

# Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council



## Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council General Meeting

**January 14, 2009**

Approved by the Board  
March 11, 2009

### MINUTES

#### Call to Order

A duly noticed meeting of the Board of Directors of the Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council (“GWNC”) was held on Wednesday, January 14, 2009, at the Ebell of Los Angeles, 743 South Lucerne Blvd. President Charles Dougherty called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.

#### Roll Call

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

The Secretary stated that a quorum was present.

President Charles Dougherty announced that former GWNC Board Member Tom Gibbons died in December, and that a memorial service will be held on Saturday, February 7.

#### Guest Presentation

Ted Holmquist, field representative for State Assembly Member Mike Feuer, outlined proposed legislation introduced recently by Mr. Feuer, which would place a moratorium on new digital billboards for two years, until federal safety studies are completed.

Director Jane Usher asked how the GWNC can support this measure, and Mr. Holmquist asked that we write a letter or pass a resolution to that effect.

Director Rudy Gintel asked if the measure would only apply to new signs, or if it would also be retroactive to cover existing signs. Mr. Holmquist said it would only apply to signs that have not yet been constructed, but it would take precedence over another recent settlement. The two-year moratorium would provide time for the completion of safety studies already underway, and would give legislators time to analyze the study before considering further legislation.

President Charles Dougherty said that because this item does not appear on our official agenda, we can't take action at this meeting> He invited Mr. Holmquist to return for our March meeting, where it can be agendized and voted on.

*[Director Jared Abrams joined the meeting at 7:16 p.m.]*

Stakeholder Ira Dankberg, who lives at 855 S. Orange Drive, asked if the federal study covers sign aesthetics in addition to traffic safety issues. Mr. Holmquist said safety is the main concern, but the study will also look at environmental impacts.

Director Jared Abrams asked if it would be possible to cover or turn off existing digital signs, but Mr. Holmquist said that would probably have to be an action taken at the city, not state, level.

Ms. Usher said constituents of the GWNC are among the city's most vocal on this issue, and Mr. Dougherty said that's why we hope Mr. Holmquist will return in March for a vote.

#### 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. Director John Gresham moved that the minutes be approved as written. Director Owen Smith seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously.

#### Treasurer's Report

President Charles Dougherty reported that we have hired a temporary accountant, who is helping get our financial paperwork moving again, and that we hope to have all of our vendors paid soon. Mr. Dougherty said both he and Secretary Elizabeth Fuller recently took DONE's treasurer training and found it so valuable that he has invited DONE representative Rodger Shimatsu to provide the information to all Board Members at our March meeting.

#### President's Report

President Charles Dougherty presented the Directors with certificates and pins awarded by the President's Volunteer Service Awards program several months ago.

Mr. Dougherty also reported that, in response to a grievance filed against the GWNC and according to our bylaws, we have formed a Grievance Committee consisting of five people who volunteered for this duty several years ago (Laura Foti Cohen, Vincent Cox, Frank Badami, Liz Morehead, and Frederic Rheinstein). The committee will meet soon to begin dealing with the issue in question.

Finally, Mr. Dougherty reminded all Board Members and Alternates to complete the Mayor's Budget Survey and the city's online ethics training course. The ethics training is required of all GWNC members every two years. Secretary Elizabeth Fuller said only Joan Jakubowski, Clinton Oie and Martha Schuur completed the training in 2007 or 2008. All other Board Members and Alternates must still complete the program.

#### Ad Hoc Land Use Committee

Committee Chair James Wolf thanked President Charles Dougherty and Secretary Elizabeth Fuller for conducting last week's meeting of the Ad Hoc Land Use Committee in his absence.

Cuvee Wine Lounge (320 S. La Brea) -- Mr. Wolf reported that plans for this project – an upscale wine bar – have evolved since we first heard about it in November. Project representative Bill Bergstrom said he and the owner have met with neighbors and revised their plans for parking and hours, which will now match other restaurants on the block as much as possible. Cuvee architect George Kelly said the new plans also call for more of a restaurant than the original tasting bar concept.

Cuvee owner Edgar Pouresagh said the restaurant will not use parking lots behind its building for customer parking, and that it will keep its alley gates locked after 7 p.m. He also said valets will use push-to-talk systems, and that although he originally planned to be open until 2 a.m. on weekends, and midnight on weekdays, the business will now close at 11:30 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays, and 10 p.m. on other days.

Director Martha Schuur asked if the valets will park customers' cars in the lot adjacent to the restaurant building and Mr. Pouresagh said yes. He said the landlord has agreed to let his business use that lot indefinitely, and it should "easily" accommodate all customers that can fit in the restaurant's 44-seat capacity. Mr. Pouresagh also said neighbors had concerns about the amount and type of food that would be served. Original plans were to have only appetizers available, but they have now added a kitchen and affordable tapas menu.

Director Jane Usher asked if there will be live music, and Mr. Pouresagh said no. Ms. Usher also asked if the business will be available for outside rentals, and Mr. Pouresagh said it would not shut down for private parties, because the layout isn't conducive to that kind of use. Finally, Ms. Usher asked if there will be liquor sales to

non-restaurant customers, and Mr. Pouresagh said he's open to discussing that. His current plan is to not serve wine to non-restaurant customers.

