

WESTWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 12, 2012

WESTWOOD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

10822 WILSHIRE BLVD.

LOS ANGELES, CA 90024

1. CALL TO ORDER

President Jerry Brown called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. Board members in attendance were Angus Beverly, Connie Boukidis, Jerry Brown, Lisa Chapman, Roozbeh Farahanipour, Mark Herd, Stephen Resnick, Marcello Robinson, Tom Schneider, Clinton Schudy, Kurt Smalberg, Steve Somers, Michael Stajura, Scott Whittle, and Laura Winikow. Board members excused were David Crew, Toni Gray, Mark Rogo, and George Torbay. There were also 30 stakeholders and guests in attendance.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Clinton Schudy moved to approve the August minutes as written. Lisa Chapman seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

3. EMPOWER LA--NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Tony Wilkinson, the Independent Elections Administrator from DONE, introduced himself and spoke about WWNC's upcoming election on October 28th. The ballot will be ready ten days after the candidate filing deadline, which is September 28th. Jerry Brown mentioned that WWNC's voter qualifications are wrong on the website, which will be corrected. In answer to a question from Kurt Smalberg about why DONE was involved, it is for financial reasons and is an experiment. Community members were encouraged to get involved in the elections as volunteers.

4. COMMENTS BY PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Councilmember Koretz's Field Deputy Sarah Mallory said that LADOT is looking at the intersection of Westwood Blvd. and LeConte Avenue and is considering the installation of left turn signals and possible "No Right Turn" signs. Bureau of Street Services will redo the street there in November or December. Cell tower ordinance information will be emailed to Jerry Brown.

Jerry Brown and stakeholder Wolfgang Veith both commended Sarah Mallory for the great job she does for Westwood, especially her tenacity and follow-up on issues.

Councilmember Koretz's Transportation Deputy Jay Greenstein introduced himself and said he covers the Westside Subway Extension, 405 widening project, Expo Phase 2 project and the Westside Mobility Plan.

Earl Massey, a field representative for Congresswoman Karen Bass who represents the 33rd District, introduced himself and said he was at the meeting to listen to issues since part of Westwood will be redistricted into the 33rd district in January 2013.

5. WESTSIDE MOBILITY PLAN

Tom Gaul gave a presentation on the Westside Mobility Plan. It is a three year study and is about halfway done. Traffic congestion issues, the job/housing imbalance, transportation connections, trip reduction strategies, and ideas for parking, bicycles, roads, and transit are some of the things it encompasses. The study has come up with four mobility packages which focus on different improvements. Community members were encouraged to attend the upcoming community workshops on October 4th at Westside Pavilion and October 9th at Felicia Mahood Senior Center. For Westwood, angled parking in Westwood Village was one idea looked at but it would necessitate the removal of a lane to accommodate it so it isn't a viable solution. Stakeholder Steve Sann said that east-west streets were overlooked for angled parking and recommended that they be looked at because they have a lower volume of traffic. Stakeholder Sandy Brown commented that the study is focusing on how to get people in and out of Westwood but is ignoring Westwood residents navigating their own neighborhood which is a component that should be looked at as well.

6. STANDING COMMITTEE STATUS REPORTS

A. The Executive Committee has no report. Jerry Brown is still researching the UCLA Medical Center helicopter issue.

B. Budget Committee Chair and Treasurer Laura Winikow said that WWNC has spent \$3,500 so far this fiscal year. \$3,000 of that was for the website.

C. Land Use and Planning Committee Chair Connie Boukidis said that iPic Theaters and Sprouts Family Market will be presenting at LUPC's meeting next Wednesday September 19th at the Westwood Library.

D. Outreach and Communications Chair Lisa Chapman announced that the website is still being worked on, an email newsletter will go out next week, and election posters have been put up in the neighborhood.

E. Public Safety Committee Chair Michael Stajura announced that the Great California Shakeout is on October 18th and for more information go to www.shakeout.org. The Disaster Preparation Fair will take place on October 20th on Broxton Avenue from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. Target would like to donate \$3,000 to the effort but can't do so directly due to City rules. Stakeholder Steve Sann said that the Rotary Club is a 501(c)3 organization that can facilitate the donation.

F. WRAC

1. Motion 5(F)1 Infrastructure Assessment

Connie Boukidis moved that the following motion be passed. Scott Whittle seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

“Whereas the maintenance of City infrastructure is critical for the quality of life of all citizens in all neighborhoods with respect to the provision of adequate public services; police; fire; schools; parks/open space; libraries; transportation; sewers; flood control; water and water treatment; power supply and delivery; and

Whereas Los Angeles City officials are required by the City's General Plan to produce an Annual Report on Growth and Infrastructure (ARGI) as cited in the General Plan Framework Element Chapter 2, Growth and Capacity, Growth Monitoring, and Whereas the most recent report dates from 2000 and is based upon data from 1998, and

Whereas members of WRAC are experiencing 'piecemealing' of development projects in the Western Los Angeles area without adequate regional infrastructure assessment, growth monitoring or capacity.

