



Approved General Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 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 Vice President Jon Liberman called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

Board Members Present: Kimber Smith, Harold Bock, Robyn Braun, Bette Billet, Jon Liberman, Joe Gjonola, Paula Waxman, Brian Bergman, Baila Romm, Terrence Gomes, Marj Safinia, Barry Levine, Roy Nwaiser, Ann Hammond, Gary Garcia

Board Members Absent: Paul Del Piero, Anne Gross, Adam Wheeler, Gerald Chavarria, Doug Fitzsimmons, Nahed Guirguis, Caitlin Lowe, Susan Burden

Guests: Brooke Powers, Robin Young, Brian Kite, Oliver Summers, Lottie Williams, Brenda Boulton, Wendy Greuel, Megan Matlock, Howard Kim, Ron Waldman, Captain Durrell

II. General Public Comment

Maegan Matlock announced SurveyLA, Los Angeles' first citywide survey of historic resources, begins in April. LA's Westside is one of the first areas to be surveyed. The survey team has been researching historic places and taking pictures of properties, but cannot do all the research by themselves. She invited the community to contribute to this work by going online to www.SurveyLA.org to complete the interactive form and share stories.

Jon announced the Treasurer's report would be heard so the SORO NC Treasurer could attend another meeting.

V. Committee Report

b. Treasurer's Report (Gomes/GB031810-2). Referring to a package of materials available to all present, Terry said three forms contained therein, entitled "Commercial Prepaid Card Quarterly Reconciliation Forms," constitute verification that SORO NC is up-to-date with its audit report submissions to DONE; he said the DONE website does not have staff to update their website, which shows two SORO NC audit reports overdue. Terry said the package also included a new set of funding documents, in accord with new DONE guidelines, to be completed for motions involving expenditures. He said DONE has accepted recommendations for Demand Warrants to be required, on a trial basis, for amounts larger than \$2,500 rather than for amounts larger than \$1,000, so NCs can now charge up to \$2,500 on the NC credit card, thereby giving greater flexibility and speed to NCs processing payments. This new procedure will be on trial until the end of the year; if successful, DONE will adopt the change permanently.

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Terry said he also included in the package two budget reports: one is up to March 8th and includes rollover funds; the other is after March 8th with no rollover. The updated budget shows a total of \$43,400 available until June 30, 2010, of which \$6,750 is budgeted for Operations, \$11,250 for Outreach, and \$25,400 for Community Improvement. Terry said that, in his view, no funds should be reallocated out of Operations because the NC needs that money to function administratively. Marj asked if Demand Warrants need to be submitted by April 15th for any remaining expenditures during this fiscal year, which ends June 30, 2010. Terry said that is correct, to give DONE sufficient time to process them. Marj asked Terry to explain what has happened since February 18th. Terry said that DONE sent an email on February 24th saying all NCs were required to submit by March 10th (later revised to March 8th) all paperwork on motions passed before January 29th that were to be covered by rollover funds, and no motions passed after January 29, 2010, could be paid for with rollover funds. Terry referred again to the package of papers, pointing out the March 5, 2010 letter to DONE, specifying eight expenditures totaling \$25,326.87 to be charged to rollover funds, all of which had been approved before January 29, 2010. Terry also explained that any individual Demand Warrant for a single payment of more than \$20,000 requires City Council approval and an additional 6 to 7 weeks processing time. Marj asked if DONE is likely to approve the March 5th submission; Terry said yes. Terry said all motions passed at the February 18th Special Meeting required rollover funds and were declined by DONE because they had not been passed before January 29th. Jon clarified that the NC cannot pass motions for expenditures during the remainder of this fiscal year that exceed \$43,400 in the aggregate. Marj clarified there will be no rollover in future years, so whatever funds not allocated at this meeting and not spent for Operations by June 30, 2010, will no longer be available to the SORO community. Jon said he and Terry estimate \$800 per month for administrative expenses for storage, food, and phones between now and June 30th and propose \$2,000 should be reserved for Operations.

(Brian arrived.)

Barry asked about the deficit on the Education Committee budget and asked where it came from. Terry said he would have to look into it and report back.

II. Public Comment (resumed)

Howard Kim of the Census Bureau in Culver City announced that April 1 will be Census Day. He emphasized that completing the census questionnaire is important to make sure communities receive all the benefits to which they are entitled. His area of responsibility covers Marina del Rey to Hollywood, and he wants to hire people to help with the census. Community events to publicize the census are coming up, people will be available to help whoever needs it, and translation services will be available. Bette asked what information is required by law; he said only 10 questions need to be answered, with the principal question being how many people are in your family. He said the Federal government allocates \$1,000 to the city for every person living here. He added that he hoped no one would be offended by the questions about ethnicity.



Wendy Greuel, City Controller, said the City's population has been undercounted in the past, and that has cost the City millions of dollars. She said if people return their forms now, it will cost the Government \$0.42 per form. If they do not, it will cost the Federal government \$56 per person to send a representative door-to-door.

