

Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council



Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council General Meeting

July 12, 2006

Approved by the Board,
as corrected, on 9/13/06

MINUTES

A duly noticed meeting of the Board of Directors of the Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council ("GWNC") was held on Wednesday, July 12, 2006, at The Ebell of Los Angeles, 4400 Wilshire Boulevard. Charles Dougherty, President of the Council, called the meeting to order at 7:18 p.m.

The Secretary called the roll, and Board of Directors members in attendance were: Yigal Arens, Carolyn Bennett, Chickie Byrne, Arnold Castaneda, Moon Chung, Cindy Chvatal, Charles Dougherty, Larry Eisenberg, Roy Forbes, Elizabeth Fuller, Tom Gibbons, Jane Gilman, Rudolph Gintel, Lisa Hutchins, Susan O'Connell, Thomas Roe, Michael Rosenberg, Ruth Silveira, Jolene Snett, Jane Usher, and James Wolf. The following absent Directors were represented by their Alternates (noted in parentheses): Arlin Low (Frances McFall), Baruch Twersky (John Gresham), Robert Wishart (Thomas Fenady), John A. Woodward III (Patricia Lombard), and Gary Zeiss (Russell Sherman). Directors Margaret Hudson, Shemaya Mandelbaum, Norman Murdoch, Mary Rajswing, 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.

The Secretary stated that the Minutes of the Council's General Meeting of May 10, 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. The Minutes were approved as written. (At this point, about 7:25 p.m., Director Michael Rosenberg excused himself and left the meeting.)

Treasurer's Report and Initial Organization

Treasurer Susan O'Connell reported that, subsequent to the May meeting, the Council has spent no money. She continues to try to work out the final details of insurance issues between the DONE Risk Management department and the Junior League that are preventing the Council's completing its arrangements for office space. She also

noted that, with the Board's having just approved the Minutes of its May meeting, the 2006-2007 Budget approved at that May meeting is now effective from DONE's perspective.

Public Comments

The President asked if there were any Public Comments from Stakeholders, and there were none.

Board Member Comments / New Business

Roy Forbes announced that the Annual Brookside Neighborhood Block Party would be held this year on Sunday, July 23d, starting around noon, and that all Board members and interested Stakeholders are welcome guests.

Election Committee Report

Roy Forbes presented the proposed GWNC Election Procedures developed by the Election Committee, comprised of Gary Gilbert, Jane Usher, Jan Wieringa, and Roy Forbes. (Board Member Larry Eisenberg declined to participate.) Mr. Forbes gave an overview of the most important changes and submitted the proposed Election Procedures for approval by the Board.

President Dougherty called for discussion, and Tom Gibbons requested that candidate descriptions more detailed than "three words" appear on the ballots. There was a suggestion that the Election Procedures include a voter information guide with candidate biographies that would be at a table at each poll location. Yigal Arens discussed the preparation of a handout sheet with candidate biographies prepared by the neighborhood council. Jane Usher noted that the proposed Procedures were modeled after City election procedures and that having limited information on the ballots and at the poll locations was by design. The Procedures provide for a Voter Information Guide. Yigal Arens noted that, at meetings prior to the Election, candidates may distribute their own promotional materials.

Ruth Silveira asked if there would be only one Candidate Forum near the end of the pre-Election period, and the response was "yes." Chickie Byrne asked if voters could register on the day of the Election, and the answer was "yes." Susan O'Connell and Charlie Dougherty both emphasized that it is essential that there be plenty of parking at the polling place.

Thomas Fenady said that he agreed with the information sheet idea, and Yigal Arens suggested the information guide/sheet be a one-page summary. Mr. Fenady added that the guide/sheet could be made available to the public at the three meetings prior to the election, but someone noted that election-related activities are to begin sixty days

prior to the Election.

At this point, Larry Eisenberg moved that the Board accept the entire Election Procedures document as presented by the Election Committee so the Election Procedures may be submitted by the Committee to DONE on schedule, and Jane Usher seconded the Motion. Yigal Arens suggested that the Motion be amended to include that Roy Forbes be encouraged to produce a document to summarize the Election Procedures as approved.

