

Contact Information

Neighborhood Council: Westside Neighborhood Council

Name: Terri Tippit

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Date of NC Board Action: 09/08/2011

Type of NC Board Action: Against Proposal

Impact Information

Date: 09/09/2011

Update to a Previous Input: No

Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: 08-2020

Agenda Date: 10/18/2011

Item Number:

Brief Summary: The WNC opposes adoption of the revised citywide sign ordinance now pending before the City Council PLUM Committee.

Additional Information



Westside Neighborhood Council Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 8, 2011
Westside Pavilion
10800 West Pico Boulevard
Meeting Room A

Call to order: 7:04PM by Terri Tippit

Attendance:

Barbara Broide (Seat 7), Steve Spector (Seat 4), Mike Eveloff (Seat 10b), Lisa Morocco (Seat 2), Terri Tippit (Seat 8), Shannon Burns (Seat 14B), Jerry Asher (Seat 6), Mary Kusnic (Seat 11), Drew DeAscentis (Seat 9), Letty Bugarin (Seat 5), Bob Guerin (Seat 13), Melissa Kenady (Seat 16), Charles Horowitz (Seat 15), Colleen Mason Heller (Seat 12)*, Mike McIntyre (Seat 3)*

*arrived at 7:15 pm

Absent:

Ty Vahedi (Seat 17)

2. Approval of August 11, 2011 Minutes:

Charles moved to approve the minutes

Jerry seconded the motion.

The motion passed 11 – 0 – 4 (Seats 2, 10, 13, 16 abstained)

3. Public Forum:

Colleen commented on the recent article about the Gold Line and reminded us that we have been told by Metro that Expo will be like the Gold line. We need to be vigilant to make sure our community does not have the same time line issues in addressing impacts that the Gold line residents did.

Barbara urged constituents to send comment to the Board of Supervisors regarding the proposed redistricting of our area and county.

The Board of Supervisors will vote September 27th.

5. Agenda Items:

Barbara Broide:

Update of Sign Ordinance

Barbara reported on the sign ordinance first approved on March 26, 2009. Proposed changes to this ordinance first made public on July 22, 2011 seem to seriously weaken the ability of the city to protect citizens from negative impacts.

Negative impacts of concern in the revised ordinance include but are not limited to;

- Proposing to grandfather a dozen pending sign district applications, creating a possibility of new off site signage without a single billboard being taken down which was previously necessary.
- Broadening the comprehensive sign program to allow the possibility of placement of commercial advertising in city parks and recreational facilities.
- Electronic signage allowed on site or business signs anywhere in the city.

Steve Spector suggested there may be a middle ground since some signage can revitalize an area as evidenced on Abbot Kinney and Culver City's local flavor signage.

Barbara agreed as long as signage was legally defensible and consistent.

A community meeting Q + A will be held on September 15, 2011 At Jerry's Deli in Westwood. NCs are encouraged to file Community Impact Statements and impact statements before the next PLUM meeting October 18, 2011.

The following motion was made by Barbara Broide and seconded by Charles Horowitz;

"The Westside NC opposes adoption of the revised citywide sign ordinance now pending before the City Council Planning and Land Use Management committee because it would allow a proliferation of commercial advertising on both private and public property without a significant reduction in existing billboard and signage blight, and would allow new electronic signage without addressing energy use, light pollution, traffic safety, and other issues that could negatively affect communities throughout the city."

Mike Eveloff introduced the following three friendly amendments that were accepted:

- A) Motion to ask the City Attorney for an opinion on the impact of the donor sign language in the proposed sign ordinance on public parks
- B) Motion to ask the City Attorney for an opinion on the impacts of the campus sign language in the proposed sign ordinance on tall residential and commercial buildings surrounding a campus location.
- C) Motion to ask the City Attorney for an opinion on the CEQUA implications of the Santa Monica Bus plan to install digital signs on the sides of their buses.

Motion and amendments passed 14 – 0 – 1 (Seat 5 abstained)

Barbara Broide made the following motion that a letter regarding Community Care Facilities ordinances be sent to Ed Reyes, head of PLUM;

"The Westside NC strongly urges that the proposed Community Care Facility Ordinance be brought before the full City Council for a vote as soon as possible".

Motion was seconded by Jerry Asher and passed unanimously.

Eric Wright from L.A. Department of Transportation (eric.wright@lacity.org) spoke about DOT "Watch the Road" signage program. 100 signs have been donated to the WNC in order to highlight road safety and to encourage pedestrian and bike traffic. Signs should be placed on private property only and not be a distraction in heavy trafficked areas.

Website for more information www.watchtheroad.org

Lisa Morocco reported on the following;

Pico Beautification

A total of \$318,000.00 was raised to match \$1.5 million proposed which was 20% of the total. Unfortunately due to the many projects presented, Pico Beautification was not funded. However, the Plant Pico project is moving forward with a \$200,000.00 budget which includes planting of the flowering pear trees along Pico Blvd as well as a 2 year maintenance program for the trees.

