

Contact Information

Neighborhood Council: Westwood Neighborhood Council

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The Board approved this CIS by a vote of: Yea(16) Nay(0) Abstain(0) Ineligible(0) Recusal(0)

Date of NC Board Action: 04/13/2016

Type of NC Board Action: For

Impact Information

Date: 02/24/2017

Update to a Previous Input: No

Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: 17-0168

Agenda Date: 02/24/2017

Item Number: 9

Summary: The Westwood Neighborhood Council unanimously supports the preservation of the Twenty-Eighth Church of Christ, Scientist building, located at 1018 South Hilgard Avenue, in the list of Historic-Cultural Monument.

WESTWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL MINUTES

APRIL 13, 2016

WESTWOOD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 10822 WILSHIRE BLVD. LOS ANGELES, CA 90024

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice President Lisa Chapman, speaking for President Jerry Brown since he had a sore throat, called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m. Board members in attendance were Angus Beverly, Connie Boukidis, Jerry Brown, Sandy Brown, David Burke, Lisa Chapman, Ian Cocroft (arrived 8:25 p.m.), Roozbeh Farahanipour, Jacob Finn, Ann Hayman, Mitchell Keiter, David Lorango, Stephen Resnick, Mark Rogo, Scott Whittle, and Laura Winikow. Board members excused were Dean Abell, Marcello Robinson, and Eugene Tseng. A quorum was present. There were 21 stakeholders and guests present.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Scott Whittle moved to approve the minutes of the March 9, 2016 meeting. David Burke seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

3. COMMENTS BY PUBLIC OFFICIALS

A. Congressman Ted Lieu's representative Janet Turner gave an update on the Community

Veterans Engagement Board and on HR 4871, legislation which Congressman Lieu has proposed to enlarge the area of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area to include beaches.

B. CD5 Field Deputy Jasmine Shamolian and Planning Deputy Faisal Alsari reported that

Councilmember Koretz has proposed a wildlife corridor which will mainly affect hillside neighborhoods, the BMO/BHO redraft will be ready in another two to four weeks with four more public outreach meetings to be held, the DOT is reviewing the traffic impacts of Kam Hekmat's project on Lindbrook, and the DRB is scheduling interviews for prospective new appointees.

C. Lisa Chapman read UCLA representative Marco Perez's report, as he was unable to attend. April 16th is Bruin Day for admitted students, when 10,000 or more people are expected to visit the campus. On May 1st, 15th, and 22nd UCLA's marching band will be rehearsing on the intramural field.

4. WESTWOOD VILLAGE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Megan Furey reported that the BID has been renewed for ten years. New operations manager Niki Svava was introduced.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS

UCLA USAC representative Danny Siegel announced that he would be running for USAC president and is interested in engaging students with the community.

UCLA students Sophie & Lauren from Circle of Sisterhood will be having a 5K run in the neighborhood behind the sorority houses on Hilgard. It will be held on May 22nd from 8 a.m. to noon and there will be approximately 500 runners.

6. STANDING COMMITTEE STATUS REPORTS

A. The Executive Committee had no report.

B. Budget

1. Approval of Monthly Expenditures

Treasurer Laura Winikow listed the March expenses for approval: temporary staffing services \$97.71, facility rental \$100, facility setup \$75, and printing materials \$62.35.

Laura Winikow moved to approve the expenses, seconded by Ann Hayman, and the motion carried unanimously. March's expenditure report included \$33,306.94 remaining

in the budget. Laura Winikow moved to approve the March expenditure report, seconded by Scott Whittle. The report was approved unanimously.

\$3,000 was allocated for the earthquake machine at the Disaster Preparedness Fair, which has been eliminated, so this amount can be re-allocated to NPGs. Scott Whittle moved to allocate the \$3,000 to NPGs, seconded by Stephen Resnick. The vote was unanimously yes except for Laura Winikow, who abstained.

