

Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council



Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council General Meeting

May 10, 2006

Approved by the board,
as written, on July 12, 2006

FINAL MINUTES

A duly noticed meeting of the Board of Directors of the Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council (“GWNC”) was held on Wednesday, May 10, 2006, at The Ebell of Los Angeles, 4400 Wilshire Boulevard. Charles Dougherty, President of the Council, called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

The Secretary called the roll, and Board of Directors members in attendance were: Arnold Castaneda, Chickie Byrne, Moon Chung, Cindy Chvatal, Charles Dougherty, Larry Eisenberg, Roy Forbes, Elizabeth Fuller, Tom Gibbons, Jane Gilman, Rudolph Gintel, Margaret Hudson, Lisa Hutchins, Mary Rajswing, Thomas Roe, Michael Rosenberg, Ruth Silveira, Jolene Snett, Baruch Twersky, Jane Usher, Robert Wishart, James Wolf, John A. Woodward III, and Gary Zeiss. The following absent Directors were represented by their Alternates (noted in parentheses): Shemaya Mandelbaum (Richard Battaglia) and Arlin Low (Frances McFall). Directors Yigal Arens, Carolyn Bennett, Norman Murdoch, Susan O’Connell, and Van Dyke Parks were absent and were not represented by an Alternate.

The Secretary stated that 26 of the 31 Directors were represented in person or by an Alternate at the beginning of the meeting and that a quorum was present. Director Susan O’Connell arrived later in the meeting.

The Secretary stated that the Minutes of the Council’s General Meeting of March 8, 2006, had been distributed to Directors by e-mail and had been posted on the Council’s *greaterwilshire.org* web site. Additional copies were distributed at the meeting. Next, upon a motion made from the floor and adopted without objection, reading of the Minutes was waived.

It next was noted that, at the end of the March 8th meeting, during the “New Business” discussion of a board and care facility in the R-1 portion of North Gramercy Place, Stakeholder Ralph Cataldo also had spoken about his objection to this illegal use. In addition, it was noted that, during the discussion of the Proposed Hancock Park HPOZ, Larry Eisenberg had offered a substitute Motion that GWNC support the City’s adoption of an HPOZ for Hancock Park only if the HPOZ specifically not apply to landscape and

paint colors or to construction work in back yards, side yards, and less than 50% of the front façade and that this substitute Motion had failed on a vote of 4 in favor and 20 opposed. Upon Motion made by Cindy Chvatal and seconded by Jim Wolf, the Minutes of the March 8th meeting were approved with these two corrections. Jane Usher asked that tonight's Minutes reflect that she abstained from voting on this matter.

Public Comments

President Dougherty announced that Treasurer Susan O'Connell would be arriving late from another meeting and that the Treasurer's Report would be presented later in the meeting. The President asked if there were any Public Comments from Stakeholders, and there were none.

Board Member Comments / New Business

Ruth Silveira raised the issue of LANCC, the Los Angeles Neighborhood Council Congress, an independent alliance of neighborhood councils, and its status. Roy Forbes and Margaret Hudson announced that the official DONE and City "Congress of Neighborhoods" gathering would be held on Saturday, June 17, and said that all GWNC Board members are invited. Tom Gibbons stated that he understood that this 2006 Congress would be the last such Congress that the City would fund. Michael Rosenberg suggested that these Congress meetings and other City events not be held on Saturdays because of the inability of Orthodox Jews to attend.

President Dougherty thanked the Directors for their reports on these organizations and meetings, and he said he would draft a letter forwarding Mr. Rosenberg's observations to the appropriate people at DONE and elsewhere. Mr. Dougherty also thanked other Board members who have been undertaking committee work on behalf of GWNC during the periods between meetings of the Board of Directors, and he indicated there were several other committee appointments that he would be making.

Roy Forbes noted that Brookside resident Denise Nichols, an actress and author of *Freshwater Road*, recently had been honored as a "cultural artist of the year," and that Brookside resident Sherry Bonanno, who had prepared goodwill packages to be sent to the troops in Iraq, also had been recognized for her good work. Mr. Forbes suggested that other GWNC Board members regularly recognize people in the community.