There was further discussion, and Thomas Fenady suggested there be a second candidate forum. John Gresham suggested that the Independent Election Administrator (the "IEA") be allowed to disqualify a candidate for "electioneering" inappropriately near the polling place, instead of simply telling the candidate or his or her supporters to relocate the proper distance and confiscating material. Jim Wolf and Mr. Fenady objected that this disqualification approach would be inappropriate. Committee member Jane Usher advised that the proposed Procedures' penalty was based on giving candidates the benefit of the doubt.

Mr. Arens then moved to amend Larry Eisenberg's Motion to accept the Election Procedures with the additional provision that there be an information sheet with candidate biographies. Mr. Eisenberg seconded the Motion to amend. The question of amending Mr. Eisenberg's Motion was called, and Mr. Arens' Motion to amend carried unanimously.

John Gresham then moved to amend Larry Eisenberg's amended Motion to add to the Election Procedures a provision that a passport and a birth certificate be included as a secondary form of identification for stakeholders or candidates in the Special Interest category under the heading, "As Well As One of the Following Forms of Identification." Mr. Eisenberg seconded the Motion to amend. The question of further amending Mr. Eisenberg's Motion was called, and Mr. Gresham's Motion to amend carried unanimously.

Jim Wolf next moved to amend Larry Eisenberg's amended Motion to add a provision that all references to time be changed to read Local Time, rather than Pacific Standard Time. Mr. Eisenberg seconded the Motion to amend. The question of further amending Mr. Eisenberg's Motion was called, and Mr. Wolf's Motion to amend carried unanimously.

Thomas Fenady then moved to amend Larry Eisenberg's Motion to add a provision that a second candidate forum be held at the end of the filing period (on March 7, 2007). Mr. Eisenberg seconded the Motion to amend. Mr. Fenady suggested there were two possible times to do this, either on the night the filing period ends or some other time before the election. Patty Lombard commented that the candidate forums, while laudable, were not practical to have twice within a week. She noted that, last time, the candidates essentially spoke only to one another at the forum. Jane Usher said she agreed with Ms.

Lombard and that the single forum proposed in the Election Procedures was well thought out. Susan O'Connell noted that, if there were two forums, candidates might not want to participate in the first forum. The question of further amending Mr. Eisenberg's Motion to add a second candidate forum was called, and the Motion failed, with 2 Directors in favor of the amendment and 23 Directors voting in opposition.

President Dougherty next asked if there were any further discussion on Mr. Eisenberg's Motion to accept the Election Procedures document as submitted by the Committee, together with the several amendments just approved. There being no further discussion, he called the question, and the Motion carried unanimously.

(At this point, 8:30 p.m., Director Roy Forbes excused himself and left the meeting.)

Traffic Committee Report

Director Larry Eisenberg, as chair of the *Ad Hoc* Traffic Committee, reported that it was frustrating to find that the efforts of the City's Department of Transportation ("City DOT") to address traffic issues around Los Angeles are primarily focused on "traffic calming." Evidence appears to show that City DOT kowtows to local neighborhoods, forcing traffic back onto gridlocked major streets. City DOT could refer requests and complaints to the appropriate City Council Office, but it seems to him that the Council District representatives tend to act primarily in their own parochial interests and not in the broader interests of transportation users generally.

Mr. Eisenberg said he had a second component to his report, relating to sidewalks. He rhetorically asked "What is it like for pedestrians, especially disabled pedestrians, to get around?" He noted that many City sidewalks are in sad shape. He has learned that, under California law, abutting property owners are responsible for damage done to sidewalks from trees. However, in 1974, the City of Los Angeles adopted a law relieving property owners of that liability and taking upon the City the responsibility for maintaining trees and sidewalks. Mr. Eisenberg also reported on the City's "50/50 Sidewalk Program" under which the City will split sidewalk repair expenses with property owners or groups.

President Dougherty thanked Mr. Eisenberg for his report and asked the Board if there were any questions or comments. At this point, Alternate Russell Sherman volunteered to join the *Ad Hoc* Traffic Committee. Jane Usher suggested that GWNC begin a program to assist homeowners in participating in the 50/50 Sidewalk Program after the Committee identifies some of the worst examples of GWNC sidewalks needing repair. There was discussion of GWNC funds being used as part of the 50/50 match.

