

WESTWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL MINUTES  
MARCH 8, 2023  
ZOOM MEETING ONLINE OR BY TELEPHONE

1. CALL TO ORDER

President Lisa Chapman called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Board members in attendance were Connie Boukidis, Sandy Brown, Lisa Chapman, Tracey Fitzgerald, Philip Gabriel, Ann Hayman, David Lorango, Stephen Resnick, Marcello Robinson, Paula Rogers, Mark Rogo, and Laura Winikow. Member excused was Roozbeh Farahanipour. A quorum was present. There were approximately 17 stakeholders and guests attending.

2. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sandy Brown announced that she requested a meeting with Congressman Ted Lieu, and he will be speaking to the presidents of community organizations and HOAs on May 1<sup>st</sup> at the Belmont. Lisa Chapman announced that she will be exhibiting her art at the UCLA Faculty Club on May 16<sup>th</sup>. Philip Gabriel announced that FedEx is no longer in Westwood Village.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Lisa Chapman moved to approve the January 11, 2023 minutes, seconded by Ann Hayman, and carried unanimously.

4. COMMENTS BY PUBLIC OFFICIALS

A. U.S. Congressman Ted Lieu's representative Janet Turner gave a legislative update and reported that Building 207 on the VA campus opened to residents on February 28<sup>th</sup> and Buildings 205 and 208 will start to take residents in April or May. The VA will be breaking ground on 264 new units in May.

B. LAPD SLO James Allen announced that a Citizen's Academy will be starting at the end of March, through the Olympic division. Crime year-to-date is down in two categories and up in all others. The two categories that were down were robberies and grand theft auto. Sandy Brown asked about an incident at Holmby Park where a dog owner was told to put her dog on leash and the owner's response was to get her boyfriend to drive to the park and threaten the park director. SLO Allen recommended asking for a task force to be set up between park rangers and animal control to deal with this issue.

C. 3<sup>rd</sup> District County Supervisor Lindsey Horvath's representative Zac Gaidzik reported that Supervisor Horvath is on the board of LAHSA and gave a legislative update.

D. UCLA representative Marco Perez announced that the Hammer Museum will have a public opening of its renovation on March 26<sup>th</sup>. The next two 1<sup>st</sup> Thursdays will be art-themed. The quarter ends on March 24<sup>th</sup>.

E. State Senator Ben Allen's representative Rad Nowroozi gave a legislative update.

5. DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD EMPOWERMENT

DONE NEA Freddy Cupen-Ames reported that in April all NCs will start to meet in person again. He is working on updated protocols for meetings. Teleconferencing will be allowed three times a year but the board has to vote to have it and this raises other issues.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

A. Motion to approve the Monthly Expenditure Report for January 2023

Treasurer Laura Winikow reported that the rollover money was received. January's beginning balance was \$34,306.45, \$171.09 was spent, \$108.37 was outstanding, and there is a commitment of \$500 for partnering for the election forum, leaving a net available amount of \$33,526.99.

Laura moved to approve the January MER, seconded by Tracey Fitzgerald, and approved unanimously. Laura reported that the beginning balance of February 2023's MER was \$34,135.36 with an outstanding amount of \$108.37 and commitment of \$500, no money spent, and a net available balance of \$33,526.99. Laura moved to approve the February MER, seconded by Marcello Robinson, and carried unanimously.

#### 7. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Friends of Westwood Library board member Steve Sann reported that this coming Saturday two Polish pianists will be playing at the Westwood branch library at 3:30 p.m. The recent book sale was successful and the library is accepting book donations again.

#### 8. PRESENTATION ON A PROPOSED MURAL AT 1440 SEPULVEDA BLVD. (FOX BUILDING)

Blair Gillespie of Ware Malcomb gave a presentation showing the three murals that are planned for the outside of the renovated building. Two murals will be on the Sepulveda side and one on the Ohio side. Artist Natalja Kent spoke about how she did the artwork. It is analog photography that will be transferred onto metal and will be anti-graffiti. A site meeting will be held on March 17<sup>th</sup>. Sandy Brown moved, "WWNC approves the proposed mural for 1440 Sepulveda Blvd." Marcello Robinson seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

#### 9. NEIGHBORHOOD PURPOSES GRANT PRESENTATIONS & AWARDING OF GRANTS

Treasurer Laura Winikow announced that there is \$30,000 available, which works out to \$4,285 to give to each of the seven applicants if divided equally.