Therefore WRAC recommends an immediate proper annual assessment of infrastructure be undertaken based upon accurate and up to date information,

to: Determine present and future development carrying capacity of the Westside prior to the issuance of approvals/permits for upcoming projects. Balance long-term impacts on the environment and geopolitics. Identify and establish funding sources for infrastructure upgrades, including directing payments from local sources to the local area instead of the City's general fund."

2. Motion 5(F)2 Motion Regarding Trash Collection

The City Council is considering dividing Los Angeles into districts for multi-family residence and business trash pickup, with only one company contracted to pick up trash in each district. This would reduce noise, traffic, and pollution. A discussion on the issue brought out differing viewpoints. During the discussion, Councilmember Koretz's Deputy of Environmental Affairs & Sustainability Andy Schrader said that heavy trucks destroy the streets so it is desirable to have fewer trucks, and clean emission trucks are needed too. He also said that the City Council will not vote on this issue before December because it is still being worked on. The board decided not to vote on the proposed motion because the situation has changed.

7. FOOD FORWARD

Erica Kopmar introduced her organization Food Forward, which is a three year old Los Angeles-based nonprofit which harvests fruit from trees in people's yards and from farmers' markets. The produce is then donated to local food pantries. Food Forward is looking for volunteers to help harvest and for properties with excess fruit or vegetables. Anyone can sign up on their website (foodforward.org), they are fully insured, and whoever donates fruit from their

property will get a tax receipt. The board agreed that this should be posted on WWNC's website.

8. GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FOOD (GMO)

Susan Wheeler explained that genetically modified food has been around since the 1990's but American companies don't label food as genetically engineered, although it is labeled as such for export. Proposition 37 mandates labeling genetically modified food in California. Councilmember Koretz is a co-sponsor of a resolution before the City Council to support Proposition 37.

Connie Boukidis moved, "WWNC supports labeling of GMO food products." Marcello Robinson seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of Yes: 8 and No: 2.

9. FOOD AND WATER WATCH

Brenna, an intern with Food and Water Watch, talked about Governor Brown's Bay-Delta Conservation Plan to build two huge tunnels to divert water from the Sacramento Delta, ostensibly to southern California. She asked for WWNC's support in opposing the project. Los Angeles ratepayers will be footing part of the bill, approximately \$2 billion, but Los Angeles is buying less water from the delta now because it's expensive and because Los Angeles is prioritizing local water sources. This plan was not voted on by the legislature or by California residents but was proposed by Governor Brown and California water agencies. Discussion followed, with opposing viewpoints about whether this issue was appropriate for a neighborhood council to take a stand on.

Michael Stajura moved,

“Westwood Neighborhood Council opposes the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan to build a new tunnel or any conveyance facility to divert the Sacramento River. The project, estimated to cost between \$20 and \$50 billion, is unnecessary and would benefit corporate agriculture at the expense of ratepayers in Los Angeles. We urge you to pass legislation to prohibit the use of ratepayer money to finance this project and to support investment in local water projects that would improve the reliability of our water supply.

Los Angeles does not need to import more water. In fact, LADWP’s 2010 Urban Water Management Water Plan calls for purchasing less imported water as it is becoming more expensive, and prioritizes increasing local water sources such as storm water and cleaning and replenishing groundwater aquifers. Moreover, LADWP estimates that each year there are over 1,400 water main breaks in its 7,200-mile network that need to be repaired and/or replaced. Increasing our local supply and fixing local infrastructure are cost-effective measures that create local jobs. As these necessary investments will cost billions of dollars, ratepayer money should not be wasted on an unnecessary tunnel, especially in a bad economy.

The tunnel would be a major gift from ratepayers to a few corporate agriculture interests in the Central Valley. The chief beneficiaries, the Kern County Water Agency and the Westlands Water District, already receive massive amounts of water subsidized by ratepayers and taxpayers. Some of these agribusinesses, in addition to exporting lucrative crops overseas, sell taxpayer-subsidized water for private profit. Los Angeles ratepayers should not be forced to pay ever-increasing water bills to subsidize the profits of a few powerful corporate interests.

Contrary to proponent’s claims, a new tunnel located 350 miles north of Los Angeles would not safeguard our water supply from a major earthquake. As the United States Geological Survey estimates that a major earthquake is more likely to occur in southern California than in northern California, LADWP must prioritize and accelerate the repairing of its aging and breaking local water delivery system. Given that an earthquake could also compromise pipelines that deliver imported water, diversifying our water sources by increasing our

groundwater supply and capturing rainwater will protect the public's access to water in an earthquake.

