WEST LA SAWTELLE NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL REGULAR BOARD MEETING
Wednesday, September 27, 2017, 7:00 PM – MINUTES
Felicia Mahood Multipurpose Senior Center

Attending: Arman Ghorbani, Danilo Torro, Desa Philadelphia, Eric Nakamura (Vice Chair), Jamie Keeton (Chair), Jay Ross, Jean Shigematsu, Jian Kerendian, Naomi Kageyama (Sec’y), Partho Kalyani, Ron Migdal,
Rosie Kato - late
Jay Handal – late (Treasurer)

Absent: Zana Glisovic,

Start: 7:10 pm

Number attendees: 13 NC members. Total in audience over 65+. In/out.

I. Call to Order – 7:10 pm. Roll call by Kageyama. Chair Keeton.

II. General Public Comment – none

III. Community Partner Reports –


Assemblyman Sebastian Ridley Thomas (54th District). Deputy Bryan Adams. Recently adjourned legislative sessions. Asking CalifTrans to increase beautification for community. Trying to remove more items that impact visual blight. Also trying to cap CO2 emissions. Discussed issues of State budget. Update on homeless services. Keeton requests for any white papers available from Assemblyman’s office that can be put on the Neighborhood Council website. Assemblymember_ridley-thomas@assembly.ca.gov.

Janet Turner. From Congressman Ted Lieu’s office. Investigation of the Equifax data breach. Provided list of federal agencies that are handled by his office. Please call. Also will consider writing letters of support to 501c3’s who are applying for grants. There is a Congressional App contest (winners get scholarships). Other youth opportunities.

Ezra Gale (CM Bonin’s office) – stepped out. Stephanie Cohen (Supervisor Kuehl’s office)– stepped out

Jasmine Elbarbary (DONE) – Elections pushed to next week. We think 2019. All NC’s are able to do a 2018 ‘Selection’ for those who are finishing their term in 2018. Deadline (worksheet) is Nov. 1st. They are also seeking demographic data. Link is in the monthly profile. For population data. This is not mandatory. Elbarbary will have to “guess” if no info received directly.

Ana Huizar – City of LA; Office of Community Beautification. Board of Public Works. ‘311’ App. Graffiti removal. Be specific as possible. Has clean-up tools for up to 5000 people. This is available for FREE. Has everything needed for community cleanups. Ana.huizar@lacity.org Flyers and card in back. For graffiti removal the only stipulation is that the graffiti needs to be visible to the public.

“Moon” – with a mental health nonprofit (inaudible). We provide comprehensive assessment. Focus on brain activity.

Steve Little – with WLA Chamber of Commerce. Wednesday breakfast (10/4/17). First Wednesday of each month. Housing in LA is topic. 7:30 am. Invitation.

Ezra Gale (CM Bonin’s office) – no comments.

IV. Approvals
a. Draft meeting minutes for August 2017 meeting (Secretary Kageyama); Passed. Unanimous. 13 Yes. 0 No. 0 Abstain. Minutes accepted.

b. Outstanding MERs reports (Treasurer Handal) – passes. Unanimous. 13 Yes. 0 No. 0 Abstain. MERs report accepted.

c. $100 approval for stickers to mark WLASNC property. Unanimous. For inventory. Rosie to be ad hoc committee for how to label NC property. Jay Ross will help. 13 Yes. 0 No. 0 Abstain. $100 approved.

d. Reimbursement to Jay Handal for National Night Out of $391.67 (Board approved $500 in July 2017). Unanimous. 13 Yes. 0 No. 0 Abstain. Reimbursement approved.

e. $850 for tools for community clean ups. Includes electric powered tools. To be property of the WLASNC and will be available for other community clean up efforts. Kato questioned the purchase of these tools since LA Conservation Corps has provided tools for past cleanups. G. Erickson (former board member) spoke of several community cleanups he has organized since he has left the board. Some general discussion including storage and safety. 13 yes. 0 No. 0 Abstain (Kato). $850 approved.

f. Clean Streets 2017 Application

Application to submit LA City Clean Streets application. There are two (2) big cleanups scheduled including Nora Sterry Elementary School – 11/4/17 cleanup; and University High School - 11/11/17 cleanup. Kato requests help from board members to assist with not only the clean-ups but to help man a table at the Farmers Market on designated Sundays. Keeton encourages everyone to participate and believes a signup to be passed around is useful.

Motion to submit LA City Clean Streets 2017 application. 13 Yes (all). 0 No. 0 Abstain. Motion approved.

