

Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council



Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council General Meeting

May 12, 2010

Approved by the Board
06/09/10

MINUTES

Call to Order

A duly noticed meeting of the Board of Directors of the Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council (“GWNC”) was held on Wednesday, May 12, 2010, at the Ebell of Los Angeles, 743 South Lucerne Blvd. President Charles Dougherty called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

Roll Call

The Secretary, Elizabeth Fuller, called the roll. Board of Directors members in attendance at the roll call were: Yigal Arens, Moon Chung, Charles Dougherty, Elizabeth Fuller, Jane Gilman, Rudy Gintel, John Gresham, Frances McFall, Margy Hudson, Alex Jones-Moreno, Clinton Oie, Shar Penfold, Owen Smith and James Wolf. Charles D’Atri (alt. Jared Abrams), Patti Carroll and Jane Usher joined the meeting later. Directors Charles Bergson, Sam Cunningham, Martha Schuur and Russell Sherman 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 last meeting. Director Owen Smith moved they be approved as written. Director Margy Hudson seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Treasurer’s Report

Monthly Spending Report -- Acting Treasurer Elizabeth Fuller distributed copies of the monthly purchasing card report, and a monthly spending report including purchasing card expenditures, invoices/demand warrants and automatic deductions recorded between April 1 and May 11.

YTD Budget Update – Ms.Fuller distributed an updated year-to-date spending

report, showing totals spent and remaining in each of our budget categories for the current year.

New Fiscal Year Budget -- Ms. Fuller presented an early draft of a budget for our 2010-2011 fiscal year. The budget total comes to \$67,320, but will probably have to be brought down to \$45,000 (the amount of our new allocation for the coming year) before DONE will approve it. The following suggestions for trimming came from board members:

- eliminate office rental and associated expenses
- the Green Islands project, to which we committed funding, may be fully funded without our money, so we may be able to eliminate it (Ms. Fuller will check on this)
- keep at least some administrative assistant funding so we can hire someone at least to write our minutes

Ms. Fuller said she would take those suggestions and come back to the next meeting with a revised budget for approval.

Funding Guidelines Committee -- Ms. Fuller said because of dwindling financial resources and this being the time for budget planning, it would be good to convene our long-delayed Ad Hoc Funding Guidelines Committee to draft some guidelines both stakeholders and board members could refer to when making or considering funding requests to the GWNC. Directors Frances McFall and Jane Gilman volunteered to be on the committee. President Dougherty said we would recruit more volunteers after our elections and new board members are seated.

City Budget Update – GWNC budget representative Jack Humphreville said people at City Hall are “absolutely delusional” regarding the city’s budget problems, and there are two “elephants” in the room: pensions and infrastructure. Mr. Humphreville said the Mayor is depending on more improvements in the economy to solve the problems. He said the sale of parking assets will bring in some money, but the pensions are not being well managed and City Hall is very much under the influence of unions. He said the budget is not balanced yet, and there are some interesting disclosures coming.

Director John Gresham asked if any parking structures have been sold yet. Mr. Humphreville said an RFP was sent out in January, requests for confidentiality were sent in March, due diligence was done in April, and bids will come in during May for sales to take place in July. This does include the Larchmont Village parking structure, which will probably see a substantial rate hike after it’s sold. Mr. Gresham noted that after the sale, the City forfeits all future revenue from the structures...but Mr. Humphreville said the City has promised we will not be “ripped off” as other cities – like Chicago – were when selling their parking structures.

Mr. Gresham asked how we’ll be able to access revenue from parking structures owned by the Community Redevelopment Association. Mr. Humphreville said the CRA

has agreed to give its structures to the City, which will then sell them.

Director Owen Smith asked if pension payments are part of the budget or not, and Mr. Humphreville said they are. But he said the City uses the “8% myth” (an assumption that pension fund investments will increase in value by 8% each year), which isn’t realistic. Mr. Smith said the problem is that the City is attempting to place the unfunded liability on the backs of contractors. Mr. Humphreville said the financial reality will come home to roost at some point. In the last few days, former mayor Richard Riordan has been getting a lot of press by suggesting the City will need to declare bankruptcy and make a lot of cuts in the Fire and Police departments.