Larry Eisenberg stated that he recently had reviewed the DONE website, and he reminded the Board that GWNC must perform self assessment and will be graded on the effectiveness of its outreach to the community. Mr. Eisenberg suggested that we set up a liaison for outreach because a primary objective of all neighborhood councils must be to promote public participation.

President Dougherty thanked Mr. Eisenberg for his segue back to the matter of

committees, and he reminded the Board that the GWNC must hold its next Board election in March, 2007. Draft GWNC Election Procedures, after approval by the Board at a meeting, must be submitted to DONE no later than 140 days before the election. Then, after DONE's review and possible modifications, final GWNC Election Procedures are to be approved by DONE no later than 90 days before the election. The GWNC Board then must adopt those finalized Election Procedures no later than 60 days before the election.

The GWNC Bylaws call for the election to take place at the GWNC Annual Meeting. Assuming the 2007 Annual Meeting is on the Board's regular March meeting date, the election would be on Wednesday, March 14, 2007. This means that the Board should approve the draft Election Procedures at or before its September 13, 2006, meeting. After DONE's review and approval of final GWNC Election Procedures, the last opportunity for the Board to adopt the final Election Procedures at a regular meeting will be on January 10, 2007. It therefore would be preferable to request DONE to expedite its review so the Board might, instead, adopt the final Election Procedures at its November 8, 2006, regular meeting. Given all this work that needs to be accomplished, President Dougherty said he wanted an Election Committee to get underway at once.

President Dougherty asked Roy Forbes to head an *Ad Hoc* Election Committee to plan for the March 2007 Board election and to present appropriate draft Election Procedures to the Board well in advance of the DONE deadlines. Additional Directors appointed to serve on this *ad hoc* committee are Jane Usher, Larry Eisenberg, and Tom Gibbons. The appointments were approved by unanimous acclamation of the Board.

President Dougherty asked Cindy Chvatal to head an *Ad Hoc* Outreach Committee for a duration of six months. Additional Directors volunteering to serve on this *ad hoc* committee are Jolene Snett and Mary Rajswing. The President asked John Gresham to lend his support to the Committee. Larry Eisenberg asked why the committees were being set up as *ad hoc* committees. President Dougherty said that the Election Committee and Outreach Committee appointments, as well as the other *ad hoc* committee appointments, are temporary. The *ad hoc* committees are being established for a limited duration of six months, and the need for them in the future will be evaluated by the Board at that time. The appointments to the *ad hoc* Outreach Committee were approved by unanimous acclamation of the Board.

Mr. Eisenberg then expressed concern that the communications among *ad hoc* committee members and the meetings of these *ad hoc* committees of the Board might be seen as prohibited "serial meetings." Jane Usher explained that informational messages relating to such committees, and containing such information as time and place of meetings, were not subject to the Brown Act. Jim Wolf stated that *ad hoc* committee web postings would not be allowed under the Act, but that emails should be OK. Gary Zeiss expressed concern that the Board could be perceived as using *ad hoc* committees to avoid public notice, and thus open GWNC and its Board members to liability.

President Dougherty next asked Larry Eisenberg to head an *Ad Hoc* Traffic Committee for a duration of six months. The appointment was approved by unanimous acclamation of the Board. Mr. Eisenberg recommended that the GWNC agree to have his committee explore the City's plans for transportation and traffic within the GWNC boundaries and to provide feedback and any concerns to the Board and then to the City. Mr. Eisenberg's recommendation was supported by unanimous acclamation of the Board.

Tom Gibbons announced that time is running out for signing up for the new Medicare Plans for seniors, many of whom did not understand that they had to sign up for both Part A and Part B, otherwise they would be penalized. President Dougherty suggested that Board members and Stakeholders in attendance speak to Mr. Gibbons to learn more details after the meeting.

John Woodward reminded the Board that Gary Zeiss had requested of Michael Rosenberg that the domain name of "*GWNC.org*," controlled by Mr. Rosenberg, be donated to the GWNC so it may be combined with or linked to the *GreaterWilshire.org* web page. Mr. Woodward asked Mr. Rosenberg what had happened to *GWNC.org*. Mr. Rosenberg responded that "We are looking at another use for *GWNC.org* and are not willing to transfer."

