



Approved General Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 21, 2010 7:00 p.m.
Hamilton 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 7:04 p.m.

Board Members Present: Kimber Smith, Harold Bock, Robyn Braun, Bette Billet, Paul Del Piero, Jon Liberman, Joe Gjonola, Paula Waxman, Brian Bergman, Terrence Gomes, Marj Safinia, Barry Levine, Gerald Chavarria, Roy Nwaiser, Doug Fitzsimmons, Ann Hammond, Nahed Guirguis, Caitlin Lowe, Gary Garcia

Board Members Absent: Baila Romm, Anne Gross, Adam Wheeler, Susan Burden

Guests: Eric Weiser, Mark Davis, Brooke Powers, Gil Sharone, Sara Costin, Liz Carlin

II. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Doug welcomed all present to the first Board meeting of the new year.

Ann reported that the broken water main on her street, which she and a neighbor had brought to the NC's attention at the August 2009 meeting, has been replaced. She asked Paula, as NC representative to DWP, to convey thanks from those on her block for the professionalism of the DWP crew and especially the consideration they showed in minimizing inconveniences to the neighbors.

Gil Sharone, who recently opened a medical marijuana dispensary, said his surveillance camera has picked up a lot of activity that he has reported to LAPD. He stressed that he cares about the community and will continue to be vigilant.

Gaby Collins reported EXPO line construction continues to progress. EXPO extension to Santa Monica has been under consideration for three years. The environmental impact report is now posted on EXPO's website. The next step is final approval, then work can get underway. She said the Board will meet to decide on February 4th at 2:00p.m.; she invited all to attend and let their views be known. In addition, she reported EXPO will be partially opened by the end of this year. The station at Venice and Robertson will be completed by 2011. Phase 2, if approved in February, would start construction in early 2011, and be completed in 2015. Jon suggested EXPO could make a presentation to the Land Use and Economic Development Committee. Brian asked if there was litigation for Phase 1. Barry mentioned that Herb Wesson and Mark Ridley-Thomas are on the Board. Sara Costin introduced herself and said she is also working on the EXPO outreach team.



She invited anyone who supports the EXPO project to talk with her outside the meeting.

III. OLD BUSINESS

Draft Board Meeting Minutes of December 17, 2009 (Hammond/GB012110-1). Marj moved to approve; Nahed seconded. **Vote: 13-Y; 0-N; 4-A. Draft minutes approved.**

IV. COMMUNITY REPORTS

a. Office of Councilmember Wesson (Carlin). Liz thanked everyone for support of Winter Wonderland, and said Councilmember Wesson appreciated it very much. More families from SORO neighborhoods than ever before participated, 24 in all, of which 15 were from Shenandoah Elementary and the rest from Robertson Recreation Center. Regarding medical marijuana facilities, Liz said this week's Council vote did not pass with 12 votes so must come back to full Council this week. One issue is whether facilities will have to be outside a 500 or 1,000 foot radius of a school, public park, public library, religious institution licensed child care facility, youth center, substance abuse rehabilitation center, or other medical marijuana collective. Another issue is wording regarding preference to 186 established facilities that have operated continuously since September 2007 and have not been cited by the City as a nuisance. Barry said if a proposed stipulation that a facility may not be located on a lot next to, across the street or alley from, or with a common corner with a residentially zoned lot, including mixed use residential building, all facilities on South Robertson would have to close. Regarding the SoRo Festival, Liz said the City has changed its policy for street closures; it will pay only half of the estimated \$15,000 cost, so the Festival will cost SoRo, Inc. \$7-8,000 more than in the past. Liz said Council Districts have only \$100,000 to cover all street closures during the year. Herb had asked the City to consider the SoRo Festival a city-wide event, but because it covers two CDs rather than three, the request was denied. Terry asked what street closure costs entail; Liz said Department of Transportation personnel, signage for no parking, and barricades. For the benefit of new Board members and guests, Doug briefly explained the relationship of SORO Inc. and SORO NC. Gerald thanked Liz for posting notice of the CERT training.

b. Office of Councilmember Koretz (Davis). Mark introduced Eric Weiser, the new liaison between SORO NC and the CD-5 office; Mark said he will still be involved, including with the SoRo Festival. Brian thanked Mark for all he has done, especially for bringing the Councilmember to the most recent Land Use meeting. Harold asked about painting Fire Station 58; Mark said they are still raising money. Eric's email is Eric.weiser@lacity.org.

c. Office of the Mayor (Badger). No report was made as no representative was present.

d. Office of Senator Price (Bernal). No report was made as no representative was present.



e. LAPD Report (Gray & Gonzalez). No report was made as no representative was present. Harold noted that both SLOs attended the January Public Safety Committee meeting.

f. Robertson Recreation Center (Powers). Brooke said basketball and winter classes are going on. Barry asked if there was a winter RAL program; Brooke said yes, with 32 participants. Caitlin asked if any programs were now available for children; Brooke said yes and enumerated them. Caitlin asked about community service opportunities. Brooke said forms requesting rooms for NC meetings at the Recreation Center need to be filled out by NC Committee chairs and given to her by January 31st or the meetings cannot be held at the Center. Regarding funding for the Recreation Center that the NC had approved in 2008, Terry said the container is being sent and receipts are still needed for the RAL payment.

g. DONE (Ibanez). Doug said Rose could not attend, and he read aloud an email from her: (1) the Mayor's Office has launched an interactive online budget survey, the "LA Budget Challenge," so City residents can provide direct input on budget issues the City faces; and (2) on Tuesday, January 19th, the Board of Neighborhood Council Commissioners approved Westwood (WWNC) as the 90th Neighborhood Council. Jon gave background on the online budget survey and encouraged people to participate and make their voices heard. Doug said the Regional budget day is tentatively scheduled for March 13th.

