



Approved General Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 15, 2009, 7:00pm

Hamilton Senior High School Cafeteria

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

Doug Fitzsimmons
President

Jon Liberman
Vice-President

Ann Hammond
Secretary

Terrence Gomes
Treasurer

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I. Call to Order & Roll Call

SORO NC President Doug Fitzsimmons called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

Board Members Present: Brian Bergman, Harold Bock, Bette Billet, Susan Burden, Doug Fitzsimmons, Gary Garcia, Terrence Gomes, Anne Gross, Ann Hammond, Gina LeBeaud, Barry Levine, Jon Liberman, Marj Safinia, Paula Waxman, Sandra Willard

Board Members Absent: Christine Aghassi, Robyn Braun, Paul Del Piero, Daniel Fink, Nahed Guirguis, Jake Hakimi, Roy Nwaiser, Adam Wheeler

Guests Present: Elizabeth Carlin, Mark Davis, Brooke Powers, Raymond Yu

II. General Public Comment

Raymond Yu announced that Wednesday, April 22nd is Earth Day, and there will be observance centered in Koreatown. Ken Siers, County of Public Health, said he has materials available for those interested. Paula Mann announced Palms Presbyterian Church will have a film festival. Kit Loring said the US Census Bureau will be in the area to verify addresses and asked everyone to let the community know that the information they gather is confidential. Bette reminded everyone of the SoRo Festival on June 7th and said she hoped each NC Board members would nominate one person for the Susan Bursk award. Marj reminded all of the April 30th, 7-9 pm, Skirball Center debate; Candidates Koretz and Vahedi will debate for 1st hour, followed by Candidates Trutanich and Weiss. Paula Waxman announced tomorrow night is the first meeting of the Green Team at 7:00 p.m.

- a. Candidate for City Attorney Carmen Trutanich: not present.
- b. Candidate for City Attorney Jack Weiss: not present.
- c. Robertson Public Library: no representative present.
- d. LA Bureau of Sanitation: no representative present.



III. Old Business

Marj moved and Barry seconded approval of the draft General Board Meeting Minutes of March 11, 2009. **Vote: Y-13, N-0; A-2. Motion approved.**

IV. Community Reports

- a. **Office of Councilmember Wesson.** No representative present.
- b. **Office of Councilmember Weiss.** Mark Davis reported on two projects. First, the Councilmember is trying to establish preferential parking on South Robertson Boulevard, but it has not yet been accomplished. Many residents have written letters advocating it. Second, there is a new pilot project for energy-efficient streetlights. Some 25 or 30 lights have been identified as possibilities for the project. He is working on this with SoRo's Green Team.. Harold asked when action might be taken on the parking situation; Mark said they are waiting for DOT to act and, hopefully, there will be action within the next month. Marj asked about the status of the request for speed bumps on Gibson between Robertson and Canfield, a request generated by a resident, supported by the NC and referred to Jennifer Badger, Mark's predecessor; Mark said he would follow up and report back.
- c. **Office of the Mayor.** No representative present.
- d. **LAPD.** No representative present.
- e. **Robertson Recreation Center.** Brooke Powers reported that the Robertson Activities League (RAL) Spring Break program went well; about 30 people came per day.
- f. **DONE.** Rose Ibenaz explained that ethics training is very important and, based on her records, three SORO NC Board members have not yet completed the training; this must be done by April 25th, and the Board of Commissioners will review the record. Doug noted that, based on his records, five NC Board members have not yet completed the training, yet this still is the best record of any Neighborhood Council. Rose also encouraged the NC to make a best practices presentation, A meeting on May 30th will focus on emergency preparedness.

