

WESTWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL MINUTES
AUGUST 11, 2021
ZOOM MEETING ONLINE OR BY TELEPHONE

1. CALL TO ORDER

President Lisa Chapman called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. Board members in attendance were Connie Boukidis, Sandy Brown, Lisa Chapman, Tracey Fitzgerald, Philip Gabriel, David Lorango, Stephen Resnick, Paula Rogers, and Laura Winikow. Members excused were Mark Blocker, Roozbeh Farahanipour, Ann Hayman, Eloise Metcalfe, Marcello Robinson, and Mark Rogo. A quorum was present. There were approximately eight stakeholders and guests attending.

2. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sandy Brown announced that on Saturday Rocco's Tavern illegally installed garage-style opening doors in its building without approval or a permit. The Area Planning Commission had opposed these doors. A complaint was made to the Department of Building & Safety (DBS). DBS indicated that Rocco's Tavern will be cited. A question was raised on whether this violates Neighborhood Council ethics because the owner of Rocco's Tavern is on the board of the North Westwood Neighborhood Council. CD5 Field Deputy Jasmine Shamolian said that she is talking to the Planning Department and DBS about this but it will take time.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Lisa Chapman moved to approve the July 14, 2021 minutes. Laura Winikow seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

4. COMMENTS BY PUBLIC OFFICIALS

A. UCLA representative Marco Perez gave an update on COVID procedures at UCLA and said that they will be reassessed at the end of the month. Faculty, staff, and students need to be tested weekly but this does not apply to visitors and contractors. UCLA Associate Vice Chancellor Jennifer Poulakidas reported that UCLA is paying for the testing and it is partially funded with federal money.

B. CD5 Field Deputy Jasmine Shamolian reported that construction in Westwood Park will begin in September. A shed on the east side will be demolished and the area will be fenced off so tents will have to be moved. The City Council passed a new sidewalk access law that no camping is allowed near identified sensitive areas such as schools. The intersection at Ashton & Thayer now has 4 way stop signs.

C. Mayor Garcetti's representative Brad Fingard announced that this is his last meeting and reported on a new law going into effect on September 3rd whereby each council district will have a CARES team of four people which will do comprehensive cleanups and have storage units. He is still waiting to hear from DONE about a meeting with the mayor that Sandy Brown requested.

D. State Assemblymember Isaac Bryan's representative Michelle Persoff introduced herself and listed her issue areas. She stated that the Assemblymember's main focus is affordable housing. When asked about bills SB 9 and SB 10, she said that the Assemblymember had no position and didn't want to promise anything because things can change. Board members expressed their wish for transparency.

5. DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD EMPOWERMENT

DONE NEA Freddy Cupen-Ames announced that Budget Day will be on August 21st, the Congress of Neighborhoods will be on September 25th, and gave an update on training dates.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

A. Motion to approve Monthly Expenditure Report for July 2021

Treasurer Laura Winikow reported that July's MER included a beginning balance of \$32,000, \$2,843.43 spent for website maintenance, and a net available balance of \$29,156.57. Laura Winikow moved to approve the July MER, seconded by Lisa Chapman and approved unanimously.

B. Motion to amend the Budget to roll over \$10,000 from last fiscal year's budget

Treasurer Laura Winikow moved to table this item until next month, seconded by Lisa Chapman and carried unanimously.

7. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Friends of the Westwood Library board member Steve Sann reported that while the Westwood branch used to have security there five days a week, it now has none. The senior librarian was spat on by a homeless person, which is an assault.

8. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD EMPOWERMENT (DONE) CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

A. Discussion and Introduction of Motion in Opposition

Whereas, the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners has before it consideration of amendments to the Code of Conduct Policy, that are extreme, anti-democratic, and un-American, and

Whereas, these amendments include the following:

"If a Board Member or Committee Member is alleged to have violated either the City's Workplace Equity Policy or the Commission's Code of Conduct, the Department, with written approval from the General Manager, may immediately suspend the Board Member or Committee Member for a period of up to 90 days."

and

Whereas, punitive action should never be based on an allegation and occur only following due process involving investigation and a hearing and provide the accused the right to a presumption of innocence and opportunity to mount a defense, and

Whereas, the following clause grants authority to arbitrarily impose suspensions at the sole discretion of an individual who is not accountable to anyone.

"The Department shall be the sole decision-maker with respect to a suspension. The Board Member or Committee Member may not appeal the suspension decision."

and

Whereas, this clause fails to provide adequate protections for the rights of individuals accused of misconduct and states that any board or committee member may be suspended solely on an allegation, and

Whereas, this is a direct disenfranchisement of the voters who elected the board member and removing a board member without due process gives DONE the unilateral ability to overturn an election;

Therefore, be it resolved that:

The Westwood Neighborhood Council expresses grave concern regarding proposed amendments to the Code of Conduct Policy submitted by the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment to the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners.