Carolyn Bennett reported that her block on Lucerne Boulevard recently had some unhappy experiences with City sidewalk repair, and she volunteered to distribute an email

concerning the program. Thomas Fenady expressed concern about liability issues that may remain with respect to abutting property owners. Chickie Byrne suggested that we consider carefully before we begin spending GWNC money at particular physical locations within the Neighborhood Council boundaries because of the effect that selective GWNC spending can have on others within the community.

Fourth Council District Field Deputy Carolyn Ramsay noted that the Council Office was well aware of the frustrations experienced by the Bennetts and other residents of Lucerne, as well as residents of other blocks where the City recently has done sidewalk repair. Ms. Ramsay said that a by-product of the recent Windsor Square HPOZ approval is that future sidewalk repair, within the HPOZ, will be done with more care to match the existing sidewalks.

President Dougherty thanked Ms. Ramsay for those helpful observations and also thanked Mrs. Bennett for agreeing to help with the communications about the sidewalk repair program, and he again thanked Mr. Eisenberg for following up on all of these various traffic-related issues.

Special Projects Committee Report – Emergency Preparedness

On behalf of Margy Hudson, chair of the *Ad Hoc* Special Projects Committee, Committee member Ruth Silveira presented the Emergency Preparedness Outreach budget requested by the GWNC Board at its last meeting. Ms. Silveira distributed a handout that included the budget, which calls for a major outreach effort at the Larchmont Family Fair this coming October.

The budget proposes that GWNC reserve ten booths (five booths on each side of the street) at the Larchmont Family Fair for this outreach effort. The various tables will offer booklets and kits, plus balloons for kids. Various companies that produce or distribute emergency devices and emergency kits will be present, too. The budget provides that GWNC advertise its Emergency Preparedness efforts at the Fair in local papers, including full page ads in the *Larchmont Chronicle* and the *Jewish Journal*.

Ms. Silveira then moved that the Board accept the budget as submitted. Cindy Chvatal seconded the Motion.

President Dougherty called for discussion. Stakeholder John Welborne thanked the Committee for its hard work and suggested that the Fire Department booklet on emergency preparedness is very informative and that, perhaps, this or a similar booklet could be among the information distributed at the Fair.

Larry Eisenberg suggested that emergency/earthquake kits/packs be available for purchase at the Fair. Tom Gibbons commented that the \$14,000 budget is too expensive and to do so much at the Fair was a waste of money that could be put to better use. Ms.

Silveira noted that the Larchmont Family Fair is expected to draw many more people than would attend a simple Emergency Preparedness event. Susan O'Connell noted that, although the budget for this emergency preparedness outreach is a lot of money, it is a worthwhile effort and worth the expense. John Gresham encouraged all of the Directors to leverage the investment in this event by promoting attendance at the Family Fair within their communities.

Carolyn Bennett noted that this will be an excellent opportunity to showcase GWNC. She also offered to try to get Fire Station 29 involved. Rudy Gintel suggested that a half-page ad in the *Jewish Journal* would be sufficient and less expensive. Mr. Gibbons said he agreed that the ideas are great, but he still worries that the budget is excessive. He said he feels the Council should be trying to get donations of much of the material we will use at the Fair, instead of using our public funds for this purpose. Mr. Eisenberg said he agreed that the lower-cost *Jewish Journal* ad would be sufficient, and he endorsed the idea of finding sponsorships to reduce costs. He also suggested that the fire trucks be parked in a central location, coordinated with our several tables. Mrs. Bennett commented that fire trucks always have to be positioned to move out quickly in the event of an emergency.

Yigal Arens said this approach of participating in the Fair has two types of value – promoting the GWNC and promoting emergency preparedness. He questioned how best to reach out to the rest of GWNC, especially with regard to how neighbors can help one another in the event of an emergency. Thomas Fenady commented that the \$14,000 budget for this emergency preparedness outreach effort would utilize 20% of the overall GWNC annual budget, and he questioned whether to spend so much. Frances McFall suggested the Board table the Motion and try to trim down the expenses.