Director Yigal Arens asked if Mr. Pouresagh will commit to that point in writing, and Mr. Pouresagh said it will be one of the conditions listed in the Conditional Use Permit. He said he began meeting with the neighbors at the same time he began the CUP application, so all of these issues came up early in the process.

Director John Gresham asked if people would be able to buy a bottle of wine they had tasted or had with dinner, to take home, and Mr. Pouresagh said the CUP application does request permission for off-site sales. He said, however, that the least expensive bottle the business plans to sell costs \$85, so they won't be attracting transients.

Director Rudy Gintel reminded Mr. Pouresagh that at our last meeting he indicated he might use the rear parking lot for customer overflow in "emergencies." But Mr. Pouresagh said the neighbors have now asked that it not be used for any customer parking, and he has agreed. He said there will also be no bottle dumping after 8 p.m. – he doesn't want to intrude on the neighbors any more than a regular retail establishment would in the same space.

Director Jane Usher noted that conditions written into the CUP don't necessarily follow the business plan, and permission for off-site sales would still remain even if the business plan changed. Mr. Pouresagh said he's not looking to be a retail wine seller, but he would like to be able to sell an occasional rare bottle that someone wants.

Mr. Wolf asked what the maximum occupancy will be, and Mr. Kelly said the building code allows 77 people, but they're planning for 44 chairs. The posted occupancy will be 44-52 people (including employees). He stressed that they're not planning a standard bar that would strive to keep the place filled to capacity.

Mr. Wolf asked if the 44 includes the 16 seats in the sidewalk area, and Mr. Kelly said no, that area would be covered under a separate permit. Mr. Wolf asked how that additional seating/capacity would affect the parking. Mr. Pouresagh said the side lot is large enough to cover the additional customers.

Mr. Wolf asked if the only parking access will be from La Brea Ave., and Mr. Pouresagh said yes, that gate will be open, and all parking will be done by valets. Mr. Wolf asked if the right-hand lane on La Brea will be used for queuing and Mr. Pouresagh said that during hours parking is allowed there, it will be. Mr. Wolf asked again about overflow parking in the lot behind the restaurant, but Mr. Pouresagh again said all customer parking would be in the side lot only. Mr. Wolf asked what they would do if they do ever have more cars than the side lot will hold, and Mr. Pouresagh said he is looking into leasing more spaces nearby. He also said the side-lot spaces are longer than average, so there is plenty of room for the traffic they anticipate.

Mr. Wolf asked if the CUP application will be revised to reflect the new conditions Mr. Pouresagh has negotiated with the neighbors, and he said it would be. Mr. Wolf said, in that case, it would be premature for the GWNC board to vote on the proposal until the revisions have been worked out. Ms. Usher said she'd be happy to delegate authority for a final vote to Mr. Wolf and the Ad Hoc Land Use Committee, and Mr. Wolf said the committee could definitely discuss the matter at its next meeting.

Fred Pickel, president of the La Brea-Hancock Homeowners' Association, said members of his Association have been actively discussing the plans with Mr. Pouresagh, who has been very responsive, and that all parties are very close to a final agreement. He said he would definitely be comfortable with delegating the matter to the Land Use Committee after the details are worked out. He said he does think it's important for the GWNC to review the re-drafted CUP application, but he doesn't want to hold up the application process for another two months.

Both Mr. Pickel and Mr. Bergstrom said the only issues remaining to be agreed on are the hours of operation and off-site sales.

Director Charles Bergson said that because the parties are so close to an agreement, we might be able to pass a resolution now, but Mr. Pickel and Mr. Wolf said it wouldn't be good to do that until we can review the revised proposal. Cuvee neighbor Joanna Johnson said they do have a "working document," outlining 19 points of discussion, and the neighbors and Mr. Pouresagh are in agreement on everything except closing times and perhaps the issue of off-site sales, which only came up tonight. She said they would want all 19 points written into the CUP application.

Director Jared Abrams asked if we can vote to give the Land Use Committee the power to make a decision before the next GWNC meeting, and Ms. Usher said we can.

Director Rudy Gintel said he likes that they have added a larger restaurant component, mitigated their hours and other things mentioned in the revised plans. He said he still sees potential problems, however, with a parking solution that hinges on a lot provided by a landlord whose buildings aren't fully rented at the moment. He said if the landlord does rent out more building space, he could take back some of the promised parking and Mr. Pouresagh would be forced to change his plans. He said Mr. Pouresagh can't put conditions in a CUP that aren't supported by his lease, and his lease could change in six months.

Mr. Pouresagh said the landlord has promised him all the available spaces in the side lot, even if the other building spaces are leased, and that since the CUP would only be valid for 1-2 years, he wouldn't be able to renew it if he falls out of compliance or the neighbors get upset. Mr. Gintel said the CUP goes with the land, not the building lease...but Mr. Pouresagh said the lease is for 5 years, while the CUP is only for 1-2 years, so there shouldn't be a problem.

Ms. Johnson said Sycamore Ave., on the far side of the block, has permit-only parking after 6 p.m., and the neighbors don't want a valet lot near their homes, so Mr. Pouresagh's plans to use the side lot are OK with the neighbors.