V. Motion to Support Preferential Parking from Amherst, Wellesly, and Carmelina from Idaho to Nebraska (Torro)

- Torro – Introduce a motion to support preferential parking between Carmelina and Amherst. West of Bundy. Bordered by Nebraska and Iowa. This area is suffering from parking due to neighboring businesses. They want WLASNC to support preferential parking.
- R. Kato noted that CM Bonin is aware of this and has already supported this initiative.
- Public member Ron – What does this mean? Will this replace 2 hour parking. Answer is yes. I am one block north of the impacted area. I don’t want to see restrictions on my block. Thanks the neighborhood should “share”.
- Public member Pat – I was advised that the WLASNC does not do letters. D. Philadelphia rebutted and said support can be requested once the community is in process with the petition. Pat described the process that the community has been going through. He went to CM Bonin to get a letter of support in keeping with the Dept. of Transportation requirements.
- Public member Norma – Why do residents want restricted parking? Torro answered that certain days/times residents do not have adequate parking. Norma disagrees with restricted parking.
- Public member Jonathon – I have been living on Carmelina for 15 years. We have been impacted by businesses on Santa Monica. The R2 zone seems to have different parking signs than others (R1). Just south of Santa Monica. Would like to join in this.
- Public member Jonathon - On Carmelina. Businesses and students also. It is impossible to find parking. Especially on street cleaning days.
- Public member Katherine – I live on Carmelina. Between Iowa and Idaho. Parking used by those who work on Olympic. Also mobile homes that take a lot of space and move block to block.
- Tony – I also live on Carmelina. Very difficult to park. Ongoing challenge.
- Keeton noted that NC Board Member Torro is a resident in this area so would get a benefit from this motion which is not allowed. Torro is not allowed to put forth a motion although other members of the board may do so.
- Motion for support of preferential parking for residents.
- D. Philadelphia – understands the issue. Not clear on the process. Other board members added some comments about rules/regulations about petitions. Pat (public members) briefly described the process before the petition goes out to the community.
- Pat – needs 75% votes; with 50% permits.
J. Handal – WLASNC can ‘support’ stakeholders. A letter that says “we hear you” and support the community’s efforts to review this issue.

The new motion is to provide a letter supporting the community’s effort to gather facts and reach out to residents about this issue and allow for the process to begin including creating a petition and garnering signatures. 10 Yes (Kageyama, Migdal, Kalyani, Ghorbani, Nakamura, Keeton, Shigematsu, Handal, Philadelphia, Ross). 1 No (Kerendian); 1 Abstain (Kato). No vote from Torro who is a resident of this area and unable to vote on this issue. Motion passes.

Keeton – supports community’s right to move forward but also shared her issues with preferential parking (of which she is against) based on her own experience being adjacent to a restricted parking street.

E. Nakamura – WLASNC supports the neighborhood efforts to get signatures for petition etc.

R. Kato – Businesses are not supposed to have any negative impact on residential areas. This is one of the main reasons to have preferential parking.

Kato believes there is a misunderstanding of the motion because the community had already received a support letter from CM Bonin’s office to proceed.

VI. Request for Neighborhood Purpose Grant (“NPG”) of up to and including $5,000 from Nora Sterry to fund after school programs and possible motion

Boosters Club to implement a robotics, coding etc. Lego program. 1 Teacher and aide. K-5th grade classes.

Hoping to get more students involved in ‘STEAM’ (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) fields. Will also be seeking more funding on an ongoing basis. Programs like this will also bring in more students – right now enrollment is down at Nora Sterry.

Handal – thanks Nora Sterry for coming in person to NC. From a NC standpoint – would like to see more inclusion with the WLASNC. What is the plan to attract more kids into this program? And is there a plan to get the school and parents to be more involved with the WLASNC. This year we have additional funds but may not be as willing to support this if the current budget was...ss.

Kageyama – would like to invest in youth especially girls. Investment in the future.

Some general discussion about the number of sets to be purchased and other logistical issues relating to the proposed robotics program.

Philadelphia – do you have plans for a bigger project? A ‘STEAM’ lab? Answer: The Booster Club is hoping to continue to take steps to add more programs and opportunities for the students.

Migdal – question on reuse of Lego pieces. Answer: There would be enough pieces to showcase completed projects. Not to be taken home.

Kerendian – How many students? Answer: 271 students.

Motion to approve the Neighborhood Purpose Grant submitted by Nora Sterry Elementary School for $5000. 12 Yes. 0 No. 1 Abstain (Torro). Approved.