V. Committee Reports

- a. **Executive.** Doug said that the NC Board needs to decide which of the options to adopt for 2010 elections. All Board positions are up for election. The immediate task is to go through the list of options; recommendations are needed for the May NC Board meeting so a decision can be taken. Doug suggested the NC put together a transitional plan to capture NC institutional memory, just in case there is complete turnover of Board members, as well as the possibility of an ad hoc committee – or even standing committee – to handle the transition. Rose said the City Council abolished term limits, so there are no



limitations on current NC Board members standing for re-election. Rose said the NC can decide to hold elections for every Board seat every two years, or every four years, or stagger open seats. Doug said the Board decided two years ago to stagger the seats. Doug suggested the question be referred to the Bylaws Committee, because they have expertise on this topic, and he undertook to ensure there would be a meeting on this issue before the next Board NC meeting.

b. Budget committee & Treasurer's Report. Terry reported that this committee will meet April 23rd at 8pm at the Recreation Center. The purpose is to consider any reallocations needed for the current fiscal year budget and to prepare a proposed budget for the 2009-10 fiscal year, which must be approved by the NC Board at its May meeting and submitted to the City by June 1st. Regarding the current fiscal year, Terry noted that we can consolidated storage as we have enough space in the larger bin to save us \$115 per month; he added that DONE requires us to inventory everything in storage. Terry noted that DONE has organized a new grant program, and he emailed the information to all Board members.

c. Bylaws. No report was made as no representative was present.

d. Land Use. Marj reported that the monthly Land Use Committee meeting was passionate; both parties connected with the proposed expansion of the Museum of Tolerance expressed strong feelings. Doug noted that we have a code of conduct that binds us all, in all meetings. Committee Chairs are fully empowered to ask any individual to leave if he or she acts inappropriately. Brian announced that hearings will be held April 23rd at 200 North Spring Street about a proposed 23-unit project on Holt and a 12-unit project on Wooster. There will be a meeting on April 23rd regarding EXPO Phase I.

e. Education. Barry reported that the NC has received a letter from a stakeholder expressing concerns about some alleged activities at Hamilton High School. This raised questions about what role the NC should have with respect to LA Unified School District. Gary said that if anyone has a problem with him or the school, please talk with him.

f. Public Safety. Harold reported that this Committee discussed two issues; both are reflected in motions to be considered at tonight's meeting.

g. Outreach. Marj reported that May 1st will be kick-off day for the SORO Walks at 7 program. The NC will be doing community outreach at the June 7th SoRo Festival. Copy for the SORO NC website is needed from each Committee chair by the next Board meeting. Doug asked every NC Board member to make sure they are on a committee.

h. Green Team. Doug said they will be meeting tomorrow



VI. New Business

a. Motion to request street-corner mailboxes (GB041509-3). Doug introduced the motion to authorize a letter to the Postmaster and to Representative Waxman requesting his support in reinstating as many street mailboxes as is practicable. A member of the public spoke to the motion. He noted that he works in a nearby senior center. He said the Post Office implemented removal of some arbitrary number of street-corner mailboxes with no public comment, and it is difficult for some people, including many elderly, to go to the post office to mail letters. Anne noted trash is put in some street-corner postboxes. Terrence said the SORO NC Board was given notice that mailboxes were going to be removed. Brian moved to approve the motion; Jon seconded. **Vote: 14-Y, 1-N, 0-A. Motion passed.**

b. Motion to request changes to the Century City Neighborhood Traffic Mitigation Plan (GB041509-4). Doug introduced the motion to fully support a proposed letter to Councilman Weiss regarding traffic issues affecting neighborhoods in the SORO NC and urge the council to take immediate action to eliminate the 600 vehicle per hour caps on Motor Avenue. Doug said there has been a dramatic increase in traffic due to change in Motor. Representatives of the Beverlywood Homeowners' Association, Larry and Scott, said that many other homeowner groups have combined forces to oppose the proposed plan. They reported that City studies show that, before traffic patterns on Motor were changed, about 24,600 cars per day (January 1998) traveled the street; improvements displaced about 9,000 cars (17,900 cars in 2004). As a result, Beverlywood has about 4,000 more cars per day. They said the impact of removing the current cap on Motor of 600 vehicles per hour could be addressed by improved timing of traffic lights and left hand turn arrangements. They noted that Century City guidelines say no street should be helped to the detriment of another street. Anne said alternating one-way streets work in the eastern United States; why not here. It was also noted that the proposal for Pico Blvd. would cut out two freeway exits. Gary said we should reach out to others in the community. Brian moved to approve the motion, Jon seconded. **Vote: 13-Y; 1-N, 1-A. Motion passed.**