Mr. Wolf said it sounds like all parties would like our Land Use Committee to make a formal action after the final agreement is worked out, at a fully-noticed meeting before our next GWNC meeting. He said if the parties don't come to a full agreement by then, we can make a recommendation to the City on what we do and don't support in the CUP application.

Ms. Usher said we can give the Land Use Committee authorization to make a decision based on terms we heard tonight, and if substantial changes are made later, the Committee could bring the matter back to the full GWNC.

Mr. Pickel said the agreement outline is available, and could be entered into the GWNC records. Mr. Wolf invited him to submit it to the Secretary to scan and distribute to the Land Use Committee. Ms. Usher made a motion to empower the Land Use Committee to review the agreement and make a decision whether or not to support it on behalf of the GWNC.

Director Martha Schuur asked if everyone would receive the Mr. Pickel's document and be able to comment before the Land Use Committee meets. Secretary Elizabeth Fuller said that kind of process would violate the Brown Act restrictions on closed and serial meetings. Mr. Wolf said that while all committee members would be able to see the agreement before the Land Use Committee meeting, feedback needs to be held until the meeting. Mr. Dougherty said we will also make the document available at the next Land Use Committee meeting.

Director Charles Bergson questioned this procedure. Mr. Dougherty said the motion on the table is to allow the Land Use Committee to review materials submitted by the CUP applicant and the neighbors, and act on it at a fully noticed Land Use Committee meeting. And if there are substantive changes in the agreement between now and then, the Land Use Committee could send the matter back to the full GWNC for final action.

Director Owen Smith seconded the motion. The vote was 18 in favor and one abstention (Mr. Bergson).

Mozza Restaurant & Dover Apartments – No one was present to speak on these items, so they were skipped.

Getty House -- Mr. Wolf reported that the mayor has proposed building a wall around the Getty House (the official Mayor's residence) in Windsor Square. Alternate Director Mike Genewick said the Windsor Square Homeowners' Association is on record opposing the project and has recommended to the Getty House Foundation that they go through the appropriate entitlement process if they would like to seek permission to build a wall over the legal height limits.

Director John Gresham noted that the project would also include a design review process through the Windsor Square HPOZ Board if it moves forward.

Mr. Wolf asked if either the Windsor Square Association or the HPOZ board has taken an official position yet on the project. Mr. Genewick said the Windsor Square Association did so in October, but they haven't heard anything about the project since.

Director Jane Usher said she can't think of a worse precedent in Windsor Square or the Greater Wilshire area than for the mayor's house to have a 6-foot wall around it.

Mr. Wolf called for a motion and Mr. Genewick moved that the GWNC take the position that the mayor's residence either follow city codes on wall heights or go through the proper procedures to apply for a variance.

Ms. Usher said we should also reiterate Windsor Square's precedents for an open, park-like atmosphere.

Director Yigal Arens asked why the wall is being proposed, and Mr. Genewick said it's a security measure. Ms. Usher said high walls are actually bad for security because people can hide behind them. Mr. Dougherty said security isn't really about walls, it's about having an adequate security detail for the property.

Director Jane Gilman asked if we can amend the resolution to say we're opposed to any variances for an over-height wall, and Mr. Genewick said he would accept that.

Director John Gresham asked if the GWNC has ever considered other wall proposals on the basis of safety, and said we have been historically concerned about what walls do to our neighborhoods. He asked if we could state in our resolution that we'd prefer there be no wall at all on the property.

Mr. Genewick said we could recommend that the mayor's residence comply with City codes regarding walls, and that we oppose any variance to the codes. Mr. Wolf noted that Ms. Gilman recommended we oppose any walls, and City codes do allow for a 42" wall.

Director Rudy Gintel recommended that we say we are against any walls, especially if they're over the allowed height. Ms. Usher said she would be happy to write a letter to the City, expressing that opposition.

Secretary Elizabeth Fuller read back the proposed resolution, based on a summary of the discussion so far:

*That the GWNC write a letter noting Windsor Square's historical antecedents for an "open, park-like setting" and our opposition to either a wall or a variance allowing construction of such a wall, and that we "implore" the*

*Mayor to leave the house and grounds open as they were originally planned and constructed.”*

President Dougherty opened the discussion to public comment. One stakeholder said he supports the resolution in its entirety. Stakeholder Jake Jakubowski noted that the question had been called, so discussion should stop and a vote be taken.

Director Jared Abrams seconded the motion. Another stakeholder said it’s “lucky” the matter is being discussed here instead of in the Los Angeles Times.

The motion passed unanimously.

Wilshire-La Brea Development -- Director Elizabeth Fuller reported that a small community group met with developer BRE Properties in December, to review some façade revisions in the proposed Wilshire-La Brea development. There were several concerns expressed at that meeting about design elements of the project, as well as zoning changes that would result in the loss of the [Q]C-2 designations along Sycamore Ave. (which were created as an intentional buffer zone between the residential neighborhood on Sycamore and the more commercial areas along Wilshire and La Brea). Ms. Fuller also reported that later in December, in response to community concerns, the City Council District 4 office asked the developers to downsize the project by at least 100 units...and that the final EIR for the project will be released soon.