Laura Winikow reported that there may be money from City Council President Herb Wesson that could also be used for NPGs. Without this money there will be \$22,000 for NPGs and with it there will be \$25,000.

Jerry Brown found another \$1,500 in the budget which could go to NPGs as well. With this money, the total sum to be given out could be either \$23,500 or \$26,500.

C. Land Use

Chair Connie Boukidis had no report.

Stephen Resnick received notice of a hearing on May 5th for two businesses on Westwood Blvd. who want a variance in order to share 11 parking spaces. In an emergency procedure under the Brown Act, Stephen Resnick moved, "WWNC requests that the file for Case # ZA 2015-3684(CUB)(ZV)(ZAD) remain open until May 16, 2016 in order for the WWNC, Westwood Homeowners Association, and Westwood Community Council to comment." Connie Boukidis seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

D. Outreach & Communications

1. Elections

Chair Lisa Chapman is waiting for a final number from the Westwood Recreation Center, but it will be about \$650. There will be a candidate forum before the next WWNC board meeting on May 11th from 6 p.m to 7 p.m. Steve Sann will moderate.

2. Vote on approval of pricing for election venue

No vote was taken because the final price has not been received yet.

E. Homeless Task Force had no report.

F. Budget Advocates had no report.

G. Public Safety had no report.

H. Traffic had no report.

I. WRAC had no report.

7. NEIGHBORHOOD PURPOSES GRANT PRESENTATIONS

- A. Emerson Community Charter School/PACE requested a grant for the accelerated reader program for the 2016 - 2017 year.
- B. Fairburn Avenue Elementary School requested a grant for Planet Bravo computer education.
- C. Warner Avenue Elementary School requested a grant for 20 new iPads for testing and instruction.
- D. Friends of Westwood Library requested a grant for the Hot Off the Press program.
- E. West L.A. Little League requested a grant for security officers at the Bad News Bears Field.
- F. Los Angeles Conservancy requested a grant for historic preservation efforts in Westwood Village.

If there is \$22,000 to divide between the six NPG requests, then each NPG applicant will receive \$3,667. If there is \$25,000 to divide between the six, each NPG applicant will get \$4,167. Jerry Brown found another \$1,500 in the budget which could go to NPGs as well. With this money, the total sum to be given out could be either \$23,500 or \$26,500.

Factoring in the extra \$1,500 each each NPG applicant could receive either \$3,917 or \$4,417.

Scott Whittle moved to award \$3,667 to Emerson, seconded by Lisa Chapman. The motion carried unanimously.

Laura Winikow moved to award \$3,667 to Fairburn, seconded by Ann Hayman. The motion carried unanimously.

Laura Winikow moved to award \$3,667 to Warner, seconded by Connie Boukidis. The

motion carried unanimously.

Lisa Chapman moved to award \$3,667 to the Friends of the Westwood Library, seconded by Scott Whittle. The motion carried unanimously with the exception of Roozbeh Farahanipour, Ann Hayman, Mark Rogo, and Laura Winikow, who recused themselves from the vote.

Laura Winikow moved to award \$3,667 to West L.A. Little League, seconded by Ann Hayman. The motion carried unanimously, with the exception of Mitchell Keiter, who recused himself from the vote.

Laura Winikow moved to award \$3,667 to the Los Angeles Conservancy, seconded by Ann Hayman. The motion carried unanimously.

Mark Rogo moved to increase the amounts awarded across the board to all the NPG applicants if a larger total amount is available, seconded by Lisa Chapman. The motion carried unanimously except for Roozbeh Farahanipour, Ann Hayman, Mitchell Keiter, Mark Rogo, and Laura Winikow, who recused themselves from the vote.

8. TWENTY-EIGHTH CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST

A. Introduction of motion to support an appeal of a Zoning Administrator's decision
The Church has withdrawn its application, but it could return.

Connie Boukidis moved to approve the following motion, seconded by Scott Whittle.

The motion carried unanimously.