There will be a meeting on September 15 @ 2pm Pico and Patricia with the City to determine when the project can move forward. The WNC will reach out to the community for volunteers to plant the trees.

Barbara Broide suggested that the new trees have some sort of bilingual signage noting Westside NC tree program and the city code on trimming trees.

Lisa Morocco made the following motion for funding;

"The WNC moves to fund meetings and appearances by Kathy Cerra, landscape architect for the Plant Pico project, in the amount of \$500".

Motion passed 14 – 0 – 1 (Seat 4)

Lisa also announced hotline for Pacific Graffiti Solutions (310) 204-2749. Yvette will give a report of where PGS removed graffiti in our area at our next meeting as per our agreement when we allocated funds for graffiti removal.

WNC stakeholders should utilize this phone number to report graffiti in our area.

6. Updates:

LAPD:

SLO Gonzales reported that the first homicide in our division recently occurred. It is believed to be retaliation for an incident that occurred a few years ago. Theft from motor vehicle is still high. Do not leave any items visible in your vehicle even if it's in your driveway.

CD5:

Jay Greenstein reported on CD5's Emergency Preparedness Events taking place this Sunday at the Sherman Oaks Galleria and the Century City Westfield Shopping Center. WNC will have a table at the event. Terri, Lisa, Melissa and Dick will man the table.

Outreach:

Lisa and Melissa reported on the first 2 Saturdays of Take Me Home Days. 4 cats and 4 dogs have found homes. We have 3 more Saturdays to help find homes for these animals. Councilmember Koretz will be holding office hours at the last one on September 27th from 1-4pm.

Outreach Committee Meeting on September 19th at 7pm Meeting Rm B to discuss Pico Tree Planting and Pick Pico Weekend.

Mobility:

Lisa announced the next Mobility Committee meeting will be September 19th at 6pm to discuss a request for speed humps on Tennessee, Prosser to Beverly Glen.

Chair:

Terri reminded the board that the WRAC Mayor Town Hall will be this Monday at 6:30pm at Felicia Mahood Center.

WRAC will be hosting a Town Hall Meeting on September 27th at the Iman Center at 7pm to discuss changes to the Neighborhood Council system voted on by the city council on August 16, 2011. BH Kim, DONE General Manager, will be a guest speaker. NC board members are encouraged to come.

Motion To Adjourn at 8:20pm

Motion By: Jerry

Second By: Drew

Motion passed: Unanimous

Submitted by Recording Secretary



WESTSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

P.O. Box 64370 Los Angeles, CA 90064

www.wncla.org (310) 474-2326



September 9, 2011

OFFICERS

Terri Tippit, Chair
Steve Spector, Vice-Chair
Mary Kusnic and
Melisa Kenady, Recording
Secretary
Letty Bugarin, Corresponding
Secretary
Lisa Morocco, Treasurer

Councilmember Ed Reyes, Chair
Planning and Land Use Management Committee
200 No. Spring
Los Angeles, CA 90012

BOARD MEMBERS

Jerry Asher
Barbara Broide
Drew DeAscentis
Bob Guerin
Dick Harmetz
Charles Horwitz
Colleen Mason Heller
Michael McIntyre
Ron Stone
David (Ty) Vahedi

Re: Council file 08-2020; 08-3386S1

Dear Councilmember Reyes:

The Westside Neighborhood Council (WNC) has reviewed the proposed revised citywide sign ordinance. The proposed changes to the ordinance first made public on July 22, 2011 by the City Planning Department has weakened the ability of the city to protect its citizens from the negative impacts of outdoor advertising.

The ordinance approved by the City Planning Commission (CPC) March 26, 2009 addressed our signage concerns; the revised ordinance does not.

The CPC "grandfathered" two pending applications for sign districts, the revised proposes to grandfather dozen of applications. The CPC included provisions for large properties but didn't allow any off-site or electronic signage; the revised will allow prohibited signs if they aren't visible from the public-right-of-way, which could lead to advertising on city parks and recreational facilities. Donor signs would be by-right without restrictions on size, text, or location which could lead to signs with corporate logos anywhere, including city parks and other public property. The revised ordinance doubles the allowable size of temporary signs, which could lead to building-size supergraphic-style signs. Adjustments of 20% would be granted without a hearing.

After a discussion at WNC Governing Board Meeting on September 8, 2011 we passed the following motions:

"The WNC moves to oppose adoption of the revised citywide sign ordinance now pending before the City Council Planning and Land Use Management committee because it would allow a proliferation of commercial advertising on both private and public property without a significant reduction in existing billboard signage blight, and would allow new electronic signage without addressing energy use, light pollution, traffic safety and other issues that could negatively affect communities throughout the city".

We urge you to join the WNC in opposing the revised ordinance.

Sincerely,

Terri Tippit, Chair

Cc Councilmember Paul Koretz
Ban Billboard Blight



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August 9, 2011



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Michael McIntyre
Ron Stone
David (Ty) Vahedi

Chairperson Ed Reyes and Members Jose Huizar and Paul Krekorian
LA City Council Planning and Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

VIA EMAIL ATTENTION: Michael Espinosa, Legislative Asst. - michael.espinosa@lacity.org
RE: Proposed Sign Ordinance /File No. 08-2020 / PLUM Hearing August 9, 2011 Item (5)

Dear Councilmembers Reyes, Huizar and Krekorian:

I am writing on behalf of the Westside Neighborhood Council, representing approximately 80,000 stakeholders in the Cheviot Hills, Rancho Park and Century City area.