There being no further discussion, the President called the question on the Motion made by Ms. Silveira and seconded by Ms. Chvatal. The President said he would conduct a roll call vote on the Motion, and the tally resulted in adoption of the Motion to approve and allocate the proposed budget for Emergency Preparedness outreach activities in connection with the Larchmont Family Fair, with the total expenditures not to exceed \$14,022, with the Committee being urged to find ways to generate donations or otherwise reduce the estimated expenditures. The tally of 19 Directors in favor and 5 Directors opposed was as follows:

The 19 Directors voting in favor of the Motion and approving the proposed emergency preparedness outreach budget were: Yigal Arens, Carolyn Bennett, Chickie Byrne, Arnold Castaneda, Moon Chung, Cindy Chvatal, Charles Dougherty, Elizabeth Fuller, Jane Gilman, Lisa Hutchins, Susan O'Connell, Ruth Silveira, Jolene Snett, John Gresham (Alternate for Baruch Twersky), Jane Usher, Thomas Fenady (Alternate for Robert Wishart), James Wolf, Patricia Lombard (Alternate for John A. Woodward III), and Russell Sherman (Alternate for Gary Zeiss).

The 5 Directors voting against the Motion and against approving the proposed emergency preparedness outreach budget were: Larry Eisenberg, Tom Gibbons, Rudy Gintel, Frances McFall (Alternate for Arlin Low), and Thomas Roe.

Liaison Committee Report

John Gresham described the problem of the proposed western boundary of the new 20th Police Division cutting through three GWNC neighborhoods: Larchmont Village, Windsor Square, and Wilshire Park. This proposed boundary would leave the GWNC straddling the boundary between the existing Wilshire Division and the new 20th Division. Mr. Gresham suggested that the currently-proposed new boundary would result in the GWNC and each of the three “split” GWNC neighborhoods being faced with double the work in setting up and maintaining relationships with LAPD Senior Lead Officers and each division’s administration.

Mr. Gresham added that efforts to organize community outreach, block clubs, and even neighborhood watches would be rendered more difficult. He stated that, so far, LAPD has acted unilaterally in drawing the boundary lines along the lines of the LAPD’s smaller Reporting Districts, which take into account such data as population and crime statistics. Even so, Mr. Gresham stated, LAPD officials have expressed a willingness to discuss the issue and involve the community in the process. Mr. Gresham asked for the Board’s endorsement of his continuing these discussions. Patty Lombard moved that the Board authorize John Gresham to continue discussions with the LAPD, on behalf of the GWNC, seeking to move the LAPD’s division boundary so it will coincide with a GWNC boundary, if possible. Susan O’Connell seconded the Motion. The question was called, and the Motion carried unanimously.

Zoning and Land Use Committee Reports and Possible Board Actions

(At this point, 9:03 p.m., Director Michael Rosenberg returned to the meeting. At 9:04 p.m., Director Jane Usher excused herself because she is a member of the City Planning Commission, and she left the meeting, as did Director Carolyn Bennett.)

Jim Wolf, Chair of the *Ad Hoc* Zoning and Land Use Committee, commented that there would be several project proponents presenting to the Board this evening.

3323 West Olympic Boulevard: Mr. Wolf reminded the Board that it previously had taken a position opposing the project at 3323 West Olympic Boulevard, which also involved a request to rezone residential property on Manhattan Place, and that GWNC had written a letter reporting the Neighborhood Council’s position. Mr. Wolf stated that the developer, through its consultant, Mr. King R. Woods, subsequently had withdrawn the proposal at the Central Area Planning Commission’s meeting and had stated there that his client “will go back to the drawing board.”

936 Crenshaw Boulevard: Mr. King Woods also is the representative for this project. Mr. Wolf indicated that Mr. Woods had asked for ten minutes delay before presenting the 936 Crenshaw Boulevard project. Mr. Wolf stated it might be more appropriate for Mr. Woods to wait until the end of the Zoning and Land Use Committee's portion of the Agenda to make his presentation.

260 South Sycamore Avenue: Erik Lieberman spoke, representing the owner of this existing corner lot apartment building on the east side of Sycamore Avenue, just across from the Ralphs Grocery parking lot at Third Street. Mr. Lieberman presented the owner's proposal to demolish and replace the existing 28-unit apartment building built in 1956 with a new 18-unit condominium building with 45 parking spaces. The project would leave 15-foot landscaped yards along Sycamore Avenue and Third Street. The style of the new building would be like the 1920s and 1930s architecture common in the area. Parking would be at ground level and the structure would be four stories tall. The residential units would be 2,000 to 2,800 square feet in size. Mr. Lieberman requested that GWNC express its support for the project and relay that position to the Planning Department.

