treasurer can be present for the discussion. Mr. Wishart noted that Burns Park is "crucial" to the neighborhood and urged that we do support the project at the correct time, if not tonight. Ms. Usher suggested that we could approve a token amount – perhaps \$5,000 -- and table the question of full funding until later.

Mr. Wishart withdrew his original motion and moved that we defer the full funding request for this project, but approve \$5,000 tonight. Alternate Director Rudy Gintel seconded the motion. Ms. Usher said this seems very much a "model project" for us, with wide benefits to the community. Vice President Wolf asked what the \$5,000 would cover, and Ms. Usher said it was just a token amount since it didn't seem possible to approve a larger amount without our treasurer present. Mr. Gintel said the committee asked for our support, and the \$5,000 demonstrates that. Director Wishart said we should ask that it be used for the fence, as requested. Ms. Usher noted that we could also specify that the \$5,000 is just an initial amount, and that the committee could come back to us later for further funding. Mr. Wolf said the issue still wasn't clear: this is a public park, with a lot of interested parties...so why should we allocate money to the city, which has millions of dollars? He also asked where our money would go, and Director Margy Hudson said it would go to the Windsor Square Association, which would hold it in an escrow account specifically for this project. Then there would be a bid process to find a city-certified contractor. She said that for any

park needing improvement it takes motivated neighbors or a city council district to make it happen.

Director Shar Penfold suggested that we specify what the money would be spent on. Ms. Usher asked what part of the project Windsor Square funded, and Ms. Hudson said the benches. Stakeholder Owen Smith asked why the Parks Department can't fund the project, and Ms. Hudson said they don't have the money. Ms. Usher said, "Or they do, but can't find it." She said the Larchmont Median was built with private funding, and suggested we modify the motion to say that the park improvement group can come back at our next meeting, with a list of needs that we could pick from. Mr. Wishart withdrew his motion and moved that we defer the discussion to our next meeting because we need more information. Director Elizabeth Fuller seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Outreach Expenditures – Director Margy Hudson asked if we could formalize approval of the money spent recently to purchase the additional GWNC URLs, and Director Jane Usher moved that we approve the expenditure. The motion was seconded and it passed unanimously.

[At this point, because she needed to leave soon, Director Jane Usher asked that we entertain one item of Board Member Comments before returning to the Public Comments section.]

Director Jane Usher asked that we agendaize an item about the proposed Wilshire Boulevard subway route for our next meeting. She reported that a letter was sent to the MTA recently by the Wilshire Homeowners' Association, which seemed to say there should be no subway along Wilshire...but there was no outreach or polling of neighbors before the letter was sent. She said she hopes this group will have a public hearing on the topic and send our opinion in a letter to the appropriate city agencies. She also said she will come prepared to argue in favor of a Wilshire subway route.

Stakeholder Owen Smith noted that a clarification of the WHA's original letter was sent after the first version, and it said the group is not opposed to a Wilshire Boulevard subway, but only to a station in the Wilshire and Crenshaw area (because it would likely increase density there).

Ms. Usher said the first letter had been sent in response to an MTA query about whether there should be a subway or improved bus transit along Wilshire, and it spoke almost exclusively about buses, creating the implication that the WHA doesn't want a rail route. She said she wrote to the WHA with her reaction, and when others did too, the second letter was sent talking about better bus transit "now." But she said the result of the WHA letters has been a shift in the public conversation to whether the subway will be moved to Santa Monica Boulevard because of opposition from Hancock Park and Windsor Square (and there have

been a lot of racist and other unpleasant implications in the reporting).

Director Margy Hudson thanked Ms. Usher for bringing this up and made a motion that we put a discussion of the Wilshire subway route on the agenda for our January 9 meeting. Ms. Usher said it would be wonderful to advertise the meeting in the Larchmont Chronicle and invite guest speakers, saying she hopes we don't come across as bigoted as the LA Times made us seem.

