



Approved General Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 11, 2009, 7:00pm

Hamilton Senior High School Cafeteria

2955 S. Robertson Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90034

I. Call to Order & Roll Call

SORO NC President Doug Fitzsimmons called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Board Members Present: Christine Aghassi, Brian Bergman, Harold Bock, Robyn Braun, Bette Billet, Susan Burden, Paul Del Piero, Daniel Fink, Doug Fitzsimmons, Gary Garcia, Terrence Gomes, Anne Gross, Ann Hammond, Gina LeBeaud, Barry Levine, Jon Liberman, Roy Nwaiser, Marj Safinia, Paula Waxman, Adam Wheeler

Board Members Absent: Nahed Guirguis, Jake Hakimi, Sandra Willard

Guests Present: Elizabeth Carlin, Mark Davis, Larry Hess, Zelda Hollander, Elisa Pastor, Brooke Powers, Raymond Yu

Doug Fitzsimmons
President

Jon Liberman
Vice-President

Ann Hammond
Secretary

Terrence Gomes
Treasurer

II. General Public Comment

Bette announced that the Susan Bursk award will be presented at the SORO Festival on June 7th; she encouraged people to consider nominating deserving individuals who have donated their time and talents to the community. Raymond Yu announced City-sponsored special events including the LA Marathon on Monday May 29, 7am to 8 pm, and the St. Patrick's Day Parade on Tuesday March 17. Christine reminded everyone of the upcoming election. Gary announced the Hamilton High School Career Fair would be held this year on March 19th and invited interested individuals to contact Mr. Odena.

Barry announced that Carmen Trutanich, candidate for Los Angeles City Attorney, had asked if he could come to address the SORONC Board at its next meeting. Barry suggested another option could be that the NC invite both candidates – Jack Weiss and Carmen – and arrange a discussion with them as an agenda item. Mark Davis will find out if Jack can attend. If he can, then each candidate would have the opportunity to speak for 10 minutes; if not, Carmen would be invited to speak for up to two minutes under the General Public Comment portion of the agenda.

III. Old Business

Marj moved to approve the draft minutes of the February 11, 2009 SORO NC Board meeting; Bette seconded. **Vote: 15-Y, 0-N, 5-A. Minutes approved.**

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IV. Community Reports

a. Office of Councilmember Wesson. The report was deferred as Liz Carlin was running late.

b. Office of Councilmember Weiss. Mark Davis reported on the recent billboard meeting and said that the large billboard on South Robertson has been referred to the city. The City's Department of Transportation is taking action on Recreational Vehicle (RV) parking on the east side of South Robertson; it is expected that signs will be posted next week prohibiting all-night parking. Such signs have been shown to be effective elsewhere at keeping RVs from being parked all night. Brian asked if Councilmember Weiss could come to the next Land Use Committee meeting; Mark replied this would be difficult given the upcoming election and, as an alternative, invited NC representatives to come to the Councilmember's office.

c. Officer of the Mayor. No report was made as no one from the Mayor's office was present.

d. LAPD. No report was made as no one from LAPD was present.

(Gina arrived.)

e. Robertson Activities League. Brooke Powers announced upcoming events include a Junior Olympic Skills Workshop that will be held on April 4 and an Egg Hunt at Reynier Park on April 9 that is free to the public and includes other activities including Moonbounce and face painting. The Spring Robertson Activities League (RAL) program will be held April 6th through April 10th. She also reported that the floors at the Recreation Center have been refinished. Marj invited Brooke to send flyers about upcoming events so they can be posted. Brooke introduced Tammy Wilson, who has joined the Rec Center staff as Recreation Coordinator.

f. DONE. No report was made as no one from DONE was present.

V. Committee Reports

a. Executive. Doug reported the Executive Committee met on March 5, 2009, and discussed several issues. One was ethics training. As of February 17th, SORO NC Board members who have not yet completed the training are Gary, Harold, Gina, Susan, Sandra, Adam, Paul, Roy, Jake, and (new member) Paula; Susan reported she had just done it. Doug emphasized that the training is easy and only has to be completed every two years, and he again urged everyone to complete the training before the next meeting. A second issue was Board member attendance, which has been uneven during the past year. Doug passed out a record of attendance for the past fourteen months for each Board member, and reminded everyone that the bylaws



stipulate that Board members who miss three Board meetings in a row may be removed from the Board. He stressed that participation is what is important, and attendance is a means to that end. He asked that Board members notify him in advance if they have to miss a meeting; an email to info@soronc.org or dfitzsimmons@soronc.org is an appropriate means of notification. Doug also announced that LADWP has scheduled a strategic workshop for March 14th, and he invited anyone interested in attending to speak with him about it.