Director Jane Usher asked about the current zoning of the Sycamore lots, and Ms. Fuller said the current [Q] C-2 designation limits that side of the block to either R2 housing or at-grade parking for an adjacent business. Ms. Usher urged the community not to give up that zoning for the denser C-4 designation being requested.

Billboards -- Land Use Committee Chairperson James Wolf reported that digital billboards and large graphics on buildings in our area are becoming big issues, and that both community feedback and City Council discussions have made it important to bring them up with the GWNC.

Stakeholder Lucille Saunders, from the Melrose Neighborhood Association and the La Brea/Willoughby Coalition, said she is glad the issue is finally “hitting critical mass,” and that her organizations are working closely with the Coalition to Ban Billboard Blight. She said there’s currently a moratorium on new digital billboards and super-graphics, and that a proposal for a new sign ordinance will be discussed tomorrow by the City Council. She said the proposed ordinance deals with definitions of legal and illegal signs, digital billboards, super-graphics and sign districts. She also reported that a week ago, volunteers in the 10<sup>th</sup> Council District inventoried the billboards in their area, and that CD 5 will be making a similar effort and will need volunteers to help.

Another stakeholder noted that other cities have bans and restrictions on signs and billboards, and that it sounds like people here are also opposed to them, so he’d like to see Los Angeles get to where other cities are in controlling signs.

Director Jane Usher said the City Planning Commission will consider the new sign ordinance a week from tomorrow. A 125-page staff report, available on the Planning Department website, proposes a complete change in sign regulations.

Director John Gresham said the key is raising awareness, and letting people know about what signs are in their own areas is a good way to start. He said the Pico Neighborhood Council did a survey of all signs in its area and it would be good for the GWNC to do the same thing. He said many current signs are illegal, but there's no enforcement because the City doesn't know they exist.

Director Owen Smith said his Brookside neighborhood has raised the issue with City Council Member Tom La Bonge, who will be coming to the Brookside annual meeting on February 4, at the Wilshire Private School, at 7:00 p.m.

A stakeholder said we shouldn't wait on this issue, and should tell the City Council that we want a ban on signs now.

Conversion of Land Use to Standing Committee – Secretary Elizabeth Fuller reported that we are making progress toward converting the Land Use Committee from Ad Hoc to “standing” status. We have identified a regular location (Wilshire United Methodist Church) for the meetings, and have chosen the first Tuesdays of GWNC meeting months as a regular meeting date for the Committee. To complete the transition, we will need to start following Brown Act requirements for meeting notices, and make a formal resolution to create the new standing committee...both of which we should do soon.

#### DWP Oversight Committee

DWP Oversight representative Jack Humphreville said he's all for clean energy and solar power, but Measure B, which will appear on the March election ballot, is trying to “greenwash” us and he urges us to vote against it. He said an alternative is to pass a plain old ordinance, rather than a change to the City Charter, under which the DWP and its Board of Commissioners let all interested parties provide their input and create a more structured dialogue than we saw with Measure B.

Mr. Humphreville said there are two issues to consider: clean, open and transparent government, and the effects Measure B would have on our power rates. He said the rates depend on tax subsidies, economics of scale and other factors, and could vary from \$.40 to \$.70 per kilowatt hour...which means it would increase ratepayer costs.

Also, he said, all work done under Measure B would be in-house, which is “notoriously” expensive. He said DWP labor rates are up to 50% higher than those of independent contractors, and there's a wage premium for union workers and restrictive work rules. He says the Mayor claims using City labor will be cheaper in the long run, but hasn't provided numbers to support the claim. Mr. Humphreville said he believes the

plan will cost more than the city says, and the DWP doesn't have the management capabilities for a project of this size.

The other issue, according to Mr. Humphreville, is process. There's only been one committee hearing on the Measure, Neighborhood Councils didn't get any advance materials on it, and citizens didn't have a chance to provide input. Even the City Council, he said, didn't get much information.

Mr. Humphreville said this would be the largest project in DWP history, and even the DWP hasn't vetted or held hearings on it. In addition, he said, City Council Member Eric Garcetti covered up a consultant's report, which concluded the plan was risky, would have a big effect on power rates...and said there had been no analysis of the number of jobs it would create, materials sources and other issues.

He said this would set a bad precedent: the plan wouldn't be open to competitive bidding, and the City Council would be allowed to override the Charter (giving them more power than they've ever had).

Also, the measure was financed by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), which raised \$260,000 to support it. 63% of that money, he said, came from the IBEW itself, and more came from associates of the Mayor. He predicted we will see more large contributions and campaigning from those sources...while groups he's working with to defeat the measure don't have the money to fight it effectively.

Director Mike Genewick complained about the aesthetics of solar panels, saying they're not attractive. Mr. Humphreville said he hadn't heard that specific complaint, but there is concern about the ability of buildings to support the heavy panels, especially if there's an earthquake.

Director Jane Usher asked Mr. Humphreville to explain the kind of resolution he'd like the GWNC to pass. Mr. Humphreville said he's asking that the GWNC support green power, but not Measure B, and that we urge people to vote "no" in the March election. He's also asking that the City create a new ordinance on solar power, which has been properly vetted and reviewed by stakeholders...and that we file a Community Impact Statement on the subject.