Several tenants of the existing building were in attendance and spoke about the proposal. All opposed the change. One current resident, Ms. Bernadine Stabersky, a tenant in the building for 14 years, stated that she was opposed to the project because the four-story size is out of proportion to the surrounding community. She also complained that she and the other current tenants will be displaced from their current affordable apartment units. In addition, she stated that she believes there will be traffic and drainage impacts and that the remainder of the neighborhood would be negatively impacted because this project does not match the architectural standards of the neighborhood.

Another resident of the building, Michael Sharf, who has lived there for 10 years, stated that nine senior citizens would be displaced if he and his fellow residents have to leave, as will three teachers. Mr. Sharf stated that the existing units are rent-controlled and are affordable and that he perceived the new building probably would not have the same social spirit. He believes approval of the new project will further contribute to destruction of the City's rent stabilization ordinance. Mr. Sharf suggested that the proposed project belongs on Wilshire Boulevard or in another neighborhood.

Mr. Michael Cohen, also a current resident, stated that the proposed condominium project is an example of the expulsion of the middle class. He stated that the new owners have not been maintaining the building and have been making eviction threats. Kay Bernard, another tenant, spoke and said there is not one single four-story building between La Brea Avenue and St. Andrews Place between Third Street and Beverly Boulevard. She said all the existing apartments are two-story buildings.

President Dougherty asked the owner's representative if the project is seeking any variances, and Mr. Lieberman said "no." Mr. Lieberman discussed various "Q"

conditions and other City rules applicable to the project and indicated that the developer will not be asking for any variances or special privileges. The owner only is seeking condominium approval through a Tentative Tract Map under the Subdivision Map Act. The hearing before the City Planning Department's Deputy Advisory Agency will be held on July 26th.

Michael Rosenberg asked if a 45-foot building height is allowed under the QR3-1VL zoning. Mr. Lieberman said "yes." Mr. Rosenberg asked if the new units would be the same size as the existing units, and Mr. Lieberman said they would be substantially larger, in the range of 2,000 to 2,800 square feet each. There also was additional discussion of the "Q" zoning restrictions, and Mr. Lieberman said he was not sure of the history, but that the "Q" conditions came after the current building was constructed.

Lisa Hutchins stated that the plans presented to the Board seemed to show the proposed setback would be seven feet from the adjacent duplex buildings on the east, but that the Building Code requires five feet plus one foot for every story. Mr. Rosenberg asked if there would be any structures or activity on the roof, and Mr. Lieberman replied that nothing is planned at this time. Ruth Silveira asked about the proposed color scheme and whether there would be common space outside of the building. Mr. Lieberman responded that, under applicable codes, the new building will provide 3,645 square feet of open space. Mr. Rosenberg asked if the building would be a hotel, and Mr. Lieberman said, "no, it will be private family residences."

Larry Eisenberg asked a procedural question as to whether the *Ad Hoc* Zoning and Land Use Committee had formed, or was intending to relay, an opinion on this project. Jim Wolf responded that the Committee had no specific recommendation on this project but will endeavor to provide the City with a report of the information learned by the Committee and the Board. Mr. Wolf continued that he feels that the owners or developers, not just the one representative here tonight, should be present to give GWNC Directors additional information. A more fundamental question, Mr. Wolf added, is whether the project is compatible with the Wilshire Community Plan. Mr. Wolf reminded the Board that the developer was not asking for any special consideration other than to obtain the condominium designation.

Rudy Gintel asked what the developer expected the per square foot sales price to be for the units, and Mr. Lieberman said he was not sure. The target market is for luxury housing, and the per-unit cost of these large residences probably will exceed \$1 million.

In response to a question about how this project differs from one the GWNC Board voted to approve at our last meeting, Liz Fuller noted that the building to be torn down does have a distinctive 1950s character, is not a depressed property or in a distressed block or neighborhood, and tearing it down will displace a significant number of tenants. Patty Lombard asked what the developer wanted GWNC to do. Mr. Lieberman responded that the owners hoped for neighborhood council support of their project. Mr.

Rosenberg asked if the developers really need anything from GWNC, and Ms. O'Connell responded that the only approval the developers need is from the City for the subdivision.