Director Jane Gilman asked how our NC can help, and Mr. Humphreville said we should “write and holler and scream” to get our city officials’ attention.

[Director Patti Carroll joined the meeting at 7:38 p.m.]

DWP Oversight

DWP Oversight representative Jack Humphreville said an increase in the Energy Cost Adjustment Factor was recently rejected by the City Council. But a well-written independent report on the subject was also released, sparking other developments. Among them, the Board of Commissioners approved a 3.4 cent rate increase...which was rejected by the City Council. So the DWP tried to “blackmail” the city into approving the increase by withholding money due to the City. And the City Council did not respond well. City Council Member Jan Perry sponsored several “transparency motions,” which would allow the City Council to approve DWP budgets and rates. The motions also call for charter amendments that would allow the City Council to remove the DWP general manager and commissioners.

Mr. Humphreville said other DWP issues include parity of wages and a number of uncertainties about whether the rate increase will be temporary or permanent. Meanwhile, it was also learned recently that the City has transferred a lot of employees to the DWP, and the DWP pension plan has had to assume extra liabilities for those people. Mr. Humphreville said the next couple of months will be interesting – people are trying to get the transparency motions on the ballot, and the issue of appointing a ratepayers’ advocate is also still active. He said there will be lots of pushback on this from the Mayor, and the politics will be rough.

[Charles D’Atri (alt. Jared Abrams) joined the meeting at 7:38 p.m.]

Local Government Reports

State Assembly 42nd District Report – Haeyoung Kim, field deputy for Assembly Member Mike Feuer, reported that Mr. Feuer has been appointed Majority Policy Leader for the Assembly. She said his main legislative concerns at the moment are things that will be cost neutral but will have major impact. One is working to ensure that increases

in health care insurance rates will be just a one-time hike. Another issue is tax equity for same-sex partners. And another is prohibiting companies with Iranian energy contracts to do business with California (this is in response to Iran's nuclear program). Finally, she said, Mr. Feuer is also working on securing funding for 12 major transportation projects.

State Senate 26th District Report – Andrew Lachman, field deputy for Sen. Curren Price, said Mr. Price was recently appointed to the budget and education committees. He was also asked to carry a bill for Senate leadership that would help people majoring in high end green fields, and he's supporting a bill for arts education, which would contribute \$500,000 to replace other programs and funding that have been cut. In addition, said Mr. Lachman, special interest license plates are now tax deductible. Another bill would set aside 25% of state contracts for small businesses, and another would distinguish between civil and religious marriage. Finally, Mr. Price sponsored the SHEroes Awards, which recognized 26 women of achievement, including the woman who runs the Miracle Mile Art Walk.

Septic Systems – Doug Walters and Chandra Silaban, from the Bureau of Sanitation, said the city recently posted a map showing active septic tanks in the city. (There are only 3 in the GWNC area, on Muirfield, Hudson and one other street.) Mr. Walters distributed an informational packet, including a fact sheet on septic systems, and said the City has a new ordinance which requires property owners to have active septic systems inspected every five years. The goal is to make sure systems are operating properly and not leaching or leaking bacteria into surrounding property. He said the City also wants to ensure that inspectors have proper training to inspect the systems, and that owners have correct information on how to handle system failures (if the failure is minor, the homeowner can repair it; if the failure is major and the property is near a city sewer line, the City will require the property owner to connect to the system).

Director Margy Hudson asked if the systems are all at private homes and Mr. Silaban said they are, but only three are in the GWNC area. He said they were built before the city built its sewer system, and people weren't required, at the time, to connect to the city system after it was built. He said that if the systems are properly maintained, they can last a lifetime.

Director Owen Smith asked if the City is trying to protect the environment with this effort or just raise money. Mr. Silaban said the City requires the program to be cost neutral, and that it's doing this to comply with state requirements. Mr. Walters said they're trying to find cost effective ways to bring existing septic systems into compliance, and to protect the environment – and the State is calling on all cities to get better control of the systems and make sure they're effective.