Ms. Usher asked if the DWP Commissioners approved Measure B, and Mr. Humphreville said not to his knowledge -- it was just an act by the City Council.

Director Rudy Gintel asked how, as a property owner, Measure B would affect his options to put up solar panels. Mr. Humphreville said that under Measure B, the DWP would own the electricity created, and the rate of return would be 10-20 years, which isn't cost effective. Mr. Gintel asked if it would affect his ability to sell power back to the grid, and Mr. Humphreville said no. Mr. Gintel asked if there would be a cost to the property owner, and Mr. Humphreville said he doesn't know.

Director Owen Smith asked if Measure B would do away with the normal contractor bidding process for City work, and Mr. Humphreville said it would.

James Unger, representing the “Yes on B” campaign, said he agrees that the process that put this measure on the ballot was flawed, but he does think it’s a good measure. He said it allows property owners to participate voluntarily in the program, but they could still opt to do a private solar installation if they prefer. Panels installed by the DWP would be owned by the DWP and there would be a 30-year rate freeze, which would increase the value of the property.

Mr. Unger said aesthetic issues would be minimal – the panels are flat and the configuration on each building would be different. He said he understands the process concerns with Measure B, and agrees that not enough public input was sought...but he believes that will come, and he asks people to hold off judgments until more information is available.

Mr. Unger said the consultant report Mr. Humphreville referred to was incomplete, and the consultants didn’t have access to all the information they needed at the time. He said what Measure B will really do is provide a mandate to move toward solar power and state requirements for solar power. Also, it would reduce our reliance on fossil fuels. He said Los Angeles has some of the “dirtiest air” in the country, which also carries big costs, and that Measure B would help draw solar power companies to the LA area.

In addition, according to Mr. Unger, IBEW didn’t sue the opponents of Measure B (including Mr. Humphreville), as Mr. Humphreville claimed. The “Yes on B” campaign filed the suit...but it was simply a common technique to clarify language in the arguments against the measure, which appear in voter information pamphlets. And the result was just removal of one phrase from the argument. Also, he said, Measure B does not give IBEW a monopoly on solar installation work – private residences still have options. This measure covers mostly commercial buildings.

Mr. Unger said there is also a plan to support the new jobs created under the Measure, and training academies will be located in “underserved” communities. He said the Measure’s language doesn’t give the City Council more power, as Mr. Humphreville claimed, but simply modifies the language in one specific area.

He said the Measure is necessary now because the DWP has not made a move toward solar on its own, and needs a mandate from the voters to do so.

Finally, he asked people not to be scared off by the price of solar energy, because costs are coming down and some experts say it may soon be on a par with other energy sources.

Ms. Usher asked how much the Measure is going to cost, who will pay for it and why there will be no competitive bidding for the installation work. Mr. Unger said the

total cost will be between \$100 million and \$1.2 billion, which isn't an exact number but is better than Mr. Humphreville's "scary" predictions. He also said the DWP can hire outside contractors, and their labor costs are among the cheapest and most effective in the U.S. Ms. Usher disagreed with that, and Mr. Unger said he could provide numbers to support the claim. Ms. Usher asked if he was speaking historically or of the last two years, because rates have gone up. Mr. Unger said the DWP does not make a profit, and that any extra funds are always returned to the ratepayers.

Ms. Usher said Measure B requires IBEW to do all the installation work, and that the systems installed will be owned, operated and installed by the DWP. Mr. Unger said that's not true. Ms. Usher said DWP and union wages are also not the same, and Mr. Unger contended again that DWP rates are cheaper than private companies.

Alternate Director Mike Genewick said there are no coal companies in Los Angeles, so coal power has nothing to do with this city. Mr. Unger said using coal for energy has effects all over the world, but Mr. Genewick denied this.

Director Owen Smith said the Measure contains requirements that 30% of materials be manufactured locally, and that all installation must be done with local contractors...which means the City has to hire those people, permanently -- a built-in cost we can't get away from. Mr. Unger said that's a cost of the installation, not the resources, and the plan will actually create jobs. Mr. Smith said he's a union contractor, and using contractors is a lot cheaper than doing jobs in-house. Mr. Unger contended that private contractors tend to overcharge the government

Director Yigal Arens asked if private citizens could choose whether or not to participate, and Mr. Unger said the Measure would have no effect on the residential market. It only covers solar installations on commercial and industrial buildings, and building owners would not own the panels.

Director Patti Carroll asked when voter information about the Measure will be available. Mr. Unger said there's a report coming out in the next couple of weeks on costs for the program, and a lot of other information is available now. Ms. Carroll asked how the information is being made available, and Mr. Unger said it's public.

Mr. Humphreville said the DWP has hired a consulting firm to do a study, and an IEA study is also coming out soon. Going back to an earlier point, Mr. Humphreville asked people not to confuse "low rates" with "efficiency." He said the DWP does get 44% of its power from coal-fired plants...and that he would like to see the new reports.

Ms. Carroll said she heard on KCRW radio that solar panels are actually adding to global warming. Mr. Unger said he'd yield that question to representatives from the DWP.

Mr. Gintel said that as a property owner, he'd object to the DWP owning solar panels on one of his buildings, because it would restrict his "bundle of rights" on the

property. He said it would be better if the DWP made it more attractive – perhaps through tax incentives - for him to put up his own panels. Mr. Unger said he would still be free to do that under Measure B.

