

Contact Information

Neighborhood Council: Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council

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Date of NC Board Action: 11/14/2012

Type of NC Board Action: Against Proposal

Impact Information

Date: 12/12/2012

Update to a Previous Input: No

Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: 12-1611

Agenda Date:

Item Number:

Brief Summary: On Wednesday, November 14, the Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council voted to oppose the City Council's passage of new measures relating to billboards in the city. NC members felt that the City Council should not act before the court case is settled, and without opportunity for Neighborhood Councils and others to weigh in on any new measures proposed.

Additional Information:



Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council General Meeting
November 14, 2012
DRAFT MINUTES

1. Call to Order (Owen Smith)

A duly noticed meeting of the Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council (“GWNC”) Board of Directors was held on Wednesday, November 14, 2012, at the Ebell of Los Angeles, 743 S. Lucerne Blvd., Los Angeles. President Owen Smith called the meeting to order at 7:02 p. m.

2. Roll Call (Elizabeth Fuller)

[*This Agenda Item was addressed after Item #5. a. i.*] Stakeholder Elizabeth Fuller called the roll. Board Members in attendance at the roll call were: Jeffrey Carpenter, Patricia Carroll, Ann Eggleston, Betty Fox, William Funderburk, Michael Genewick, John Gresham, Patricia Lombard, Fred Mariscal, Frances McFall, Jeff McManus, Caroline Moser (Alternate for Jack Humphreville), Jason Peers, Joane Pickett, Owen Smith, Briana Valdez, Daniel Whitley, Greg Wittmann and James Wolf. Clinton Oie and Jane Usher arrived later. Board Members absent and not represented by an Alternate: none. Also attending: approximately 18 Stakeholders and guests.

Board Member Greg Wittmann and Alternate Board Member Karen Gilman arrived at this time and read aloud the Oath of Office.

Twenty one of the 21 Board Members or their Alternates were present at the roll call. The GWNC quorum (the minimum number of Board Members needing to be present to take binding votes on Agendized Items) is 13, so the Board could take such votes.

3. Approval of the Minutes (Elizabeth Fuller)

[*This Agenda Item was addressed after the beginning of Item #13.*]

MOTION (by Mr. Gresham, seconded by Ms. Lombard): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council approves the Minutes of its October 23, 2012 General Meeting as written.

MOTION PASSED by a voice vote.

4. Special Presentation: GWNC Citizen Recognition Award – John Welborne (Jason Peers, Mary Rajswing)

Ms. Rajswing described many of Mr. Welborne’s contributions and service to the community, and presented him with the first GWNC Citizen Recognition Award. Mr. Welborne saluted outgoing and incoming Board Members. Mr. Smith listed other major issues and organizations to which Mr. Welborne has contributed.

5. President's Report (Owen Smith) [The first Item #5 on the Agenda.]

A. Seating of New Board Members and Alternates.

i. Oath of Office:

Mr. Smith turned the gavel over to Ms. Fuller, who led incoming Board Members in reading aloud the Oath of Office.

Board Member James Wolf arrived at this time. New Board Member Patty Lombard arrived and read aloud the Oath of Office.

ii. Election of Officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer)
[This Agenda Item was addressed after Item #2.]

President:

Mr. Gresham nominated (Patty Lombard seconded) Owen Smith, who accepted the nomination. Owen Smith was ELECTED President by a hand vote.

Vice-President:

Mr. Smith nominated (it was seconded) James Wolf, who accepted the nomination. Mr. Gresham nominated (it was seconded) Greg Wittmann, who declined the nomination. James Wolf was ELECTED Vice-President by a hand vote.

Secretary:

Mr. Smith nominated (Ms. Moser seconded) Jeffrey Carpenter, who accepted the nomination. Mr. Smith spoke in support of Mr. Carpenter. Ms. Carroll nominated (Ms. Lombard seconded) Greg Wittman, who accepted the nomination. Mr. Carpenter and Mr. Wittmann spoke of their community service and interests. Jeffrey Carpenter was ELECTED Secretary with 12 votes; Mr. Wittmann received five votes.

Treasurer: Mr. Smith nominated (Mr. Gresham seconded) Patricia Carroll, who accepted the nomination. Patricia Carroll was ELECTED Treasurer by a hand vote.

Ms. Fuller returned the gavel back to Mr. Smith.

iii. Committee Selection/Volunteers.

[This Agenda Item was returned to after Item #6. a.] Ms. Fuller explained that GWNC Standing Committees (Land Use, Transportation and Outreach) are available for Board Members and other Stakeholders to sign up to volunteer.

Board Member Jane Usher arrived at this time.

Ms. Fuller described the Committees' work and responsibilities, and circulated sign-up sheets for each committee

B. Board Vacancies

Alternates needed for: Area 1 (Brookside), Area 2 (Citrus Square), Area 3 (Country Club Heights), Area 6 (La Brea-Hancock), Area 8 (Melrose), Area 9 (Oakwood-Maplewood-St. Andrews), Area 12 (We-Wil), Area 15 (Windsor Village), Business, Education, Other Non-Profit and Religion.