MOTION REGARDING THE TWENTY-EIGHTH CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST

Whereas, the Twenty-Eighth Church of Christ, Scientist, located at 1018 Hilgard Avenue in Westwood Village and completed in 1955, was designed by Master Architect Maynard Lyndon, a noted Los Angeles modernist who also designed UCLA's landmark Bunche Hall among many other notable structures; and

Whereas, the Twenty-Eighth Church of Christ, Scientist is recognized by the Los Angeles Department of City Planning's "Survey L.A." as a highly significant architectural and cultural resource and has been deemed eligible for the highest level of landmark status, including designation as a City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument, listing on the California Register of Historic Resources, and the National Register of Historic Places, the official listing of the nation's most important architectural treasures; and

Whereas, the elegant design of the Twenty-Eighth Church of Christ, Scientist is considered an outstanding example of expressive Mid-Century Modernism, one of the most significant examples of New Formalist institutional architecture in Westwood, a pristine example of modern ecclesiastical design, and a prominent local example of Christian Science architecture of the post war era; and

Whereas, the architecture of the Twenty-Eighth Church of Christ, Scientist features a gracefully curved exterior concrete wall punctured with tiny round openings similar to a monumental pegboard, while the remainder of the Church Building echoes the same curving motif, complemented by a gently curved colonnade along Hilgard Avenue that connects both the Church and Sunday School Buildings; and

Whereas, the magnificent and lush landscaping located throughout the grounds of the Twenty-Eighth Church of Christ, Scientist in Westwood beautifully and sensitively complements the Church and Sunday School Buildings, and was designed by Master Landscape Architect Garrett Eckbo of the renowned Southern California landscape architecture firm of Eckbo, Dean, Austin & Williams; and

Whereas, this verdant landscaping is considered an extraordinary example of the power of a fully integrated landscape design with its surrounding structures, including gracious courtyards, sunken gardens, a variety of specimen tree species, concrete planters, strips of green grass, and a gracefully curved Colonnade along Hilgard Avenue that connects the Church and Sunday school buildings; and

Whereas, this monumental church property fronts on three Westwood streets – Hilgard Avenue, Weyburn Avenue, and Lindbrook Drive – at the southeast edge of Westwood Village and creates a significant and elegant gateway into the multi-family residential area of Westwood Village and the Gracious single-family Holmby-Westwood neighborhood, which is currently in the process of establishing one of the largest Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (HPOZs) in the City of Los Angeles; and

Whereas, the Twenty-Eighth Church of Christ, Scientist has quietly advertised its intention to sell off three lots at the southern end of its site as a speculative apartment development project, marketed by CBRE as a “32-Unit Residential Development Site 2 Blocks to UCLA,” which project would require the total demolition of the sacred Church Building and destruction of much of the landscaped gardens and Colonnade; and

Whereas, the church has applied to the City Zoning Administrator for a “lot untie” as a discretionary action to sever the three lots containing the Church Building from the rest of the site, which the church’s marketing brochure describes as “the lot untie is a condition of sale” in order to enable this proposed development project to move forward without conducting any environmental analysis or completing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) required by the California Environmental Quality Act, in order to analyze the impacts that would result from the destruction of this landmark Church Building and gardens, and the loss of this highly significant architectural and cultural resource; and

Whereas, an appeal has been filed to challenge the Zoning Administrator’s erroneous decision to grant this discretionary “lot untie” without properly considering the totality of the “project” and without requiring the prior completion of an EIR before any discretionary project approval by the City that contemplates the demolition of, or would result in significant adverse impacts to, this historic resource:

Now, therefore, be it resolved, that the Westwood Neighborhood Council urges the West Los Angeles Area Planning Commission to grant the appeal filed in Case No. ZA 2014-4422(PAD)(ZAA); CEQA No.: ENV 2014-4423-CE and to rescind the erroneous granting of the requested “lot untie” by the Zoning Administrator; and