Chickie Byrne agreed that the neighborhood council does not have to approve the project for its development to continue. She noted that her concern is that, while available housing would be reduced to 18 units from 28, the scale of the building would be increased out of proportion to the neighborhood. Jolene Snett asked what notifications had been made, and the developer's representative answered that there had been notice to tenants and neighbors within the required 500-foot radius. Ms. Snett commented that GWNC could make recommendations in a letter to the Planning Department, or the Council could abstain and take no action.

At this point, Jim Wolf thanked the applicant's representative for attending and moved that GWNC support the project as presented. The Motion was seconded by Thomas Fenady.

Jolene Snett commented that the GWNC should be very careful to address the issues that distinguish "by-right" projects from projects that are restricted or are requesting a variance. Mr. Wolf agreed. He emphasized that Board members should seriously consider the ramifications of how GWNC acts with respect to a proposed development that already is allowable "by-right." When a developer comes to the Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council and says, "I'm following the adopted City rules, and I just want to let you know what I am doing," should the GWNC advocate what the law does not require?

There being no further discussion, the President called the question on the Motion made by Mr. Wolf and seconded by Mr. Fenady. The President said he would conduct a roll call vote on the Motion to support Tentative Tract Map approval for an 18-unit condominium project proposed for 260 South Sycamore Avenue. The Motion failed, with the tally of 2 Directors in favor, 17 Directors opposed, and 4 Directors abstaining from voting being as follows:

The 2 Directors voting in favor of the Motion supporting the Tentative Tract Map were: Thomas Fenady (Alternate for Robert Wishart) and James Wolf.

The 17 Directors voting against the Motion and against supporting approval of the Tentative Tract Map were Yigal Arens, Chickie Byrne, Arnold Castaneda, Moon Chung, Cindy Chvatal, Charles Dougherty, Elizabeth Fuller, Tom Gibbons, Jane Gilman, Lisa Hutchins, Frances McFall (Alternate for Arlin Low), Susan O'Connell, Thomas Roe, Ruth Silveira, Jolene Snett, Patricia Lombard (Alternate for John A. Woodward III), and Russell Sherman (Alternate for Gary Zeiss).

The 4 Directors abstaining from voting were: Larry Eisenberg, Rudy Gintel, Michael Rosenberg, and John Gresham (Alternate for Baruch Twersky).

853 South Lucerne Boulevard: No representative was present.

936 Crenshaw Boulevard: Mr. Wolf reminded the Board that discussion of this matter had been continued from an earlier point in the Agenda. Mr. Wolf observed that the developer's representative who is working as the zoning and entitlements advocate on this project has a prior history of saying one thing to the community and then doing something else with respect to official actions. Mr. Wolf then introduced Michael Bai, a field representative from the Tenth Council District Office of Herb Wesson. Mr. Bai announced that the developer's representative, Mr. King Woods, now intends to withdraw the project at the July 25th Central Area Planning Commission hearing.

Mr. Wolf then summarized his very frustrating experiences in dealing with this project. Mr. Wolf stated that, despite a series of meetings called at the last minute and during the appeal process, Mr. Woods repeatedly had failed to provide any concrete presentation of the developer's plans for 936 Crenshaw Boulevard. Mr. Wolf said that Mr. Woods (and the developer) had wasted the community's valuable time and energy.

Mr. Wolf then reiterated the history of 3323 West Olympic Boulevard, also represented by Mr. Woods, a project that also was withdrawn after much travail and dubious tactics aimed at misleading City officials and staff, plus the neighbors.

Larry Eisenberg then moved that the GWNC go on record as urging denial of the appeal relating to 936 Crenshaw Boulevard, and Thomas Fenady seconded the Motion, adding that the GWNC will continue to oppose the project until an acceptable presentation is made to the GWNC Board. The question on the Motion, as amended by the Secunder, was called, and the Motion carried unanimously.

Wilshire and LaBrea: The owner of the property located on the southeast corner of Wilshire and La Brea, comprising the entire block to 8th Street and Sycamore Avenue, is Cal Coast Development, owned by Edward J. Miller. Mr. Miller and his representative, land use lawyer Dale Goldsmith, stated that they already had made a presentation at one other neighborhood council meeting (Mid-City West Neighborhood Council). Mr. Goldsmith said they are making a presentation to GWNC tonight only to share their preliminary thoughts with the Board, and that they are not seeking Board approval of anything. They would appreciate receiving feedback and input from the GWNC Board.

