WEST LOS ANGELES SAWTELLE NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, September 26, 2018, 7:00 PM
Felicia Mahood Multipurpose Senior Center
11338 Santa Monica Boulevard – Community Room – Los Angeles, CA 90025

Attending: Chair Jamie Keeton, Jay Ross, Arman Ghorbani, Eric Nakamura, Naomi Kageyama, Ron Migdal, Jay Handal, Dylan Wright, Jean Shigematsu.

Absent: Jian Kerendian, Jennifer Gavina, Zana Glisovic.

TIME BEGINS: 7:02 p.m. TIME ENDS: 8:19 p.m.
Community and stakeholder members present: count not taken

I. Call to Order
Chair Keeton called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. with quorum.

II. Community Partner Reports

Musa Khan, election administrator for city elections, introduced himself, and explained that the Office of the City Clerk, Election Division will be administrator for 2019 NC elections. He directed the board and stakeholders to a printed timeline he had brought copies of that covers candidate filing all the way to the certification of the election. June 2, 2019 is election day. February 17, 2019 is when candidate filing starts, and filing ends March 19, 2019. The deadline to submit documentation to establish candidacy is March 22, 2019. The Election Division will be responsible for the polling place, candidate filing, and counting ballots.

Hannah Levien introduced herself as a representative for Councilman Bonin. She gave updates on the Stoner Park sidewalk, and said she would be testifying before the Rec and Parks Commission during their October meeting about how moving the sidewalk will take more than they thought. Second, at the last West Sawtelle NC meeting the board passed Safe Parking for the lot behind the CD11 building. The contract with the General Services division has been finished; also LAHSA and HSID have been recently funded, so the program will be starting in the next couple of weeks.

Zachary Geidsig introduced himself as a new field deputy for Sheila Kuehl. He did not have a partner update since he is new.

III. General Public Comment

Stakeholder Phil Brown introduced himself and explained that he had developed a new transportation system focusing on eliminating traffic snarls and problems in the west side and the accompanying CO2 pollution by the tune of 73 metric tonnes per day. The system solves the traffic and pollution problems and it structures their community plan which will be updated coming in October, so he will be meeting at the Henry Medina building. At this point, he had exceeded his time but continued speaking, prompting the board to speak over him to direct him to sit down.

Stakeholder Rosie Kato wanted to bring up the code of conduct and remind board members that NC board members should treat other board members and members of the public with respect. NC board members should promote a safe environment, not engage in bullying or harassment. Regarding the outreach committee meeting, she wanted to find out what documentation allowed the committee to meet in the first floor meeting room, if they are covered for insurance because during that meeting nobody showed any concern for her, and she had to go to urgent care, so she would like to know who to submit an urgent care bill to.

IV. Approvals

Ron Migdal motioned to approve the entire approvals agenda by consent, and Jay Handal seconded. Jay Ross asked them to read through the approvals agenda. Keeton read through each item. Jay Handal asked to pull item H for discussion, because item H will require discussion of who will be on the committee, since the Brown Act negates them from making decisions in advance. Handal motioned to approve items A through G, and Eric Nakamura seconded. Jay Ross asked to pull items C, D, and E for discussion as well. The motion was amended to now approve A, B, F, G.
Handal motioned to approve item IV.C., and Migdal seconded.

Ross asked when they move to approve these funds, does it mean they’re getting paid for sure, and asked how invoices are vetted. He understood that the board does not vet invoices, the treasurer does, and asked whether everyone was comfortable with that. Handal explained that the way the funding policy works is the NC board approves the expenditure of the money, their treasurer submits invoices to the city, and they match the funding. Invoices go to the city clerk, who has it pre-approved thanks to the NC’s motion. Once they spend the money, the city’s on the hook to pay it anyway.

Migdal said that his take on it was as follows: $200 for refreshments whether it’s an actual allocation of funds or just reserving it is not so expensive an account that it must be considered, and the next two items are things they have done before so he is not sure what the issue is. Ross asked if they did a review and got a Request for Proposal for D and E, asking what the motion meant. Chair Keeton explained that it means that they are committing to approve paying vendors up to $3,000. Ross thought they needed to look into that process more.

Stakeholder Rosie Kato said she had always been asking for accountability and transparency from the board, adding that the Outreach Committee chair has a responsibility to provide an estimate or a quote, not just a flat fee.

Migdal moved to approve agenda item IV.D., Handal seconded.

Migdal moved to approve agenda item IV.E, Handal seconded.

For agenda item V, Chair Keeton explained that there were a couple people who we got their applications in time to print them out for the board, and not enough time for others. However, everyone who submitted is here tonight, so she would ask them to come up and speak for two minutes a piece.

