WEST LOS ANGELES SAWTELLE NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, October 25, 2017, 7:00 PM
Felicia Mahood Multipurpose Senior Center
11338 Santa Monica Boulevard – Community Room – Los Angeles, CA 90025

Attending: Jamie Keeton (Chair), Eric Nakamura (Vice Chair), Jay Handal (Treasurer),
Naomi Kageyama (Secretary), Desa Philadelphia, Danilo Torro, Ron Migdal, Jay Ross, Zana
Glisovic, Partho Kalyani, Jennifer Gavina, Arman Ghorbani (late)

Absent: Rosie Kato, Jean Shigematsu, Jian Kerendian

Total 12 NC members. 41 members in audience.

I. Call to Order 7:05 pm

COMMUNITY Partners

Officer Lavenson: Property crime is our primary issue in WLA. We can control this. Stay vigilant. This weekend is Haunted House event. A lot of fun.

Stephanie Cohen (Sheila Kuehl’s office): Some updates. The sobering center lease was terminated. Supervisor listened to the community. We are still looking for a site in District 5. More communication will happen. Re Measure H. Rollout has begun. Taxes started as of Oct. 1, 2017. More services for transitional age youth (TAY), women, families etc. Will have more info later on homeless and veteran services. There are many gaps in service that need to be addressed. LA County looking at armories for shelter services. Hepatitis A outbreak – certain areas are being targeted for vaccinations and hand washing stations. Supervisor looking more closely at conservatorships and mental health.


II. General Public Comment

Jay M: parent who is active with both University High School and at Emerson Middle School. Also with the foundation made up of alumni etc. I will be asking for a grant to help students.

Phil B.: My issue is transportation improvement in the Westside. Working on a patent. To control traffic flow.

III. Approvals

a. Outstanding draft meeting minutes (Secretary Naomi Kageyama) – Draft minutes provided including 9/27/17 and a special meeting held on 10/5/17. 12 Yes. 0 No. 0 Abstain. Minutes approved.

b. Outstanding MERs reports (Treasurer Handal) – copies of MERs not available. Misunderstanding with Secretary Kageyama regarding copies. Will be reviewed next month.

c. $500 for candy for Stoner Park Halloween Event Motion to combine approval to $500 for Stoner Park Halloween event as well as for $200 for Felicia Mahood Center. 11 yes (all members except Torro). 0 no. 0 abstain (Torro currently ineligible to vote on funding items).

d. $200 for refreshments and candy for Felicia Mahood Center Halloween Celebration – see above.

e. Additional $6.00 for t-shirts for Clean Streets 1 abstain (ross) 1 ineligible (torro)
Nakamura requested a recap of the highly contested ‘Sobering Center’ proposal by Supervisor Sheila Kuehl.

[Here is a timeline of the ‘Sobering Center’ that was in process through approval from LA County Supervisor Sheila Kuehl (district 5) at 11419 Santa Monica Blvd. (old Ethan Allan furniture location; recently a dance studio; currently empty). NC Member Handal found out about this initiative via LAPD contacts and posted the information on Next Door on 9/20/17. The project had been kept under wraps with zero community participation and input. The only other sobering center is currently in skid row downtown L.A. There was a rapid mobilization of community including residents, businesses and developers in a show of unity. An article written by Jay Handal was published by ‘Citywatch LA’ on 9/25/17. At the 9/27/17 NC meeting there was a motion to stop the project including censure of the Supervisor’s office on lack of community participation. A formal letter from Chair Keeton was sent on 10/2/17. Keeton began the planning for a community town hall and other activities. Before this could happen the Supervisor (as noted in ‘community partners’ section above) re-analyzed the project amid community concerns and decided to break the lease and begin the process anew – with community participation this time. A formal letter stating that the lease was stopped with project suspension (until a new site is found) was sent by Supervisor Kuehl dated 10/9/17. All details of this entire process were updated daily (and at times hourly) on the NC website at www.westlasawtelle.org, twitter and facebook by Vice Chair/Outreach Director Eric Nakamura. Nakamura also monitored information flow and social media participation that reached a significant peak during this time.]

