

WESTWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL MINUTES
JUNE 9, 2021
ZOOM MEETING ONLINE OR BY TELEPHONE

1. CALL TO ORDER

President Lisa Chapman called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m. Board members in attendance were Connie Boukidis, Sandy Brown, Lisa Chapman, Tracey Fitzgerald, Philip Gabriel, Ann Hayman, David Lorango, Eloise Metcalfe, Stephen Resnick, Marcello Robinson, Paula Rogers, Mark Rogo, and Laura Winikow. Member excused was Roozbeh Farahanipour. A quorum was present. There were approximately 11 stakeholders and guests attending.

2. ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcements were made.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Eloise Metcalfe moved to approve the May 12, 2021 minutes. Tracey Fitzgerald seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

4. COMMENTS BY PUBLIC OFFICIALS

A. U.S. Congressman Ted Lieu's representative Janet Turner gave an update on recent legislation, including the passing of the West LA VA Campus Improvement Act which means that leasing money will go to housing and services for homeless veterans. The Gold Star Family Fellowship Program and the Federal Writers Project are accepting applications.

B. SLO Pete Ojeda reported that crime statistics are down. Some Westwood Blvd. businesses had windows smashed and a suspect has been arrested. Stolen cars are still a problem as are burglaries at construction sites and vacant houses.

C. CD5 Transportation Deputy Jay Greenstein reported that speed feedback signs and the Rest on Red program will be implemented through the Santa Monica Blvd. parkway mitigation fund.

D. UCLA Associate Vice Chancellor Jennifer Poulakidas reported that in the fall quarter UCLA will return to in-person teaching (with a remote learning option for those who can't return to campus) and be at full occupancy in campus housing.

5. DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD EMPOWERMENT

DONE NEA Freddy Cupen-Ames announced the dates of various training sessions. The Congress of Neighborhoods will have a virtual meeting on September 25th. Comments on redistricting can be made online through June 30th.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

A. Motion to approve Monthly Expenditure Report for May 2021

Treasurer Laura Winikow reported that May's MER included a beginning balance of \$26,538.71, \$11,673.73 spent, and an ending balance of \$14,862.98. An amount of \$3,850 is still outstanding for the L.A. Conservancy and \$127.57 for staffing services, bringing the net available balance to \$10,885.41. There was an issue with Emerson's NPG and it was denied because it was for the next fiscal year. There will be approximately \$10,885 to roll over so about \$800 will be lost. Laura Winikow moved to approve the May MER, seconded by Philip Gabriel and approved unanimously.

For the administrative packet, Treasurer Laura Winikow went through the 2021-2022

budget line by line. Lisa Chapman will remain as second signer, Ann Hayman will remain as the alternate signer, and Marcello Robinson will remain as the second card holder. Laura Winikow moved to approve the 2021-2022 budget and the administrative packet, seconded by Marcello Robinson, and carried unanimously.

7. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Friends of Westwood Library board member Steve Sann announced that the library re-opened on June 1st.

8. SEPULVEDA TRANSIT CORRIDOR PROJECT

CD5 Transportation Deputy Jay Greenstein discussed the proposed rapid transit project through the Sepulveda pass, a choice between a monorail or a subway. Recently Councilmember Koretz changed his mind about this and now supports a monorail because it is above ground and will be cheaper and quicker to build. In response to a question from Associate Vice Chancellor Jennifer Poulakidas, the Transportation Deputy said that Councilmember Koretz would only support a plan with a UCLA stop. He also recommended that WWNC have a Metro representative present the project choices at a future meeting.

9. WESTWOOD VILLAGE SPECIFIC PLAN

A. Discussion and Introduction of Motion: "The WWNC Opposes Councilmember Koretz's Second Motion to Amend the Westwood Village Specific Plan."

"The Westwood Neighborhood Council opposes Councilmember Koretz' Second Motion to Amend the Westwood Village Specific Plan that

1. Removes the CAP on the number of food uses thus changing a basic goal of the Plan to insure a "balanced mix of uses."
2. Removes from the Design Review Board (DRB) the review of signage thus allowing plastic, neon, etc. signs rather than carefully designed and approved signs. The WWNC supports fee reduction and process time for the applicant but oppose removing the DRB from oversight.
3. Removes any guarantee that the Village will have sit-down restaurants.
4. Allows unlimited financial service on the ground level including banks, real estate offices, escrow offices, and insurance offices without any study thus enabling uses that go dark at dusk and deadening the pedestrian experience.
5. Allows all Fast Casual restaurants to have a full bar.
6. Has had NO community outreach.
7. Has not been analyzed or studied and creates inconsistencies with Design Review Board Procedures, Sec. 16.50.
8. Creates ministerial review for signage as it would be approved over the counter with NO notice to the community, NO public hearing, and NO ability to appeal even by neighboring property owners who might be affected.