Stakeholder Owen Smith said the opposition to the Crenshaw station comes from a desire to protect the low density and current building height limits of the Park Mile area. He also said the area's low density doesn't seem to warrant a station, and that it's definitely NOT a racial issue. He acknowledged that John Gresham, author of the WHA letter, could have phrased things differently, but he said the group is definitely in favor of the subway construction.

Director Shar Penfold noted that people might drive to the subway, so density might not be such an issue, but Ms. Usher said the city doesn't tend to build parking at subway stops and prefers to create residential and business density around them to support the subway. She said the City of Beverly Hills was originally opposed to a subway, but is now in favor...and the density throughout Los Angeles is much greater now than when such a route had been discussed in the past, both of which increase the likelihood that it could be approved. She also said, however, that we will need to fight back if someone says the Park Mile can't be protected.

Vice President James Wolf brought the discussion to an end by noting that we don't need to take a vote on whether to put an item on the agenda.

Director Elizabeth Fuller said she had one other Board Comment item to present before Ms. Usher left: the creation of a Board telephone list for the use of our officers. (We have a full list of e-mail addresses for all Board Members and Alternates...but not a full list of phone numbers, which would have come in handy tonight so we could have called some of the absent folks in hopes of filling out our quorum.) She circulated an optional list for people to provide their contact numbers.

Returning briefly to the Robert Burns Park issue, Vice President James Wolf moved that we officially request City Controller Laura Chick's office to conduct an audit of the Quimby funds system. Director Robert Wishart noted that the Chair can't make motions, but said he would make the same motion. Director Jane Usher said such an audit is already in the works, but we should weigh in and support it. She seconded the motion. It carried unanimously.

[Director Jane Usher left the meeting at 9:59 p.m. Alternate Director Charles Bergson left the meeting at 10:00 p.m. A quorum was no longer present.]

Return to Public Comments

Returning to the Public Comment section, David Honda, president of D. S. Honda Construction reported that a development that he built, with 202 apartments and 6,000 square feet of retail space on Reseda Blvd, paid \$2.2 million in Quimby fees, which funded a neighborhood pool and speed bumps. He said he's also doing a project in Glendale for some REIT partners and came to tonight's meeting because he wants to build a new development at 5112 Melrose (at Gramercy). He said there are no official plans, architects or lawyers yet, but he is looking forward to meeting with Director Wolf and the Land Use committee to talk about what would be good for the neighborhood.

Director Patti Carroll asked which side of the street the project would be on and Mr. Honda said the south side, on property owned by Chabad of Southern California. Ms. Carroll asked how many units will be in the project, and he said 300. Stakeholder Karen Gilman said it would be just west of the car wash and asked about the current zoning. Mr. Honda said it's now C-2 but they'd need to change it. Director Shar Penfold asked if there would be retail at ground level, with residential units above, and he said yes, along with three levels of parking below grade.

Mr. Honda asked how the Board Members feel about affordable housing, and Vice President James Wolf said he doesn't think much of SB1818, which allows the replacement of affordable units with unaffordable ones. Mr. Honda said he has designed affordable units for disabled and deaf residents in the neighborhood, so he is sensitive to the issues involved. Ms. Carroll asked if the units would be available to everyone and he said yes, and they would be mostly two and three bedroom units, since it is a family area. Finally, he said it would be about 4 ½ years until the project is ready for occupancy, and that the GWNC is his first stop in seeking support.

Board Member Comments/New Business

Director Elizabeth Fuller noted that two people have contacted the GWNC about the issue of billboard blight, which is heating up in our area. Unfortunately neither of them could be at this meeting, but it would be good to put it on our agenda for January. Also, one of the parties, Barbara Broide, asked that if anyone is interested in this issue, we pass their names along to her so she can contact them with more information. Director Margy Hudson asked that she and Jane Usher both be contacted.

Announcements and Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:13 p.m.

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Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Fuller
Secretary