

Contact Information

Neighborhood Council: Westwood Neighborhood Council

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Date of NC Board Action: 12/08/2010

Type of NC Board Action: General Comments

Impact Information

Date: 06/09/2011

Update to a Previous Input: No

Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: 11-0695

Agenda Date: 06/08/2011

Item Number: 1 - Special Meeting

Brief Summary: "Be it resolved that the Westwood Neighborhood Council supports the exclusion of the Comstock to Selby segment of Wilshire Boulevard in Westwood from the Bus Rapid Transit Wilshire Boulevard Dedicated Bus Lane Project because of severe traffic, pollution, and safety impacts on Wilshire and surrounding streets."

Additional Information

Contact Information

Neighborhood Council: Westwood Neighborhood Council

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Date of NC Board Action: 12/08/2010

Type of NC Board Action: General Comments

Impact Information

Date: 06/10/2011

Update to a Previous Input: Yes

Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: 11-0695

Agenda Date: 06/08/2011

Item Number:

Brief Summary:

Additional Information: \$7.5 million for inclusion of the Comstock-Glendon segment in the Wilshire BRT represents 20-25% of the entire project budget. The FTA has indicated that this money could be used elsewhere on Wilshire. An independent traffic consultant has reported that, currently, buses traveling in mixed use lanes are traveling at or near posted speed limits, and that little or no improvement in their speeds would result from a bus only lane in this area

WESTWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 8, 2010
WESTWOOD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
10822 WILSHIRE BLVD.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Toni Gray called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. Board members in attendance were Connie Boukidis, Lisa Chapman, Roozbeh Farahanipour, Brent Gaisford, Toni Gray, Mark Herd, Stephen Resnick, Yoni Riemer, Kurt Smalberg, Steven Somers, Michael Stajura, and Scott Whittle. Members not present were Jerry Brown, David Crew, Terry Pullan, Mark Rogo, Clinton Schudy, George Torbay, and Laura Winikow. There were also fifteen stakeholders and other attendees in the audience.

2. APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER MINUTES

Scott Whittle moved to approve the minutes with the correction of one typo in item 11. Toni Gray seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

3. CENTURY CITY SUBWAY STATION

Susan Bursk was unable to come and give her presentation. Connie Boukidis told the board that the Chamber of Commerce is in favor of a station on Constellation Blvd. The majority of attendees at subway hearings are in favor of a Constellation Blvd. stop. Beverly Hills wants a Santa Monica Blvd. stop so that the route won't require tunneling underneath homes and Beverly Hills High School. Stakeholder Carol Spencer said that in addition to the fact that more people prefer the Constellation Blvd. location to a Santa Monica Blvd. location, there is an earthquake fault which runs under Santa Monica Blvd. The problem with that is that the subway would run parallel to the fault instead of perpendicular, and that would raise the cost also. Yoni Riemer mentioned that the location of a stop is about ridership numbers, and a Constellation Blvd. stop would promote ridership.

Jay Greenstein, Councilmember Koretz's Transportation Deputy and Chief Field Deputy, said that Councilmember Koretz supports a Constellation Blvd. stop because it is best for the community and central to where people go, in the heart of the businesses and hotels there.

Connie Boukidis proposed the following motion: "Be it resolved that the Westwood Neighborhood Council supports the Century City Subway Station on the Purple Line/Westside Subway Extension to be located at Constellation Boulevard and Avenue of the Stars because it is the hub of Century City offices, condominiums, shops, hotels, and restaurants and will serve the greatest amount of commuters, shoppers, tourists, and residents." Michael Stajura seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

4. NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICAL ISSUES

DONE representative Amber Meshack spoke about parameters and limits on what Neighborhood Councils can do. They are allowed to make their positions known but are not allowed to spend public funds to do so. The avenue that the city set up for neighborhood councils to make their positions known is the Community Impact Statement, which becomes part of the legislative record. N.C.'s can also do outreach, educate their stakeholders, and speak with City Councilmembers. Advocated positions can't be posted on a website but minutes with actions the N.C. has taken can. N.C.'s can use funds to make flyers with the pros and cons of an issue on them, but not flyers that are one-sided. Amber recommended that board members speak with the City Attorney to get the facts on what actions are legal after many voiced dismay because they felt the City gave the N.C.'s a mandate without allowing them to use their money to fulfill the mandate. Connie Boukidis volunteered to contact the City Attorney and felt it would be useful to have a representative from his office attend a WWNC meeting. Stephen Resnick said he would assist Connie with contacting the City Attorney.