VII. Presentation by Food and Water Watch and possible motion

[1 minute allowed] Faith M. With Food and Water Watch. This is in support of the motion passed by PLUM committee. The gas storage facility has not been investigated fully. Ballona wetlands gas storage facility is similar and there are still effects. CM Mitch Englander and Mike Bonin are putting in a motion to do a joint agency investigation.

VIII. Presentation by Lisa Detamore of Grace APS, a Medical Marijuana Pharmacy regarding a permanent license and possible motion
Lisa Detamore – As required by LA City regulations - she is the community liaison for Grace medical marijuana dispensary. Has been in operation since 2009 with linkages to several hospitals and other organizations. Supports local causes. Employment practices to ensure women and minority representation. All products are child proof and labeled correctly. Currently working with many organizations and networks.

Public speaker: supports Grace dispensary

D. Philadelphia – wants a clear understanding of procedures. Ms. Detamore says it is based on City and State regulations.

J. Ross – wants to know security measures. These are often targets (possibly due to money). Ms. Detamore says there is a security door. And motion sensors/video. Ross asked about the application process for new dispensaries. Answer: Applications were supposed to be available Oct. 1st. But still not available at this time. It is an intensive process.

IX. Motion to Approve up to and including $500.00 of the $2,500.00 awarded for the 2016 Clean Streets Challenge be given to the LA Conservation Corps, and approval for up to the remaining $2,000.00 to be used for the 2017 Clean Streets Challenge

Motion to approve up to and including $500 of the $2500 awarded for the 2016 Clean Street Challenge be given to the LA Conservation Corps, and approval for up to the remaining $2000 to be used for the 2017 Clean Streets Challenge as submitted by R. Kato. 11 Yes. 1 No (Ross). 1 Abstain (Shigematsu). Motion passes.

J. Ross thinks funds for t-shirts not necessary. Some discussion among board members. Amendments to motion are not considered due to time constraints.

X. PLUM Presentation and possible motions (Ross)

  a. Approval of Officers – Chair (Ross), Vice Chair (Sherman), Secretary (Kato)
  b. Playa Del Rey gas storage facility
  c. Oil buffer zones
  d. Bundy/Missouri Housing Project (aka Safran Project)

Ross provided a brief overview of past PLUM Committee resolutions. Including focus on affordable housing and those with special needs.

There is a presentation by representative from developer Tom Safran and Associates (TSA) regarding the Bundy/Missouri Housing Project (old Animal Shelter site).

- Includes permanent supportive housing
- Had a meeting with Westside family YMCA
- Community Tour (with about 30 people)
- Went to New West, cornerstone church and PLUM
- Made some changes. Transitional height on Northeast corner to make more sensitive to single family residences.
- Needed balance of northwest (to provide balance and view) so this was also lowered.
- Turned another area by 90 degrees.
- Increased setback on Bundy.
- Improved security plan with more neighborhood lighting.
- Also looking at a community garden idea.

PUBLIC and NC member comments

- Ron – I was apprehensive. I live right there. I am fine now. In Support
- Lynn – Hoping to have affordable housing. I am in support of this. There is not enough affordable housing in this area.
- Sandra – I am a neighbor. Supports affordable housing. Need to support older adults.
- Katy – Supportive of this project. A member of League of Women Voters. Please see www.yesinmyla.org
- Laura – echoes the support for this project.
• Timothy Sweeney – also on WLASCNC PLUM committee. In a housing crisis. We need this. I have worked with TSA in the past. Support this project.
• J. Handal (NC) – supports Tom Safran. Have known this guy 30 years. This is a hand up project – not a hand out project.
• N. Kageyama (NC) – Why is the percentage for permanent supportive housing higher than what was stated at the July 2017 special meeting. Does ‘special needs’ include those who fit permanent supportive housing criteria (i.e. homeless). Answer: Yes. This is a City mandate. The ‘special needs’ are for families (formerly homeless). This is the criteria for ‘special needs’.
• D. Torro (NC) – occupancy? 2 or 3 per occupancy. Often 1 parent + 1 child.
• R. Migdal (NC) – I took the bus tour. In support of this project. Buildings are stellar.
• J. Ross (NC) – I would amend the motion to be 78 units; community garden mandated.
• 100% affordable with 50% special needs tenants. And to approve the design based on the 9/27/17 with removals from NE and NW corners. Community gardens., Balconies facing inward.