Jay Handal provided an impassioned overview of the efforts made on behalf of the community to stop this project. His immediate request for a “public records act” produced results that proved lack of community consideration for the project. Handal continued to monitor the actions of the Supervisor’s office as well as other elected officials (i.e. CM Bonin) very closely.

Handal noted that the community took power by assembling residents, businesses and developers to stop the “drunk tank”. He provided a short summary of what a sobering center really is. Without any community input this was proposed by Supervisor Kuehl. The NC organized immediately to do outreach. There were commitments to raise funds totaling over $10K. The NC’s job is to protect the community. There was a ‘partners meeting’ and the NC was barred. “This was absolutely wrong. Yes we are an advisory group. But we actually have the backing of the community... which makes our efforts powerful”. It was noted by other NC members that CM Bonin was not very supportive at the time of the 9/27/17 NC meeting. Others remarked that CM Bonin was out of the country but stayed involved to monitor the situation and as the situation became more heated worked hard to help the community fight the project. Handal noted that CM Bonin did a lot behind the scenes. Handal and others on the NC board thanked those in attendance at the NC meeting and reiterated that the power of the community voice can make true changes.

IV. Presentation regarding sidewalk repair

Isabelle Duviver of the City of LA Community Forest Advisory Committee. Asking for support. The CFAC has provided comments on the Sidewalk Repair Program Initial Study. There are several recommendations to ensure that LA’s urban forest is responsive to the community and environmentally positive. Mature trees should not be cut down unless evaluated. The Venice NC provided a letter to support CFAC’s activities to support our urban forest, protect trees from unnecessary removal and work in collaboration with sidewalk repair.

V. PLUM Presentation and possible motion and possible CIS (Ross)

a. Proposed increase by the Department of Planning of appeals fees.

City wants to increase fees based on size of project. NC PLUM committee Chair Ross noted that there should not be barriers to residents and stakeholders who have the right to appeal.

Motion to recommend that the city shall not increase proposed Planning Dept. appeal fees and maintain existing fee structure. 11 Yes (Ghorbani, Torro, Philadelphia, Nakamura, Keeton, Ross, Kageyama, Migdal, Handal, Glisovic, Gavina); 1 No (Kalyani); 0 Abstain. Motion passes.

b. 11800 Santa Monica Boulevard CUB presentation (File number ZA-2017-3083-CUB)
- Presentation by 360 (Zachary Andrews). Requesting full alcohol. 146 seats. Will restrict patio to midnight. 38 parking spaces. In line with code. Residential above and behind the restaurant. Currently not a specific tenant. Maybe Pitfire or other family style restaurant.
- Handal noted that other restaurants have tried to decrease noise. But restricting the patio to 11 pm would solve the problems that are anticipated. He suggested materials to reduce noise based upon his many years as restaurant owner.
- General discussion about noise, patio and types of sound barriers. No residents across the street right now. There will be space between the restaurant and residents.
- Philadelphia asks whether it is better to discuss noise issues at a later date once the tenant is selected. Ross noted that planning for potential problems should be addressed before the tenant is selected.
- Public comment(s) – noted that liquor sales should be stopped earlier. 10 PM is better for local residents especially mid-week. Midnight is late for residents. Sound carries at night.
- General discussion including patio, sound abatements, glass doors vs. none and cost. It was noted that in general cost for restaurant structure phase is not a significant factor because the overall development costs are high and developers have very large budgets for projects like this.
- Several motions regarding patio use and time frames without agreement from NC members that do not pass due to lack of majority.

First motion to approve the CUB with restrictions on the patio. 5 Yes. 6 No. 1 Abstain. Motion doesn’t pass.
Second motion to approve the CUB with glass doors; no restrictions on hours. This motion also fails.

[note: note-taker Kageyama was not able to get details on vote counts for the failed motions due to speed of discussion and also inability to see all board members from where she was sitting].