Mr. Silaban said that if a homeowner is financially unable to comply with the new requirements, he or she can apply for a variance, and applications will be evaluated on a case by case basis. Mr. Smith asked how much the variance would cost and Mr. Silaban said it would cost \$100 to apply for the variance, but the proposal isn't finalized yet, and they're still seeking input on the subject.

Director Jane Gilman asked what the acronym OWWTS refers to in Mr. Walters' handouts. Mr. Silaban said it stands for "on-site wastewater treatment systems," which is a fancy name for septic systems.

Stakeholder Lucille Saunders asked how people can find out about other septic system sites in the City. Mr. Silaban said the website lasewers.org has a list, and people can contact him or Mr. Walters if they have questions about specific properties.

Director John Gresham noted that we heard complaints recently from residents of an apartment building on Rossmore that was flooded because of a storm drain problem in that area. He asked if the Dept. of Sanitation deals with that kind of issue, and Mr. Walters said it does. He left his business card and contact information.

City Council District 4 Update – Nikki Ezhari, field deputy for City Council Member Tom La Bonge, said parking on Larchmont is definitely on our radar, and Mr. La Bonge has asked that the Larchmont structure be removed from the sales contract or, if it is sold, require that conditions be kept the same, without any rate increases. Also, she said, Mr. La Bonge did vote against the DWP rate increase and against the proposed rent freeze, because he feared landlords might not maintain their buildings as they should. In other news, Ms. Ezhari said Beverly Blvd. was resurfaced recently, and the City is working on a storm drain project that affects the entire area. Also, Hancock Park will be doing a tree canopy project that includes planting, trimming, stump removal and more.

Director Shar Penfold asked when the repaving of Wilshire Blvd will begin and Ms. Ezhari said it's behind scheduled and the new start date is in December. She said Mr. La Bonge is going to write a letter in hopes of bypassing some of the obstacles involved, but because federal money is being used, the project requires certain kinds of community outreach, an Environmental Impact Report and other time-consuming steps. President Dougherty asked if the "outreach" involves asking people if they want the street re-paved, and Ms. Ezhari said it does. She also reviewed the history of the project: because the city didn't have the money to complete the repaving on its own, it applied for federal funding for part of the job (the curb lane repaving), but the federal funding requires that the paving work be connected to a larger project. So the City attached it to the Bus Rapid Transit project, which also required EIRs and other studies. In the meantime, the City Council office also requested stimulus funding for the center lane repaving, but you can't do the center lanes without the curb lanes, so everything is on hold until the curb lane funding is approved. If it doesn't get approved, they will still pave the full width of the street, but for a shorter distance than originally proposed. Finally, regarding the BRT project, Ms. Ezhari said City Council District 5 is currently the only one objecting to the BRT project, because people there are concerned about the loss of parking in some areas.

Director Owen Smith asked about the city's proposed freeze on rent increases and Ms. Ezhari said again that Mr. La Bonge opposed the freeze. Mr. Smith asked if the City is going to provide any kind of relief to landlords and Ms. Ezhari said she will check on

that.

President's Report

Election Reminder -- GWNC President Charles Dougherty reminded everyone that our election will be held tomorrow, at Wilshire Crest Elementary School, from 2-8 p.m. He advised everyone to bring identification and documents to verify their stakeholder status in the categories they will be voting in.

Board Officers and Alternates – Mr. Dougherty noted that, because of the fact that many people are running unopposed in the election, we will have many openings for alternate board members after the election. He asked that if people are interested in being appointed as alternates for specific seats, or if anyone knows of someone interested in being an alternate, they let us know. Also, in addition to alternates, we will be choosing new board officers after the election, so people need to think about who they would like to nominate to replace him as president, Mr. Wolf as vice president and Ms. Fuller as secretary and treasurer. He said he has enjoyed serving as president for the past five years.

[Director Jane Usher joined the meeting at 8:05 p.m.]