c. Motion to allocate \$2500 to support the Artist in Residence program at Shenandoah Elementary School (GB041509-5). Barry presented the motion for SORO NC to fund the LA's Best After School Arts Program with \$2,500 for a ten-week Artist in Residence program, beginning in the September 2009/June 2010 school year. He introduced Harold Haislip of LA's Best. Harold explained that LA's Best is now in its 20th year. It began at 10 sites and is now at 180 sites, serving thousands of children with numerous activities. Program participants meet two hours per week and conclude the 10-week program with an event to validate skills the children have learned. The program results in significant improvements in children's self-efficacy. Marj asked how participants are identified; he said they are self-nominated. Bette asked about potential participation of other schools in the SORO community; he clarified that it can only be done at one of LA's Best schools, so only



at Shenandoah. Gary commented that the costs seemed reasonable for an after-school program at a middle school. Anne related a story about the motivational aspect of arts programs, noting that, for many students, it is the arts program that brings them to school. Susan clarified after-school programs are also good for parents. The question arose as to whether this program would need to be done during the current fiscal year or whether approval could be given now for an expenditure for next fiscal year; Rose said she did not know. Ann moved that the motion be amended to stipulate that, if necessary based on advice from DONE, the program would be funded to begin during the current fiscal year; Gina seconded. **Motion to amend approved unanimously.** Ann moved to approve the motion as amended; Gina seconded. **Amended motion passed unanimously.**

(Gina left.)

e. Motion to provide a neighborhood purposes grant of \$5000 to the LA Parks and Recreation 501(c)(3) for the Summer RAL program (GB041509-7). This item was taken out of order to accommodate Brooke Powers' schedule. Jon recused himself, and Harold presented the motion to sponsor the Summer 2009 RAL Program for \$5000, including \$1000 from our 2008-2009 fiscal year and \$4,000 from our 2009-2010 fiscal year. Brooke gave details of how the program would be structured this summer. DONE clarified that the Recreation Center does not have to be a 401 c 3 organization; a grant can also be approved for a City Department, where it is a city-to-city transfer. Doug proposed an amendment to the motion, so the wording would be "If feasible the funding shall be by means of a Neighborhood Purposes Grant. If this proves unworkable due to time constraints...;" Ann seconded. **Vote: Y-11, N-0, A-2, R-1. Motion to amend approved.** Doug moved to approve the motion as amended; Susan seconded. **Amended motion passed unanimously.**

d. Motion to allocate \$540 for snacks for the SCATCH program (GB041509-6). Barry presented the motion for SORO NC to fund SCATCH snacks with up to \$540 for the balance of this school year and the entire next school year. Questions were raised about how it would be paid and what organization would be responsible for safety of food served. It was agreed details would need to be worked out. **Motion tabled.**

f. Motion to provide \$1500 to renovate LAFD Station #58 by purchasing tile and supplies to replace the front office floor and a small flat screen LCD TV for the office (GB041509-8). Jon introduced the motion to authorize the NC to purchase the following items for LAFD #58: (a) flooring tiles and supplies in an amount not to exceed \$1000; and (b) a flat screen LCD TV for an amount not to exceed \$500. Questions were raised about whether the television would be used for work or recreation; Jon clarified that it was for recreation. Doug proposed an amendment to the motion dropping proposed funding for the television; Ann seconded. **Vote: 11-Y, 3-N, 0-A. Motion to amend**



approved. Ann moved to approve the motion as amended; Doug seconded. **Amended motion passed unanimously.**

g. Motion to support the revisiting of financial disclosure requirements for Neighborhood Council Files (GB041509-9). Doug introduced the motion that the SORO NC support the motion of Councilmember Janice Hahn to revisit the issue of financial disclosure in relation to the NC Council File motions and recommend that the currently approved Form 54 be replaced with a more suitable form and to authorize a letter to Councilmembers Wesson and Weiss asking them to support Councilmember Hahn's motion. Terry said that, in his view, the form is not so intrusive; Doug replied that many others find that it is. Bette moved to approve the motion, Robyn seconded. **Vote: 13-Y, 0-N, 1-A. Motion approved.**

VII. Adjournment

Bette moved to adjourn the meeting; Ann seconded. **Motion unanimously approved.** The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.