Be it further resolved, that the Westwood Neighborhood Council insists that the Los Angeles Department of City Planning and its Office of Historic Preservation require the completion of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) in full compliance with the requirements of CEQA prior to any discretionary action or approval by the City that could result in significant adverse impacts to this priceless architectural and cultural resource; and

Be it further resolved, that the Westwood Neighborhood Council calls upon Councilmember Paul Koretz and Mayor Eric Garcetti to support the appeal in this case, to protect this architectural and historic resource in Westwood, and to support the historic preservation of this highly significant site; and

Be it further resolved, that the Westwood Neighborhood Council strongly supports a Preservation Solution or adaptive reuse of this magnificent religious site in Westwood Village, similar to what was successfully achieved in 2002 with the preservation and conservation of the First Church of Christ, Scientist property located on Rexford Drive in Beverly Hills, following the sale of that property to Nessah Synagogue and Educational and Cultural Center, which transaction enabled the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Beverly Hills to construct a new and more appropriately sized church facility directly across the street from its former site; and

Be it finally resolved, that the Westwood Neighborhood Council calls upon the Council Office, Mayor's Office, Planning Department, Office of Historic Preservation, Los Angeles Conservancy, and other interested parties to work together with the Westwood Neighborhood Council, Westwood Community Council, local Westwood Homeowner Associations, business community, members of Westwood's faith communities, and other Westwood stakeholders, and with the leadership of the Twenty-Eighth Church of Christ, Scientist to achieve a Preservation Solution for this beautiful and sacred site that can be beneficial to all involved, and to further the goal of historic preservation in the Westwood community.

9. 611 SOUTH GAYLEY AVENUE

A. Introduction of motion to support an appeal of a Zoning Administrator's decision

Scott Whittle moved to approve the following motion, seconded by David Lorango.

The motion carried unanimously.

MOTION REGARDING THE 611 SOUTH GAYLEY AVENUE PROJECT

Whereas, on July 23, 2015 the Zoning Administrator of the Department of City Planning conducted a "public hearing" on a proposed Fraternity House at 611 South Gayley Avenue, to consider multiple discretionary actions including a requested Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to construct and operate a new Fraternity House in the North Westwood Village Specific Plan area which does not otherwise allow "boarding house" uses, a Zoning Administrator's Adjustment, Project Permit Adjustment, Project Permit Compliance, and Design Review Board approval, with NO NOTICE sent by U.S. mail to the Westwood Neighborhood Council or to other interested Westwood community members; and

Whereas, this failure to send a copy of the official notice via U.S. Mail to the Neighborhood Council is a blatant, significant, and direct violation of city policy and long established practice, which, according to the Empower LA website states that it is Planning Department Policy that: ***"The Planning Department***

requires that an official notice be sent by U.S. mail to the appropriate Certified Neighborhood Council for each public hearing on a case. In order to ensure that your Certified Neighborhood Council receives a mailed notice, please make sure that your Neighborhood Council provides DONE with the one contact name and address that should receive the Planning Department official notices”; and

Whereas, the official notice of the July 23rd hearing also was never sent to the nearly 20 members of the public who attended meetings of the Westwood Design Review Board about this project, who filled out speaker cards (including name, address, and telephone number) with the Planning Department, and who testified on this project, and therefore, not a single member of the public (other than the Applicant and his representatives and supporters) attended the July 23rd public hearing and were able to testify; and

Whereas, on more than six occasions the Westwood Neighborhood Council Land Use and Planning Committee and full Board met with the Applicant, Dr. Stephen Copen, and/or his attorney Kevin McDonnell of the firm Jeffer Mangels Butler & Mitchell and architect Dale Yonken of Nadel Architects to review and discuss this project in great detail, and to adopt proposed conditions for their requested CUP as well as their proposed design for the new Fraternity House; and