Community Concerns

City Ride Transportation Program -- Stakeholder Joan Taylor said the City has proposed cutting in half the City Ride program, which provides quarterly transportation subsidies of \$84 to senior citizens. She said the program is very tightly regulated and well managed, and the senior population is growing -- getting out of the house is very important to them. She said the proposed \$42/month subsidy will not be enough for many seniors, and asked that the GWNC write a letter to Bill Rosendahl, chair of the City Council's Transportation Committee – asking the committee to preserve the City Ride Transportation program, as it is now, with no cuts. She said the program costs only \$6 million per year, and is staffed very efficiently by just one person with one or two assistants. Under the proposed cuts, the program allotment would go down to \$4.7 million, with a 50% cut in benefits to its users.

President Dougherty asked for further information on how the program works. Ms. Taylor said seniors pay \$6 per quarter if they meet low income requirements (or \$16 for higher income brackets), and they receive \$84 in transportation scrip or coupons. She said the City does want to raise the rates to \$10 or \$20 per person, which she thinks is fine.

Mr. Dougherty asked how long the coupons are valid, and Ms. Taylor said you can keep them for up to a year. Some people use them right away; others save them for emergencies.

Director Elizabeth Fuller moved that we send the requested letter to the City

Council Transportation Committee, requesting that the City Ride Program be maintained at its current level. Director John Gresham seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Memorial Library Landscaping Project – Director Owen Smith said neighbors are still working on the plans for this project and are waiting for information from the Dept. of Recreation and Parks. A Big Sunday project at the park was completed on May 2. There is no further news at this time.

Feral Cat TNR Injunction – Stakeholder Myrna Dwyer said a recent lawsuit claimed that feral cats are responsible for the deaths of many birds. As a result, the judge in the case declared that city animal shelters can no longer provide vouchers for or information about spaying and neutering feral cats, and Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR) programs will be prohibited. Ms. Dwyer said studies show, however, that TNR programs actually reduce the population of feral cats. She requested that the GWNC pass a motion in opposition to the city ban on TNR and restore resources for such activities.

Stakeholder Nora Abbott agreed, noting that in our current down economy people are abandoning more animals, which, if not spayed or neutered, can multiply quickly: one cat can produce 420,000 offspring in just seven years (this figure comes from FixNation, a spay/neuter organization, and the San Francisco Humane Society).

Stakeholder Mary Catellano, who said she has been rescuing animals for about eight years, said rescuers have always been allowed to distribute spay/neuter vouchers to people with animals. It's kitten season now, and many kittens are being left in homes, boxes, and cars. The City kills them within half an hour if they can't find a rescue person to bottle feed them. Also, she said, if we can reduce the feral cat population through spaying and neutering, they will kill fewer birds. (And cats aren't the only animals killing birds – raccoons and other predators contribute as well.) She said the FixNation TNR group is fully funded through private sources, and helps people trap and mark cats as well as neuter them. The City used to provide information about their services...but is no longer allowed to do so. Finally, she noted, many stray cats are not feral but abandoned and starving.

President Dougherty asked why the judge issued the injunction against TNR, and Ms. Catellano said that someone in the Audubon Society complained that feral cats are killing too many songbirds. Mr. Dougherty asked how neutering cats will save birds, and the stakeholders said neutering reduces the cat population, which in turn reduces the number of birds killed.

Director John Gresham said he doesn't think we have enough information to act on this issue.

Director Margy Hudson asked if we didn't appoint someone to deal with animal issues a couple of years ago. Secretary Elizabeth Fuller said we did vote to create a "Director of Animal Welfare" position for stakeholder Lee Goldberg, at her request, but she hasn't been back to our meetings since she was appointed.

Alternate Director Charles D'Atri asked for clarification that we're being asked to take a stand against a judicial ruling. Everyone agreed that is the case.

Ms. Fuller disagreed with Mr. Gresham, saying the issue seems fairly simple.

Mr. D'Atri asked how the judge's ruling is being applied. Ms. Catellano said no one in the city is allowed to distribute information on the availability of TNR services, or the assistance TNR organizations can provide. Ms. Dwyer said TNR helps to control the cat population because neutered animals die off naturally and don't breed. Euthanizing cats doesn't have the same effect because the animals who remain uncaught just keep breeding in the wild. Ms. Catellano agreed, and also noted that feral cats have a rough life, so they don't live very long and populations dwindle rapidly if they can't breed.