V. Committee Reports

a. Executive Committee. Doug spoke to the importance of ending NC meetings no later than 9:30p.m. He said options are starting earlier than 7:00 p.m. and having faster meetings. No sentiment was expressed for starting earlier. Roy suggested New Business precede Committee Reports. Jon suggested a Consent Calendar. Doug explained a Consent Calendar allows anyone to call for a vote on an agenda item, triggering a full discussion; motions for which no vote is called would be considered approved at the end of the meeting. Joe said he had experience with this in another body and found it added time and complexity. Joe asked if there might be Brown Act implications; Doug said none that he has been able to discern. Bette asked if Consent Calendars had been used successfully by other NCs; Doug said not to his knowledge. Doug stressed we take on controversial issues, and it is important not to limit transparency or discussion. Kimber asked if we can limit ourselves in our comments; she said a potential drawback to a Consent Calendar would be if people do not read materials beforehand, then motions may be passed without people understanding the action. Marj asked if we could try a Consent Calendar for one month. Brian suggested Committee Chairs suggest an item be considered by consent. Marj said perhaps Committees could report their votes. Joe expressed concern at having some items by consent and others not. Jon suggested someone prepare a motion; Brian agreed.

(Paul arrived.)



b. Treasurer's Report. Terry distributed a two-page summary showing \$70,849.76 unallocated of the budgeted \$106,265. Terry said the Budget Committee would meet February 11, at 7:00 p.m., before the 8:00 p.m. Executive Committee meeting.

c. Land Use & Economic Development (Bergman). Brian reported Councilmember Koretz came to the last Committee meeting and discussed covered issues related to medical marijuana dispensaries, land use between 18th Street and Hamilton High, and the environment. Brian said there will be a special Land Use Committee meeting to discuss ordinances. He said Rueben Caldwell will also come regarding the proposed overlay zone; plans will then be presented to the full Board for its consideration.

d. Education (Levine & Braun). Barry reported the Artist-in-Residence program is set to start in March. The Committee has not met since the last NC Board meeting.

e. Green Team (Waxman & Hess). Paula reported on the E-waste battery drive. She stressed that batteries, especially rechargeable, are toxic to the environment. She said free fruit trees from Tree People will be distributed on January 23rd. On January 31st and on February 14th, the Green Team will pick fruit from neighborhood trees to give to the SOVA food bank. The Green Team has broken ground on the garden at Hamilton High and also installed compost bins. Paula said a decision will be made by February 15th on the grant proposal previously considered by the NC. Paula reported Speaker Karen Bass' office has asked for donations for a homeless shelter with which the Speaker has a relationship.

f. Public Safety (Bock & Hammond). Harold said Committee discussions included the motions now before the Board, halfway houses, and a prospective meeting with the City Attorney's Office about street vendor noise in residential neighborhoods.

g. Oureach (Safinia). Marj said the Committee would not meet during January because a Candidate Information session was being held at the Committee's regular meeting time. SORO cards saying the NC meets on Thursday are now available. Roy asked about the new website; Marj said it will involve training so Board members can update information themselves. Paula complimented the current website. Ann asked about election coordination with other NCs; Marj said she has not heard anything and will call her contacts on Friday. Marj added the \$2,000 the NC allocated will probably not be used

h. Board Development/Ad Hoc Election Committee. Roy said seven new people attended the January 14th Candidate Information Session and the meeting provided them good information. Roy said there had been implementation problems with lawn signs and with Walking Man, the company hired to distribute flyers door-to-door. Paul reported six lawn signs he posted in his Zone have gone missing.



VI. New Business

a. Motion to Write a Letter to the L.A. County Agricultural Commissioner Requesting Removal of Poison Bait Traps until Proper Use Established (Waxman/GB012110-3). Paula said the Green Team approved unanimously the proposed letter. She introduced Steve Coker, who researched the situation regarding unmonitored poison bait traps he discovered along both sides of the I-10 freeway. Steve showed the Board photos of the traps and their labels. He read questions he had posed to County authorities and described his independent research. Steve said the County has no explanation as to why the traps are there and no intention of monitoring or retrieving them. Steve said the neighborhood should have been informed, alternative steps could have been taken including education, and traps could have been posted in secure areas; but these traps – which can be harmful if inhaled/touched/eaten – are close to sidewalks, and containers are open at top and bottom. Board members confirmed there are rats in that area, but it is not clear whether there are more or fewer since the traps were placed. Board members questioned if the proposed letter is directed to the correct department, if questions asked by phone are the same as in the letter, and if the letter is clear as to desired action. Joe said he is concerned about asking for traps to be removed without sufficient information, then perhaps having to put them back if answers justify their placement. Marj suggested County officials be invited to attend a Green Team meeting and discuss the situation. Paula said she is concerned that the area is not protected and that humans and pets are at risk. Roy said he was concerned that the County had a reason for placing these traps and their removal might carry greater risk. Ann said Marj's suggestion for the Green Team to meet with the County carried the best possibility for quick resolution. Paula withdrew the motion and will refer back to the Green Team to seek a meeting with the County.