Ad Hoc Zoning and Land Use Committee Reports and Possible Board Actions

(At this point, 7:54 p.m., Director Jane Usher excused herself because she is a member of the City Planning Commission, and she left the meeting. Mr. Rosenberg also left the meeting at this time.)

Jim Wolf, Chair of the *Ad Hoc* Zoning and Land Use Committee, commented that there would be only one project proponent presenting this evening, Mr. Buckmelter. With regard to a second project, the staff of CD 10 had given GWNC very short notice of a meeting it sought to arrange with the developer. Mr. Wolf had sent emails to members of the *ad hoc* Land Use Committee but had received little response. Mr. Wolf requested that the committee members pay more attention to the import of such notices.

Mr. Wolf then invited Mr. Jerome Buckmelter to speak about his proposed condominium development at 5037 West Rosewood Avenue in the Oakwood-Maplewood-St. Andrews geographic area adjoining the Larchmont Village geographic area. Mr. Buckmelter is asking for tract map approval for a new, 42-unit, condominium development on R-3 zoned property at 5023-5043 Rosewood Avenue, between Wilton Place and Van Ness Avenue. The three-story building has a 250-foot frontage on Rosewood. No variances are required. Jim Wolf said the building falls within the development criteria in the City's adopted Wilshire Community Plan and is consistent with other rules overseen by other City agencies.

In discussion, the developer clarified that the project will be 35 feet high, 3 stories

over basement parking, and is providing two covered spaces per unit. Board members expressed concern that the development is displacing residents in smaller 2-to-4 unit apartments and single-family homes and that it could negatively impact the smaller buildings adjacent to the rear. Mr. Buckmelter was asked what the developer had done in the way of community outreach, to which he answered that community outreach is what he thinks he is doing tonight. He was advised to speak to the directly-affected neighbors and the associations in the area, such as the Larchmont Village Neighborhood Association and the Oakwood-Maplewood-St. Andrews Neighborhood Watch group. Board members also asked about green space. The courtyard will be interior and not open to the public. Mr. Buckmelter commented that the neighborhood is in transition.

John Woodward asked for a clarification of GWNC's role in this matter, *i.e.*, what exactly was being asked of GWNC, mentioning that there had been a school meeting the night before the GWNC Board meeting, wherein the need for school facilities was discussed. Mr. Buckmelter commented that his company will be paying hefty LAUSD school fees on a square-foot basis. Mr. Buckmelter said that he wanted the GWNC blessing for his development. There was more discussion regarding how much contact the developer has had with the neighborhood. It was generally agreed that GWNC could not evaluate the impact on infrastructure or the community. Mr. Wolf reminded Board members to seriously consider the ramifications of how they review a proposed development that already is allowable "by-right" when a developer comes to the Council and says, "I'm following the rules, and I just want to let you know what I am doing."

At this point, Mr. Wolf moved, and Roy Forbes seconded, that the GWNC take a position in support of the proposed 42-unit Rosewood Avenue condominium development. The Motion is that the GWNC may be cited as supporting the applicant's efforts to obtain a tentative tract map for the specific project described to the Board during tonight's (May 10, 2006) GWNC board meeting. The project presented and being supported is one that is not seeking any variances or other construction permissions beyond what already is allowed "by right." The question was called, and the Motion carried (17 in favor, 3 opposed, and 3 abstentions).

Mr. Wolf said that the second project being presented for action by GWNC is a medical office building at 3323 West Olympic Boulevard. The developer was not present. This was the project mentioned earlier. Mr. Wolf next asked Mr. Gary Kim to present information on the proposed expansion of the building on behalf of the neighbors who oppose the project. Mr. Kim, a neighbor to the north of the property in question, indicated that he and other nearby Stakeholders object to the encroachment into the residential zone, the height of the building, and the lack of adequate parking. Mr. Kim asked the GWNC to join in opposing the proposed expansion for those reasons and also because of pedestrian safety issues and increased traffic. Mr. Wolf next distributed to Board members a committee report on the Olympic Boulevard project stating the developer's and neighbors' positions. A copy of the report is included with the record set of these Minutes. Mr. Wolf noted that the developer is requesting a series of variances including

expansion into the residential zone, commingling business and residential parking, additional height, and an increased number of residential units. The project has been denied by City staff and the developer is appealing to the Central Area Planning Commission. (Baruch Twersky left the meeting at this point, and his Alternate, John Gresham, took his seat.)