Director Yigal Arens asked how a GWNC action could affect the judge's injunction. Ms. Dwyer said they're not sure yet, but the case is under appeal and the more people who speak out in favor of TNR programs, the more influence it might have.

Ms. Catellano said there are people in our neighborhoods who are begging for this kind of information to deal with the cats in their yards.

Ms. Fuller moved that we communicate our objection to the injunction against TNR information and vouchers to the parties dealing with the issue and who might have the power to overturn the ruling or to enact new legislation in favor of TNR. Ms. Hudson seconded the motion.

In discussion, board members agreed that we will need to do some research on the proper people to receive such a letter. Mr. D'Atri said we shouldn't adopt such a motion without inviting the Audubon Society to speak to the other side of the issue. Director Owner Smith disagreed, noting that the discussion and vote was property agendized and publicized.

Director Rudy Gintel asked why it's better to spay and release instead of euthanizing feral cats, which seems more efficient. Ms. Fuller recalled Ms. Dwyer's point that euthanizing some animals leaves all others left in the wild unneutered and continuing to breed. But if you reduce the breedable percentage of the population, the population reduces naturally as animals die off.

The tally was 7 votes in favor of the motion, 8 opposed. The motion failed.

Ad Hoc Outreach Committee

Policy on Political Candidates as Speakers – Secretary Elizabeth Fuller recalled that early last year, the request of a declared candidate for political office to address the GWNC set off a heated discussion of whether such addresses should be allowed, or not, and – if allowed – whether all other candidates for the same office should also be allowed

or invited to address the Board. She said the Outreach Committee started working on a draft policy to address this issue, but it was never finalized. Now, however, with election season upon us again, we already have one request from a candidate to speak at a Board meeting, so it would be a good time to re-visit the issue. Ms. Fuller distributed a draft of such a policy, which reads:

The GWNC will permit declared or soon-to-be declared candidates for public office to address Board meetings only when all candidates for the same office are provided an equivalent opportunity to address the Board.

To ensure compliance with this policy, whenever a declared candidate contacts the GWNC requesting to speak at a board meeting, all other registered candidates for that office will be extended an invitation to appear as well, either at that same meeting or at another meeting mutually agreed on between the candidate and the GWNC.

Director John Gresham said it sounds very simple, and asked if DONE would need to approve such a policy. Ms. Fuller said we contacted DONE last year, to see if they already had such a policy. They do not and didn't object to the idea of us creating one.

Director Jane Gilman asked if this would include candidates from all parties, saying it would take up a lot of our agenda time if all candidates for an office appeared at the same meeting. Director Frances McFall agreed that speakers can take up a lot of valuable agenda time, but she said she also agrees that if we invite one candidate, we should invite all of them.

Director Rudy Gintel said he thinks the policy is fine, but he would like to add a 3-minute time limit on each speaker. Ms. McFall suggested two minutes. Director Yigal Arens said he was going to make the same point, but thinks 3 minutes is a bit short. President Dougherty said he thinks whoever is chairing the meeting should have the discretion to allow for extra time if a speaker is providing useful information and not just a campaign pitch. But he said putting a time limit on it does give us parameters to enforce if we choose to do so.

Director John Gresham moved to accept the draft resolution as presented, noting that if we have a meeting with a light agenda, we could allow the speakers to take an hour. Director Owen Smith asked if the President always has the option to limit speakers' time and Mr. Dougherty said yes. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. The vote was 13 in favor, two (Gintel and Gilman) opposed. The motion carried.

Conversion of Outreach Committee to Standing Status – Secretary Elizabeth Fuller reported that our DONE contact has informed us that our Outreach Committee must be a standing committee, not an ad hoc committee, because it deals with ongoing business. This would mean that we need a committee chairperson and secretary, who can keep minutes, and agendaize and publicize meetings according to Brown Act regulations.

Director Yigal Arens said a more convenient alternative might be to just disband the committee. Director John Gresham disagreed, noting that outreach is a never-ending job, and we need to keep our efforts going.