A. Emerson Middle School - For field trip expenses for the four school academies. Request up to \$5,000

Jen Kanter and Elaine Hsieh made the presentation.

B. Fairburn Elementary School - For computer literacy training for students. Request up to \$5,000

Hayley Mackintosh made the presentation.

C. Friends of Westwood Library - To purchase physical books. Request up to \$5,000

Steve Sann made the presentation. Ann Hayman, Stephen Resnick, and Laura Winikow recused themselves during the presentation.

D. Los Angeles Conservancy - To advance historic preservation within our area. Request up to \$5,000

Steve Sann made the presentation.

E. Los Angeles Music Salon - To fund a series of free public concerts at Westwood Branch Library. Request up to \$5,000

Terry Tegnazian made the presentation. Ann Hayman, Stephen Resnick, and Laura Winikow recused themselves during the presentation.

F. Salvation Army Transition - To replace the industrial dishwasher and stove at the childcare center. Request up to \$5,000

Diane Good made the presentation.

G. Warner Avenue Elementary School - To purchase sound equipment for the WAVE music program. Request up to \$5,000

Angel Rabbie made the presentation.

After the presentations, Ann Hayman, Stephen Resnick, and Laura Winikow recused themselves for the first vote. Lisa Chapman moved, "WWNC will award \$4,285 each to the Friends of Westwood Library and the Los Angeles Music Salon." Connie Boukidis seconded and the motion carried unanimously. Ann Hayman, Stephen Resnick, and Laura Winikow returned for the second vote. Lisa Chapman moved, "WWNC will award \$4,285 each to Emerson, Fairburn, and Warner

schools, the Los Angeles Conservancy, and the Salvation Army.” Connie Boukidis seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

#### 10. WESTWOOD PARK ADVISORY BOARD

Tracey Fitzgerald reported that the park is moving forward on getting pickleball courts. A special meeting for a vote was held and a letter was sent to RAP. Park Director Jason’s programs are popular and well-attended. Jaime Rooke made a proposal for a greenery space on the Veteran side.

#### 11. HOLMBY PARK ADVISORY BOARD

Ann Hayman reported that the new playground is a success but there are still problems with unleashed dogs (see agenda item 4B) which should be dealt with through the park director.

#### 12. HOLLYWOOD STUDIO DISTRICT NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL MASS RESIGNATIONS

##### A. Discussion and introduction of motion to support the former board

Stephen Resnick introduced the motion and reported that Raquel Beltran has resigned over this. Stephen Resnick moved that the name of Raquel Beltran in the motion be changed to Vanessa Serrano, the interim manager, seconded by Lisa Chapman and carried unanimously.

Marcello Robinson moved that the motion be approved with additional language added to the last paragraph, “In addition, the WWNC votes no confidence in Mario Hernandez and his position as NEA as a result of his actions. DONE should issue a public apology to HSDNC.” Ann Hayman seconded and the motion carried unanimously. The motion below is the corrected version.

### **MOTION**

Date: March 8, 2023

To: Karen Bass, Mayor of Los Angeles

Ray Regalado, Board of Neighborhood Commissioners President

Eunisses Hernandez, City Councilmember District 1 and chair of the Neighborhoods and Community Enrichment Committee

CC: Vanessa Serrano, Department of Neighborhood Empowerment Interim General Manager

Re: Hollywood Studio District Neighborhood Council

The Westwood Neighborhood Council is very concerned about the events leading to the mass resignation of Hollywood Studio District Neighborhood Council board members and their implication for the Neighborhood Council system as a whole. We are equally concerned about the response from the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment General Manager.