Motion to approve the Bundy/Missouri Housing Project as proposed by Tom Safran & Associates (TSA) with 100% affordable housing units including 50% for special needs; design improvements for better visibility and integration with the local neighborhood. Includes lowered levels for the northwest and northeast corners of the building as well as the inclusion of community garden(s). Balconies facing inward. All iterations as proposed by the PLUM Committee. 10 Yes (Kageyama, Migdal, Kalyani, Ghorbani, Nakamura, Keeton, Kerendian, Ross, Handal, Philadelphia). 1 No (Kuto). 2 Abstain (Torro, Shigematsu). The motion passes.

XI. Discussion and possible motions related to proposed “sobering” facility at 11419 Santa Monica

J. Handal – Sobering center. To bring people who are high to sleep it off overnight. They ignored the community and did it under the radar. This is the worst possible governmental action. There is no real plan yet construction has already started.

Questions read by Chair Keeton:
Question 1: Transparency? What other sites were considered? Why was there no community discussion?
Question 2: How many?
Question 3: why is SM chosen if the clusters of pick-ups are in other areas?

Clare Foundation (nonprofit; with 11 sites). More clinical services provided. Not just a “drunk tank”. We are in business of recovery. Most will stay for 8-10 hours. No signage. Entrance will be from rear. We are hoping to “break the chain”. We have many partnerships in place. We will have emergency responders.

(Nurse – name inaudible) – has done research on sobering center. This is an advanced sobering center. Very different than “drunk tanks”. Spoke about assessment centers in San Francisco.

J. Keeton – Respectively, none of the questions were answered. The question is why the secrecy? Why wasn’t the community informed at all?

Brian (community member): Why was this location selected? You have said yourself that

Answer: This is the only location that makes sense for first responders and others. There is no other available areas.

J. Handal – will be asking for public records. Please be honest. Is this a “by right” decision? We will know if you are lying because we will have full public records.

Answer: The location was selected with full consideration. We have 15 parking spaces and 8 bike slots.

Other public comments from various residents. How will homeless individuals be transported back to areas they came from? How will this continue to be funded? If this is such a great project why did you hide it and keep it away from the community?

Answer: Discharge plan includes transportation back to where they were picked up from or to homeless service providers. We have
been talking about an outreach project since the lease was signed.

Stephanie Cohen (Sheila Kuehl’s office): “Our office takes responsibility for not coming to the community first before the project was sited. What I can say now... is that we have learned a lot. We will continue to engage in community outreach from this point forward... we understand what we did was not right...”

[at this point the community residents started speaking out including saying “break the lease”]

Speaker (identified himself as a member of the Mar Vista Community Council) – spoke about the benefits of a ‘sobering center’.

Len (CM Bonin’s office) – Message from CM Bonin. He is disappointed that there was not adequate community input. CM does support the sobering center. He believes this will help local LAPD and first responders.

Al & Vicky C. (residents) – Identified himself as being on the West LA Sawtelle NC for the prior 15 years. Venice rejected this project. Appalled at this overall process. Santa Monica used to condone the dumping of homeless and drunk individuals from Santa Monica; load them on the bus; and tell the bus driver to drop off at Bundy. We are not a dumping ground.

Answer: We did not find a spot in Venice.

J. Keeton wants details and data. Not anecdotes. The community has a right to know. Why are you doing community outreach now? It is a waste of time since you already decided what to do. We need true statistics.

J. Handal demands details about the only other sobering center which is located in downtown skid row. Calls out the police representatives in the rear of the room. Noted that it is ‘kidnapping’ to force someone to go to another location they don’t want to go. So what kind of transportation plan is there? It is appalling what Supervisor Kuehl has done to this community.

D. Philadelphia – no signage is not the right way to do business. [other board members also noted that this is prime business area].

Motion 1: Demand that the Board of Supervisors stop this sobering center project immediately. 13 Yes. 0 No. 0 Abstain. Motion passes.

Motion 2: To send a letter to Supervisor Kuehl condemning her actions against the community. 13 Yes. 0 No. 0 Abstain. Motion passes.

XII. Officer Elections - deferred to next meeting.

XIII. Consideration of Application for Vacant Board Position – deferred to next meeting.

XIV. Election of CIS filers – deferred to next meeting.

XV. Reestablishment of Outreach, Homelessness and Public Safety Committees – deferred to next meeting.

XVI. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda - none.

XVII. Board Comment and Announcements – none.

XVIII. Adjournment Time (approx.) 9:50 pm.