

Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council



Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council General Meeting

March 11, 2009

Approved by the Board
May 13, 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, March 11, 2009, at the Ebell of Los Angeles, 743 South Lucerne Blvd. President Charles Dougherty called the meeting to order at 7:13 p.m.

Roll Call

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

The Secretary stated that a quorum was present.

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 Yigal Arens and Alternate Director Mary Rajswing, made several small corrections:

- p. 7, sixth paragraph: “...hid behind them” should be “...hide behind them”
- p. 11, fourth paragraph: “solare power” should be “solar power”
- p. 12, fifth paragraph: “...asked what if” should be “...asked if”
- p. 13, sixth paragraph: “own and operate all” should be “owns and operates all”
- p. 15, third paragraph: “Council Herb Wesson, Tom La Bonge...” should be “Council Members Herb Wesson, Tom La Bonge...”

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes as amended. It passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Elizabeth Fuller reported that we are now back to processing invoices as they come in, and our vendors are being paid.

President's Report

President Charles Dougherty yielded the floor to Alex Ponder, district Director for California State Assembly Member Mike Feuer, who was scheduled to speak later in the meeting, but needed to leave early.

Mr. Ponder spoke about a two-year moratorium on the conversion of static billboards to digital billboards, proposed by Mr. Feuer, which would allow federal studies on eye movement, driver distraction and traffic safety to be completed before further proliferation of the signs would be allowed.

Director Jane Usher thanked Mr. Ponder saying he and the rest of Mr. Feuer's team have been our "best allies" on this issue. President Dougherty noted that the GWNC's Ad Hoc Land Use Committee discussed other billboard issues at its meeting last week, and they will be covered in greater depth later this evening.

Responding to a stakeholder question regarding opposition to Mr. Feuer's proposed moratorium, Mr. Ponder said there is tremendous opposition. Many people say that if there are no studies showing a clear danger, the signs should be allowed. But he said Mr. Feuer thinks there needs to be more independent analysis of the issue before that should happen. He said there will be big hurdles in getting the proposal approved.

GWNC DWP MOU Representative Jack Humphreville asked if the legislation would pre-empt agreements the City has already entered into regarding digital billboards, and Mr. Ponder said the measure would only affect off-site signs. He said his office believes this would prevent conversions of signs covered under a recent settlement, and that they have issued a press release specifically addressing this issue.

Director John Gresham said that if anyone is under the impression they won't get bombarded with signs, they haven't seen anything yet. He urged everyone to speak up on this issue. Mr. Ponder agreed, and suggested anyone who doesn't live in Mr. Feuer's district contact their own Representatives to ask them to support the measure.

Stakeholder Myrna Dwyer asked if the measure would also cover new supergraphics, which are also distracting to drivers. Mr. Ponder said there are many different kinds of signs, but they felt that for the state to step in and pre-empt local regulations, it would best be done in a vary narrow way, so they're only focusing on digital conversions with this particular measure.

Returning to items agendaized under the President's Report, President Dougherty reminded all Board Members and Alternates that they must take DONE's online ethics training course if they haven't already done so, or renew their certification if it's been more than two years since they took the test. Secretary Elizabeth Fuller reported that the only Board Members and Alternates who have current ethics training certifications are Mr. Dougherty, Ms. Fuller, Margy Hudson, Clinton Oie, Martha Schuur, Owen Smith, Jane Usher, Mike Genewick and Joan Jakubowski.

Director John Gresham reported that he and Director Owen Smith attended a recent Board of Neighborhood Commissioners ceremony honoring several Neighborhood Councils, including the GWNC, on their fifth anniversaries. Betty Wong Oyama, from the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment, presented a certificate to commemorate the occasion.

Guest Presentations

Helen Yoon, who works with alternative technologies for the L.A. Bureau of Sanitation, said that because 10 million tons of solid waste are going to urban landfills each year, the BOS is developing a 20-year Solid Waste Integrated Master Plan, which will be stakeholder-driven. One goal is to develop facilities that will turn solid waste into renewable energy, which is much more ambitious than our current recycling plan. To accomplish this, the Bureau is looking at new technologies being used in other countries. It has now issued RFPs, and vendors are submitting proposals. Also, for the past two months, they've been talking to stakeholders about where to locate waste sheds. The goal is for all sheds to have their own alternative technology facilities, powered by their own energy, either biological or thermal. She said they're seeking feedback on both kinds of systems and are exploring alternatives in each category. The goals are to keep materials out of landfills, reduce groundwater contamination from landfills, reduce the number of miles waste is transported, create local "green" jobs, and more. She said they're currently considering various heavy industrial sites for the location of the sheds. She left literature for people to look at, and a sign-up sheet if people would like more information. She said the project's website is listed on the handout, and their goal is to begin building in 2013.

Rick Stoff introduced his organization, Chrysalis, which helps homeless people get back into the workforce by providing transitional, temporary employment on cleanup projects around town. He said his crews often work for Business Improvement Districts and Neighborhood Councils. As an example, he described how the Palms NC had an idea for "outreach with a broom" – using his people to clean up neighborhood streets and passing the word to local businesses that the service was being provided by the NC. Director Elizabeth Fuller asked about costs for the service, and Mr. Stoff said it costs approximately \$250 to sweep and empty trash on a five-block stretch of street, and they're happy to provide estimates for any area. Vice President James Wolf asked if the organization is for-profit or non-profit, and Mr. Stoff said it's a non-profit, has been in

business for 25 years, and is an approved vendor for DONE.

