



Approved Special Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 18, 2010, 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 Special Meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

Board Members Present: Brian Bergman, Bette Billet, Harold Bock, Robyn Braun, Susan Burden, Gerald Chavarria, Paul Del Piero, Doug Fitzsimmons, Gary Garcia, Joe Gjonola, Terrence Gomes, Nahed Guirguis, Ann Hammond, Barry Levine, Roy Nwaissar, Baila Romm, Marj Safinia, Kimber Smith, Paula Waxman

Board Members Absent: Anne Gross, Jon Liberman, Caitlin Lowe, Adam Wheeler

Guests: Miriam Cherner, Fabiola Gonzalez, Brian Kite, Larry DeMers

Doug Fitzsimmons
President

Jon Liberman
Vice-President

Ann Hammond
Secretary

Terrence Gomes
Treasurer

II. General Public Comment

LAPD Sgt. Mark Durrell wants NC support for a carnival; the need would be to shut down South Robertson for four days. Most other LAPD department carnivals shut down streets for five days. The plan would be to shut down between Cattaraugus and Beverlywood for Cadets, RAL, and Jeopardy program. How much would it raise? He doesn't know. Another division netted \$34,000. Jeopardy is a new program to impact at-risk kids, including those from Hamilton and Shenandoah. Money raised would go back to community. He is thinking about April 16-18th. He is not looking for money, just support to hold it on the street. Doug recommended he work with the Public Safety Committee.

Terry said Rose Ibanez is not here because she has moved to the Housing Department, so we have no representative at DONE. Terry also wanted to honor the late Charmette Bonpua of Councilmember Wesson's office; Terry said she was great to work with and described some of the impact she had on our neighborhoods.

**South Robertson
Neighborhoods Council**

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III. Old Business

None

IV. New Business

Doug prefaced motions by describing the City funding situation, wherein severe cuts are being proposed in many areas. This includes stripping Neighborhood Councils of rollover funds (which, for SORO NC, is \$61,000), and perhaps providing little money next year. The motions



tonight aim to allocate those rollover funds in a way that they will have maximum impact. It is proposed to allocate these funds to SORO, Inc., which was the precursor to this Neighborhood Council. We have maintained close ties and a close working relationship with SoRo, Inc., including on the SoRo Festival. They have raised money through the Festival, which they then make available for us to direct how funds will be spent. By allocating funds to SoRo, Inc., we would be able to continue to direct these funds and the projects for maximum impact on the community. Larry DeMers, Treasurer of SoRo, Inc., will be here shortly to answer any questions.

Nahed asked how we would continue to control specific expenditures. Doug said we would continue to pass motions with specifics of how to spend the money allocated within the category. Kimber asked if SoRo, Inc. would require a motion from us to spend the money; Doug said yes. Kimber asked if they are accountable to us; Doug said yes. Harold asked if they are legally accountable to us, and would there be a contract. Doug said we do not envisage a contract, but they are obliged to spend according to what is designated in the motions.

Larry DeMers arrived, introduced himself, and provided background on SoRo, Inc. SoRo, Inc. is here to support the South Robertson Neighborhood Community. It was originally envisaged that there would be two organizations: one part of the City, and one an independent 501c3 to support that body. Marj said to Larry that there were questions about whether SoRo, Inc. can spend it independently. Larry said yes and no. SoRo, Inc. is an independent body, but it has a rule that all funds raised by the Festival must be spent in the way SORO NC decides. SoRo, Inc. would enter into a management agreement with SORO NC exactly how the funds would be managed. Roy asked if there was a way to ensure the money would be spent that way if there was a change in leadership of SoRo, Inc. Larry said that the NC was established to serve the community, and for the NC Board to decide what was in the best interests of the community; in his view, the community should not be penalized for SORO NC's fiscal responsibility. Kimber asked Larry to describe what "project management" means. Larry said the Festival is a good example; SoRo, Inc. provides a manager, Christel Wilson, and then implements the Festival in partnership with SORO NC. SoRo, Inc. is also eligible to get grants, can get good prices on items, can work with flexibility and efficiency. The agenda of SoRo, Inc. is set by SORO NC. Roy asked if SORO NC could later come back and ask for the money be spent on something else. Larry said we need to do a little homework and be sure the agreement is consistent with the City charter. Marj said it is not inconsistent for NCs to have partnerships with 501c3s; it allows them to get matching funds. Marj added that community leaders have commented how lucky we are to have SORO, Inc. Doug said the NC system was created through neighborhood initiative, by the voters, not by City Council.