Director John Gresham said DWP rates have been artificially low because it has underfunded its pension plans.

Joe Avila, representing the DWP, said he is not advocating either way on Measure B (he's not allowed to), but can help to explain it. Mr. Avila said the 400 megawatt initiative is part of an overall solar power push. The DWP has had solar programs for a decade and currently produces 13 megawatts of solar power per year (out of its overall total of 7,000 megawatts). But sunshine is a natural resource in LA, so we should try to make better use of it. He said the DWP does own coal plants, so it has a fiscal responsibility: we will have to pay to pollute or invest in renewable energy sources. He said solar energy requirements are not covered under Public Utility Commission regulations, but the DWP adopted a 20% threshold by 2010.

The current DWP solar program, said Mr. Avila, produces 1280 megawatts, and includes rebates and others incentives. He said analysis does show DWP rates are lower than other providers, largely because the DWP owns its generation and distribution channels, so it doesn't rely on others to move its power. He said they have a very diverse blend of resources, which protects ratepayers.

Mr. Avila said Measure B is important -- it won't put solar power on all rooftops, but will take advantage of economies of scale and help control distribution better than "concept car" installations. He also said it will lower costs and create partnerships with solar companies.

Ms. Usher asked why the proposition won't allow the DWP to use a competitive bid process for the labor, and Mr. Avila said the DWP's philosophy is that it owns and operates all of its own assets. Ms. Usher asked if he's a union member, and he said he's not, he's a civil service employee. "But we worry about how our union brothers are spoken of." Ms. Usher said it is possible to use a competitive bid process and still specify a requirement for union labor, but Mr. Avila said "you get what you pay for." He said he recently saw a spinning, fully functional turbine with a 1908 date on it, so things do last a long time. He said the DWP is the only power company that didn't divest, and their rates are still lower, so the "proof is in the pudding."

Mr. Smith said he has no confidence in a system that requires putting all the new installation people on the payroll permanently. He said there are plenty of union contractors available now for the work, and they could go back to looking for other work when the project is done. Mr. Avila said DWP does hire from union halls.

A stakeholder said he's hearing that many people do want solar power, but they'd also like to spread the wealth for the installation work. Also, people are uncomfortable

with the DWP ownership of the panels – if they can train people to install them properly, why can't individuals own them and not pay the DWP?

Mr. Avila said 2/3 of the work will be done on private buildings. Also, the Federal government has also just extended its rebate program, so people can now get about 80% of the panel costs back and get off the grid entirely. But Mr. Humphreville said that's not on the ballot.

Mr. Genewick asked why nuclear power rates were missing from the chart Mr. Avila handed out, and why the DWP isn't promoting nuclear power.

*[Directors Jane Gilman and Charles Bergson left the meeting at 10:00 p.m.]*

Mr. Arens said we do need to do something about solar power, even though this may not be a perfect solution. He said he shares the view that the issues of union and government employees are problematic. But he doesn't yet think we should oppose the Measure.

Stakeholder Dan Kegel said he recently installed solar panels on his home, and the subsidies are great – the system should pay for itself in 12 years. He said global warming requires that we take bold action, and he thinks the plan the Mayor came up with is a good one and we should support it. He said he does have some minor concerns: if the goal is to reduce overall pollution, we should also consider the materials used in the panels themselves. He said he chose lead-free panels for his own system. Also, we can provide green power, but we also need to stop burning fossil fuels and institute a revenue-neutral carbon tax. However, those are side issues, and he believes the GWNC should support Measure B.

Mr. Dougherty read a sample resolution submitted by Mr. Humphreville:

*The matter of ballot Proposition B of the City of Los Angeles, having been duly agendized, came before the Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council (GWNC) for presentation, discussion and action at its regular meeting of January 14, 2009. Following discussion on all sides of the issue and review of the attached writings, the GWNC now adopts the following resolution:*

*WHEREAS the stakeholders of the GWNC are committed, without reservation, to reducing their individual and collective environmental footprint using current and future tools that may become available for this purpose, including but not limited to solar energy technologies;*

*WHEREAS the GWNC believes that a thorough and transparent public process is essential to the honorable conduct of local government, most especially where government proposes a significant change that may have substantial long-term financial implications for the workers, businesses, and residents of this City;*

*WHEREAS based on the attached writings and on the oral testimony presented, the GWNC does not believe that the solar energy program contemplated by Proposition B was the product of a thorough and transparent public vetting, but rather that it was unduly hurried, secretive, and without appropriate DWP Commission and Neighborhood Council notice and input;*

*WHEREAS the GWNC cannot endorse and must raise its voice against any City ballot proposition that lacks the normal and customary public process that is so vital to ensuring the integrity of government and the welfare of all the citizens of Los Angeles; and*

*WHEREAS the GWNC hopes by its action to raise the similar public conscience of its fellow Neighborhood Councils, its local Council Members Herb Wesson, Tom La Bonge and Jack Weiss, and each elected official of the City of Los Angeles, on whom the GWNC relies upon to work faithfully and openly for the betterment of us all.*

*NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this Neighborhood Council unabashedly supports green power and sustainable energy, but it does not support the insufficiently vetted Proposition B and urges a NO vote on March 3, 2009; and*

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the GWNC urges the City Council to adopt a solar energy program for the benefit of its workers, businesses and residents at the earliest possible time that such a program can be thoroughly and transparently determined to be in our best interests; and*

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Neighborhood Council shall promptly provide the City with a Community Impact Statement to this effect.*

Director Owen Smith moved that we adopt the resolution. Director Jane Usher seconded the motion.