Legislative action by the City Council is needed to ensure ratepayers are not harmed. Because the Metropolitan Water District, a partial source of LADWP's water supply, would be a financial sponsor of the tunnel in its effort to control more water, ratepayers in Los Angeles could be made to pay over \$2 billion over the next thirty years.

Therefore we urge the Council to pass legislation prohibiting the use of any ratepayer funds towards financing a new tunnel or any conveyance facility to divert the Sacramento River. As LADWP's water plan states, Los Angeles needs to repair and augment its local water supply. We should not waste money on a project that was defeated by California voters in 1982. We thank you for your attention and future action towards protecting ratepayers and our water supply."

Marcello Robinson seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of Yes: 6, No: 4, and Abstain: 3.

10. DOCUMENTARY TRANSFER TAX

Scott Whittle put forth a motion opposing the proposed documentary transfer tax rate change from \$4.50 per \$1,000 sales price to \$9 per \$1,000 sales price.

Scott Whittle moved, "RESOLVED, that the Westwood Neighborhood Council does NOT support the proposed documentary transfer tax ballot proposal and requests our Councilmember Koretz oppose any Los Angeles City Council action supporting this proposal, and it is further

RESOLVED, that the Secretary of the Westwood Neighborhood Council communicate in writing with any and all the necessary City agencies, including Councilmember Koretz, regarding this action taken by Westwood Neighborhood Council.”

Stephen Resnick seconded the motion, which carried with 10 votes in favor.

11. COMMUNITY CARE FACILITIES ORDINANCE

Stephen Resnick proposed the following motion regarding this ordinance. Connie Boukidis seconded and amended the motion, adding a fourth provision at the end on senior housing.

“Whereas Los Angeles County, the City of Los Angeles and various other public and private entities will ‘focus funds on chronically homeless and public officials and private donors will spend \$105 million on more than a thousand chronic street dwellers’ (Los Angeles Times article by Alexandra Zavis, posted 6:59 PM PDT, August 15, 2012); and

Whereas the siting of such housing with appropriate support to transition the chronic homeless to a stable living environment is of paramount importance to Neighborhoods throughout the City of Los Angeles; and

Whereas the purchase of low density property is the biggest lifetime investment most families will ever make in the City of Los Angeles; and

Whereas the City of Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety has opined there is no limit to the occupancy of a single family dwelling; and

Whereas Neighborhoods have a right to know what decision making process will be employed to site such homes in low density Neighborhoods; how such homes and the resources needed to sustain them will be funded long term; whether the number of such homes per block will be limited; what the occupancy level of such homes will be; and which agency/agencies/not for profits will be directly accountable to the community wherein such homes are located once established

Therefore the Westwood Neighborhood Council calls for the complete transparency of this process, including full disclosure and accountability to the public and to Neighborhood and Community Councils concerning:

1. How and where chronic homeless with mental health issues would be placed and spaced and supervised in low density Neighborhoods
2. How and where parolee/probation homes would be placed and spaced and supervised in low density Neighborhoods
3. How and where so-called 'wet houses' (homes where chronic drug and alcohol abusers can use off the street) would be placed and spaced and supervised in low density Neighborhoods
4. How and where senior homes would be placed and spaced and supervised in low density Neighborhoods."

The motion passed by a vote of Yes: 10 and No: 3.

12. REGULATION OF CELL TOWERS

The City Council acted yesterday on the cell tower ordinance and therefore the agenda's motion on the cell tower ordinance was not addressed by the board. Jerry Brown moved, "WWNC extends its commendation to Chris Spitz of Pacific Palisades, who spearheaded the effort to better regulate cell towers and WWNC supports the City Council's action." Marcello Robinson seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

13. NEW BUSINESS

Tom Schneider announced that he is leaving WWNC at the end of this term since he will not be running for re-election in October. Jerry Brown and Connie Boukidis thanked Tom for all his work on the Land Use and Planning Committee.

Kurt Smalberg heard concerns from constituents about the lack of a vote by mail option for the October 28th election, and asked if that could be reconsidered at this point. Tony Wilkinson said that it is too late officially to change but WWNC can ask elections coordinator Stephen Box. A mail vote will cost \$500 for the first 200 mail votes and 50 cents for each vote above that. A public meeting with the agenda item will be needed to vote to spend the money.

Michael Stajura moved to re-open Item 4, EmpowerLA and Neighborhood Council Elections. Kurt Smalberg seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. Michael Stajura then moved, "WWNC will go to EmpowerLA and ask if we may change our prior position and have a vote by mail option." Connie Boukidis seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of Yes: 7 and No: 6. Lisa Chapman will email EmpowerLA tomorrow.

If EmpowerLA decides that WWNC can have a vote by mail option, a meeting will be held on Friday September 14th at 5:30 p.m. at Holmby Park near the

play area by the intersection of Beverly Glen Blvd. and Comstock Avenue to vote on spending the money.

14. ADJOURNMENT

President Jerry Brown adjourned the meeting at 10:15 p.m.