- Discussion on sound barriers, materials and height of barriers. Lack of consensus.
- [it is noted that there are strong feelings on this subject with sense of irritation from many NC members due to lack of agreement and length of conversations. There is also sense of urgency due to other high level community interest projects on the agenda – e.g. old Vons site]

Motion (by Handal) to move this project forward with no recommendations from the NC. The motion is to approve the proposed CUB for a restaurant space with full line alcohol sales and dispensing on-site (with proposed indoor/outdoor/balcony seating) at 11800 Santa Monica Blvd. 9 Yes (Ghorbani, Torro, Philadelphia, Nakamura, Keeton, Handal, Glisovic, Gavina); 3 No (Ross, Migdal, Kageyama); 0 Abstain. Motion passes.

c. Old Von’s Site at Barrington and Santa Monica Boulevard (Planning project number ENV-2015-2957-EIR)

Ross provided a brief overview. Current mixed use project proposal. There are asking for greater height by providing affordable housing. 11650 W. Santa Monica Blvd. 5 stories. 55,000 market. 180 units (the maximum). Matt Hayden from 360 to present.

Matt Hayden (from 360) Land use consultant for this project: This has not yet been approved by the City of LA. This is a mixed use project. Want to improve SM Blvd. On the SE corner of Barrington/SM Blvd. Has had 4 community meetings. This is our 5th meeting. The PLUM Committee liked the design of the project. Ingress/egress on Barry (per recommendation from Dept. of Transportation). Will also have a parking permit survey. 11% affordable (20 units). We would like to also help update the Bundy Triangle.

Design Architect (name?): Provided an overview including use of more organic elements. Roof terrace and small dog park. Did an analysis with set-backs. The ‘canyon’ design is more appealing from a visual and space point of view. The open plaza is one that will be a good community benefit.

Owner Arpel: Have been working on this project for 3 years. Believes this street (in 10 years) will look a lot different in 10 years. Not boxy. Creative design.

NC Board Member comments:

Kalyani – wondering about the entrance. Are both entrances needed - Barrington and Barry. What about pedestrian traffic? Answer: will work with community on pedestrian traffic. Entrance is on Santa Monica only (pedestrians). Vehicles from Barrington and
Barry.  
Migdal - is dog park for public?  Answer: no.  Question - what is % low income.  
Nakamura - I liked ghetto Vons.  I wonder about Barry Av.  How to mitigate the dirtiest part of the market?  Answer: the loading zone will have a sliding gate to conceal that "mess".  The service area will be mitigated.  
Keeton - what about cleanliness?  Answer: Owner is very focused on cleanliness.  
Handal - I have been working on this project for 3 years.  Against the boxy element on the back.  Need to focus on the crosswalks.  I want this project to start.  
Torro - Concern with pedestrian crossing.  It's a very deadly crossing.  Maybe a diagonal crosswalk?  
[Note: video stops here]  
Glisovic - Also concerned with pedestrian crossing.  Also the noise.  I live here.  I know the traffic patterns every single hour.  This is too large of an impact on traffic.  
Ghorbani - this is better than what was proposed before design-wise.  Will the privacy gate also work as a sound barrier?  Answer: yes.  Answer: will work on sound mitigation using materials on roof.  
Ross - no questions.  
Philadelphia - I live 2 blocks away from this project.  Very excited about this project.  I have never heard of "ghetto Vons".  My question is regarding bicycle parking including maybe bike rentals?  Answer: we are looking at this.  Every single stall will have electrical conduits.  Will have 300 bike stations as well.  

Public comments  
Daniel - I live on Armacost.  Lived here for 30 years.  This market will restore walkability in this area.  
Mike - I'm with Wiseman Residential.  I think this is a beautiful project.  Will be an icon for this boulevard.  
Kyle - I'm a WLA resident.  I think this is a great project.  They are not greedy developers.  I commend them.  
Stephen - I'm former staffer of CM Bonin.  This is a great project.  This will be a neighborhood anchor.  Beautiful.  
Jeffrey - I'm one of the owners of bistro across street.  Attests to cleanliness of projects by this developer.  
Ben - in charge of real estate development for Whole Foods.  Amazon presence is anticipated.  
Sandra - I like the design.  I support the mixed use.  I like the low income housing units.  Parking?  Answer: Underground.  
Nick - I will be living 2 blocks away from this project.  I believe in housing density.  I think it's fantastic.  
Leonard - I've known Jeff (owner) for 25 years.  He takes pride in what he does.  This will be a gorgeous project.  I canvassed the area and spoke with 37 people in the neighborhood.  All positive.  
Roger - We have been hired by Mr. Appel to do a study on the community.  