Director Yigal Arens said the motion mixes two different things: complaints about the Measure itself, and complaints about the process taken to craft the measure. Director John Gresham said procedure is what's wrong with Measure B, and that it was done without any of the usual vetting or competitive bidding.

Director Shar Penfold said she'd rather see the motion written differently, to say that we want to see the procedures tidied up, but that we're all for solar power.

President Dougherty said he agrees with Mr. Gresham: solar power isn't the issue, it's that this measure is being sent to voters without being vetted. We're not being asked for our opinions on solar power.

Director Martha Schuur noted that the motion clearly states that we are committed to alternative energy sources. Ms. Penfold said it's a bit long-winded. Mr. Dougherty said it covers all the important points, and that resolutions of this nature tend to be lengthy.

Ms. Schuur asked if it's implied in the resolution's language that we would support the City going out for competitive bids for the installation process. Mr. Humphreville said that if it's done by an ordinance, as requested in the resolution, the usual City Charter requirements for competitive bidding would apply.

Mr. Unger noted that the resolution is a template that's being presented to all neighborhood councils.

Mr. Humphreville said that for more comments on the process that led to Measure B getting on the ballot, people should read City Controller Laura Chick's comments (which he passed out), including words like "stinks" and "swindle." He said the vote isn't a yes or no on solar power...we can still ask for an alternate solar power measure that was created through a better process.

Vice President James Wolf said rejecting Measure B doesn't preclude getting the right program in place, and that a "rush" job like this Measure usually contains some reason it was rushed.

President Dougherty called the question and took a roll call vote. Board Members voting in favor of the resolution were Patricia Carroll, Moon Chung, Charles Dougherty, Elizabeth Fuller, Rudy Gintel, John Gresham, Alison Hannon, Margaret Hudson, Mike Genewick, Martha Schuur, Owen Smith, Jane Usher and James Wolf. Voting against the resolution were Jared Abrams, Yigal Arens, Clinton Oie and Shar Penfold. The resolution passed with a vote of 13-4.

*[Director Moon Chung left the meeting at 10:25 p.m.]*

#### Neighborhood Parking Issue

Stakeholder Shawn McMahon read a letter which he had earlier submitted to the GWNC:

*Dear Neighbors:*

*I reside at 839 S. Wilton Place. My street is part of the anti-gridlock zone that helps the neighborhood avoid congestion during peak traffic hours in the morning and the afternoon. This comes at a cost to the residents of my street because we aren't allowed to park between the hours of 7 a.m. and 9 a.m. and again from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. The street directly to the west, Westchester Place, has additional restrictions, which prevent anyone from parking between the hours of 2*

*a.m. and 4 a.m. This means that my neighbors and I are forced to move our vehicles once or twice a night to avoid ticketing or towing.*

*The residents of Westchester Place appear unwilling to revisit the possibility of changing the parking restrictions from no parking overnight to neighborhood-only permit parking so that we neighbors who live in buildings that do not have on-site parking will have a place to park at night.*

*My research with the city suggests that given the Westchester Place residents will not request the changes themselves, the Neighborhood Council provides an alternative platform and has the authority to weigh in and recommend the desired change.*

*In recognition of the unusual parking restrictions on Westchester Place and because of the Anti-Gridlock zone on Wilton Place, I ask the Neighborhood Council to recommend to the DOT that the parking restrictions on Westchester be reviewed and changed so that all neighborhood residents have access to overnight parking. I would also ask that such a recommendation be forwarded on to the Councilmember's Office.*

A stakeholder, who also lives in Mr. McMahon's neighborhood, said that in addition to the restrictions Mr. McMahon mentioned, some other streets allow only 2-hour parking, especially on street cleaning days.

Director Elizabeth Fuller asked if Mr. McMahon has spoken to his City Council office about the problem. He said he did, and they recommend he bring it to the Neighborhood Council.

Director Jane Usher asked what life is like on Wilton Place, and Mr. McMahon said he and his neighbors either get parking tickets or park several blocks away and get rides back to their residences. The neighbor said he gets lots of tickets, too, and impounds are even more expensive. The current situation isn't fair to residents on his block.

Ms. Usher asked if there's ample room for cars on Westchester Place, and Mr. McMahon said there is.

Director John Gresham said Mr. McMahon should have brought this issue to the Wilshire Park Association. He said it sounds reasonable but the GWNC will have to hear from residents on Westchester before it can make a recommendation. Mr. McMahon said his hope in getting the item agendaized tonight was to get immediate action.

Director Jared Abrams asked if Mr. McMahon has spoken to Preferential Parking about the problem. Mr. McMahon said he has not, and that he is only asking us to ask the DOT to review the situation, not come up with a specific remedy at this time.