Nikki Ezhari, from City Council Member Tom La Bonge's office, distributed copies of the latest CD 4 newsletter, and reported several items of local interest:

- Developer BRE donated a large number of landscaping plants to John Burroughs Middle School and Wilshire Crest Elementary.
- The Ridgewood-Wilton neighborhood is getting ready for a new lighting project.
- Pedestrian tunnels are re-opening at Wilshire Crest and Vine Street schools.
- The vines planted last year at 3rd Street School are not doing well and are being replaced.
- The Windsor Square Historical Society will be honoring Carolyn Ramsay.
- Tom La Bonge's next Community Congress will be held at 6 p.m. on March 25 at the LA Zoo's Botanical Gardens.

Betty Wong Oyama, from the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment congratulated the GWNC on its fifth anniversary. She also said that a DONE e-mail newsletter will be sent out on Thursday and asked everyone to read it. She said the city Neighborhood Council elections will be held in 2010, and do require some bylaws changes. There will also be a checklist for each NC to complete, which will be ready in about two weeks. The bylaws changes and checklist are due by the end of May if NCs are having elections next year, so she urged us to return the documents as soon as possible.

In addition, Ms. Oyama said there will be a regional training session for NC members, which will cover roles and responsibilities, legal issues, the Brown Act, funding and other important topics.

On April 29, there will be a City Attorney's Conflict of Interest training session for NC Board Members and Alternates. The course can also be taken online if people don't want to go to the in-person session...but all members and alternates must take the training, or they won't be able to participate in board votes.

On April 30, the City will offer a workplace violence training session and roundtable with Bong Hwan Kim.

Ms. Oyama said she's collecting stories of successful NC funding projects, which will be used to convince city officials – who are working on new budgets – how important our Neighborhood Councils are.

Finally, she announced that NCs will soon be able to both give and receive grants...and that DONE's regional conference will take place in May.

Director Jane Usher noted that we have only one board meeting between now and the deadline for the submission of our bylaws materials, and asked that we be sure and

agendize that item. Ms. Oyama said we don't need board approval for the required changes, and that the City Clerk's mandates will supercede items in our bylaws. Ms. Oyama said she would work with Ms. Usher to figure out the details.

Featured Presentation

President Dougherty introduced guest speaker Rodger Shimatsu, from the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment. Mr. Shimatsu distributed folders containing Neighborhood Council financial training information to all board members and interested stakeholders.

Mr. Shimatsu said DONE will be rolling out the neighborhood grants program in the next few weeks, and urged us to prepare by setting up a vetting committee so we don't get bogged down in funding requests. He said the new donations ordinance will also be rolling out soon, and that will allow the GWNC to receive donations from corporations and other entities...which could be especially helpful with city budget cuts looming.

Turning our attention to the documents in the left-hand side of the folders, Mr. Shimatsu pointed out the Neighborhood Council Funding Flow page, which shows that if a Council has more than \$100,000 saved up, it won't get its yearly allocation of \$50,000. If there is less than \$100,000 in an NC's account, it will receive another \$50,000 in the next funding cycle. Because of this, he urged us to turn in any paperwork for payments by the end of May, which is when funds are frozen while DONE balances its books before the next fiscal year begins in June. After May 31, no more checks can be cut until the second week in July.

Mr. Shimatsu said DONE assumes that about 50% of an NC's expenditures will be made via Demand Warrants, and about 50% on our debit card. For any Demand Warrant to be paid, DONE requires supplemental documentation of various sorts, and it may ask for additional information if items are missing in the original submission. He suggested, to make this easier, that we establish a rule that whoever brings a funding request to the Council be responsible for collecting the necessary documentation.

[Director Moon Chung joined the meeting at 8:02 p.m.]

Next, Mr. Shimatsu pointed out the yellow Demand Warrant brochure in the folder, which explains that when we submit a Demand Warrant for payment, we'll receive notifications from DONE when the form has been received, if more information is needed to process the request, and when a check has been sent. If we do receive notification that more information is needed, we need to act on it, or the item will just sit in a pending file until we do.

The white sheets in the folder are applications for a Neighborhood Council debit card (which we already have). The green sheet is a new budget sample. This one contains lots of detail, but it's OK to provide even more – our budget is a roadmap for

both our Council and our stakeholders.

The green Board Resolution form can be used to document our Council's intent if we don't yet have an approved set of minutes to prove our intent to fund something. It can be used, instead of minutes, to expedite a payment request...but we shouldn't abuse it. Minutes are preferred.

Moving on to the documents in the right-hand side of the folder, Mr. Shimatsu said the yellow Accountability and Technical Assistance Policy explains how Council finances are tracked and audited, and the consequences for violations. He said other Councils have had some problems – including arrests and indictments – and he hopes that won't happen again.

The blue Funding Guidelines document lists acceptable and unacceptable purchases. Acceptable items include a book donated to a library. But a book given to an individual would be unacceptable because it would be defined as a gift. Purchases made without board approval are also unacceptable and may not be reimbursed by DONE. Also, only board members may be reimbursed for expenditures, never stakeholders.