Doug said he was excited to announce that the SORO NC Green Team is being revived through the leadership of Paula Waxman and will meet on March 16th. At that meeting, the Green Team is expected to elect co-chairs and decide to broaden the scope of the Green Team to include environmental issues within community as well as clean-up. Anyone interested in joining should contact Paula. Larry Hess is expected to serve as Co-Chair. The Board will formally select Green Team leadership at the April Board meeting.

b. Budget Committee and Treasurer's Report. Terrence reported a cash balance of \$80,164.90 and an unallocated amount of \$25,847.80. He added that some items have just been approved for disbursement, thus are not yet reflected in the Treasurer's Report. Anne said the local Robertson Library needs money; Librarian Carol Duan could not come to this meeting to provide specifics. It was agreed this request should be referred to the Education Committee for consideration. Terrence talked about submitting brief descriptions of Best Practices to the City to help show what types of activities the NC has helped to fund and what impact the funding is having; that letter was sent earlier in the day. Doug added that a few more things will be added to today's submission. Christine asked Terrence to follow up so that if there is a hearing, NC representatives would have a chance to elaborate directly.

c. Bylaws. Roy reported the Committee did not meet during the past month. Jon said DONE has asked for more specific information on what changes to the bylaws were approved by the NC Board and when.

d. Land Use & Economic Development. Brian said the outcomes from the meeting this past month were reflected in the motions before the Board this evening.

e. Education. Barry said the Committee would be proposing an artist-in-residence program for Shenandoah Elementary School. The motion will be forthcoming. Currently, 15 students are being mentored. He asked if it might be possible to fund nutrition for children after school and said that, if so, a motion would be prepared.

f. Public Safety. Harold apologized for the Public Safety Committee not having met for the past three months, explaining that he has been away. He said he would get the Committee meetings back on track before the next Board meeting.

g. Outreach. Marj reported that, on February 23, the Outreach and Public Safety Committees had had a second joint meeting with representatives of local neighborhood groups within the SORO



boundaries. On the whole, the meeting was productive. Different neighborhoods face different challenges, and so we need to ensure that meetings are structured in a way to help ensure they are constructive. The Outreach Committee is also working on the idea of organizing a debate. “SORO Walks at 7” is now viable because the clock has moved ahead, so it is light outside at both 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.. Harold posted lawn signs in the neighborhood for tonight’s meeting, and he asked each Board member to put up at least one sign. Terrence will buy dry erase markers so it is easy for each Board member to change the dates each month.

h. Ad-Hoc Committees. Doug said none of the ad hoc committees had met since the last NC Board meeting.

Marj asked if attendance is to be taken at each committee meeting; Doug said each Board member is supposed to be a member of at least one Committee and to attend at least one Committee meeting per month.

VI. New Business

a. Motion not to oppose the expansion of 1250 Edris Drive to 8 rental units (Land Use/GB031109-3). Brian introduced the motion. Ann asked if it were consistent for the NC to have opposed the Beverlywood homeowner who wanted to take down a tree, even though it was within City code, while not opposing this expansion. Brian said that, in principle, the NC does not oppose a proposed action that is within code; however, the difference between this situation and the tree situation is that, to the best of our knowledge, there is no community opposition in this case. Daniel said that Joseph Dabby had told them there was no opposition. Brian emphasized that the language of the motion is “not to oppose” the expansion. Christine moved to approve the motion; Brian seconded. **Vote: 18-Y; 0-N; 2-A. Motion approved.**

b. Motion supporting changes to the proposed Pico/Robertson Senior Housing and Parking (Bergman/GB031109-4). Brian introduced the motion, explaining that the City is about to send out the Request for Proposal (RFP). He said that what is proposed is a mixed-use parking and senior development. Brian had asked for more parking, because that would be advantageous for small businesses in the neighborhood. To accommodate more parking, it would be less expensive to build up to a 60-foot height rather than build underground parking. Because the adjacent temple is at a height of 60 feet, the vast majority of those at the Land Use Committee meeting agreed the structure should go up to 60 feet.