Amber said she could set up a training session covering what resources are available to Neighborhood Councils and the session could cover specifics such as the Brown Act, ethics, Public Records Act, legal parameters, and board procedures and policies. Amber could tailor the session in conjunction with a board representative. Yoni Riemer volunteered to be the board's liaison with Amber.

5. SIX AMENDMENTS TO THE L.A. CITY ZONING CODE

Sandy Brown met with Alan Bell of the City Planning Department to discuss the zoning code and changes to it. She was told that there are many problems with the code: it dates back to 1946 and hasn't been changed since then. It contains multiple languages and unclear findings. Changes will help standardize language. A meeting of the Community Planning Council will be held on January 13, 2011 downtown where the six amendments will be discussed.

Stakeholder Laura Lake talked about the Community Planning Implementation Overlay District Ordinance which was recently passed. It is apparently an end run around community plans, and will make it possible for projects to be approved without any hearings. The piecemeal approval of projects is a violation of CEQA. It will be litigated.

Amber Meshack said that the City Planning Department wants liaison names from the neighborhood councils. The chair of the Land Use & Development Committee should be the liaison.

Eric Norton recommended to the board that Chris Koontz, Councilmember Koretz's Planning Deputy, be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

6. OFF AGENDA ITEM

Toni Gray explained that there is a procedure for putting an urgent item on the agenda. Connie Boukidis announced that the urgent item is the MTA vote on the Wilshire BRT project tomorrow at 9:30 a.m., and whether to exclude the segment of Wilshire Blvd. from Comstock to Selby. The Bus Riders Union has mounted a huge campaign against excluding the segment which mischaracterizes the residents' position, and is putting pressure on the Mayor. Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Councilmember Paul Koretz, and Mayoral Appointee Richard Katz support the exclusion of the Westwood segment, and they need to hear what WWNC's position is. Mark Herd moved to put this urgent item on the agenda, seconded by Kurt Smalberg. The motion carried with one opposed.

Jay Greenstein said that Councilmember Koretz has raised issues about the Wilshire BRT project, including exclusion of this segment. The Councilmember requested that MTA and LADOT ask the Federal Transit Administration whether the project could be approved without the Westwood segment. Last week the FTA said it would approve the project without the Westwood segment.

Stakeholder Sandy Brown said that the segment is a residential section only, is less than a mile long, and has one rapid bus stop in it but 56 driveways that will be impacted. Stakeholder Steve Sann said that this is a very important matter because it takes a situation where no problem exists and creates one.

Connie Boukidis proposed the following motion: "Be it resolved that the Westwood Neighborhood Council supports the exclusion of the Comstock to Selby segment of Wilshire Boulevard in Westwood from the Bus Rapid Transit Wilshire Boulevard Dedicated Bus Lane Project because of severe traffic, pollution, and safety impacts on Wilshire and surrounding streets." Stephen Resnick seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Yoni Riemer suggested that all upcoming City meetings be put on the agenda in the future.

7. BUDGET

Yoni Riemer presented the budget, which was based on a City template and reviewed by the executive board, and mentioned a few points relating to the budget. He advised the board that according to DONE guidelines, the budget can be revised with a board resolution. All expenditures must be pre-approved so Yoni requested that all board members email him if they think they will need to spend money on something. Jerry Brown as President and Yoni as Treasurer are the only people permitted to make requests for payments.

Yoni proposed a motion to allow necessary expenses related to WWNC's monthly meetings in the budget. Discussion followed during which itemization of those monthly meeting expenses was suggested. Scott Whittle asked if the budget was a use it or lose it budget. Amber said that the council has two years to use the budget

money and will lose it in the third year if it hasn't been used. There was also a suggestion that the budget review be agendized.

After discussion Yoni proposed the following three motions: "Motion to allow necessary expenses related to monthly meetings in the budget, specifically rent related expenses at Blair House and the Westwood Presbyterian Church, copying expenses to provide the agenda and other documents to the public, and if the Budget Committee chooses, limited food and refreshments for the public so as to increase participation at the meetings, and any other general expenses deemed necessary to run efficient meetings." The second was: "Motion to allow necessary payment for website design, hosting and upkeep, and other internet related expenses." The third was "Motion to allow necessary payments for business cards." Steven Somers seconded the motions. A "yes" vote included all three motions. The motions carried unanimously. The board thanked Yoni for a job well done.

8. STANDING COMMITTEES

Toni Gray stated that this item should be tabled for the next meeting. Lisa Chapman asked that finalization of committees should be agendized for the next meeting. Brent Gaisford said that the board should outline a definite procedure for how the agenda will be set. Amber Meshack told the board that the process for setting the agenda should be articulated in the standing rules and Stephen Resnick pointed out that the committee hasn't been formed yet.