If we hire an outside vendor for anything, they must fill out the gold Business Tax Registration form.

The white Demand Warrant form is for the treasurer's use, to request payments.

The white Neighborhood Council Supporting Documents form lists the different documentation requirements for different funding situations.

The white Help on Community Improvement Projects form lists several suggested and pre-approved vendors (e.g. Chrysalis) for different types of services. If we use these vendors, there will be less documentation required to pay them (e.g. no BTRC or W-9 forms, which are required for other vendors).

The blue sheet provides information on DONE's required ethics training.

The blue FAQ sheet answers many common questions (Mr. Shimatsu pointed out the tip on page 6, about discounts available through Office Depot), and DONE is in the process of revising it to include even more topics.

Finally, Mr. Shimatsu said his business card is also in the folders, and anyone is welcome to call him with any questions.

A visitor from the Olympic Park Neighborhood Council asked Mr. Shimatsu who can take this training in a face-to-face session. Mr. Shimatsu said that both OPNC members in attendance tonight have now been trained and should sign his sign-in sheet to document this.

The OPNC member also asked about money that has been encumbered but not spent yet, and Mr. Shimatsu said he should look on the DONE website for his NC. The site will show the date the council was certified, how much money has been received from the city throughout the life of the Council, and how much is left in their account. They can also review all checks that have been issued, and all credit card transactions. Mr. Shimatsu said they can't officially encumber funds without a demand warrant and the other documentation necessary to process the demand warrant.

The OPNC member said they have earmarked some funds, but have not yet spent them. Mr. Shimatsu said they would have to get their paperwork in by May 15 to reserve the funding.

Director Margy Hudson asked who on our council has signatory rights for Demand Warrants, and President Dougherty said he and Secretary Elizabeth Fuller (also the acting Treasurer) do. Ms. Hudson suggested it would be good to have a third person certified, just in case one of the other two is unavailable. Mr. Shimatsu said we could appoint anyone who is signed in to the meeting tonight.

Alternate Director Mary Rajswing asked about the pending grant program, and Mr. Shimatsu said information will be available when the program is rolled out later this month, and all paperwork will be available on the DONE website.

Ms. Hudson suggested we propose some official funding guideline language at our next meeting, based on a list of recommendations Director Jane Usher made last year. Mr. Dougherty said we do have a Funding Guidelines committee, and this would be a good time for them to meet. Ms. Hudson asked that this be put on the agenda for our next meeting.

Director Jared Abrams asked if all approved vendors appear on the DONE website. Mr. Shimatsu said they do, and we can also find others by looking at funding lists from other NCs – people who have been paid by one NC don't have to re-do all the paperwork if they're hired by another NC. Mr. Abrams asked if it's hard to become an approved vendor, and Mr. Shimatsu said they just have to fill out a W-9 form and a BRTC.

Mr. Dougherty urged everyone to review the Funding Guidelines sheet in the DONE folder, to get a better idea of items we can and cannot fund.

Ad Hoc Land Use Committee

Cuvee Wine Lounge (320 S. La Brea) -- Vice President James Wolf, chair of the Ad Hoc Land Use Committee, reminded us that the Board voted at its last meeting to empower the Land Use Committee to help the developer of this project, and its neighbors, iron out a variety of points in the Cuvee CUP application. Cuvee owner Edgar Poursagah said all the issues have now been settled to everyone's agreement, except for

the issue of soundproofing...but they have agreed to work that out later. Mr. Wolf complimented the parties involved, saying there has been very proactive interaction and cooperation between the applicant and the neighbors. Mr. Pouresagh said no hearing date has been set yet, but they expect it to be sometime in March.

303 S. Highland Update – Mr. Wolf said there was a hearing on this issue on February 17, which was well attended by people on both sides. The question is whether Congregation Etz Chaim will be allowed to use the location as a place of worship. The hearing examiner left the file open for 30 days, because there were so many people at the hearing, not everyone had time to speak. The examiner did not indicate when a decision would be rendered.

Mozza to Go – Mr. Wolf reported that the owners of the Mozza Pizzeria and Osteria are planning to open a third Mozza, for take-out service, in the old Apple computer store on Melrose, adjacent to the other two restaurants. He said the owners are seeking a CUP for the project, and our Land Use Committee asked that they talk with the community surrounding the restaurants, the Hancock Park Homeowners' Association, and members of two other adjacent homeowners' groups, about unresolved parking issues, before our committee makes a recommendation.

Dover Apartments – Mr. Wolf said the Dover is an existing building on Beverly, where the owners would like to convert an old ground floor parking area, now used for storage, into several small creative studio spaces. He said the Land Use Committee recommended that the owners talk to the community about the layout of the property and potential parking issues, and then return to us with a report.

Mobil Station at Beverly & Western – Mr. Wolf said this business has requested a CUP for the sale of beer and wine. The Land Use Committee encouraged the applicants to meet with local HOAs and other groups to better understand their needs and concerns. Mr. Gresham added that the applicants did say they had conducted a survey of "stakeholders," who do support the liquor sales...but the survey was conducted exclusively among customers of the station's mini-mart, who aren't necessarily a representative cross-section of the neighborhood.