Director Owen Smith asked what the difference is between ad hoc and standing committees, and Ms. Fuller said it's mostly that the Brown Act governs standing committees – which means you have to publicly post agendas at least 72 hours before the meetings, and they have to be open to the public and meet ADA accessibility requirements. The advantage, however, is that a standing committee can include stakeholders, while an ad hoc committee cannot.

Mr. Smith moved that we convert the Ad Hoc Outreach Committee to standing status. Ms. Fuller seconded the motion. Vice President James Wolf, noting that our other standing committee (Land Use) requires a lot of work, asked why we can't keep the Outreach committee's ad hoc status and convene it only when specific tasks or projects require it. Ms. Fuller said we can't do that, but could perhaps dissolve the committee and just create new ad hoc committees for specific outreach projects as they come up. But that wouldn't help with our advertising efforts, which are ongoing and need someone to manage them.

Director Frances McFall said we need to involve our alternates more in our committees, so we don't burn out the handful of people who seem to do all the work.

The vote was 14 in favor of the motion and one (Oie) opposed. The motion carried.

Website Re-Design – Secretary Elizabeth Fuller said there is no report on this subject because it was her responsibility to get back to our designer with the information for the next step in the process, and she has been too busy to do so.

Other Committee/Project Reports/Projects

Burns Park Renovations – Director Margy Hudson said the park renovation committee is now sculpting a bronze plaque about Robert Burns to post on the boulder in the park. (The plaque will also be in Braille, since the park is near the Frances Blend School for blind students.) She said Mr. Burns was an early member of the Los Angeles City Council, who was particularly active in parks issues. She said the Windsor Square/Hancock Park Historical Society is paying for the plaque and its installation, which will cost about \$3,000. Ms. Hudson also expressed appreciation to all the local homeowners' associations that donated funds for new trash receptacles. Finally, she said she's also working the CD4 field deputy Nikki Ezhari to get Proposition K funds for replacement of the park's hardscape and shade structures with something more historically appropriate. She hopes all the work will be done this fall.

La Brea Art Walk – Event liaison Owen Smith had no news to report.

City Planning Department Audit Review – Director Patti Carroll asked that this item be tabled until next month.

[Director Jane Usher left the meeting at 9:05 p.m.]

Land Use Committee

Committee chairperson James Wolf said the Land Use Committee has been making an effort to streamline the time it takes to bring the rest of the board up to speed on land use issues on our agenda, so we have included a brief synopsis of each one as part of the agenda. He said the committee did not take any actions on any of the issues listed this month, so the listings on tonight's agenda are just updates – no action is required. He asked if there were any questions about any of the items listed.

Director Margy Hudson said she'd like it stated for the record that there's a possibility of moving the cell phone pole proposed for 1st and Wilton to Burns Park, but she would not like to see that happen. Director Patti Carroll said when she and other residents walked the area recently with T-Mobile representatives, the suggestion was to put the pole next to the park, not in it. But when they heard the pole would be 65 feet high, the neighbors said they would like to keep it on a major thoroughfare like 3rd or Beverly. She also noted that the pole would be a "stealth" pole, with all the equipment enclosed inside the pole. But it would have to be 65' tall in the park location, which is "ridiculous."

Ms. Hudson said Windsor Square was one of the first areas in the city to have underground utilities, and we need to respect that – it's an HPOZ. Director Rudy Gintel said the same thing is true in Hancock Park. Ms. Carroll said that if the pole is constructed, it would probably be on 3rd St. Ms. Hudson noted that 3rd passes through both Hancock Park and Windsor Square, which are both HPOZs. Mr. Wolf said we do have a Land Use subcommittee looking at cell phone issues, and the kinds of incentives that might persuade the industry to show a bit more imagination in creating installations that meet not only technical requirements but aesthetic needs as well. Mr. Gresham said the subcommittee is also looking at what can be done to enhance city regulations. But Mr. Wolf noted that the City does currently allow cell phone equipment installations unless there's some sort of protest.

Mr. Wolf called people's attention to the list of upcoming land use issues at the end of the Land Use section on the agenda, and said he'd be happy to answer any other questions.