The representative of the project's architects, Nadel Architects, presented various massing models, block studies, and renderings showing that the proposed buildings, conceptually, would contain street-front retail along La Brea and Wilshire, with five stories of residential along the La Brea side. Along the Sycamore side, the developer plans two-and-one-half-story townhouse condominiums. Between the La Brea and Sycamore buildings, there would be a parking structure for the complex, with recreational open space for the tenants on the roof of the structure. There would be two residential

towers at the corner of La Brea and Wilshire. One tower would be 22 stories (220 feet), and the other tower would be 19 stories (190 feet). By comparison, the “MONY” building across the street is 12 stories high, plus the height of its electric sign. The developer noted that, while the property is not in the Miracle Mile proper, it is in the Miracle Mile Overlay Zone, and that the proposal would be compatible with this zone. In all, the project would provide 300 to 330 units of housing, all condominium.

Patty Lombard asked the developer why the plans were for such a large building, which was completely out of scale with even the 12-story historic MONY building on the northeast corner. The Developer noted that the corner was a “gateway” corner: the Gateway to the Miracle Mile, and his project was supposed to be noteworthy. What he is proposing is within the planned densities of the City of Los Angeles “Wilshire Community Plan” and the “Centers Concept” for such properties on major commercial corners on Wilshire Boulevard. La Brea and Wilshire is a significant “transit-oriented development” intersection. Mr. Goldsmith noted that the proposal for townhouses on Sycamore attempts to be complementary to the lower density, R-1 parcels across the street on the Sycamore side of the project.

Larry Eisenberg, noting that City codes call for open space, asked if the project included a public park. Mr. Goldsmith responded that the project will comply with all codes and that the developer does want to create more open space, perhaps a plaza at the corner of Wilshire and La Brea. For geotechnical reasons, the designers feel the project should only go two levels underground, so the developer had opted for above-ground parking in the structure to be built behind all the buildings.

Ruth Silveira observed that residents need common open space. Mr. Goldsmith responded that the developer agrees and that that is why his plans call for using the deck above the parking structure as park-like common open space. Jolene Snett thanked the developer for being interested in early input and requested that much more thought be put into the exterior design of the buildings – especially because of the existing landmark building across Wilshire Boulevard. Yigal Arens urged the developer to be very careful about traffic impacts from his proposal.

Mr. Miller replied that it is a major goal of his company and his team of consultants to minimize the impacts of the project on the neighborhood. He encouraged Board members to go to his web site to view information about the project and to send comments directly to him at his email address of emiller@calcoastusa.com. The web sites are: www.calcoastusa.com and www.calcoastusa.net/wilshirelabrea.

(At this point, 9:50 p.m., Director Lisa Hutchins left the meeting.)

140 South Gramercy Place: Valerie Sacks and her associates next made a presentation regarding a proposed small, multiple-family project at 140 South Gramercy Place, just south of First Street and just east of Wilton Place. The project will be a 2-story

building containing seven condominium units ranging from 1,100 to 1,632 square feet each. The project is on property zoned R3-1VL and is "by-right." No variances are being sought. The only required governmental approval is the Tentative Tract Map to allow sale of the units. A single-family home currently occupies the property. Although the existing house will be demolished, the developers intend to substantially salvage the elements of the existing home. The developers are self-described modernists and environmentalists and have always tried to blend their designs into neighborhoods.

(At 10:15 p.m., Frances McFall, Alternate for Arlin Low, left the meeting.)

Larry Eisenberg moved that the GWNC support the project, and Thomas Fenady seconded the Motion.

President Dougherty asked for additional comments from the developers and any questions or discussion from the Board. In response to a suggestion, the developer's representative stated that the developer and architects also would consult with any existing neighborhood associations in the immediate area of the property.

(At 10:20 p.m., Director Thomas Roe left the meeting.)

Ruth Silveira observed that the rendering presented to the Board makes the project look as though it will not fit in with the existing neighborhood. Susan O'Connell observed that the rendering makes the building look like a huge, dark mass. John Gresham asked about the "doghouse" for stairs to the roof (or an elevator penthouse) and whether that feature must be within the height limit. The developer's representative stated that it could extend beyond the 45-foot height limit. There were additional comments by several Board members about what might be a more perfect color for the project.