BRE Wilshire/La Brea Development – Dave Powers, from developer BRE Properties, said the project as originally presented contained 645 units, but was then scaled back to 562 units. The EIR has been completed, but about a month ago, the City Council office asked for another density reduction, so the design now calls for 482 units. Retail space has also been reduced by 5,000 square feet. The reductions were made by slicing one story out of the middle of the building; the footprint hasn't changed. Mr. Powers said they're still consulting with a small community working group on design ideas for the pocket park at the corner of Sycamore and 8th, as well as neighborhood protection and traffic calming measures. He said the first public hearing on the project should be held in 6-8 weeks, and there will be approximately three more hearings after that.

Director Jane Gilman asked about the height of the project in the current design. Mr. Powers said there will be five stories of residential space, one floor of retail, plus a mezzanine level.

Director John Gresham asked about access and egress...and whether the height of the buildings will step down toward the residential area along Sycamore. Mr. Powers said there will be two residential and retail entrances to the complex, one on 8th St. and one on Sycamore Ave. He said the building's courtyards will open to the east, and the building heights will step down toward the townhouses along Sycamore. Those units will be in scale with other homes along the east side of that street.

Director Margy Hudson asked if there will be any attempt to save the significant art pieces in the former Columbia Savings building – a bronze water sculpture and the stained glass skylight. Mr. Powers said they haven't made a decision yet, but might potentially be able to incorporate them into the new project. Ms. Hudson asked when they might make this decision and Mr. Powers said perhaps within the next two months. He said issues of the pieces' situation, removal costs and alterations over time might make saving them difficult or impossible.

Director Elizabeth Fuller said she's concerned about the loss of the [Q]C-2 residential buffer zone along Sycamore Ave., and concerned that changing them to C-4, as BRE has requested, would allow either BRE or some other developer the right to replace the proposed townhouses some day with something much larger, without any community input. The attorney for BRE suggested those lots could be protected with detailed [Q] conditions. Director Jane Usher said she would never recommend using [Q] conditions to protect zoning – it's much better to establish the zoning you want because people rarely look at or pay attention to [Q] conditions, and using them to protect zoning status is a bad precedent. The BRE attorney disagreed, saying using [Q] conditions in this way is common practice, and details about them are very easy to find; they're even listed on the Internet. Ms. Usher said that's often not true, and the only reason [Q] conditions are so commonly used this way is because the city is so "abusive" of the zoning system. The attorney said another reason not to worry about this is that the townhouses will be structurally integrated into the rest of the development, so they couldn't be replaced by themselves.

A visiting member of the Ocean Park Neighborhood Council asked if the developers had considered using increased setbacks in the project, and BRE architect Daniel Gehman said setbacks along La Brea will vary from 15 to 21 feet. The Sycamore setback will be 15 feet to the townhouses (50 feet to the taller portion of the development), and the setbacks along 8th St. will be 16 feet.

GWNC DWP MOU Representative Jack Humphreville said he'd like to see a higher degree of transparency for the project, especially regarding the benefits the developers are receiving from the City. He said that if we don't have full financial disclosure on the project, we shouldn't approve it. Director Jane Usher asked what makes

him think the project is City funded, and he said the zoning changes alone are worth something – the area is going to be a lot more crowded when this is built.

The BRE attorney said there has been a water supply assessment that shows no strain on local resources, and no housing is being replaced. Also, the only zoning changes being requested are to make the zoning consistent across the site. The current zoning actually allows the construction of 455 units by right (or 615 with a density bonus). He said the requested zoning changes would allow the developers to shift the density across the site, and thus avoid putting high towers along either the Wilshire or La Brea sides of the property.

Ms. Usher suggested they look at the Old Spaghetti Factory development in Hollywood. The developers of that project wanted to re-zone the whole parcel, but wound up splitting it, to keep a lower density area along the back, near the neighboring residential area. She said it's a better precedent for a neighborhood to have "two colors" on a map, showing a real transition to the residential areas.

Director Jane Gilman asked what Ms. Usher would recommend here, and Ms. Usher said the Old Spaghetti Factory site ended up with lower density zoning at the back of the project to preserve the adjacent neighborhood, and higher density zoning along Sunset. Ultimately, the neighbors prevailed.

The BRE attorney reminded her that all of the Wilshire-La Brea site is currently zoned C-2...but Ms. Fuller said that's not true, because the current [Q] conditions on the Sycamore lots limit them to R-2 residential development or surface-level parking. Ms. Usher said the attorney had just proved her point: people ignore [Q] conditions, so they're not a good way to protect zoning.

The attorney said the townhouses along Sycamore will be designed to fit in with the community, but Ms. Usher asked him if it isn't true that the current [Q] conditions limit what can be built there. The attorney said yes, but the area is zoned for Regional Commercial use. Mr. Powers said the project as proposed is what they'd like to build, and BRE is a long-term owner. They won't want to tear down the townhouses to replace them with something else later. Ms. Usher said if that's the case, they should get the zoning they need for the townhouses and no more...and the attorney said that's exactly what they want to do.

Stakeholder Dan Kegel said the project's EIR states that the City verified there would be sufficient water and power for the area for the next 20 years. But the City hasn't done its legally required infrastructure audits and doesn't factor in climate change. He said we'd need to see results and projections for those things before we could believe there would be no impacts.

