

South Robertson (SORO)
Neighborhoods Council

SORO Neighborhoods Council
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A Certified City of Los Angeles Neighborhood Council

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Goals 2008 Meeting Minutes
January 31, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.
Fu's Palace – 8751 W Pico Blvd.

I. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL

Victoria Karan calls the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Board members present: Christine Aghassi, Brian Bergman, Bette Billet, Harold Boch, Robyn Braun, Daniel Fink, Doug Fitzsimmons, Gary Garcia, Terrence Gomes, Anne Gross, Nahed Guirguis, Ann Hammond, Victoria Karan, Barry E. Levine, Jon Liberman, Roy Nwaiser, Marjan Safinia, Sandra Willard

Guests present: Barry Stone, Lucy (Durango Manor), Noah Bleich, Michelle, Peter Weineberger, Terry Schoenwald

II. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There is no public comment for the record.

III. PROPOSAL REGARDING DATE AND MANNER OF NEXT SORO NC GENERAL ELECTION (013108-01)

Jon reports that there are three options for Board elections: (a) June 2008, (b) September 2008, and (c) 2010. Jon moves that the Board reject option (a) and consider options (b) and (c). Harold seconds. Jon explains that the need to make such a decision is driven by the City's decision to change its procedure with respect to Neighborhood Council (NC) elections, and DONE has sent out a memo detailing a basic choice all NCs must make with regard to their elections. Jon explains that, if option (a) were to be selected, the Board must decide that before February 1, 2008. If one of the other two options is chosen, the election could either be held as previously scheduled, in September 2008, or it may be postponed until 2010. The SORONC Executive Committee recommends option (a) be rejected on grounds of being burdensome in terms of the time that would be available to handle all the needed tasks of an election, including ensuring the public has an informed choice of candidates, even though it could save approximately \$6,000 in SORONC funds.

After a full discussion of the pros and cons of each option, the Board votes on options (b) and (c):
Vote for option (b). **Vote: Y-3; N-13; A-1.**
Vote for option (c). **Vote: Y-13; N-5; A-0. Motion passes.**

IV. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE BOARD ACTION REGARDING THE BOARD'S VISION & GOALS FOR THE YEAR 2008 (013108-02)

Victoria asks guests to speak first. Their suggestions are:

- improvement to the safety of the neighborhood;
- environmental focus;

- more accountability for projects;
- take a stand about the one-way plans for Pico and Olympic – Victoria noted the Board will consider this at its February 13th meeting;
- focusing on neighborhood issues in the traffic debate over Pico and Olympic, changing what needs to be changed;
- feasibility of SORONC buying video cameras and using them, without tapes, to deter drug dealing, street racing; and
- Shenandoah—LA’s Best and youth services, children need to be picked up at 6 p.m. and there is a cost for additional supervision: \$2,700 for 180-day school year for an extension to 6:30 pm; \$4,800 for 7 p.m.

Victoria asks Board members for suggestions:

- arrows on signs for one-way lanes;
- watering of lawns in the evening;
- improved safety for students and businesses on Robertson – have SORONC buy cell phones for people to use to call about crime;
- foster relationships with LAPD and other councils;
- conduct qualitative and quantitative research to inform planning, including using internet surveys to identify priority problems in the community;
- reach out into the African-American and Latino communities for Board representation;
- fight against City Council when necessary to preserve character of the neighborhood;
- collaborate with other neighborhoods – create ad hoc committee to build that dialogue;
- participate in the LANNC, regional committee;
- urge the Palms NC Board not to shy away from taking strong stands on issues;
- encourage business development on South Robertson;
- address issues with bylaws;
- establish an ad hoc committee for reviewing the best practices from other committees and learn from others; and
- have a separate committee establish a vision statement;

Victoria reads community requests from emails:

- keep in mind Recreation Center for classes and events – Victoria added that there is a need for a Community Center, and one approach would be to extend Recreation Center events;
- have a skate-park for kids in zone 4;
- address issues of graffiti and gangs—protect the community from violence;
- oppose traffic issue;
- do something about the strip clubs;
- do something about the need for stop signs at Wentworth;
- establish a dog park;
- hold a neighborhood clean-up day;
- hold a 5-10K walk race for Robertson;
- issue simple SORONC funding guidelines; and
- from this council.

Victoria asks Board members to resume suggestions:

- place priority on public safety, cleanliness, direct communication between SORO and community;
- have general community meetings periodically, for example, with transportation officials, candidates for elected office;
- develop and disseminate information and plans on emergency preparedness, including where people should congregate in case of major earthquakes, terrorist attacks – Barry Stone clarified that the city has a program through the Fire Department, based on leads on each block;
- improve high school areas -- make things safer, address Hispanic and African-American communities;

- ensure community members are better informed, for example, residents of Hillsborough knew nothing about the strip club;
- do better in the Hispanic and Jewish communities, including schools in the Jewish community;
- address the rise in Hispanic gangs, including encouraging the mayor to step up against the graffiti problem and threats from gangs;
- provide better information and training for Board members—funding, how it works, copy of folder for rules, better two-way dialogue, include bylaws so we can function;
- economic revitalization of SORO, for example, the Crenshaw NC received grant money for this purpose, and we should do more to attract businesses to Robertson;
- conduct more effective outreach and be more relevant to the community—have a good website, a blog, better town-hall meetings;
- at the LAPD hearing about strip clubs, 600 people attended – this was generated by a tiny group of people doing outreach, and SORONC should take a position on strip clubs, be effective and take a stand – Doug put forward a report on “no on strip club”;
- conduct surveys to validate our goals and regional stands;
- address crime and safety, business development;
- be more pro-active in the community, and have a liaison, have an ear, build a better relationship with community members;
- help others meet their goals, for example, develop a dog park in the community, places we can walk to – the land at the corner of Cadillac and Robertson would be a place for a park—even though it is contaminated, we may be able to use it, and we can discuss it with Jack Wiess’ office;
- address historic preservation – we have had rapid and unchecked development at this point – for example, we could hold an improvement fair to find private funds for areas such as Pico/Union – we could look into how many are interested in this issue, cultivate a committee being established, look into CRA (Community redevelopment agency) and can we get grants, work on basic beautification issues;
- use 2008 to lay the groundwork, approach business owners, get grants, conduct smaller projects, embellishments, and get funding, so that in 2009 we can make real progress and do many things;
- Westside launch;
- an outside cinema;
- street banners;
- take back the streets;
- showcase restaurants;
- fund after-school programs;
- create master guidelines that govern the SORONC Board
- strengthen neighborhood watch, which ties into a lot of issues;
- help Shenendoah primary school and the vision problems for kids, for example, take a 5th grade class to a planetarium;
- help Shenendoah school, Robertson clients, business owners – make South Robertson a destination.;
- get more cameras to deter gangs and crime;
- deal with the City budget cuts and the strip club problem;
- when there are signs posted on lawns, take them down and recycle them;
- identify stories to tell to the press and get media attention;
- all Board members should serve as mentors at school – two volunteers are needed now;
- advertise Council meetings;
- encourage the mayor to share with stakeholders the fiscal terms for this year; and
- address gangs, surveys, skate park grant, better training for board members.

Victoria says that these suggestions will be written up, summarized, and used to inform the Board’s goal setting.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Victoria adjourns the meeting at 9:07 p.m.

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