Be it further resolved that:

1. BONC is strongly advised to immediately withdraw consideration of the proposed amendments to the Code of Conduct;

2. In connection with future revisions of Neighborhood Council paperwork, DONE shall request the Neighborhood Councils appoint a group of representatives to consult with BONC, DONE and the City Attorney on an ad hoc basis;
3. An aggregate majority of those meeting shall at all times be Neighborhood Council board members;
4. The initial focus of this group shall be to develop and incorporate rules under the City's recently adopted Workplace Violence Policy into the existing Code of Conduct, including appropriate enforcement actions;
5. Discussion about incorporating the proposed Workplace Equity Policy shall be deferred until such a policy is formally adopted by the City, if at all; and
6. Any amendments to the Code of Conduct must take into account varying degrees of conduct when considering suspension and appropriate penalties, if warranted.
7. At all times, policy should require that the minimum correction necessary to address any issue be used;
8. No person shall be suspended or otherwise penalized for that which is protected political speech.
9. No board member or Neighborhood Council affiliate shall be required to waive rights granted under the Constitution of the United States and the State of California, including but not limited to freedom of speech and assembly, probable cause and due process

Comments made about this were that it is autocratic to change it from a panel to one person making a decision, favoritism is a problem, and there is no due process. No vote was taken on this item as there was no longer a quorum

- B. <https://citywatchla.com/index.php/cw/los-angeles/22244-fascism-with-a-smiling-face>
- C. <https://www.citywatchla.com/index.php/cw/los-angeles/22132-the-city-of-la-descends-into-full-on-fascism>

9. WESTWOOD CONNECT DAY UPDATE

A. General update on event and Update on donation of hygiene kits for Homeless Connect day event to be held on Sept. 28, 2021 at Westwood Park

Lisa Chapman reported that she went to the Rotary Club, which agreed to donate up to \$1,000 to be used for hygiene kits. A flyer will be made and distributed. Many service providers will be represented along with items such as clothes, blankets, and pet food.

10. CD5 HOMELESS WORKING GROUP

Committee member Lisa Chapman reported that they are working on legislative issues and finding sites, which are entered into a database. Three recently identified sites are being looked at.

11. STANDING COMMITTEE STATUS REPORTS

- A. Executive – no report
- B. Land Use & Planning
No meeting was held due to lack of a quorum.
- C. Outreach & Communications – no report
- D. Homeless Task Force – no report
- E. Budget Advocates – no report
- F. Public Safety/ Transportation & Parking – no report
- G. Bylaws

Lisa Chapman suggested setting up a new ad hoc committee to go through the bylaws.

H. WRAC – Report and Motions

1. Support: Station located Directly on the UCLA Campus as part of Metro's Sepulveda Transit

Corridor Project

“The Westwood Neighborhood Council (WHA) strongly echoes the sentiments expressed by numerous elected officials, neighborhood organizations, community groups, business associations, and many local citizens who urge that Metro must include a Station located directly on the UCLA campus as part of this pivotal transportation corridor project — specifically a one-seat ride from the San Fernando Valley directly to UCLA, hewing to Metro’s original proposal which suggested a 16-minute travel time for that segment, the fastest connection between the Valley and Westside and one that directly links people to where they want to go. This would be one of the most heavily trafficked Metro stops in the State, and would be the busiest non-transfer station in Metro’s system.

The Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project is part of the Measure M expenditure plan, with approximately \$5.7 billion for new transit service to connect the San Fernando Valley and the Westside, scheduled to open by 2033-35. Approximately \$3.8 billion is allocated to extend that service from the Westside to LAX with a 2057-59 opening date.

Metro is making strides to improve travel between the San Fernando Valley, the Westside and Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). The natural barrier created by the Santa Monica Mountains means that most people traveling between these areas are funneled primarily onto the I-405 Freeway, already ranked as one of the most heavily congested urban highways in the nation. More than 400,000 people travel through this area every day to commute to work, school, and other destinations along the freeway and beyond.

Having a Metro Station located directly on the UCLA campus would also help transport the tens of thousands of individuals who travel to UCLA on a daily -basis, including: UCLA students, staff, faculty, medical personnel, patients, and campus visitors.

Not having a Metro Station on the UCLA Campus would be a sorely missed opportunity, and have significant negative impacts on the West L.A. region and regional traffic congestion for decades to come. An on-campus UCLA Station also presents the opportunity to connect the Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project to the Metro Purple Line Subway Station Extension, which will have a Westwood/UCLA Station located at Wilshire & Westwood Boulevards. Additionally, without a one-seat ride to the Valley, ridership would be significantly hindered, thereby negatively impacting Metro’s farebox recovery needs.

To provide this essential connectivity between transit lines in the San Fernando Valley and the City, to provide the critical “first mile, last mile” link between the Wilshire Purple Line Subway and the UCLA campus, and to build a robust transportation system that will serve transit riders for many decades to come, we also urge the Metro Board to ensure that the Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project also connect directly from the on-campus UCLA Station to the Westwood/UCLA Purple Line Subway Station at Wilshire Boulevard, to connect these two major north-south and east-west transit corridors.”

Lisa Chapman moved the above motion, seconded by Tracey Fitzgerald, and carried unanimously. (Note: this item was taken out of order and voted on while there was still a quorum.)

I. Park Advisory

Westwood Park PAB member Tracey Fitzgerald reported that the next meeting is in September as the park director decided it should only meet quarterly, even though the PAB voted to meet monthly. She asked for an update and was told only that the pool is open and there are limited classes but nothing about construction or the bathrooms. Sandy Brown volunteered to help Tracey arrange a meeting with Mike Shull.

12. ADJOURNMENT

President Lisa Chapman adjourned the meeting at 9:02 p.m.