Stakeholder Myrna Dwyer said the Columbia Savings Building, currently occupying the building site, is a prime example of 1960s architecture in the Brutalist style, which people can read about on the Los Angeles Conservancy website. She

requested preservation of the building and asked that BRE not destroy this link to our architectural heritage...especially the stained glass skylight, which was designed by a student of Marc Chagall.

Stakeholder Felicia Filer, who lives across the street from the development site on Sycamore Ave., asked that the GWNC not support the project. She said it has come down in size, but there is a lot more work to do. She said she shares the concerns raised about the zoning issues, and that the proposed pocket park is a “joke” considering the number of residents the development will house.

Stakeholder Lydia Olivier said she also supports the preservation of the Columbia Savings building, and that it’s one of two buildings that anchor the entrance to the Miracle Mile. Ms. Olivier said she’s also a parent at Wilshire Crest Elementary School, which has a population of just over 300 students. She said LAUSD will soon be removing three classroom bungalows from the campus, and the school could easily become overcrowded if a lot of new kids move into the area. She said she thinks the developers have a responsibility to support the school as another developer (Sonic Automotive) recently did with a large cash donation. She asked how BRE would commit to the school, and how many children they anticipate living in the development. Finally, she said she also has concerns about the increased traffic the development would bring to Sycamore Ave., between Wilshire and Olympic, which could also affect school safety.

Mike Feuer Digital Billboard Moratorium – As noted earlier in the evening by California State Assembly Member Mike Feuer’s deputy, Alex Ponder, Mr. Feuer has introduced AB109, which would place a two-year moratorium on new digital billboard conversions. Mr. Wolf reported that our Ad Hoc Land Use Committee has recommended that the GWNC support the proposed legislation as long as it doesn’t undermine more restrictive measures taken locally. Director John Gresham moved that we adopt the LUC’s recommendation. Alternate Director Mary Rajswing seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

City Council Sign Ordinance – Director Jane Usher reported that the Planning Department is writing a new City sign code. She said the City does have a code already, but doesn’t enforce it. There are two separate ordinances being proposed, and a third version was due today. She said she has put together a motion that could reflect our point of view, no matter which proposal the City finally adopts. She passed out the resolution, which reads:

*Re: CPC-2009-0008-CA
Revisions to City Sign Code*

We, the _____, hereby ask the City Planning Commission and City Council to take the following actions regarding revisions to the City sign code:

1. *Retain the distinction between off-site and on-site signs. Strengthen the off-site sign ban currently in place by severely limiting the City's discretion to grant exceptions in supplemental use districts, specific plans, and development agreements. These exceptions have led to a degrading of the city's visual environment and a crass commercialization of public space.*
2. *Support regulations to limit the height, size, number, and placement of signs to protect communities from visual clutter and blight.*
3. *Repeal the agreement allowing 840 digital signs and prohibit any additional digital signs to protect residents and communities from unwanted light trespass and pollution, potential traffic safety hazards, and excessive energy usage.*
4. *Prohibit signs that cover doors or windows, and limit the size of wall signs to prevent entire buildings from being turned into advertisements with "supergraphic" signs.*
5. *Enact meaningful penalties for illegal signage that will act as a real deterrent to this unlawful activity that is currently blighting our city, and make provision for the recovery of "ill-gotten gains" from companies that reap financial returns from illegal signs.*
6. *Establish criteria for sign districts that include a mandatory reduction of billboards and other forms of off-site signage in the community plan area. Include regulations that protect adjacent neighborhoods from any light trespass and other negative effects from the allowed signage.*
7. *Oppose the "grandfathering" of current applications for sign districts that would allow them to proceed through the approval process under the existing, more liberal provisions that do not include mandatory sign reduction and protections for surrounding neighborhoods.*
8. *Oppose the establishment of any new sign districts until a definitive ruling has been received from the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in the World Wide Rush v. City of Los Angeles case. Allowing any new sign districts could lead to further injunctions of the sort that have undermined the city's ability to enforce the current off-site sign ban, and could result in a significant proliferation of supergraphic signs and other types of outdoor advertising.*
9. *Strengthen our program to inspect billboards. Commence an aggressive effort to cite and remove billboards that do not have current permits or that no longer comply with lawfully issued permits.*

Director Elizabeth Fuller noted that the Ad Hoc Land Use Committee has recommended that the Board support the motion.

Director Jane Gilman asked what penalties are set forth for violations. Ms. Usher said the first version of the proposed ordinance contained almost no penalties and the second version is still very weak. She said a large supergraphic can generate \$100,000 per month in income for the sign and building owners, and a digital sign brings in even more. New York City has set first-day violation fines up to \$15,000, with an additional \$25,000 levied for the second day of a violation and each day thereafter. Also, all advertisers must register, and if they violate the rules, they can't have signs for five years. In addition, the City can recover removal costs from both sign and building owners. She said this is a relevant standard to consider, and item number 5 in the proposed resolution addresses this point.

Director John Gresham asked if there are any objections to incorporating those exact penalties into our resolution, because there is clearly a desire to change Los Angeles' lack of penalties. Ms. Usher asked if we should amend the resolution. Mr. Gresham suggested that we refer to New York City's sign code and attach a copy of their penalties to our resolution. He suggested we also send a copy to the Los Angeles Times. Director Margy Hudson suggested adding the Larchmont Chronicle as well.