Kimber asked how these proposals match our overall priorities. Marj said that any profits from the Festival will be earmarked for SORO NC to spend however it would like. Marj added that the annual survey of stakeholders puts economic revitalization of the Robertson corridor as a priority. Gerald asked if this arrangement is going to work with DONE. Marj said, and Larry concurred, that DONE ultimately has to approve it. Roy said he does



not agree with this approach. Paul said that he does not like being in this situation either, but if we don't do this, the money will disappear. Baila said Larry had said there is a precedent in the Festival. Brian and Marj and Terry said that none of these projects have been created for this purpose; these are projects that have been budgeted for and have been in the planning stages for years. Bette said NCs were created out of a secession movement by communities that felt the City Council was not paying attention to communities; and it is important that we protect our community. Ann said we are safeguarding funds we have been granted in the past, rather than risking being penalized for our past fiscal responsibility. Joe asked how this is safeguarding; Larry replied.

Christopher Koontz, from Councilmember Koretz's office, explained that any funds not encumbered would be swept into general City funds, to meet creditor's demands for a cushion. He said the City is in violation of what amount its creditors require it to keep in reserves. Doug said these funds would then otherwise go to service City debt.

a. Motion to approve \$30,000 for SoRo Festival (Safinia/SB021810-1). Marj introduced the motion. Roy asked Larry for estimated costs of the 2010 Festival; Larry said costs are likely to run \$40,000 compared to last year's \$33,000, due to the City cutting back services previously provided for free, but some of the grant funding previously approved by the City may be withdrawn. Marj repeated that any profits from the Festival will be available to SORO NC to determine specific investments in the community. Marj moved to approve the motion; Bette seconded. **Vote: 13-Y; 2-N; 4-A. Motion approved.**

b. Motion to approve \$6,000 for Emergency Preparedness plan and supplies (Hammond/ SB021810-2). Ann introduced the motion. Baila described briefly the envisaged emergency preparedness fair and rough estimated costs; Gerald described briefly the outline of an emergency preparedness plan and rough estimated costs. Preliminary planning has begun on both of these undertakings, and details will be forthcoming, and estimated costs passed out to those in attendance are illustrative only. Roy expressed concern about how the money will be spent. Robyn said she thought this was a very valuable cause, but expressed concern about where supplies would be stored; Gerald said they are working on this. Robyn asked if this might be kicked off at the Festival; Doug said yes, and we can fill in the details later. Baila said specifics would be presented soon. Baila moved to approve the motion; Kimber seconded. **Vote: 16-Y; 1-N; 2-A. Motion approved.**

c. Motion to approve \$5,000 for the school Fresh Fruit program (Levine/SB021810-3). Barry introduced the motion. Roy asked if funds would be evenly distributed across schools; Barry said it would be equitably distributed on the basis of number of students per school. Ann moved to approve the motion; Harold seconded. **Vote: 15-Y; 1-N; 3-A. Motion approved.**

(Robyn left.)

d. Motion to approve \$9,000 for a brochure to promote community development and attract businesses (Bergman/SB021810-4). Brian introduced the motion. Marj added details of discussions with