Roy asked if tax dollars were going to be used for this project; Terrence said grants are coming from the state. Roy said current available parking is not used, and parking rates are \$2 per hour until 10 p.m. Roy said that, if there is to be more parking, it needs to be affordable. Mark Davis explained the \$2 per hour rate reflects a city-wide raise in rates. Terrence noted that, with senior housing, it is expected there will be



more demand for parking due to caregivers attending the seniors. Brian added that current underuse may be related to the fact that the lot is not clearly advertised as a public lot. Daniel noted that other communities have large lots for visitors to community, and SORO should, too. Jon expressed appreciation to Councilmember Weiss for being responsive to the NC's request to have input into the RFP. Ann asked if additional parking would mean any change in the number of housing units; Brian said no. Ann asked about safeguards for security and noise, etc. Christine said the parking would be on the first two floors, with housing starting at the third floor, and there would be adequate measures for both security and quiet.

Christine moved, and Daniel seconded, that the motion be amended to say: "This motion should not be construed as either supporting or opposing the proposed project. " **Vote: 15-Y, 3-N; 2-A. Proposed amendment approved.**

Brian clarified that government funds are available because it is senior housing. Paul said he does not see a down side to having senior housing in the community. Jon moved to approve the motion, as amended; Marj seconded. **Vote: 17-Y; 0-N; 3-A. Amended motion approved.** Brian will send the letter immediately after this meeting.

c. Motion to comment on YULA Boys High School Draft Environmental Impact Report (Land Use/GB031109-5). Two letters dated March 11, 2009, were distributed to NC Board members: one from the Homeowners Opposed to Museum Expansion (HOME), signed by Susan Gans; the other from Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker LLP, signed by Elisa Paster. (Both are on file.)

Jon introduced the motion. He said the position of the neighborhood group is that the proposed expansion of the Museum of Tolerance and YULA should be considered as one project, not two. And, the community in the neighborhood of YULA and the Museum has expressed some concerns that are not being taken into account. Community resident Zelda Hollander read a detailed letter she had written about her experiences with YULA and the Museum and passed around a photo of school busses parked in red parking zones in the area.

Elisa Pastor, representing the Museum of Tolerance, spoke. She explained that YULA and the Museum of Tolerance have two different environmental impact reports. Terrence asked her about the experience of about busses parked in red zones. Brian clarified that her position is the projects are separate and have no bearing on each other. She reiterated that the school project is separate. Brian asked at what point were they separated. She said that regardless of organization, these are separate projects. She said they were separated last year. Roy said we should do what residents want, and Christine agreed. Jon said he has sympathy for both sides, but there is an intertwining of interests of the Museum and the school that suggests they are not entirely separate. Roy moved to approve the motion; Marj seconded. Two NC



Board members recused themselves. **Vote: 12-Y; 4-N. Motion approved.**

(Gina and Jon left.)

d. Motion to reallocate \$550 to the Operations Budget

(Gomes/GB031109-6). Terrence explained the proposed reallocation covers (a) \$250 that was expended for the December 20th holiday event organized by Councilmember Wesson and (b) extension to the end of June to cover SORO NC Board meeting refreshments at \$100 per month. Terrence moved to approve the motion; Robyn seconded.

Motion approved unanimously.

Report of Office of Councilmember Wesson. Liz Carlin reported back on the question raised at last month's meeting about how the City determines fines for those who post illegal billboards. She said fees are based on a percentage of gross receipts of the companies for the posted billboards; thus when they add billboards without telling anyone, they are still taxed just on the basis of the original number. Liz added that electronic billboards are not billed on a different basis. Liz also passed out information from LA Department of Water & Power about their lower rates for low-income customers on power and other utilities. Liz mentioned there is a power point presentation about water reclamation and related topics relevant to communities like SORO that are in Ballonna Creek. Christine asked about the marijuana business on South Robertson; Liz said the moratorium on medical marijuana has been extended for six months, so this business will be investigated. Paul asked about trash collection in his area, as trash including large furniture items is piling up in his area; Liz suggested he call City services at 311.

VII. Adjournment

Doug noted that the regular SORO NC Board meeting date, the second Wednesday of the month, falls on the 8th in April. Because some committees meet during the first week of the month, it would not be possible to agendize for the April meeting anything coming out of those Committee meetings and still be in compliance with Brown Act requirements for 72-hour advance posting. April 8th is also the first day of Passover, and we aim not to schedule meetings that might conflict with religious holidays. Therefore, based on a show of hands, it was agreed that the meeting would be postponed by one week to Wednesday, April 15th.

Ann moved to adjourn the meeting; Jon seconded. **Motion approved unanimously.** Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.