President Dougherty asked if someone would make a motion to adopt Ms. Usher's motion on signage (with item #5 changed to read "*Enact meaningful penalties such as those in force in New York City (see attached)...*"), and that we send the approved motion to the media. Mr. Gresham made the motion. It was seconded by Ms. Gilman.

Director Yigal Arens said he hasn't read the full list of New York's sign regulations and may not like all of it, but Ms. Fuller reminded him we're only referring here to the specific penalties mentioned by Ms. Usher.

The motion passed unanimously.

Hancock Park HPOZ Board Nomination – Mr. Wolf reported that the newly created Hancock Park HPOZ Board reserves one seat for a person recommended by the Neighborhood Council, and one for a person recommended by the Mayor (who hasn't yet made an appointment). He said the City has not been considering candidates who were active in either the fight for or against the establishment of the HPOZ. The Ad Hoc Land Use Committee looked at seven resumes that have been submitted and narrowed our choice down to two candidates: David Cole, a resident on Las Palmas Ave. for 35 years, who is also an attorney with an interest and background in historic preservation...and Sandra Kohn, a 40-year resident on McCadden Place, who's also an attorney.

Mr. Wolf said there were several other worthy candidates from the real estate community, but because the Mayor will probably choose a Realtor, we should consider people with other backgrounds. Also, one of the applicants was not local (and might have trouble attending meetings), and one was a contractor who does so much work in the neighborhood that he might have to recuse himself too often when his own projects are being discussed.

Ms. Usher asked what kind of law the two recommended candidates practice. Mr. Wolf said Ms. Kohn has a private mediation practice, and Mr. Cole is involved in real estate property matters.

Director Margy Hudson asked for the names of the three people who are already on the board and Alternate Director Cindy Chvatal provided them. Ms. Usher asked if one of the new applicants has preservation experience, and Mr. Wwolf said one person we considered has experience in Atlanta.

[Director Charles Bergson left the meeting at 9:26 p.m.]

Ms. Usher moved that we nominate Mr. Cole to the Hancock Park HPOZ Board seat.

Director Yigal Arens said he doesn't feel we have enough information about the candidates yet to vote. Ms. Chvatal said both the Land Use Committee and the Hancock Park neighborhood association have recommended Mr. Cole as well, and that he has just restored his home and has sat on preservation committees in Washington, DC.

Mr. Abrams asked if there are any women on the Board yet, and Ms. Chvatal said all three of the already-appointed Board members are women.

Ms. Usher repeated her motion that we recommend Mr. Cole for the seat. Director Jane Gilman seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Cell Phone Tower – Stakeholder Henrietta Cosentino, who lives in on Gramercy Place in St. Andrews Square, said she recently received a notice in the mail about the installation of a new cell phone tower to be placed on an apartment building at 108 S. Gramercy. The tower would rise 10 feet and include equipment cabinets and a screen enclosure. The total building height would then be 55 feet, which is over the 45-foot limit for an R1 residential zone (which is why the applicant is required to file for a Conditional Use Permit). Ms. Cosentino read a letter drafted by the St. Andrews Square Neighborhood Association opposing the tower, and requested that the GWNC write a similar letter in support of the SASNA position and that we attend a public hearing on March 25.

The SASNA letter takes the position that:

- The proposed tower is inappropriate for an R1 neighborhood
- The Gailmore apartment building, where the tower will be placed, is already out of scale with surrounding houses and the tower will make it more so.
- Many people's perception is that cell phone towers are hazardous to our health, which may have a chilling effect on property values.
- While the tower will bring revenue to the building's owners and the owner of the cell phone tower, it doesn't benefit the neighborhood in any way.

Ms. Cosentino said most neighbors are disturbed by the potential health issues, which aren't proven...but the negative perception is very real.

She said they don't know what the aesthetics of the tower will be yet, that the apartment owner is concealed by an LLC, and the cell tower owner has concealed itself behind a facilitator company.

Director Elizabeth Fuller said the Neighborhood Council does have the CUP application and the tower plans on file, and can provide them to the neighbors.

Director Margy Hudson said a similar application was made a few years ago at St. Brendan's Church. Ms. Cosentino noted that application was turned down, and said a tower would be no more appropriate at this location.

Director Jane Usher said that to award a CUP, the applicant has to make five findings specific to the codes (she offered to send them to Ms. Cosentino later), and if they can't make them, the application will be denied. (For example, "Is the use compatible with surrounding land uses?") She also noted that all CUP applications don't go to the zoning department; some go other places. Applications with "ZA" in the case number do go to a zoning administrator.

Ms. Cosentino asked if the neighbors should address the five findings in their letter, and Ms. Usher said yes. Vice president Jim Wolf agreed, saying the letter definitely should address the five findings the applicant is required to make, because they have to hit all five or the application is thrown out. Mr. Wolf further noted that this item was not agendaized in time for the Land Use Committee to vote on it, though it was discussed at that meeting. He said the neighbors are seeking support for their opposition to the application, and what we need to keep in mind is that the antenna will be 10 feet higher than the building. Also, although the tower will be screened, it will not be made of the same materials as the building. He said the applicant is asking for the privilege of building higher than the zoning allows, and also for a commercial intrusion into a residential area, which is precedent-setting.

[Director Jane Gilman left the meeting at 9:48 p.m.]