Whereas, the Westwood Neighborhood Council voted to conditionally support a CUP for the proposed project with 58 conditions, based on nearly identical existing CUP conditions for a neighboring fraternity house located at 613 South Gayley Avenue, as well as the proposed design for 611 South Gayley Avenue, subject to certain design conditions, and the Chair of the Land Use Committee drafted a letter which was never sent to the Zoning Administrator’s Office due to the failure to notify the Neighborhood Council of the date and time of the hearing, as well as the name and address of the ZA handling this case; and

Whereas, Mr. McDonnell advised the members of the Neighborhood Council Land Use and Planning Committee that because the Applicant’s environmental documents needed to be redrafted and recirculated, the hearing date was not yet determined, further confusing and obfuscating the date, time, and location of the public hearing for this matter; and

Whereas, Mr. Kevin McDonnell, after he learned of the date, time, and location of the public hearing, never informed anyone on the Westwood Neighborhood Council, Westwood Community Council, or any other Westwood stakeholders of the date and time of the hearing, despite the fact that he had been in regular and repeated communication with the committee chairs and other leaders in these organizations on numerous occasions for more than one year regarding this project; and

Whereas, the first notice that the Westwood Neighborhood Council and other members of the public received that the public hearing had already taken place was when the final Determination Letter, dated February 19, 2016, was mailed out to members of the public, nearly seven months after the hearing was conducted; and

Whereas, as a direct result of the failure of the Planning Department to send out the legally required official hearing notice via U.S. Mail to the Westwood Neighborhood Council (an officially Certified Neighborhood Council recognized by the City of Los Angeles), as well the failure by the Office of Zoning Administration to follow standard Planning Department procedure to also mail the official hearing notice to all members of the public who dutifully filled out Speaker Cards (containing their name and mailing address) and testified before the Westwood Design Review Board, which Speaker Cards were contained in the Case File, and which should have guaranteed that those Public Commenters received notice of the Zoning hearing (and all of whom did receive a mailed copy of the written Determination Letter seven months after the public hearing – proof that the City had their correct name and mailing address!) not a single member of the Westwood Neighborhood Council nor a single member from the general public attended the public hearing to speak in opposition to any aspect of the Applicant's requests, due to this fatal flaw in the hearing notice, which constitutes a highly significant error or abuse of discretion; and

Whereas, an appeal has been filed due to this outrageous denial of due process, and to challenge the Zoning Administrator's decision to grant a discretionary Conditional Use Permit, without including ALL 58 of the Conditions of Approval adopted by the Westwood Neighborhood Council:

Now, therefore, be it resolved, that the Westwood Neighborhood Council urges the West Los Angeles Area Planning Commission to grant the appeal filed in Case No. ZA 2014-1095(CU)(ZAA)(DRB) (SPPA)(SPP); CEQA No. ENV 2014-1094-MND and to rescind the erroneous granting of the requested Conditional Use Permit and other discretionary actions; and

Be it further resolved, that the Westwood Neighborhood Council calls on the Area Planning Commission to determine that the Decision Maker in this case (Zoning Administrator in the Department of City Planning) erred or abused their discretion in failing to follow established policy and practice that the Planning Department is REQUIRED to send via U.S. Mail the official notice of ALL public hearings within the Neighborhood Council boundaries; and

Be it further resolved, that the Westwood Neighborhood Council calls upon Councilmember Paul Koretz to support the appeal in this case and to STAND UP FOR DUE PROCESS, to ensure that the Westwood Neighborhood Council and all of its stakeholders are treated fairly and evenly; and

Be it finally resolved, that the Westwood Neighborhood Council insists that the public hearing for this matter be rescheduled, properly noticed, reheard, and that the official notice of the hearing be sent via U.S. Mail to the Westwood Neighborhood Council and to all members of the public who submitted speaker cards to the DCP on this matter and which cards (containing names and mailing addresses) are contained within the Case File.

10. IMPACT OF NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS

- A. Discussion of how to assess the impact/success (or lack thereof) of Neighborhood Councils and the Neighborhood Council system

This topic was not discussed.

11. ADJOURNMENT

President Jerry Brown adjourned the meeting at 9:48 p.m.