These are major changes to the Plan that we oppose. We request community outreach, that the council file be left open for at least 60 days, that the Planning Dept. study, analyze, and report back to the WWNC its findings, that discussion and comment be solicited with and from the Westwood Design Review Board, that all inconsistencies with other ordinances and DRB Practices and Procedures be addressed, that a CAP be placed on food use in order to maintain a balanced mix of uses, signage going to DRB must require 1 public hearing and encourage landlords to adopt signage programs, and finally, to remove all ministerial review."

Sandy Brown reminded everyone that at the April meeting CD5 Planning Deputy Daniel Skolnick said that there were no new amendments so she withdrew her letter and then they were released soon after, to which he replied that the second motion was necessary because of Westwood Village's decline. A hearing on the motion will be held tomorrow. A lengthy discussion ensued, during which board members remarked that Westwood Village's problems predate COVID though that is being blamed for them; Westwood Village's vacancy rate is no worse than Beverly Hills or Santa Monica Promenade's rate and may be better; Jann Williams worked on solutions for the Village for two years and the Westwood Village Improvement Association (WVIA) didn't study any of her suggestions; the signage problem is not with the DRB but the Planning Department and no other neighborhood is getting rid of the DRB; Westwood Blvd. looks terrible because landlords there let properties stay vacant instead of lowering the rent and this has gone on for years, while the other streets in the Village look fine. Philip Gabriel stated that as a merchant, nobody from the WVIA or CD5 ever reached out to him; the WVIA spent a lot of money on studies but didn't implement anything from them; property owners won't work with each other and will not allow the WVIA to have a list of properties for rent with contact information. In response to a request Planning Deputy Daniel Skolnick agreed to broker a meeting between property owners and the community.

See agenda item 13 B for motion votes.

10. CD5 HOMELESS WORKING GROUP

Committee member Lisa Chapman reported that she had high hopes for this group but it is only being used to find sites for housing.

11. WESTWOOD TOMORROW

Sandy Brown reported that the meeting was canceled.

12. RENTER SEAT APPLICANTS – UPDATE

Lisa Chapman reported that she found a candidate who will attend the next meeting.

13. STANDING COMMITTEE STATUS REPORTS

A. Executive – no report

B. Land Use & Planning

1. Discussion and vote in regard to second motion submitted by Councilmember Koretz to make changes to the Westwood Village Specific Plan

LUPC Chair Marcello Robinson introduced the following four motions which the LUPC, with four of its five members present, voted unanimously to recommend that WWNC pass.

Marcello Robinson moved,

“The Westwood Neighborhood Council opposes the second motion submitted on May 4th 2021 by Councilmember Paul Koretz to make changes to the Westwood Village Specific Plan.” Connie Boukidis seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Marcello Robinson moved,

“The Westwood Neighborhood Council supports all signage to be reviewed by the Design Review Board (DRB) once and final approval reviewed by the DRB and/or their designated board member. The purpose of this motion is to shorten the signage approval process.”

Philip Gabriel seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Marcello Robinson moved,

“The Westwood Neighborhood Council reiterates our position that the Westwood Village Specific Plan continue to have a balanced mix of uses and specifically retain section 2A Purpose of the current Westwood Village Specific Plan, which states:

“Section 2. The purposes of this Specific Plan are as follows:

- A. To permit, encourage and facilitate a balanced mix of uses and an environment attractive to a cross section of the community (in particular, nearby residents, office employees, and UCLA students and staff), so that Westwood residents continues to function as a retail center that primarily serves the surrounding community and secondarily serves the broader regional and tourist market.”

Lisa Chapman seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Marcello Robinson moved,

“The Westwood Neighborhood Council strongly requests the city planning department with CD5 conduct outreach regarding the May 4th 2021 proposed amendments to the original Westwood Village Specific plan to the Westwood Neighborhood Council and Westwood stakeholders prior to holding any additional hearings.”

Tracey Fitzgerald seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

- C. Outreach & Communications – no report
- D. Homeless Task Force – see agenda item 10
- E. Budget Advocates – no report
- F. Public Safety/ Transportation & Parking – no report
- G. Bylaws – no report
- H. WRAC – Report and Motions

- 1. Support: Facilitate Greater use of 5150 Holds and Conservatorship

“Severely mentally ill persons in Los Angeles, who are unable to avail themselves of current public services, are dying on our streets. We demand the City of Los Angeles collaborate with the County of Los Angeles to fully utilize the Lanterman-Petrus-Short Act, including section 5150 and fast-track conservatorships of these individuals, to enable life-saving care. Further, we ask that the city add to its legislative program a demand that the State Legislature provide funds to the county to create as many fully-staffed psychiatric beds as necessary to properly house and treat these individuals.”