Councilmember Wesson's office about this approach. Roy asked about how many brochures this would buy; Brian said these would be given to Councilmembers' offices, restaurant associations, real estate agents, and others who could influence businesses to move into the community. These would be color, high gloss. Doug said it is difficult to estimate how many brochures this would buy until the brochure is designed. Baila asked why this would be good during a time of economic depression; Terry and Brian said that is exactly the time to attract developers. Kimber asked why more money is not allocated to the brochure and less to the Festival; Marj said profits from the Festival can also be applied to this project. Gerald asked about details of the strategy; Brian and Marj invited Gerald to attend Land Use meetings. Gary asked why we cannot just move ahead; there is flexibility later on to determine the details. Bette moved to approve the motion, Paula seconded. **Vote: 13-Y; 2-N; 2-A, 1-R. Motion approved.**

e. Motion to approve \$3,000 for two community clean-up projects (Bergman/SB021810-5). Brian introduced the motion. Terry moved to approve the motion, Bette seconded. **Vote: 13-Y; 2-N; 2-A, 1-R. Motion approved.**

f. Motion to approve \$12,000 for tree planting, educational events on "green" issues, and Hamilton High garden maintenance (Waxman/SB021810-6). Paula introduced the motion. Roy asked for clarification on how many trees would be purchased; Paula explained this would cover costs of trees throughout SORO, and maintenance throughout the first year, by which time they would be established. Roy asked about field trips; Larry said all funds have been taken away from schools for field trips. Marj moved to approve the motion, Joe seconded. **Vote: 16-Y; 1-N; 1-A. Motion approved.**

IV. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.



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Approved General Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 18, 2010, 7:30pm(immediately after Special Meeting)

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 8:50 p.m.

Board Members Present: Brian Bergman, Bette Billet, Harold Bock, Susan Burden, Gerald Chavarria, Paul Del Piero, Doug Fitzsimmons, Gary Garcia, Terrence Gomes, Nahed Guirguis, Ann Hammond, Barry Levine, Baila Romm, Marj Safinia, Kimber Smith, Paula Waxman

Board Members Absent: Robyn Braun, Joe Gjonola, Anne Gross, Jon Liberman, Caitlin Lowe, Roy Nwaiser, Adam Wheeler

Guests: Brooke Powers, Chris Koontz, Eric Weiser, Liz Carlin, Robin Young, Brian Kite, Larry De Mers

II. General Public Comment

Gary Garcia, Hamilton High School Principal, announced an upcoming career fair at Hamilton and distributed a flyer to all present. He asked that if anyone could help with the fair, the school would appreciate it. Gary also gave a brief summary of Hamilton students' recent achievements, the role of the jeopardy program being conducted by the LAPD, and wanted to let neighbors know to expect group runs from program participants, in uniform, from the high school to Reynier Park.

Brian Bergman requested Motion A on the agenda be moved forward to accommodate the schedule of the applicant, There were no objections.

VI. New Business

a. Motion that SORO NC support applicant's request for variance at 1540 Cardiff Avenue (Land Use/GB021810-4). Brian presented and summarized the motion. The applicant spoke and requested the variance be approved and summarized her deep, long commitment to South Robertson. Harold moved to approve the motion; Gerald seconded. **Vote: 14-Y, 0-N, 2-A. Motion approved.**

III. Old Business

a. Draft Special Meeting Minutes of February 18, 2010 (Hammond/GB021810-1). Ann distributed copies of the draft minutes to the Board, and all read them. Baila moved to approve; Bette seconded. **Vote: 14-Y, 0-N, 2-A. Minutes approved.**

b. Draft Meeting Minutes of January 21, 2010 (Hammond/GB021810-2). Marj moved to approve; Nahed seconded. **Vote: 14-Y, 0-N, 2-A. Minutes approved.**

IV. Community Reports

a. Office of Councilmember Wesson (Carlin). No report was made as no representative was present. Terry said the Councilmember's Chief of



Staff, Charmette Bopua, had died unexpectedly, and this was a great loss to the community as well as to the Councilmember.