The Hollywood Studio District NC found itself unable to make quorum on a regular basis and asked for help from the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment. The Department put the Neighborhood Council under Exhaustive Efforts at the request of the NC. With Exhaustive Efforts, the Department takes much greater control of the Neighborhood Council and works to help the NC to repair its issues. It also allows the NC to operate with a smaller quorum.

At the February 8, 2023 meeting of the HSDNC, Neighborhood Empowerment Advocate Mario Hernandez announced that the NC would sponsor a Sheriff’s Youth Foundation event at the \$4000 level, \$4000 being 12.5% of the NC’s annual budget, adding that any board member who did not attend the event would be removed from the board. Neither a majority of the NC board members nor the stakeholders present at the meeting were in favor of the expenditure. In fact, a majority of the board members are actively opposed to the event and asked Mr. Hernandez about avenues for appeal. He responded that no appeal was possible; the decision was final. On top of that, the event is

not scheduled to occur in the NC's district. In fact, it is not even taking place in the City of Los Angeles.

It is not the responsibility of a Neighborhood Council to promote the Neighborhood Council system at a regional event that is held outside of the City limits and would do little if anything to help the Neighborhood Council recruit new board members and satisfy the reason the board had entered exhaustive efforts.

Any one board member, even a board member who is the chair of a committee, may not speak for the whole board. It is not uncommon for a board to disagree with a committee or even a committee chair and in this case, the board disagreed. It is disingenuous for the Department to use the one member as justification for violating the sentiments of the board. To be clear, the board member cited in the Department's response to the resignation is one of the board members who resigned. This is not what the NC board had in mind when it asked for help. This is not empowering the Neighborhood Council.

In response to this egregious overreach, and choosing to stand for their principles, 9 of the 11 members of the Hollywood Studio District NC board, including 100% of the executive committee, resigned February 15, 2023.

The mission of the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment is to promote civic engagement and make government more responsive to local needs by supporting the Neighborhood Councils throughout Los Angeles which matches its purpose as set out in Section 901 of the City Charter.

It is hard to see how forcing a Neighborhood Council to sponsor an event its board members and stakeholders oppose satisfies the Department's mission. If this forced participation can happen to Hollywood Studio District, it can happen to any Neighborhood Council.

In a letter to the Neighborhood Council board members on February 18, the General Manager asks why the HSDNC board members did not appeal to the assigned Neighborhood Empowerment Advocate's management. We understand that their NEA told them appeal was not possible so we ask a different question. Why didn't the Department reach out to the resigned board members to see what kind of accommodation would bring them back? The GM says in her letter that the Department "would have liked to have had an opportunity to work with them to resolve the matter." The opportunity still exists. All that is needed is for the Department to avail itself of it.

The letter from the General Manager seems to indicate a hurry to restaff the board. Its efforts should be directed towards restoring the resigned staff and filling the remaining open positions.

The Westwood Neighborhood Council seeks the satisfaction of seeing the \$4000 funding restored to HSDNC budget, the resigned board members restored to their positions without being required to support an event in West Hollywood that they oppose, and the Department and BONC work to help the HSDNC thrive. Anything less is an injustice to the people involved, the people who elected them, and to the system as a whole. In addition, the WWNC votes no confidence in Mario Hernandez and his position as NEA as a result of his actions. DONE should issue a public apology to HSDNC.

### 13. STANDING COMMITTEE STATUS REPORTS

- A. Executive – no report
- B. Land Use & Planning – no report
- C. Outreach & Communications – no report
- D. Homeless Task Force – no report

- E. Budget Advocates – no report
- F. Public Safety/ Transportation & Parking – no report
- G. WRAC – Emergency Preparedness – no report
- H. Bylaws – no report
- I. WRAC – Report and Motions - no report
  - 1. Support: Request for Audit of STAP Program
  - 2. Support: Request re: Housing Replacement Program

14. ADJOURNMENT

President Lisa Chapman adjourned the meeting at 10:12 p.m.