Mr. Dougherty asked if there were any additional Stakeholder comments on the project. Arlin Low commented that one of the reasons the development was brought before GWNC was that the developer briefly had Olympic Park Neighborhood Council (OPNC) support. OPNC actually had gone on record in support of the project when only a few members of that Council were consulted. However, the OPNC subsequently rescinded its support. This developer's applications for his commercial activities to encroach on residential property have been repeatedly denied over the past three years. Neighbors said they are seeking a letter opposing the project from GWNC.

Mr. Wolf moved, and Jane Gilman seconded, that the Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council strongly oppose the proposed project at 3323 West Olympic Boulevard, at Manhattan Place, and that the GWNC specifically opposes any and all variances related to this project or projects. The question was called, and the Motion carried unanimously. (Jane Usher returned to the meeting following the land use portion.)

Liaison Committee Report

Committee Chair Roy Forbes mentioned that the award of cable television franchises again is being debated by City government. Meeting notices concerning cable service will be posted on the website. Mr. Forbes also reported on community concerns recently expressed concerning response times to emergencies from the Los Angeles Police Department and the Los Angeles Fire Department.

Special Projects Committee Report – Emergency Preparedness

Committee Chair Margy Hudson discussed emergency preparedness planning, the role of the GWNC website in communicating to Stakeholders about emergency preparedness, and upcoming events. She distributed a written report, a copy of which is included with the record set of these Minutes, and thanked her fellow committee members, Gary Gilbert and William MacNeil, for their efforts. Saturday, June 17, is the date set for the next big Emergency Preparedness meeting to be held at the Los Angeles Convention Center. Ms. Hudson emphasized that, when (not if) disaster strikes, it is vital for all of our Stakeholders to be prepared for 5 to 10 days without utility services, City services, grocery stores, etc. Each neighborhood within the GWNC needs a representative to inform residents about how to be prepared. Ms. Hudson suggested that the informative Los Angeles Fire Department booklets on emergency preparedness be reproduced and distributed at the next Larchmont Family Fair as a community service of the GWNC.

President Dougherty agreed that the Council should support emergency preparedness efforts, and noted that any GWNC costs would need to be voted upon by the Board. John Gresham moved that Margy Hudson prepare an emergency preparedness budget for the GWNC and present it at the July meeting. John Woodward seconded the Motion. The question was called, and the Motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Susan O'Connell reported that, subsequent to the March meeting, \$1,320 had been spent to pay for the Ebell meeting space for this and subsequent meetings. She noted that the GWNC has not yet resolved the office space issue because of certain language in the City's standard form Lease Agreement. Ms. O'Connell then presented the GWNC budget for the fiscal year beginning on July 1, 2006, a copy of which is included with the record set of these Minutes. Total expenditures for last year were \$2,133, so there is \$35,367 remaining to carry forward into next year. The City's allocation for the July 2006-2007 fiscal year is another \$50,000. Of that, the GWNC Budget uses \$37,500 (the allocation through March 2007). Therefore, the rounded 2006-2007 GWNC Budget is \$72,850. John Gresham moved that the Board approve the 2006-2007 GWNC Budget as presented. Chickie Byrne seconded the Motion. The question was called, and the Motion to approve the Budget carried unanimously.

Report on Initial Organization

President Dougherty said he had nothing to add to Ms. O'Connell's report.

Announcements

President Dougherty reminded Board members that, in addition to the upcoming Congress of Neighborhood Councils on June 17th at the Convention Center, they are invited to Fire Station Recognition Day on May 13th. He also reminded the Board that the next regular bi-monthly meeting of the GWNC will be on Wednesday, July 12, 2006, at The Ebell of Los Angeles at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Gilman
Secretary