b. Motion to approve 2010 General Board meeting calendar (Fitzsimmons/ GB012110-4). Doug introduced the motion to hold NC meetings on the third Thursday of each month in 2010: February 18, March 18, April 15, May 20, June 17, July 15, August 19, September 16, October 21, November 18 and December 16. Based on Executive Committee research, five dates fall on days significant for major religions represented within SORO boundaries. Ann said Baila had indicated May 20th is a major date for some; Bette said she thought we should move that date. Marj said December 16th is major date for her religion. Nahed said we are a very diverse community. Joe said the research indicated the proposed schedule did not conflict more than once with any one religion's significant days. Roy moved to approve the motion; Robyn seconded.
Vote: 17-Y; 1-N; 0-A. Motion approved.

c. Motion for translation services for the 2010 SORO NC election (Lieberman/ GB012110-5). Jon introduced the motion, explaining that it responded to the City Clerk's inquiry. Jon confirmed that the \$50 cost is for the whole day and clarified that it is documents that will be translated. Joe asked for a breakdown of native languages within SORO boundaries; Ann said 20% of our community speaks Spanish at home and 16% speak IndoEuropean languages. Doug proposed an amendment to translate into



Hebrew instead of Farsi; Nahed seconded. **Vote: 4-Y; 10-N; 4-A. Motion to amend not approved.** Roy moved to approve the motion; Terry seconded. **Motion approved unanimously.**

d. Motion to approve up to \$2700 for community outreach for 2010 SORO NC Board elections (Nwaiser/GB012110-6). Roy introduced the motion, as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Election Committee, saying he did not support it because he considers that \$2700 more, on top of what has already been approved (up to \$5,000), is too much for the NC to spend on the election. He said the lawn sign vendor has offered to print the new set of signs for free, charging only for shipping costs, since the experience in January had been so poor. Marj suggested the flyer be revised to include the SORO NC logo so it would be easily recognized as related to SORO NC business; Doug agreed to take on flyer design so it could be included. Marj suggested lawn signs be printed in the SORO NC green color and said green can be easier to see than red. Marj also suggested we use money to buy space in the LA Times for flyer information instead of distributing it door-to-door.

(Gary arrived.)

Roy proposed an amendment to have the back of the flyer say more about the NC rather than provide the same information in Spanish. Marj said the flyer could be modified to include information about the election in both English and Spanish on one side, with outreach information on the other; Joe seconded. **Vote: Y-2, N-17, A-0. Proposed amendment not approved.**

Marj proposed that, if possible, language could be added specific to outreach, with English on one side and Spanish on the other side; Nahed seconded. **Vote: Y-15, N-4, A-0. Proposed amendment approved.**

Based on the extensive discussion, Ann proposed the motion be further amended to: allocate up to \$1,000 in total costs; (revised 1) order 10,000 copies (@\$.035 + nominal delivery fee) of a redesigned flyer, black print on white paper, including the SORO NC logo; (revised 2) print lawn signs, 2-sided, green print, English only, paying shipping costs only; (revised 4 and 5) have SORO NC Board members distribute copies through the schools and houses of worship, hiring a professional distribution company to distribute to SORO NC businesses only. Paul seconded. **Proposed amendment approved unanimously.**

Ann moved to approve the motion, as amended; Jon seconded. **Motion, as amended, approved unanimously.**

(Roy left.)

e. Nomination of Jon Liberman as SORO NC Representative to C-PAB (Hammond/ GB012110-7). Ann explained that, at its January meeting, the Public Safety Committee reconsidered the candidacy of all Board members who had expressed interest in serving in this capacity: Baila, Jon and Terry. Baila withdrew herself from consideration. Ann said a majority of Committee members present voted to nominate Jon as



representative. Barry moved to approve the motion; Nahed seconded.
Motion approved unanimously.

(Roy returned.)

f. Nomination of Terrence Gomes as Alternate SORO NC Representative to C-PAB (Hammond/GB012110-8). Ann said that a majority of Public Safety Committee members present at the January meeting voted to nominate Terry as alternate representative. Ann asked Terry about his lack of attendance at Public Safety Committee meetings. Terry explained his work schedule had precluded his attendance, but his schedule was about to change so he would be able to attend in future, and he planned to do so. Barry moved to approve the motion, Robyn seconded. **Vote: Y-18. N-1, A-O. Motion approved.**

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:42p.m.