- b. **Office of Councilmember Koretz (Weiser).** Chris Koontz, Deputy for Councilmember Paul Koretz, introduced himself to the Board. He said on Monday, February 22nd, there will be a Council budget meeting at Hamilton High Cafeteria. Doug encouraged people to attend.
- c. **Office of the Mayor (Badger).** Doug said that Jen had to leave earlier in the evening, but asked him to remind everyone that online budget surveys are due by February 28th; leave your survey with Gary Garcia, and Jen will pick them up from him. Jen said the NC Regional Budget Day is March 13th, and the Mayor's Day of Service will work with the Big Sunday Organization this year for a May 1st event; Jen invited those interested to attend a planning meeting on February 23rd, and she thanked Paula for already recommending projects.
- d. **Office of Senator Price (Bernal).** On February 26th, Senator Price is chairing an informational hearing of the Joint Legislative Committee on Arts. Nomination forms are available for 26 "SHeroes," outstanding women who reside in the 26th Senate District and who have demonstrated community leadership and commitment.
- e. **LAPD Report (Gray & Gonzalez).** No report was made as no representative was present.
- f. **Robertson Recreation Center (Powers).** Brooke said programs are ongoing, the Easter Egg Hunt is scheduled, there will be a Spring RAL program but she does not know yet if there will be a summer RAL. Bette asked if it were possible for the NC to send a letter of commendation for Brooke; it was suggested that individual emails would be appropriate.
- g. **DONE Report (Ibanez).** Doug announced that Rose Ibanez has moved elsewhere and we no longer have a liaison assigned. He said that DONE is being hit hard in the City's budget crisis.

V. Committee Reports

- a. **Executive (Fitzsimmons).** Doug said the Executive Committee meeting had focused on budget issues.
- b. **Treasurer (Gomes/GB021810-3).** Terry reported that, before commitments made at the Special Board meeting earlier in the evening, \$70,261.17 had been unallocated of the budgeted \$106,265. Sue asked if businesses can contribute; Doug said SoRo, Inc. can raise money but SORO NC cannot.
- c. **Land Use & Economic Development (Bergman).** Brian urged everyone to come to the very important Land Use Committee meeting where the proposed plan for the community will be discussed. He said it is normally the first Tuesday of the month. Marj encouraged everyone to read the background materials before the meeting.
- d. **Education (Levine & Braun).** Barry said the Artist in Residence



program started on Tuesday, Terry said the dance program is also starting.

e. Green Team (Waxman & Hess). Paula said the Sierra Club spoke at the Green Team's last meeting about the club's study of current garbage disposal technology; current landfills serving the City of Los Angeles will be at capacity by 2011. The Hamilton electronic waste collection program had been extremely successful, packing a huge truck to the brim; this event will be repeated. Paula announced the \$5,000 City Beautification Grant had been awarded to the Green Team, even though there was a lot of competition and scarce funds. Two days of fruit picking gathered almost 1000 pounds of fruit. Canfield donated worms to the new Hami Garden.

f. Public Safety (Bock & Hammond). Harold said he is still working on developing a community program with Fire Station #58, but discussions have been complicated by changes in Captains and the fact that there are different Captains for each shift. Ann reported that all the equipment had been procured for the Station, and that thanks in part to Alcon lighting, the amount spent was less than the \$4,400 approved ceiling.

g. Outreach (Safinia). Marj said there will be a motion next month about banners.

h. Election (Nwaiser). Ann said plans are proceeding on track with the election process.

VI. New Business

b. Motion that SORO NC recommend that the City draft a new wireless telecommunications ordinance (Land Use/GB021810-5). Brian introduced the motion. He said there is a push to have the City re-write the ordinance, and SORO NC is one of the last Westside NCs to consider supporting such a step. Kimber moved to approve the motion; Bette seconded. **Motion approved unanimously.**

c. Motion to establish the position of Assistant Treasurer (Fitzsimmons/GB021810-6). Doug introduced the motion. Ann moved to approve it; Bette seconded. **Vote: 15-Y, 0-N, 1-A. Motion approved.**

d. Motion to approve up to \$1,600 for Hamilton High School Student Security (Hammond/GB021810-7). Ann introduced the motion. Gary clarified that funds were not actually for High School security staff, but that this program benefits the community as well as students. Paul moved to approve the motion; Nahed seconded. **Motion approved unanimously.**

e. Motion to use the approved soronc.org website banner & background artwork for Green Team email newsletters, event flyers and informational website (Waxman/GB021810-8). Paula introduced the motion, explaining that it was especially important to be able to use the logo on the newsletter. Baila moved to approve the motion; Ann seconded. **Motion approved unanimously.**

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.