

WESTWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

NOVEMBER 14, 2012

WESTWOOD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

10822 WILSHIRE BLVD.

LOS ANGELES, CA 90024

1. SWEARING IN OF NEW BOARD

Councilmember Paul Koretz swore in the new board.

2. CALL TO ORDER

President Jerry Brown called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. Board members in attendance were Sarah Austerlitz, Angus Beverly, Connie Boukidis, Jerry Brown, Lisa Chapman, Carole Cohen, Jolie Duhon, Roozbeh Farahanipour, Armen Hadjimanoukian, Samuel Haws, Mark Herd, Ryan Krebs, Stephen Resnick, Clinton Schudy, Michael Stajura, Scott Whittle, and Laura Winikow. Board members excused were Dean Abell and Mark Rogo. There were also 26 stakeholders and guests in attendance.

3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

A. President

Mark Herd nominated Jerry Brown for president, seconded by Laura Winikow. He was elected unanimously.

B. Vice President

Lisa Chapman nominated Dean Abell, who was not present, for vice president. Mark Herd seconded the nomination. He was elected by a majority of votes.

C. Secretary

Michael Stajura nominated Stephen Resnick for secretary. Clinton Schudy seconded the nomination. He was elected unanimously.

D. Treasurer

Lisa Chapman nominated Laura Winikow for treasurer. The nomination was seconded by Scott Whittle. She was elected unanimously.

E. Outreach Chair

Scott Whittle nominated Lisa Chapman, with a second by Clinton Schudy. She was elected unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Scott Whittle moved to approve the October minutes as written. Clinton Schudy seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

5. COMMENTS BY PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Councilmember Koretz reported that the City's financial difficulties is the issue consuming most of his time. The City Council will be voting on a half cent sales tax increase this week in order to raise money so that public safety is not compromised. If the tax increase doesn't pass, the alternative is to cut services and lay people off.

Stephen Resnick asked the Councilmember why there was a DRB meeting scheduled for tonight at the same time as WWNC's meeting. The Councilmember was not aware that was the case but Field Deputy Sarah Mallory answered that the scheduling of the meeting is not up to CD5 but the Planning Commission and it was scheduled for tonight because of deadlines involved. She will request the Planning Commission not schedule future meetings at the same time as WWNC's meetings.

Officer Chris Ragsdale handed out LAPD contact information and spoke about crime trends in the neighborhood. The rate of violent crime is low but theft of things like bicycles and small electronics is a concern. Stephen Resnick asked about a pedestrian fatality and Officer Ragsdale mentioned that there has been a significant increase in pedestrian accidents across Los Angeles and he will get the specs on the fatality.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

7. STANDING COMMITTEE STATUS REPORTS

A. The Executive Committee did not meet.

B. Treasurer Laura Winikow said that the election came in a bit below what was budgeted so the unused money can go into neighborhood grants.

C. Land Use & Planning Committee (LUPC) chair Connie Boukidis tabled the discussion of the trees in Westwood Village until stakeholders Steve Sann and Wolfgang Veith were present. Stakeholders Ann Hayman and Marjan Jamshidi expressed interest in being on the LUPC.

Lisa Chapman nominated Connie Boukidis for LUPC Chair, seconded by Michael Stajura. President Jerry Brown duly appointed her as chair. He also appointed stakeholders Ann Hayman and Marjan Jamshidi to the LUPC committee, and the board ratified the decision unanimously.

Connie Boukidis thanked Tony Wilkinson for a well-run election. Tony announced that the election cost 40% of what it cost when the City Clerk ran it, so DONE is deciding whether to keep the election as it was run this time or return it to the City Clerk to handle. WWNC's revised bylaws were approved two days before the election.

Stephen Resnick announced that he heard that Sprouts Market may be willing to drop its request for a liquor license and may try to get a commercial corner variance for deliveries.

Michael Stajura brought up the issue of NC budget advocates. Angus Beverly is one of WWNC's budget advocates but David Crew and Marcello Robinson should be contacted to see if they are still interested in being budget advocates although they are no longer on the board.

D. Outreach and Communications Chair Lisa Chapman said that webmaster Kevin will set up accounts for board members.

Jerry Brown requested that Lisa set up a meeting with director of Emergency Preparedness for UCLA Health Systems William Dunne to discuss the medical helicopter issue.

E. Public Safety Chair Michael Stajura said that the committee has only had four meetings but he would like to step it up in 2013. The Disaster Preparedness Fair was successful but it was spread out over Broxton Avenue and taking up the whole street wasn't necessary. Michael thanked CD5 for paying City fees, WWNC for providing \$3,000 of the \$6,000 budget, the Westwood Village Rotary Club, Target, UCLA, and the American Red Cross for their support of the fair.

F. WRAC representative Michael Stajura brought before WRAC WWNC's October motion opposing the stealth tactics of Westfield Century City in its plan to start charging for parking. The WRAC president tabled the item because the Westside NC president was absent. Jerry Brown said that a letter should be written to WRAC president Mike Newhouse stating WWNC's disappointment at WRAC's failure to do its job.

