



Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council Land Use Committee

April 22, 2014

MINUTES

Approved by the Committee 05/27/14

1. Call to Order

A duly noticed meeting of the Land Use Committee (“LUC”) of the Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council (“GWNC”) was held on Tuesday, April 22, 2014, at Wilshire United Methodist Church, Assembly Room, 4350 Wilshire Blvd. Chairman James Wolf called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m.

2. Roll Call and Seating of New Committee Members

Secretary Wittmann called the roll. Land Use Committee Members in attendance at the roll call were: Mike Genewick, Karen Gilman, John Gresham, Dick Herman, Joseph Hoffman, John Kaliski, Patty Lombard, Barbara Savage, Dorian Shapiro, Julie Stromberg, Greg Wittmann and James Wolf. Patricia Carroll and Ann Eggleston arrived later. Committee Members absent: Alan Bernstein, Gerda McDonough, Jeff McManus and Caroline Moser. Also attending: 31 Stakeholders and guests. Twelve of the 18 Committee Members were present at the roll call. The GWNC Land Use Committee quorum (the minimum number of Committee Members needing to be present to take binding votes on Agendized Items) is ten, so the Committee could take such votes.

3. Officer Elections

A. Chairperson

Mr. Shapiro nominated James Wolf; Mr. Herman seconded. James Wolf was re-elected Chairperson of the Land Use Committee by a unanimous hand vote.

B. Secretary

Mr. Wittmann nominated Barbara Savage; Ms. Lombard seconded. Barbara Savage was elected Secretary of the Land Use Committee by a unanimous hand vote.

Committee Member Patti Carroll arrived at this time, making 13 Members present (the Committee quorum is ten).

4. Approval of Minutes

MOTION (by Mr. Genewick, seconded by Ms. Gilman): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council Land Use Committee approves the Minutes of its March 25, 2014 Meeting as written.

MOTION PASSED by a hand vote.

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

The “04/22/14 Early Planning Report Summaries for GWNC Area” of recent land use applications received by the City was distributed and reviewed. It was noted that all projects were HPOZ or Design Review Board issues, which are handled outside the GWNC.

6. Old Business

A. Conversion of existing recreational space to second dwelling unit at 118 N. Gramercy Pl. (Christopher Sorenson)

Copies of the Variance Application were distributed. Ms. Carroll reported that the applicants are still working with neighbors to find solutions agreeable to all parties. Mr. Wolf recommended and it was agreed to TABLE this Item.

B. Discussion of Park Mile zoning issues (John Welborne)

Copies were distributed of the “Park Mile Specific Plan.” Stakeholder John Welborne described the Plan’s history.

Committee Member Ann Eggleston arrived at this time, making 14 Members present (the Committee quorum is ten).

Mr. Welborne pointed out that the last City review of the Plan was in 1978. Around 30 of the then-35 empty lots have been developed. He described the Variance request process: first, a Master Land Use Application is made to the City Planning Dept., then to the Park Mile Design Review Board. However, no variances have ever been granted within the area covered by the PMSP. The Plan has broad language about compatibility with neighbors, but not specific design or architectural guidelines; there are some landscaping guidelines. Some height limits are 36 to 45 feet. Mr. Wolf noted that the GWNC can influence land use decisions and that density could have been much higher without the Plan. There was very extensive discussion of current and potential land uses in the Park Mile area. Stakeholders present spoke in favor of maintaining the “no exceptions” policy, to protect adjacent neighborhoods.

There was a brief recess at this time.

7. New Business

A. CUB and street/sidewalk adjustments at LC, 710 N. El Centro (Christopher Roche)

Developer representatives Christopher Roche and Ari Kahan reported that they have been granted a requested CUB for a proposed 3,300 square-foot restaurant to serve a full line of alcoholic beverages until 11:00 weeknights and until midnight on weekends. There will be no dancing and no live entertainment. There will be 26 parking spaces on-site; they’re required to have seven. Mr. Kahan stated that “the valet [parking] is in” their covenant. It would have 155 interior and 50 exterior seats. It fronts “about 40 feet on Melrose, about 50 feet on El Centro . . . it’s inside the property line.” The restaurant intends to serve beers starting at \$4 and “craft” wines starting at \$9. They acknowledged that “there are a

lot” of restaurants in the area with full-line alcoholic licenses. Mr. Kahan indicated that a West LA restaurant they represent has 50% of its seating outside and three stories of residential units above it; they must keep noise down.

The City Zoning Administrator approved the Application last week. It will again be reviewed in five years.

Committee Members expressed concern that the business and/or property could be sold in the future to a less responsible owner and whether enough parking will be provided. Ms. Gilman was concerned this would set a “precedent” for Melrose Ave. and noted nearby neighbors’ parking concerns. Mr. Kaliski was concerned that the project is very large for “this particular site” and its traffic impact. Ms. Savage noted that owner may decide to have fewer seats.