Alan Bernstein, owner of the building Mr. McMahon lives in, said the change in restrictions on Westchester was made recently, without consulting residents of other blocks. One solution would be to get the Westchester block to change its restrictions, but the residents there are not willing to do that.

Ms. Usher asked what the cross streets are on the Wilton block, and Mr. Bernstein said it's between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Streets.

President Dougherty asked if they're simply asking the GWNC for a letter to the DOT and Mr. Bernstein said yes, with a copy to Council Member Herb Wesson's office. Ms. Usher asked if Mr. McMahon could draft the letter, and Mr. Dougherty said that wouldn't be out of the norm.

The stakeholder who also resides on Mr. McMahon's block said residents can't park safely on the side streets because there have been a number of break-ins there.

President Dougherty suggested that someone propose a resolution that we write a letter to the DOT and Council Member Wesson's office, urging a review of the current parking restrictions on the blocks in question, without taking a specific position but noting that there does seem to be a real concern as voiced by the residents of the area.

Director Yigal Arens moved that we approve such a resolution. Director Owen Smith seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Mr. Gresham said that although it doesn't affect this resolution, he would still encourage Mr. McMahon to bring the matter to the Wilshire Park Association for mediation...and that this is a good example of the adage that any time you move a problem away from one area, it simply goes to another.

#### Million Trees, Director of Animal Welfare & LA Team Mentoring

No speakers were present for these agenda items, so they were passed over.

#### Ad Hoc Outreach Committee

Committee Chair Margy Hudson reported we are trying to get our logo designer paid and we are working out some back-end software issues for the website re-design.

She also reported that we will be running new ¼ page ads in the Larchmont Chronicle, which will include more meeting details (like the Windsor Square and Hancock Park Homeowners' Association ads). These will start running in March.

We are also working on developing guidelines for booking speakers for our meetings (which DONE does not have).

Burns Park Improvement Project

Director Margy Hudson reported that the children's play area, benches and new restrooms have been installed and the park is close to breaking ground on the irrigation project and putting in the new decomposed granite path. Also, new drought-tolerant landscaping is being installed. The City has given an estimate of \$97,000 to paint the park fence, but Yolie Sheridan got another bid of only \$9,800, which she is working with the City to approve. The park is very heavily used, so organizers of this project are hoping Proposition K funds, which are paying for much of the work, do not get cut.

Ms. Sheridan reminded us that last year the GWNC promised \$20,000 for this project and asked why the money has not been received. Ms. Hudson said we lost our Treasurer and our funding was frozen for a time, so that's part of the problem. Director Elizabeth Fuller further explained that the GWNC can't make any up-front grants, and can only pay specific invoices for work already completed...and we haven't received any invoices yet for the park project.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Board Member Comments

Director Margy Hudson reported that we have received one Survey LA nomination from the link on our website, for the property at 232 S. St. Andrews Place, and that the Brookside neighborhood has also expressed an interest in being surveyed.

Director Jared Abrams asked if he could take the lead in creating a new GWNC ad hoc committee on Crime Prevention, and talk to the LAPD about starting Neighborhood Watches in the GWNC area. Mr. Dougherty said it sounds like a good idea and asked if anyone would like to make such a motion.

Director Jane Usher said the street where Mr. Abrams lives (Gower) is now split between the Wilshire and Olympic divisions of the LAPD. She said the new Olympic Division captain is looking for people to be part of the Community Police Advisory Board (CPAB) in that area.

Director Owen Smith moved that we create an Ad Hoc Committee on Crime Prevention and Director Elizabeth Fuller seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

President Dougherty asked if there were any volunteers for the committee, and Ms. Usher suggested Director John Gresham could provide some advice. She said she'd be willing to help as well.

Stakeholder Karen Gilman noted that interest in Neighborhood Watches ebbs and flows with crime in the area; some blocks have them and some don't.

In another matter, Director Margy Hudson reported that new parking stations have been installed on Larchmont Blvd. and there are new meter rates throughout the City. She said rates on Larchmont are now \$1 an hour, the hours you must pay for parking have increased, Sundays are no longer free, and there are no receipts from the digital pay stations. Director Yigal Arens added that proximity sensors are notified as soon as the meters expire.

Director Patti Carroll passed around photos old and new of a building at 135 N. Western Ave, which was the original home of See's Candies. She said there are plans to convert the building into a shopping mall, but the L.A. Conservancy has filed a landmark application, which will be heard by the Cultural Heritage Commission on February 6. She requested that this item be put on the GWNC Land Use and Board agendas for March, so we can vote on whether or not to support the application. She said the property is just outside the GWNC's official boundaries, but it is part of a neighborhood that does lie mostly inside our area.

Director Owen Smith asked that we also agendaize, at our next meeting, a vote on helping to fund improvements at Memorial Library. He said a similar project was discussed several years ago, but it was never completed and now the neighbors would like to revive it.

Vice President James Wolf announced that the Hancock Park HPOZ Board is being formed, and one spot is reserved for someone nominated by the GWNC. We got this notice too late to agendaize it for a vote at this meeting, but we will find out more about the available candidates and take a vote at our next meeting.

#### Announcements and Adjournment

President Dougherty announced that the next meeting of the GWNC will be held on Wednesday, March 11, 2009.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Fuller  
Secretary