9. BROXTON PARKING GARAGE

Toni Gray announced that the P3 Plan, which is the plan to privatize ten City garages including the Broxton garage, is on the City Council agenda for its December 14th meeting. Eric Norton said that the P3 hearing will be a closed meeting. People will be allowed to speak, then the City Council will adjourn and go into closed session. Eric said he can arrange free parking in City Hall for those interested in attending.

Discussion about rallying people to go to the meeting and why it's so important followed. Points made were that 7 or 8 City Councilmembers are against pulling out the Broxton garage from the package, it is desirable to get as much public comment from as many of the affected communities as possible, and that sale of the Broxton garage would hurt businesses, reduce tax revenue, and is contradictory to the Shop L. A. effort. Stakeholder Laura Lake emphasized that WWNC should try to get a block of time in which to speak because the history, special status, and legal issues of the Broxton garage can't be explained in two minutes. Toni Gray stated that the legal issues involve the EIR because the provision of free short term parking is part of the certified EIR for the Westwood Village Plan, and mitigates that Westwood Village stay competitive. The Westwood Village Plan would have to be amended and a new EIR done in order to change the parking.

Eric Norton stated Councilmember Koretz's position as the Councilmember supports pulling the Broxton garage out of the sale package but is not opposed to the P3 plan.

Amber said that a Community Impact Statement would be very important here and is a process that is often under-utilized. She explained that in order to make a C.I.S. a board member needs to register with the City Clerk and get a password to enable use of the website. The C.I.S. is printed on the agenda for the City Council and public and can also be found online. Stephen Resnick volunteered to work on the C.I.S.

10. WEBSITE

Roozbeh Farahanipour said he solicited a proposal from a company who will design the website for \$1200 and can have it done in less than a week. Lisa Chapman, who is also on the committee, had not seen the proposal and asked to agendaize this for the next meeting. She had contacted another company which had made a proposal that sounded good. She wanted the committee to look at product and price and possibly have proposed vendors give presentations. Stakeholder Arthur Greenberg told the board he uses a guy in North Carolina who is reasonably priced. Connie Boukidis suggested that the committee solicit three set proposals and the board can look at them and voice their opinions.

11. BYLAWS

Toni Gray tabled this item for the next meeting.

12. MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS

Michael Stajura apologized for not setting up a free website as he had said he would at the last meeting. This item will be carried over to the next meeting.

13. AD HOC COMMITTEES

This item will be carried over to the next meeting.

14. BUSINESS CARDS

Stephen Resnick told the board that they have a choice about whether to have the City Seal on their business cards or not. If so, cards must be ordered through the City and if not, they can have cards printed privately. He will research costs. Mark Herd said that the City Seal should be on the business cards as they will be good for outreach. Yoni Riemer said they should have the WWNC website address printed on them.

15. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Arthur Greenberg read a list of proposals to make Westwood Village more lively, such as making some streets pedestrian streets and having musicians and entertainers.

Roxane Stern said that she only found out that the location of the meeting had been changed by a fluke. Mark Herd said he had gotten the necessary code and would post meeting notices on the website. Toni Gray asked for a date for the next meeting. Brent Gaisford then moved to set the date of the next meeting as January 12, 2010 because that is the second Wednesday of the month. Michael Stajura seconded the motion, and it carried with one opposed.

Sandy Brown asked to agendaize the UCLA Faculty Center for the next meeting. Sandy also mentioned that gourmet food trucks are parking in Westwood Village, taking up parking spaces, and that isn't good for the restaurants there. Eric Norton said these trucks are regulated by the California Vehicle Code. He is waiting for an opinion from the City Attorney about whether they can be permitted so fines can be raised and trucks can lose permits if they don't follow rules.

Jerry Tsai of Westside Neighborhood Council advised the board that it takes a long time to pay contractors so anyone that WWNC deals with should understand that and must be patient. He also advised them that the budget money should be used because the City will take it before the third year if not.

16. GOOD AND WELFARE

Stephen Resnick sent best wishes to Mark Herd's brother in dealing with his illness.

Yoni Riemer wished everyone happy holidays and early happy New Year.

17. MOTION TO ADJOURN

Toni Gray moved to adjourn the meeting. Brent Gaisford seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Westwood Neighborhood Council

Community Impact Statement

June 9, 2011

Westwood Neighborhood Council

Stephen Resnick, Secretary

sresnick@wwnc.org

“Be it resolved that the Westwood Neighborhood Council supports the exclusion of the Comstock to Selby segment of Wilshire Boulevard in Westwood from the Bus Rapid Transit Wilshire Boulevard Dedicated Bus Lane Project because of severe traffic, pollution, and safety impacts on Wilshire and surrounding streets.”