Continuation of C. Land Use & Planning Committee

Stakeholders Steve Sann and Wolfgang Veith returned from the DRB meeting and the issue of tree removal in Westwood Village was taken up. LUPC Chair Connie Boukidis said that a special LUPC meeting was held on November 9th with Head of Urban Forestry Ron Lorenzen about the Westwood Village BID's plan to renovate the sidewalks which would necessitate the removal of 18 mature trees. A discussion of how detrimental to Westwood Village this would be followed.

Connie Boukidis moved,

“The Westwood Neighborhood Council calls on the Board of Public Works to save the trees in the Westwood Village Business Improvement Association area by whatever methods are necessary. Should removal of a tree be unavoidable,

we demand that it be replaced with a mature tree in a 48” box and that the Westwood Village BIA be required to install a permanent irrigation and fertilizer system to service said trees.”

The motion was seconded by Scott Whittle and carried unanimously.

8. NEIGHBORHOOD PURPOSE GRANTS

Treasurer Laura Winikow stated that WWNC has \$8,000 in grant money to award at this meeting.

Warner Avenue Elementary School representative Wendy Whoriskey requested \$5,000 for library computers and the necessary furniture.

Emerson Middle School representative Dara Williams requested \$5,000 to hire a library aide.

Friends of Westwood Library representative Steve Sann requested \$2,500 for programming at the library.

Fairburn Avenue Elementary School had no representative present but sent in a grant proposal for \$12,000 for books and periodicals for the library.

After discussion about how to apportion the money, Michael Stajura moved that Fairburn not be considered because it didn't send a representative to the meeting and submitted its grant proposal at the last minute. Jolie Duhon seconded. Stephen Resnick and Laura Winikow recused themselves from voting on the grants. The motion was defeated by a vote of Yes: 2 and No: 15.

Connie Boukidis moved that WWNC grant \$2,000 to each of the four organizations which submitted a grant proposal, for a total of \$8,000. Scott Whittle seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

9. FACTUAL BASIS STAKEHOLDERS

Jerry Brown gave background on the Eagle Rock NC election, in which people who had no stake in Eagle Rock were bused in to vote in the election as factual basis stakeholders. This prompted Councilmembers Jose Huizar and Bernard Parks to call for a review of this process. Factual basis stakeholders were not mentioned in the original City Charter amendment but were added later.

Jerry Brown moved,

“The Westwood Neighborhood Council believes that the empowerment of factual basis stakeholders to vote and/or run for a Board seat on a Neighborhood Council is antithetical to the very concept of Neighborhood Councils. By the inclusion of non-neighborhood stakeholders in Neighborhood Council elections and as Board members, the “Neighborhood” in Neighborhood Council is diminished to the point of irrelevance. In no other branch of governance is such a notion present. No amount of fine tuning of the definition of factual basis stakeholder or limitation of their number on any given NC Board can alter this fact.

We therefore urge the elimination of the concept of factual basis stakeholders from the Neighborhood Council system.”

Scott Whittle seconded the motion.

Several stakeholders recommended that a subcommittee be formed to look into the issue because it is complicated and there is no rush because the next election is two years away. Mark Herd was of the opinion that it shouldn't be a decision for the City Council to make, but each individual NC to make. Jerry Brown withdrew his motion, but said the issue needs to be dealt with.

10. DIGITAL BILLBOARD SETTLEMENT

Stephen Resnick reported that the appellate court ruled in favor of Summit Media in the digital billboard case. The decision will be permanent in 90 days. Clear Channel co-wrote a motion that the City Council approved in order to do an end run around the decision so that illegal digital billboards would not have to be removed.

Stephen Resnick moved,

“Whereas the Los Angeles Superior Court ruled against the City of Los Angeles in the Summit Media digital billboard case, stating that the entire settlement was invalid (the settlement the City reached with billboard companies illegally denied the public its right to be heard on a matter that would normally require hearings and public input); and

Whereas the ruling of the court has been appealed and a decision is pending; and

Whereas the Los Angeles City Council has approved a motion to pursue a digital sign settlement before the Appeals Court issues their decision; and

Whereas this settlement would not be in the best interest of the citizens of Los Angeles;

Therefore, the Westwood Neighborhood Council demands that the City Council of Los Angeles enact no legislation pertinent to billboards before the ruling on this issue by the state of California's 2nd District Court of Appeal has been officially announced and before input on the subject from the City's advisory agents, the Neighborhood Councils, has been sought and received by the City Council."

Connie Boukidis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

11. NEW BUSINESS

Lisa Chapman announced that Westwood Presbyterian Church is not available for WWNC's next scheduled meeting on December 12th. The meeting date can either be changed to when the church is available or the meeting can be held somewhere else. She will ask Mark Rogo about possibly holding the meeting at Blair House.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:18 p.m.