The developers also presented their plans for their current request: maintaining the existing curb line on Melrose (and improving the existing sidewalk area with landscaping and street furniture), instead of widening the street, as the city has requested. Committee members generally agreed with the request, saying that widening the street for just one block could create traffic bottlenecks where the street narrows again at either end of the block...and also that widening the street would narrow the sidewalks in front of the development, making it less friendly for pedestrian passage.

MOTION (by Mr. Kaliski, seconded by Ms. Savage): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council Land Use Committee recommends that the GWNC Board support the applicants’ request for a revocable permit to maintain the existing 21’ 6” curb line along the north side of Melrose, on the condition that the Applicant return to the GWNC’s Land Use Committee with architectural firm Rios Clemente Hale Studios to present more detailed plans for the streetscape.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Wolf reminded that the Applicant waited until the last minute to seek GWNC approval.

MOTION PASSED by a hand vote with 12 in favor; Ms. Gilman opposed; Mr. Shapiro abstained.

B. Reduced side setbacks for addition at 200 S. Gramercy

Mr. Wittmann explained that the Applicant promised not to have a Hearing with the City before presenting to the Land Use Committee; the Hearing was held and the Application was approved by the City.

C. Girasole Expansion Plans (Joanna Verneti)

Copies were distributed of a Variance Application and one photo each of the outside and inside of the restaurant. Joanna Verneti and Steve are, as of November 1, 2013, the new owners of Girasole Restaurant, a “neighborhood Italian restaurant” at 225 ½ Larchmont. They are hoping to expand the business into the adjacent vacant storefront, to make room for additional restroom and kitchen space (the seating capacity of the restaurant will not

expand) but want to make sure they comply with local “Q” conditions” that place limits on total restaurant frontage for the block. Ms. Verneti stated that “we respect the “Q” conditions . . . we live in the neighborhood . . . we want to serve the community,” She described efforts and plans for expansion and compliance (one potential solution involves adding retail space to part of the expansion area, so the restaurant frontage would not change) and that “even with the expansion” of the bathrooms and kitchen, they’d still be one of the smallest restaurants on the street. They would also like to apply for a beer and wine license with possible hours of Mondays through Thursdays until 10:00 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays until 11:00 p.m. and Sundays until 9:00 p.m. They’re keeping all the staff, many of whom are related to each other, and who have worked there for many years. Mr. Welborne supports the Application.

Committee Member Mike Genewick left at this time, making 13 Members present (the Committee quorum is ten).

There was discussion of whether the restaurant’s proposed uses are with allowable limits. They currently have four of eight parking spaces in back of the building. Ms. Verneti said “we’ll probably have to request a Variance for parking”; they’re working with the City to determine the requirements. Steve said that “whatever you see [in the diagrams they displayed] is going to be made to Code.” They are increasing the square footage by around 150 square feet, but the new space would be used only for bathrooms, kitchen space and perhaps a small retail space, not an expansion of the restaurant’s seating area or capacity. No formal applications have been filed yet, and the applicants will return to share their plans as they develop.

D. Tom LaBonge Motion Calling for Review and Revisions of Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance

Copies were distributed of a City “Department of City Planning Recommendation Report.” Stakeholder Elizabeth Fuller described that other Neighborhood Councils requested that the GWNC support the Motion. Mr. Kaliski added that the guidelines were issued February 12, 2014 and are available on the City website [www.LACity.org]. He said “the new guidelines are more restrictive” and address additional issues. He agreed to make a presentation about the new guidelines to the Committee at a future meeting.

8. Committee Member Comments and Reports

Mr. Kaliski reported regarding the future item #3, the Kangnam Restaurant’s request to repeal a building line, that “they built a wall [and] covered the wall with a tent . . . now they want to make it a building.” It was requested and Mr. Wolf agreed to Agendize this for the next Meeting

9. Transportation Committee

Gerda McDonough was unable to attend and there was no report.

10. Public Comments

There were no comments at this time.

11. Announcements and Adjournment

Mr. Wolf encouraged Committee Members to view documents on their portable computers to reduce the need for paper copies. There was discussion that the GWNC could vote to oppose projects if Applicants haven't presented to the Committee.

A. Next meeting May 27

Possible future agenda items:

1. Density Bonus at 807 N. Hudson
2. Condo development at 853-859 S. Lucerne
3. Building line repeal at Kangnam Restaurant at 4103 W. Olympic Blvd.
4. Application for CUB renewal and extended business hours at Jajungguh Café at 4653 W. Beverly
5. Change of use to non-profit museum at the former Scottish Rite Temple, 4357 Wilshire Blvd.
6. Construction of 30-unit residential building at 4180 W. Wilshire
7. Update on Larchmont Bungalow variance/CUP application
8. Redevelopment plans for Farmers' Insurance site

Mr. Wolf declared and the Committee agreed to **ADJOURN** the Meeting at 9:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
David Levin
Minutes Writer