Mr. Wolf also said there are other alternatives for the cell phone company to achieve the same goal, and the Park Mile district has been dealing with this issue for a long time (though not in a residential area). Finally, he noted that the phone company's drawings of the tower are a bit sketchy, but said the City doesn't go out to make sure things get built exactly as shown.

Ms. Cosentino said the design doesn't matter, and the real issue is that the tower has no business in a residential area.

Alternate Director Mary Rajswing asked if it's sufficient to send a flyer out only to people within 500 feet of such a project, but Mr. Wolf said that's common practice. Ms. Rajswing said there's no question the tower would stick out visually, and the neighborhood already has good cell service.

Mr. Gresham asked if we can simply object without writing a motion. Director Yigal Arens asked if we can just vote to support the neighborhood. President Dougherty said that would be more expedient. Ms. Rajswing moved that we support the St. Andrews Square and Ridgewood-Wilton Neighborhood Associations in opposing the placement of a cell phone tower on the Gailmore Apartments at 108 S. Gramercy, and that we urge the zoning administrator to deny the CUP application. Director John Gresham seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Ms. Cosentino said that if any other neighborhood associations are inspired to write letters in support of this opposition, she can supply further details about the project and stamped envelopes. Ms. Usher asked her to send the information to our Secretary, so she can compose the letter.

Finally, Ms. Cosentino noted that there will be a community meeting on this subject on Saturday, at the St. Andrews Place Library.

See's Candies Landmark Application – Mr. Wolf said this issue also came up too late for consideration at our recent Land Use Committee meeting, and it concerns a property outside the Greater Wilshire boundaries, though just barely (and the neighborhood that contains the property *is* one of our GWNC neighborhoods).

Ms. Cosentino said the Cultural Heritage Commission has already taken the matter under consideration and it was brought to her neighborhood's attention by the Los Angeles Conservancy, which was alarmed by the recent sale of the property at 135 N. Western. She said the St. Andrews Square and Ridgewood-Wilton Neighborhood Associations have written letters in support of the landmark application. Also, CHC commissioners visited the site last week and discovered that the property has already taken over the adjacent alley. The owners have bought adjacent properties and intend to raze a house on Manhattan Place to create parking for the new development they're planning for the former See's property. She said it would be helpful to have a letter of support for the landmark application from the GWNC.

Director Jane Usher asked if the properties on Manhattan Place are all residential, and Ms. Cosentino said they are, except for the corner property. Mr. Wolf confirmed this, saying the street is all residential, and does fall within the GWNC boundaries, which end at the edge of the adjoining commercial properties along Western.

Ms. Cosentino said we are now seeing disastrous results of the last-minute decision to exclude Western from the GWNC boundaries. The idea was to get unified memberships on both sides of every street, but that decision set in motion the rapid commercialization of Western that is now going on. She said she would like the GWNC

to write a letter of support for the See's landmark application. Ms. Usher moved that we supply one. Director Elizabeth Fuller seconded the motion. Mr. Gresham noted that this is an appropriate action, even though the property is outside our boundaries, because we have an acknowledged "sphere of influence" that extends about 100 feet outside each of our boundaries. The motion passed unanimously.

Converting the Land Use Committee from Ad Hoc to Standing Status – In the interest of time, this item was continued until our next meeting.

DWP Oversight Committee

DWP MOU Representative Jack Humphreville reported that Measure B is currently failing by 1,322 votes, though there are still more votes to be counted. We should have a final tally by March 24. He said some people say that even if the Measure loses, those opposing it will have won, because we made a lot of noise and got a lot of attention. He agreed that the vote is actually a "disaster" for the DWP. The Valley and the Westside went 62% against the Measure, and also had a lower percentage of support for the Mayor than the city-wide tallies. He said the next step is to hammer out a solar program everyone can support. Finally, he said the DWP Oversight Committee, particularly Soledad Garcia, deserves much of the credit for the outcome and did a great job of leading the opposition to the Measure. Other helpful events were the report of information covered up by Eric Garcetti, and the memo from Laura Chick, saying Measure B "stinks."

Million Trees Project

Alternate Director Mary Rajswing reported that the Million Trees project is standing by to help out on the Robert Burns Park improvement project, and the Frances Blend School sensory garden project. She said John Burroughs Middle School and Wilshire Crest Elementary have done a good job of re-landscaping recently, with plants donated by developer BRE, which was a good example of a developer giving back to the community. She also passed out an update on the Green Islands project, which is currently waiting to receive City redevelopment funds. Finally, Ms. Rajswing said she's looking for a larger scale tree-planting project to get involved with.

[Director Rudy Gintel left the meeting at 10:19 p.m.]

Director of Animal Welfare

DAW Lee Goldberg was not present, so there was no report.

Ad Hoc Committee on Crime Prevention

Director Jared Abrams reported that crime is on the rise in our area, and there was at least one home invasion recently. He passed out a crime prevention tip sheet from the

LAPD, and asked if we could post the contents on our GWNC website. Webmaster Elizabeth Fuller said we can.

Mr. Abrams said it's important to keep our eyes and ears open, and to look out for each other. He also said that with more City budget cuts coming, we'll have to do more things ourselves, and that he will work with the LAPD to bring speakers to our next GWNC meeting.