Stephen Resnick moved the above motion, seconded by Tracey Fitzgerald and carried unanimously.

- 2. Support: Request for City Attorney Opinion re Consideration of Developer’s Financial Interest

“The Westside Regional Alliance of Councils requests that the City Council direct City Attorney Mike Feuer to provide a legal opinion as to whether or not the City Planning Department and commissions have the legal right under State and City laws and ordinances to consider the financial interest of the developer when considering entitlements.”

Stephen Resnick moved the above motion, seconded by Philip Gabriel and carried by a vote of Yes: 6 (Connie Boukidis, Sandy Brown, Lisa Chapman, Philip Gabriel, Stephen Resnick, Laura Winikow), No: 0, and Abstain: 2 (Tracey Fitzgerald, Marcello Robinson).

- 3. Support: Request for Clarification of Cloud/Ghost Kitchens

“WHEREAS businesses referred to as “cloud kitchens” or “ghost kitchens” represent a fairly new form of commerce and land use concept, and,

WHEREAS this new business model has the potential to create significant impacts on neighboring business and residential communities, and

WHEREAS the City of Los Angeles has not established a specific zoning classification for such businesses, thus creating potential inconsistencies, uncertainty and lack of transparency for applicants, City staff, and those seeking to review these proposed projects, and

WHEREAS the absence of clear classification for cloud/ghost kitchens can result in some being treated as commercial and/or retail uses, while others may be grouped as light manufacturing, and

WHEREAS none of these classifications accurately captures the true nature of these operations, and

WHEREAS cloud kitchen/ghost kitchens are being established in many areas across the City of Los Angeles,

Therefore, be it moved that the Westside Regional Alliance of Councils (WRAC) requests that the City, represented by our Council District, PLUM, the City Council, in coordination with the Departments of Planning and Building and Safety:

—- define what constitutes a Cloud/ghost kitchen, including possible different categories of such operations based upon numbers of kitchens and/or square footage involved,

—-identify criteria for the evaluation of their applications for buildout and permitting, including a process to evaluate potential impacts on their surroundings (noise, odor, traffic and requirements pertaining to factors

—-assess needed infrastructure (adequacy of electric service to area), parking and/or loading zones,

WRAC believes that providing this needed clarification will remove uncertainties as and contribute to the establishment of successful enterprises by creating the structure needed to guide the city's review and decision-making process."

Stephen Resnick moved the above motion, seconded by Tracey Fitzgerald and carried unanimously.

4.Support: Request for Improved Signage & Enforcement re EV Charging Stations

"The Westside Regional Alliance of Councils requests that the city of Los Angeles improves signage in electric vehicle charging locations to discourage non-charging vehicles (both ICE and EVs) from parking there. It further requests that the city issue a warning ticket and subsequent fine to any vehicle owners who repeatedly park in these spots illegally once adequate signage is installed."

Stephen Resnick moved the above motion, seconded by Lisa Chapman and carried by a vote of Yes: 7 (Connie Boukidis, Sandy Brown, Lisa Chapman, Tracey Fitzgerald, Philip Gabriel, Stephen Resnick, Laura Winikow), No: 0, and Abstain: 1 (Marcello Robinson).

5. Support: Support CF 20-0584 and 20-0498 – Incentives to Work from Home

"WRAC supports motions (City Council File: 20-0584 and 20-0498) introduced by Councilmembers David Ryu/Koretz and O'Farrell/Martinez to create incentives for employees of businesses and for government officials and employees to work from home.

While remote work is not a panacea for the climate crisis, making the practice more widespread and available in Los Angeles could help to reduce commuter traffic, which would have the benefit of reducing vehicle air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Teleworking is just one of many tools in our toolbox that we must utilize to fight the climate crisis and create sustainable air quality improvements to our region."

Stephen Resnick moved the above motion, seconded by Laura Winikow but only 6 yes votes were cast. Sandy Brown moved to table the motion, seconded by Lisa Chapman and carried unanimously.

I. Park Advisory

Westwood Park PAB member Tracey Fitzgerald reported that the Brown Act and Aidan's Place were discussed at the last meeting. CD5 did not attend. Encampments are getting services but it will be months before anyone will be moved out. No future meeting date has been scheduled yet.

14. ADJOURNMENT

President Lisa Chapman adjourned the meeting at 10:37 p.m.