Going back to agenda item IV.H., Naomi Kageyama explained that she did not have a chance to bring together all the applications for the homelessness committee. She has been having discussions in here and in the community for months about how important it is to have a homelessness committee. She has comments from stakeholders who could not be here today but would like to join.

Motion to form a Homeless Committee and approve committee members. 9 Yes (Keeton, Ghorbani, Nakamura, Kageyama, Shigematsu, Wright, and Handal, Migdal, Ross). 0 No. 0 Abstain. Motion passes.

Handal nominated Kageyama as committee chair, Migdal seconded.

Motion to approve Naomi Kageyama as Homeless Committee chair. 9 Yes (Keeton, Ghorbani, Nakamura, Kageyama, Shigematsu, Wright, and Handal, Migdal, Ross). 0 No. 0 Abstain. Motion passes.
she was an education researcher in Chicago and Philadelphia. She is seeking this opportunity to be more engaged in her community and neighborhood.

Stakeholder candidate Nick Burns introduced himself, and said that he lives on Ohio Ave and by day works in Financial Services in downtown LA. He moved to LA 4 years ago because his wife changed jobs, and both ended up loving the city. He had started a few years ago in grassroots advocacy around housing because it’s so expensive in LA. They wanted to make an effort to make it easier for people to live in LA and got involved with a group advocating for pro-housing policies in LA. He found the neighborhood council, and now that he’s been in the community for a few years, he wants to make it better for everybody for housing and wants to take a more active role.

Stakeholder candidate Cory explained that he lives on Barry Ave, and grew up here since he was 12. He has lived in the neighborhood pretty much his whole life, has seen place grow and change, and has direct experience with all the problems the area experiences. He has a good moral compass, and thinks he would be a good fit.

Stakeholder candidate Galen Pindell introduced himself, and lives in the 1800 block of Brockton. He has lived in the neighborhood for four years, but been coming to it for much longer. His wife was born here and grew up here, and her parents still live here. He started coming to the West Sawtelle NC about the permanent supportive housing issue, and it made him want to be a part of this board. He would just like to be on this board and try to influence it because it’s a wonderful, diverse committee with activities that bring community together.

As part of general public comment about the item, stakeholder Rosie Kato said she believes that Galen should withdraw his candidacy, and believes it is an ethics violation since he served on the PLUM committee. He requested revision of plans which they then did modify.

Ron Migdal asked all of the candidates to talk about their civic involvement up to this point.

Candidate Pindell said that he was on the board’s PLUM committee and has been doing that for six to eight months, and wants to be close to decision-making on the council. He attends the farmer’s market and events at Stoner Park. Migdal asked how long he’s lived here, and Pindell explained that he’s lived in this community for 5 years. IN LA, 18 years.

Candidate Cory explained that he was invited to come to Westlake Sawtelle NC meetings two months ago, and has been coming ever since. He goes to PLUM meetings, Board Meetings, Renters’ Rights event, concerts.

Candidate Burns explained that he is a member of Funding Housing LA, which involves showing up to NC meetings like this and working to empower people to speak up in communities. Also involved in committees at his church.

Candidate Rugland said that she had been involved in Girls on the Run, a coaching program after school. She had also been part of Teach for America, whose focus is on educational inequity and raising education issues.

Eric Nakamura thanked the candidates for applying, and asked what priority they would put the NC in their life.

Candidate Pindell said it would be third. First would be his family, the second is his job, which is tied to my family. Third would be this because this is my home and it waterfalls to his first two priorities.

Candidate Cory said that he could have been present at a work event during the NC meeting, but decided to come here instead.

Candidate Burns said that it would be a third priority for him as well: first is family, second is supporting the family. He thinks making communities more accessible to people coming there and people who already live there is important, but does not commit to things without knowing the way he will participate. Were he selected, he would not be the person driving turnover.

Candidate Rugland said that she does not have family or kids, works from home, and does not have a commute. If she did not think it was something that she would put effort into she would not do it.

Chair Keeton asked what the likelihood was that the candidates are going to run in 2019 to get on the board, and whether they would keep coming to meetings even if they do not get elected tonight. Candidate Rugland said that is something she would come back for. Candidate Burns said that he would, and added that he and his wife own a home in the neighborhood where they intend to make their life. He would also run, as it seems like a non-confrontational neighborhood council with a
lot of opportunities. Candidate Cory said that they were all at the meeting because they want to be there, and that they had seen him here before. Candidate Pindell said that he would commit to being here and to running for re-election.