Director John Gresham asked if Mr. Abrams has been in contact with both police divisions that serve the GWNC area and Mr. Abrams said he's only talked to the Wilshire Division so far. Mr. Gresham said he hasn't been able to contact our Senior Lead Officer for several weeks. Stakeholder Karen Gilman asked if that's the same SLO that serves the Windsor Square area, and Director Jane Usher said it is. Director Margy Hudson said he's been injured for the last couple of weeks, so isn't reachable.

Ms. Usher said Captain McDonald has promised her that he will send two officers – one from each division - to every meeting we have, and that we do need to have both divisions represented. Mr. Abrams said he would try to get commitments from both divisions.

Ms. Hudson said we can have the LAPD officers be the featured speakers at our May meeting. She also told the story of how she recently saw three men in a yard in her neighborhood, called SSA, the private security company that serves the area, and SSA pursued and found the suspects. The LAPD took a report two hours later. Mr. Humphreville said there are 200 families contracted with SSA in Hancock Park and Windsor Square. President Dougherty promised to put the LAPD speakers at the top of our next agenda, and asked Ms. Usher and Mr. Gresham to be resources, if necessary, in scheduling the talk.

Ad Hoc Outreach Committee

Director Margy Hudson reported that our website designer neglected to include the cost of Content Management System programming in her initial bid for our website re-design project (which was previously approved by the Board). She said the designer has submitted a revised bid, which the Outreach Committee re-compared with all previous bids received for the project. After doing so, we still liked her bid the best. Unlike others, it included logo design and other elements the others did not, and site examples submitted by another designer were error-ridden and didn't demonstrate the attention to detail that we'd like. She said the Committee is asking the Board to approve an additional \$1,500 expenditure to cover the extra cost of the CMS programming, as well as layout of new letterhead and business cards, which also wasn't included in the designer's first bid.

President Dougherty noted that we can't vote on this tonight because too many people have left the meeting and we've lost our quorum, so it will have to be postponed until May.

Ms. Hudson said the Outreach Committee is also working on new display ads for the Larchmont Chronicle, which will soon include our new logo. The ads, written by Alternate Director Joan Jakubowski, will talk about what the GWNC does, and what we've discussed at recent meetings.

Burns Park Improvement Project

Director Margy Hudson reported the City is now trimming the trees and grass in preparation for painting the fence. The Windsor Square Association paid \$9,000 for the fence painting, versus the \$97,000 bid by the City contractor. Improvement committee head Yolie Moreno got a release from the City to use independent painters. The committee is now waiting for the City to start the irrigation project. They want to use the \$20,000 donated by the Neighborhood Council to buy new benches, with a plaque noting the source of their funding.

Public Comments

Stakeholder Phil Brown, an architect and planner who was raised in the Wilshire District, noted that the MTA's first scoping meetings for the Wilshire Corridor subway line will be held in the next month. He said he would like to see the study opened to a third alternative (a Santa Monica Blvd.-only route) in addition to the two already being studied (a Wilshire to Santa Monica line along Wilshire, and a line along both Wilshire and Santa Monica Boulevards to Santa Monica). Mr. Brown said he did his own transportation corridor study, and concluded that even though Wilshire Boulevard lends itself to increased transportation capacity, there would still be a huge, unsolvable bottleneck in Beverly Hills. He asked that the GWNC recommend that the MTA open its study to a third alternative, and that there be more transparency in the MTA's studies and process.

Director Jane Usher said she assumes Mr. Brown has read the City of Beverly Hills' own study on the project, which states a preference for a Wilshire Blvd. route.

Mr. Brown said the solution would be increased capacity in a tunnel from City Hall to Century City, which would cause no change to vehicle traffic...and that the Beverly Hills' study was not extensive enough. Director Margy Hudson asked where the tunnel would be, and Mr. Brown said it should run under Santa Monica Boulevard. He asked if we could make a resolution to this effect, but President Dougherty said we cannot because the item wasn't agendaized. The soonest we could agendaize it would be in two months. Also, it could be discussed at our Land Use Committee meeting before then.

Mr. Brown asked if he can still communicate with us about this issue, which is very important to him, and Mr. Dougherty said he can.

Stakeholder Myrna Gintel reported that the Frances Blend School Garden Project was promised \$15,000 in funding from the GWNC, which will be used to pay for the

master plan by Sonny Estrada. Paramount Pictures is also helping to fund the project, and the Hollywood Beautification Team is going to plant trees outside the school. She distributed invitations to the annual Windsor Square Garden Party, which will include a tribute booklet and garden tour that will also help fund the Frances Blend project. She offered the GWNC a free full-page ad in the book, which will contain tributes to Carolyn Ramsay and Paramount Pictures.

President Dougherty asked Director Margy Hudson, chair of the Ad Hoc Outreach Committee, to coordinate the ad effort, and she agreed.

Ms. Gintel said another improvement will be the planting of sunflowers in cups on both sides of the fence between the Blend School and Van Ness Elementary next door. There will also be animal relief tiles, which may require additional funding.

[Director Jane Usher left the meeting at 10:48 p.m.]

Ms. Gintel urged everyone to attend the Garden Party, and said lots of people are also volunteering to work on the garden project, and people can contribute to the tribute book as well.

Board Member Comments

Director Margy Hudson reported that the official kickoff of SurveyLA will take place on April 4 at the Central Library.

Announcements and Adjournment

President Dougherty announced that our next meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 13. The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Fuller
Secretary