While we are pleased to see this important issue come before your committee, we are greatly concerned that significant changes have been incorporated into the draft in current circulation since it was last considered by the CPC. We cannot support the draft in its current form.

We feel there has not been adequate time allowed for community input and discussion on this important policy document. Several months have passed since the CPC meeting where revisions to the ordinance were discussed and are concerned there is a rush to move this document forward. We urge that the PLUM Committee take testimony on August 9th and continue the item until October thus giving the neighborhood councils the minimum 60 days advance notification on issues as promised to us. Policy should be discussed and debated in public – not crafted behind closed doors with input alone from the industry that is to be regulated. We have not been consulted during these months of staff work and assume that neither were other neighborhood councils.

While the latest proposed ordinance to revise and amend the Los Angeles Municipal Code regulating signs contains a number of positive elements including recognition of the distinction between on and off-site signs, substantial fines for non-compliance with signage regulations, the primacy of specific plans, and other effective provisions which we can support, we are concerned there are a number of serious flaws that must be remedied before PLUM adopts a position on any revisions to the ordinance.

Sign Districts. We are strongly opposed to the creation of additional special Sign Districts. These districts run contrary to the over-riding desire of the citizens of this City. The 2002 Sign Ordinance was specifically enacted in order to halt the proliferation of new off-site signage in the City. Sign Districts that have currently been approved should be allowed to continue. Those districts in existence or approved at the time of CPC consideration of the ordinance revisions may be allowed. However, anything introduced since that time should not be “grandfathered” into existence. The intent of the City was clear at the time of the CPC hearings. The communities should not be punished as a result of the time that it took the Dept. to issue the revisions to the ordinance. The “clock” on sign districts ran out many months ago.

Comprehensive Sign Program. There can be no justification for exceptions for larger developments. Larger developments would have, almost without exception, longer street footages and thus be allowed larger signs than would be the case for small developments. The blighting and safety issues would remain the same for signs exterior to the developments. The argument for the need for larger signs interior to a larger development makes no sense. In addition, while three acres and/or 50,000 to 100,000 square feet may define an exceptionally large commercial development in cities such as New York or Chicago, it is no larger than the typical “big box” store or strip mall in Los Angeles. Such an exemption would essentially emasculate any sign ordinance and a barrier to the adoption of a coherent ordinance. We urge further discussion of the proposed allowances for internal signage, particularly where such signage includes off-site and digital signage. We have not had adequate time to discuss this issue and have many concerns related to possible park signage, impacts on courtyard

buildings, schools, etc. Commercial signage in parks is a highly emotional issue and one that is of great concern.

Sign Modification. The current proposal refers to variances of up to 20% increases in height and area as “minor”. That is certainly a misnomer and a serious loophole. All modifications that increase the sign height or area should be subjected to the sign variance process.

Right of Private Action. We question the position against legitimate right of private action. The City of Los Angeles has a well documented reluctance to initiate legal action, despite flagrant violation of the municipal code. Budget constraints may exacerbate the City’s failure to act. “Frivolous” lawsuits seem rather unlikely given the cost of filing and the lack of potential monetary gain to the civic minded groups likely to file such an action. Delay in action until all courses of remedy are exhausted equates to a free ride for years for the offending parties. The past history of the City and its commitment to enforcement are evidence enough to justify right of private action.

Digital Signs. The Planning Department and CPC decision to delay consideration of any restrictions to the conversion of existing signs to digital or erection of new digital signs is truly unfortunate. These signs are a substantial safety hazard, a distraction to drivers and pedestrians in the area, a light invasion of adjacent homes, and an unconscionable waste of electric energy. There are needs to establish new regulations on brightness, message, and duration for existing digital signs (after those that should never have been erected are removed), to acknowledge and address the real problems created by the signs. We propose a moratorium on any new digital signage or conversion until a comprehensive set of regulations is provided and subjected to public scrutiny. We have long advocated for a halt to any new digital signage pending the completion of federal traffic safety studies. We believe this to be the prudent course for the city.

Removal of Existing Unlawful Signs. We do not see language that addresses the elimination of existing unlawful signs. That is, signs erected without a permit or which violate the terms of the permit issued. The current proposal covers existing signs that are lawful under current regulations, but does not address unlawful signage. We strongly support provisions that will lead to the speedy elimination of all signage that is unlawful under the current code (or that was not granted a permit under prior regulations).

We urge the PLUM and later the City Council to: eliminate the Comprehensive Sign Program and any additional special sign districts, foster wide community discourse on elements of a new sign ordinance, and, of paramount importance, vigorously enforce the provisions of the law once it is in place.

Sincerely,

Terri Tippit, Chair

cc: info@banbillboardblight.org