Mr. Eisenberg noted that, unlike the Sycamore Avenue project that was presented earlier in the meeting, this project does not displace a number of exiting rental tenants, so he suggested the Board should support the project as presented, noting to the developer that color seemed to be an issue with a number of people and that the Board expected the developer to consult with local neighbors and neighborhood associations. Jane Gilman wondered whether the GWNC Board should delay commenting on the project until the immediate neighbors had had an opportunity to weigh in on the subject.

Jim Wolf commented that several of the projects presented to the Board this evening demonstrate that the Board is facing fundamental choices as a neighborhood council. He urges that we should try to get to a point where we develop a policy by which we will review development projects. For example, Mr. Wolf asked, is the Board going to stand in the way of "by right" projects which do not require any special considerations under the law? Mr. Wolf observed that this particular project is one where excellent documents had been shared with his Committee and the GWNC in advance. It also is a project that complies with the law.

There being no further discussion, the President called the question on the Motion made by Mr. Eisenberg and seconded by Mr. Fenady. The President said he would conduct a roll call vote on the Motion, and the tally resulted in adoption of the Motion to support Tentative Tract Map approval for the seven-unit condominium project proposed for 140 South Gramercy Place, with a request to the developers that they review exterior color choices and also consult with immediate neighbors and with any local neighborhood associations. The tally of 14 Directors in favor of the Motion, 1 Director opposed, and 5 Directors abstaining from voting was as follows:

The 14 Directors voting in favor of the Motion and supporting approval of the Tentative Tract Map were: Yigal Arens, Chickie Byrne, Cindy Chvatal, Larry Eisenberg, Elizabeth Fuller, Tom Gibbons, Rudy Gintel, Susan O'Connell, Michael Rosenberg, John Gresham (Alternate for Baruch Twersky), Thomas Fenady (Alternate for Robert Wishart), James Wolf, Patricia Lombard (Alternate for John A. Woodward III), and Russell Sherman (Alternate for Gary Zeiss).

The 1 Director voting against the Motion and against supporting approval of the Tentative Tract Map was Ruth Silveira.

The 5 Directors abstaining from voting were: Arnold Castaneda, Moon Chung, Charles Dougherty, Jane Gilman, and Jolene Snett.

(At this point, 10:45 p.m., Director Michael Rosenberg left the meeting.)

Announcements

Stakeholder Margaret Sowma brought up the matter of the property at 608-610 South Van Ness Avenue. The owner or someone else there has been constructing perpetual, serial additions, apparently without permits, in violation of zoning laws, including constructing what appears to be a performance venue. This is relatively low-density, residentially-zoned property (RD3-1). It also is a situation where the materials the owner uses to hide the property are flammable, such as fallen palm fronds. Ms. Sowma requested that the Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council request that the property be investigated, inasmuch as she and other neighbors seem to have had no success in getting City officials to pay attention to the situation.

Someone suggested that Fourth Council District Field Deputy Carolyn Ramsay should investigate the matter, as should City Controller Laura Chick.

Stakeholder John Welborne mentioned that he is a member of the board of directors of the Los Angeles Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, as an appointed "Public Member" of that board. AIA/LA is working on a project to provide neighborhood councils with "Planning and Land Use 101" information because so much

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of what many of the councils are doing involves development project proposals. Mr. Welborne said he believed tonight's meeting could have been shortened by at least an hour if more GWNC Directors and Alternates had a better understanding of the basic provisions and "ground rules" of Los Angeles city planning, zoning, development, and construction. If the officers of GWNC decide this might be valuable for the Board, Mr. Welborne said he would put the officers in touch with AIA/LA leaders and other professionals willing to volunteer their services to help neighborhood councils become more conversant with the ground rules of local planning and land use.

Larry Eisenberg suggested that, at a future meeting, the Council might review the issue of increased Bureau of Sanitation trash collection fees. Rudy Gintel suggested that the meeting room set-up in the future should include chairs in back of the Directors' seats at the table on three sides so Stakeholders could hear better and feel more involved.

President Dougherty reminded Board members that the next regular bi-monthly meeting of the GWNC will be on Wednesday, September 13, 2006, at The Ebell of Los Angeles at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 11:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Gilman
Secretary