Stakeholder Lucille Saunders, representing the Melrose Neighborhood Coalition, said she wanted to thank Director Rudy Gintel for coming to the recent Mid-City West Community Council meeting where the CVS drug store at 3rd and La Brea was approved. She said the vote was unanimous, with a request for an open door at the corner of the building. She said her neighborhood is advocating for more stores to have open doors to the sidewalks, though some – such as Petco and Lamps Plus – have actually closed their

doors facing La Brea. She said she will be watching this project as it proceeds through the hearing process to ensure that the open door remains at the corner. Mr. Wolf asked if there will be a requirement that they maintain the open door during business hours and not close it like the other stores (including Smart and Final), and Ms. Saunders said they are advocating for that, especially in new projects.

Director Margy Hudson asked for the name of the store at 6801 Melrose that is requesting a CUP for wine tasting. Mr. Wolf said the store's name was not in the application we received, but we will learn it when we contact them to give a presentation at our next LUC meeting. Director Yigal Arens said the store is at the NW corner of Melrose and Mansfield, in a small mall. Ms. Hudson asked if it's the Domain wine store, and Director Jane Gilman confirmed this.

Board Member Comments/New Business

On behalf of Ms. Saunders, who had to leave, Vice President James Wolf reported that the City of LA is proposing a new code simplification ordinance, with study sessions starting on June 10. One example of a proposed simplification is the automatic approval of 10% increases in fence heights. Also the automatic approval of auxiliary dwelling units up to 1,200 square feet, which could double the number of structures and the occupancy in R1 areas. Ms. Saunders has requested that we agendaize this issue and ask the City to postpone the study sessions until more information is gathered. Mr. Wolf said he thought "study sessions" were for information gathering, but Ms. Saunders is afraid the "study" session will really be an "action" session and that the Planning Department will pass on recommendations made there to the City Attorney. He said that since this session happens just after our next meeting on June 9, we might want to invite someone from the City to our LUC and/or board meeting and consider action – pro or con – on the proposal, instead of just asking for a postponement.

Director Jane Gilman asked if the fence height approvals would apply even in HPOZ areas. Mr. Wolf said we may not know until the study session, since we haven't seen the language in the ordinance yet. He said the City has a history of presenting things like this that seem benign at first, but represent pretty significant changes (such as the shrinking of public notice radii and putting other things more easily at the discretion of staff, without public process).

Director Rudy Gintel distributed a promotional booklet from the recent Hancock Park Garden Party, pointing out on pages 12-13 photos of the sensory wall at the Frances Blend School, to which the GWNC contributed. He noted that there is now a proposal to combine Frances Blend and Van Ness Elementary schools, which he doesn't favor. He said Frances Blend is the only LAUSD school especially for handicapped students, and if the two schools are combined, both will suffer.

Public Comments

Director Frances McFall asked when we will know the final results in this week's

elections. President Dougherty said he doesn't know yet. Director John Gresham said it took about a week before we had results last time, but the City Clerk is handling this election, so the timeline may be different.

Director Margy Hudson thanked all the current board members, saying she has enjoyed participating for the last two terms and that it has been a pleasure working with everyone. Director Rudy Gintel said Ms. Hudson was very, very helpful with the recent Garden Party, and directly increased its attendance and results. Director Yigal Arens also acknowledged her efforts in heading the Outreach Committee.

Secretary Elizabeth Fuller said that if the election results are certified before our next meeting, the new board members will be seated at that meeting. The old officers will officiate until the point in the meeting when new officers are chosen.

Director Alex Jones-Moreno asked how people can help with the elections, and whether it would be a good idea for him to provide volunteers at the Ebell to re-direct people who may not have heard about our change in polling location. President Dougherty said that would be helpful, and thanked him for the generous offer. He said we did ask the City Clerk if we would need to provide volunteer pollworkers, but they said no. Doing our own election outreach is a good idea, however.

A stakeholder working on the Karen Bass congressional campaign distributed campaign literature and invited people who may have questions to contact the campaign headquarters, which is in our neighborhood. President Dougherty asked who Ms. Bass is running against, and the stakeholder said Felton Newell is her main opponent in the upcoming primary.

Announcements and Adjournment

President Dougherty announced that our next meeting will be held on June 9, in our normal meeting space at the Ebell.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Fuller
Secretary