Handal asked, for the three who are not appointed, what the likelihood is that they will get on a committee and work on it until the election in June. Candidate Burns said that he had actually applied to a committee and was rejected. At the time, he had considered applying to a board seat, but was too busy. Candidate Cory said that he had an active voice, and would not mind being on a committee. Candidate Pindell said that he was currently on the PLUM committee, and that the Homeless Committee interests him. Candidate Rugland echoed that, and said she has the time and motivation to be here and would appreciate being on a committee as an alternative.

Arman Ghorbani asked what the candidates would say are their two or three biggest issues or concerns in the neighborhood. Candidate Cory said that there had been a lot of infrastructure growth in the area, and he would want to make sure the aesthetics are evaluated. Also, the rise of crime, muggings, and graffitiing. Candidate Burns said that his two biggest issues were traffic and housing accessibility. He believes traffic congestion is dangerous and bad for the environment, and that housing is a much bigger problem than the NC can solve on its own. In Sawtelle in 2005, a single family house cost about $650,000. It was still not cheap, but now they go for over a million. Candidate Rugland said her number one issue was affordable housing, and the homelessness issue is a ubiquitous problem as well. Candidate Pindell said that for him, the major issues involved setbacks, people in the neighborhood being forced out due to rising rents, maintaining public areas like Stoner Park, and homelessness.

Candidate Pindell then addressed the issue that stakeholder Rosie Kato brought up, explaining that the situation was the permanent supportive housing which is what brought him to this board. He did join PLUM through multiple meetings around that project, since it is kitty corner from his house. He was against the housing building at first, then became more educated in the process of learning as a member of the committee. He did say there should be setbacks to preserve eye lines, and was very clear of where he lived in relation to the project. He said that Ms. Kato did not raise an issue at the time, and he was clear that the objections he was raising were for the good of the community.

Migdal thanked the candidates for applying and for their service in the community to this point.

By open ballot, Pindell was elected to the board. Ross added that Jian Kerendian has resigned, and that there is an open seat on PLUM so they can agendize that for next month.

VI. Treasurer’s Report
There was no Treasurer’s Report.

VII. Outreach Report
There was no Outreach Report.

VIII. Public Safety Report

Ron Migdal said that the Public Safety committee was no longer doing monthly meetings, and instead would be doing them on an as-needed basis. If the public comes to him with specific concerns, he can definitely form a meeting. He was at the Police Commissioner’s meeting, and was at the Community Police Advisory Board meeting last night: not much of significance to report.

IX. PLUM Report – all items for discussion and possible motion

Handal moved to approve agenda items IX.A, B, C, E, F, I and J. Migdal seconded. Ross asked to read out what each item was for everyone, and Chair Keeton read out each agenda item moved by Handal.

Ross explained that a representative from the Shell station was here, Steve Jameson, who was asking for a renewal. Steve Jameson introduced himself, and said he was here to request a recommendatino of approval, which Councilmember Bonin’s office has recommended. They had gone to a Zoning Authority hearing, talked to the police, and neither opposed the renewal. Migdal asked where the station was for clarification, and Jameson said it was at Santa Monica and Federal. Kageyama said that she did not feel comfortable having the two mixed-use projects not having discussion, and would like them to have a little more discussion.

Motion to approve agenda items IX.a., b., c., e., f. 9 Yes (Keeton, Ghorbani, Nakamura, Kageyama, Shigematsu, Wright, and Handal, Migdal, Ross). 0 No. 0 Abstain. Pindell ineligible to vote. Motion passes.
Handal moved not to approve agenda item IX.d., and thought it was an annual attempt to lock this board in to homogenize the board’s approach to development, denying them flexibility. He said if they approve this and a developer comes back with something reasonable and necessary, it will bite them in the back because they now have a blanket approval, and they should be looking at items one at a time. There would be no discussion moving forward since they already locked themselves in. Nakamura seconded the motion.

Migdal wondered if passing the motion obviated their ability to come back and vote on the conditions because he was thinking if this is going to keep developers from coming to them with their hand out and they can say, “Look, these are the parameters in which you have to work”, it would be good.

Board member Galen Pindell said that that was their goal at PLUM so developers from pre-planning have something in front of them before they spend any money. It was also to reduce the conversation and the time spent reviewing every project. He thought it was written in a way where it wasn’t locking them in, but rather advising developers. Handal said, just for the record, that it says the board approve the following conditions for approval for ALL construction and development projects. If the motion said “the board will recommend the following conditions”, Handal could support it. He suggested if PLUM would bring this back as a recommendation to give to developers, he would support it. Migdal said that even if they stipulate that these are the required conditions, it does not preclude them from coming back and voting on special circumstances. Ross added that developers always say they want certainty, and this is giving them what they want. PLUM has experience, and Ross thought that the arguments against supporting the motion are just generalizations, and if they need to change the conditions for a particular parcel, they can take a majority vote to change it.