[This Agenda Item was addressed after Item #5. a. iii.] Mr. Smith noted the vacancies. The following Stakeholders volunteered to serve in the following Alternate Board Seats:

Gerda McDonough (Education); Irene McFall (Area 3 Country Club Heights), Charles Dougherty (Area 15 Windsor Village) and Mitch Karp (Area 8 Melrose). They joined Ms. Usher and Mr. Oie in reading aloud the Oath of Office. Mr. Gresham explained the role of Alternate Board Members.

C. Ethics Training – All new Board Members and Alternates (along with returning Board Members whose certification is more than two years old) must complete the course at <http://ethics.lacity.org/education/ethics2007/?audience=done>.

Mr. Smith noted the above and Ms. Fuller explained the Ethics Training.

5. Community Concerns/Public Comments [The second Item #5 on the Agenda.]

A. Update on funding provided to Wilshire Park School (Gene Benda)

Gene Benda, Assistant Principal, Wilshire Park School, described the School. He thanked the GWNC for its grant and described their newly-redesigned garden. Their test score is 839; they're striving for 850. Mr. Benda invited everyone to visit the School.

B. Proposed motion of support for WSA Norton Triangle Project (Caroline Moser): "We support and approve the Windsor Square Association's Adopt-A-Median proposal to re-plant and maintain the South Norton Avenue Traffic Triangle, located in Windsor Square, Los Angeles."

Ms. Moser distributed copies of a "Norton Avenue and 6th Street Median Landscape Improvement Project" diagram and described the Median, which the City has not been maintaining. She read a letter from the Windsor Square-Hancock Park Historical Society.

MOTION (by Ms. Moser, seconded by Ms. Usher): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council will write a letter of support and approval of the Windsor Square Association's Adopt-A-Median proposal to re-plant and maintain the South Norton Avenue Traffic Triangle, located in Windsor Square, Los Angeles.

MOTION PASSED by a voice vote.

6. Local Government Updates

A. CD4 Update (Ben Seinfeld)

[*This Agenda Item was addressed after Item #5. a. iii.*] L.A. City District Four Councilman Tom LaBonge (323-957-6415; Councilmember.LaBonge@LACity.org; <http://CD4.LACity.org>) reported that Wilshire Blvd. "is going to have a lot of work on it the next several years."

Board Member Clinton Oie arrived around this time.

[*This Agenda Item was returned to after Item #5. b.*] Ben Seinfeld, Field Deputy for L.A. City District Four Councilman Tom LaBonge (213-485-3337; cell 213-804-2388; Ben.Seinfeld@LACity.org), welcomed new Board Members and invited them to meet with him.

B. CD5 Update (John Darnell)

Mr. Darnell could not attend and there was no report at this time.

C. 42nd Assembly District Update (Nicole Carcel)

Ms. Carcel could not attend and there was no report at this time.

Alternate Board Member Caroline Moser had to leave at this time.

7. Guest Presentation: Metro Subway Update (Jody Litvak)

Metro's Jody Litvak reported that the final EIR [Environmental Impact Report] was "approved . . . we're now beginning to move forward with the project . . . The next year and a half . . . [will be] pre-construction" of the "nine-mile extension of the subway with seven new stations." She displayed slides and reviewed public meetings and the project timeline to date. Ms. Litvak indicated that Metro "will start construction in 2014; that will take us to 2023." She described construction details to ensure continued utility service, test the soil, get bids from contractors, collect archeological artifacts, acquire real estate and more. Metro's David Meagher described more construction details "that will start about two years from now." First, an "exploratory test shaft" will be sunk near the LaBrea Tar Pits. He said "the whole plan is to keep traffic flowing during the construction . . . as much as possible we'll be constructing under . . . the street." They are working to improve the canopies at the subway entrances.

Ms. Litvak said "we'll do what we can to mitigate the impacts of the construction." She described an excellent outreach team and reminded "why we're doing it . . . downtown to west L.A. in 25 minutes, all day every day." The tunnel is expected to be 60 to 70 feet underground, in some places around 100 feet. A larger presentation is available at www.Metro.net/Westside; they can also be followed on Facebook and Twitter.

8. Treasurer's Report and Budget Items (Patti Carroll)

A. Monthly Budget Report/approval – Oct./Nov.

[This Agenda Item was addressed after Item #3.] Ms. Carroll distributed and reviewed the "Monthly Spending Report – October 1-Nov 14, 2012," noting that "everything's been submitted to DONE" [the L.A. Dept. of Neighborhood Empowerment].

FUNDING MOTION (by Mr. Gresham, seconded by Frances McFall): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council approves its "Monthly Spending Report – October 1-Nov 14, 2012."

FUNDING MOTION PASSED unanimously by a hand vote of all 21 Board Members present.