NC discussion:  
Discussion among NC members about PLUM recommendations.  Some debate about PLUM recommendations.  Handal noted that he disagreed with making the rear of the building like a 'box'.  Ross disagreed with Handal's comment and noted that there is not a 'box' but setbacks that would be beneficial to the surrounding community.  Handal noted that the NC should listen to constituents.  

Per agenda there is motion to accept PLUM design revisions for the proposed Santa Monica/Barrington mixed use building (old Vons site).  4 Yes (Kageyama, Ghorbani, Migdal, Ross).  8 No (Keeton, Nakamura, Handal, Philadelphia, Torro, Glisovic, Kalyani, Gavina).  0 abstain.  Motion doesn't pass.  

There is a motion to accept to approve the mixed-use 5-story grocery market and 180 residential units as proposed by the developer.  9 Yes (Keeton, Nakamura, Handal, Philadelphia, Torro, Glisovic, Kalyani, Gavina, Ghorbani).  2 No (Ross, Migdal).  1 Abstain (Kageyama).  Motion passes.  

Most audience members leave.  

d. Submission of CIS for Gateway project at 11460-11488 Gateway Blvd./2426 South Colby Avenue/2425 South Butler Avenue (Council File 17-0932, VTT-73891-1A, ENV-2015-4087-MND)  

There was general discussion about the Feb. 2017 vote count regarding the Gateway Project.  Handal would like to review the transcript.
Motion to postpone review of the Gateway project and possible submission of CIS. 9 Yes (Gavina, Nakamura, Handal, Keeton, Kageyama, Kalyani, Torro, Glisovic); 1 No (Ross); 2 Abstain (Ghorbani, Migdal). Motion passes. This issue postponed.

Kageyama requests more clarification of the application of CIS as well as approval process for the approval of statements on behalf of NC’s. Keeton will check with DONE on this.

VI. Bylaws Committee Report and possible motion

a. Elections in 2019

NC Liaison Jasmine Elbarbary provided input on this subject. The NC can have a ‘selection’ in 2018 if they so choose. This means an open selection process (rather than community elections) to be completed in 2018. There is a formal process and the stipulation worksheet is due by Nov 1st, 2017. She noted that the WLASNC Bylaws have old language before ‘staggering’ was actually put in place. Staggering language was later added but the process was not very clear. Bylaws Committee recommends a full election in 2019 for ALL members. This includes all positions ending in 2019 with a subsequent election to fill all 15 seats. The staggering would commence at that time with the top 8 individuals (per vote count) would have a 8 year term; while the remaining 7 individuals would have a 4-year term.

Motion to hold 2019 elections with staggered terms as suggested by WLASNC PLUM committee including the top 8 vote count receiving 4 year terms and the bottom 7 vote count receiving 2 year terms. 11 Yes (Gavina, Ghorbani, Nakamura, Keeton, Handal, Kageyama, Kalyani, Torro, Glisovic, Ross); 0 No; 1 Abstain (Migdal).

J. Elbarbary notes that the WLASNC has an opportunity to edit bylaws before March 2018.

a. At-large seat requirement changes – not discussed.
b. Committee composition – not discussed.

VII. Budget Advocate Report – not discussed.

VIII. Outreach Chair Report – not discussed.

IX. Discussion and possible motion on composition of Outreach, Homelessness and Public Safety Committees – not discussed.

X. Discussion and possible motion regarding speed limits and speed traps – not discussed.

XI. Discussion and possible motion regarding reconsideration policy – not discussed.

XII. Discussion and possible motion regarding ex parte communications by Board members – not discussed.

XIII. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda - None.

XIV. Board Comment and Announcements

a. Tree planting at Stoner Park

b. Clean Streets/tree adoption

Adjournment – MOTION TO ADJOURN. 9:14 pm

XV. Adjournment 9:14 PM.