Chair Keeton agreed with Handal’s reading of the motion as worded, that it would require all projects to comply with conditions to get approval. If project does not comply with these conditions, the board and PLUM will be unable to vote to approve. The wording is “the board shall”, which leaves no uncertainty.

Ghorbani agreed that the wording was definite, and recommended merging or adding conditions to the guidelines they just approved.

Handal said that he was willing to retract his motion to deny approval of this agenda item if they were willing to remand the item back to PLUM Committee to revise the wording so it is not definite and just recommending conditions, and revise wording. Ross said that they are worthless if they are just guidelines, and if there are specific conditions that they’d want to remove, to let him know, but that there have only been generalizations so far. He is willing to delay it a month and go through them. Chair Keeton said that if Ross wanted to pull the motion, he could, but in her opinion any specific directives that they require a developer to follow to gain approval will prevent them from doing anything that is not in those lines. The developers will try to follow recommendations to ease their approval.

Handal drew attention to item 3B under the standard conditions for agenda item IX.D., which said that there cannot be posters on construction walls, and that that was a property owner ordinance. He added that they can recommend that posters cannot be on construction walls, but said he would not vote for anything that interferes with property owner’s rights. He will come to PLUM and recommend to change “Shall” to “Recommend”.

Migdal asked if there was a way they could make this more emphatic than a recommendation but not an absolute irrevocable rule.

Chair Keeton called for a vote to not approve agenda item IX.D.

Motion to approve agenda item IX.d.  5 Yes (Keeton, Wright, Shigematsu, Handal, Nakamura). 2 No (Migdal, Ross). 2 Abstain (Ghorbani, Kageyama). Pindell ineligible to vote. Motion passes.

Handal moved to approve agenda item IX.i. Ross explained the project, which has already been approved by PLUM, a by-right project, with resolution deals with the landscaping plan. Migdal seconded. Kageyama wanted clarification of what was approved and if there was a zone change. Ross clarified that there was no change, and it was a by-right three-story on two lots.

Motion to approve agenda item IX.i.  9 Yes (Keeton, Ghorbani, Nakamura, Kageyama, Shigematsu, Wright, and Handal, Migdal, Ross). 0 No. 0 Abstain. Pindell ineligible to vote. Motion passes.
Handal moved to approve agenda item IX.J, Migdal seconded.

Kageyama asked for a brief description of the item for the public. Ross explained that it was a 5 story building with mezzanines, which takes advantage of the transit-oriented community incentive. The planning committee reviewed it and wanted a few changes: one additional low-income unit, and they asked that the city not require them to widen the roadway, and instead plant as landscaping. They don’t want development to get parking permits, and there would be no zone change. Handal asked if when PLUM does their report, if they could spell out that it’s already been heard, the book has been open on it, and add the lack of zone changes too.

| Motion to approve agenda item IX.i. 9 Yes (Keeton, Ghorbani, Nakamura, Kageyama, Shigematsu, Wright, and Handal, Migdal, Ross). 0 No. 0 Abstain. Pindell ineligible to vote. Motion passes. |

Chair Keeton said that they would skip ahead because Handal must recuse himself on some agenda items.

**XI. Discussion and possible motion regarding speed limits.**

Ross said that speed limits are set by how fast cars drive on the road, under state law, and that it was kind of like the robber setting the rules on robberies. He thinks that the speed limit should be set by public environment. He does not know the solution to the problem, except to repeal the law.

Chair Keeton then said that they will not be able to complete the meeting tonight thanks to the speaker breaking that was connected to the microphone utilized by all board members and stakeholders. Chair Keeton allowed a Community Partner to speak.

Janet Turner, a representative for Congressman Ted Lieu, introduced herself and said that there would be a Veteran’s Town Hall, their second annual, on Veteran’s Day, November 11. It will be a community forum with the Congressman and ten veterans with him to tell stories about the experiences they had in the service. She said that there are exciting stories, sad stories, scary stories, and funny stories, with men and women represented. Everyone is invited, but she also asks the board that if they know any veteran who they think would be a good speaker, to ask them to contact her, send her an email with one or two of their stories, then she will call them and ask more about it. Congressman Lieu is back at work: he co-sponsored the Safe Schools Improvement Act, which would direct agencies to have policies against bullying and harassment. He also co-sponsored the Expanded and Improved Medicare for All Act. And he is one of the creators of the Medicare for All Caucus and Expanded Social Security Caucus. She added that their office is always available if anyone needs any help communicating with federal agencies.

**XVII. Adjournment**

Handal moved to adjourn, Migdal seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 8:19 PM.