B. YTD Budget Review.

Ms. Carroll distributed and reviewed the "[GWNC] Budget for Fiscal Year 2012-2013" as of 11-14-12. The balance is \$49,311.15. More than \$30,000 is allocated but not yet encumbered. Ms. Fuller noted "about \$6,400 left" for community projects. \$981.42 was spent for Election outreach; our original encumbrance was for \$1110, so the difference was swept back to the City General Fund.

9. **DWP Oversight** (Jack Humphreville) Proposed Motion: [see below].

Mr. Humphreville could not attend, so Mr. Mariscal presented Mr. Humphreville's proposed motion.

MOTION (by Mr. Mariscal, seconded by Mr. Gresham): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council resolves that all Department of Water and Power labor negotiations should be open and transparent; they should be conducted by DWP management; and the Ratepayers Advocate should have access to any and all information on a timely basis.

MOTION PASSED by a hand vote.

10. **City Budget Issues** (Humphreville)

Mr. Mariscal reported (on behalf of Mr. Humphreville) that City employee "pension costs are accelerating" and that the City Council voted to increase the sales tax one-half cent, for which there will be a ballot measure in March. He described other City Budget issues.

11. **Old Business**

Frances McFall thanked Irene McFall [no relation] for being an Alternate Board Member. Frances McFall urged the Board to ensure that an American flag is present at Board Meetings.

12. **New Business**

There was no new business at this time.

13. **Election Committee Wrapup** (John Gresham)

[This Agenda Item was addressed after Item #7.] Alisa Smith, Independent Election Administrator (IEA) (213.910.3491; Alisa@EmpowerLA.org; www.EmpowerLA.org), thanked Mr. Gresham and the Board for a smooth Election and help. She announced a December 1st Board Member Training. [This Agenda Item was returned to after Item #12.] Mr. Gresham reminded of the importance of Neighborhood Councils to the City. He thanked everyone for participating; the GWNC Election had 198 votes.

14. **Transportation Committee** (Gerda McDonough)

Ms. McDonough described the City's General Plan Transportation Mobility Element parts and policies. Frances McFall requested that information be presented regarding bicyclists and skateboarders.

Board Member Joane Pickett had to leave at this time.

Mr. Wittmann expressed that "it's important to have ambitious plans" to accommodate bicyclists. Ms. McDonough noted that there will be 18 months for public comment during the EIR process.

15. **Outreach Committee** (Mary Rajswing)

Ms. Rajswing thanked Larchmont Fair volunteers, who referred many voters to the GWNC Election. She described various Committee work and encouraged bringing peanut butter to the Holiday Food Drive at the next General Board Meeting. Ms. Lombard described her work to date researching and organizing a Mayoral Candidate Forum, which will focus on "neighborhoods along Wilshire," including Neighborhood Councils from downtown to Westwood. The Forum will be held Sunday, February 10, 2013 at LACMA's Bing

Auditorium; “so far the response from the Candidates has been really positive.” The Committee is already communicating with the media and other organizations. Ms. Lombard requested that this be Agendized for a vote of support and participation by the GWNC at the next General Board Meeting.

16. Board Member Comments

There were no other Board Member comments or new business.

17. Public Comments

There were no public comments at this time.

Board Member Jane Usher had to leave at this time and was replaced by Alternate Karen Gilman.

18. Land Use Committee (LUC) (James Wolf)

[The first paragraph is directly from the Agenda.] Recommendation regarding digital billboards.

Issue: In 2006, the City entered into a set of Settlement Agreements with several billboard companies, which led to the legitimization of thousands of possibly illegal billboards and the erection of more than 100 digital billboards across the City. The Settlement Agreements were challenged in court and then invalidated. The case has been under appeal since 2010, however, and a ruling (expected to uphold the original judge’s invalidation) is anticipated within the next few months. Recently, however, the City Council passed a motion calling for an ordinance to be drafted within the next 30 days (before the expected court ruling) to solve the sign “issue.” The motion does not call for public outreach or Neighborhood Council review of the new ordinance, and says only that the proposed legislation will be presented to community groups after it is drafted.

LUC recommended Motion: [see below].

Mr. Wolf described the issue. Ms. Fuller added that a court ruling is expected very soon, but the City is not waiting nor inviting public comment.

MOTION (by Mr. Wolf, seconded by Mr. Gresham): The Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council will submit a Community Impact Statement opposing the City Council motion (outlined in CF 12-1611) that a new digital billboard policy be developed within 30 days for City Council consideration. Furthermore, we support the continued prohibition of digital billboards and request that any proposed changes to the existing City Sign Ordinance be given adequate time and opportunity for full community review and input.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Gresham described a Community Impact Statement (CIS).

MOTION PASSED unanimously by a voice vote.

Potential Agenda Items for November 28 LUC Meeting:

- CUP/CUB application for restaurant/club at 4653 W. Beverly Blvd.
- Review of recent Early Planning Notices in the GWNC area.

19. Announcements and Adjournment

The next General Board Meeting will be here Wednesday, December 12th, 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Smith declared and the Board agreed to **ADJOURN** the Meeting at 8:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
David Levin
Minutes Writer