Regarding the audit of DONE, she said DONE was found to be ill-equipped to handle financial matters and some NCs lacked sufficient expertise in financial procedures. She supports increasing the NC card limit from \$1,000 to \$2,500 as cards are faster and leave a more reliable paper trail than other mechanisms. She also suggested using an imprest account. The audit also found significant discrepancies across the City Controller's office, DONE and NCs with respect to how rollover funds are defined, and lack of clarity about accounting for property NCs purchase. She noted that DONE was originally established for outreach rather than financial operations. She encouraged everyone to read the audit report, available on the City Controller's website. She also encouraged everyone to contribute to the discussion and decision-making process about the future of DONE. She said her primary question is how the City can best support the NCs.

Regarding the City budget, she said the City has a projected deficit of \$212 million for this year and more than \$400 million for next year; every day of inaction costs \$1 million. She does not support using the City's emergency fund of \$220 million to help ease the situation, as it is earmarked for natural not man-made disasters, and the City is required to have this 5% reserve fund or be downgraded further by rating agencies. She said the City always has to borrow money at the beginning of a fiscal year because revenues such as property taxes arrive later in the fiscal year. Currently, the City needs to borrow about \$550 million. She is looking at alternative ways to make the City more efficient and effective.

(Harold left.)

Brian Kite introduced himself, saying he is a candidate for the SORO NC Board. He spoke about his background and issues about which he is concerned.

Robin Young asked for expressions of support for the proposed Farmdale station, at Farmdale and Exposition. This station might displace a motel currently on the corner to accommodate parking, but no residences would be affected.

III. Old Business

Draft General Board Meeting Minutes of February 18, 2010 (Hammond/GB031810-1). Marj moved to approve the draft minutes; Baila seconded. **Vote: 8-Y, 0-N, 5-A. Minutes approved.**

IV. Community Reports

a. Office of Councilmember Wesson (Carlin). No report was made as no representative was present.



b. Office of Councilmember Koretz (Weiser). No report was made as no representative was present.

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). Senior Lead Officer Mario Gonzalez reported on his area and that of SLO Maria Gray, who was unable to attend. He said statistics indicate that, in SLO Gray's area, crime has dropped 26%. He said recently, on Corning, a pizza deliveryman was held up; a suspect, who does not live in this area, has been apprehended. He reported a recent shooting incident on Venice and Cattaraugus involved gangs and a victim who would not give up an IPOD phone. Another recent incident involved an altercation over recycling trash. He said with additional cuts in City schools, courts and other areas, we will all have to see what impact there might be on crime and public safety.

f. Robertson Recreation Center Report (Powers). Brooke reported the Center received a grant for the LA Kids program that enables the Center to offer classes free to the community for 10 weeks for children aged 5-18. There will be a soccer clinic at Reynier Park and a summer camp program, in which they will accommodate as many children aged 9 to 14 as possible. A snack program begins April 15th, with free snacks provided between 3:15 and 3:30p.m. The free Egg Hunt will be held April 3rd, 12-3pm. The Spring RAL program will be held for four days instead of five because of the Cesar Chavez holiday.

V. Committee Reports

a. Executive (Fitzsimmons). No report was made.

c. Land Use & Economic Development (Bergman). No report was made.

d. Education (Levine & Braun). No report was made.

e. Green Team (Waxman & Hess). No report was made.

f. Public Safety (Bock & Hammond). No report was made.

g. Outreach (Safinia). No report was made.

h. Election (Hammond). No report was made.

VI. New Business

a. Motion to support LAPD sponsoring a Carnival on Pico Blvd (Hammond/GB031810-3). Ann introduced the motion, asking the LAPD and vendor (Signature Events and Catering) representatives for information requested at the March 1st Public Safety Committee meeting: letters of support from other communities where Carnivals had been held and information about net proceeds from Carnivals. No documents were provided. Ron Waldman, the vendor representative, said his company has done Carnivals for 11 LAPD divisions, and the Carnival March 12-14 netted \$29,000. He said another carnival will be held March 19-21. He said he is trying to raise money for every LAPD division that wants to do a Carnival. The proposed Carnival for the West LAPD division would close down Pico from La Cienega to Sherbourne, from Wednesday at 9:00 p.m.



to Monday at 6:00 a.m.; the Carnival would be open to the public on Friday (5pm-1am), Saturday (noon to 11pm) and Sunday (noon to 10pm). The proposed dates are May 6 to 8, 2010, determined by the vendor's availability. He said his company is ranked #1 in the state for safety, and his is the only firm with which the City will contract for these events. Kimber asked about routing traffic. He said they would start re-directing traffic at Robertson. Kimber said that, around Shenandoah and Bedford Streets, there are very busy markets, especially on Thursdays and Fridays, and residential streets are narrow. Bette said she considered the proposal a serious misadventure in terms of activities and timing and should be reconsidered. Robyn said she was concerned about timing vis a vis the SoRo Festival on June 6th; she said many people in this community cannot support two such activities so close in time and location. Capt. Durrell said he has been looking for other locations, but they are now up against a time frame; papers need to be filed for street closure 45 days before the event, and the vendor would not be available again until November. Jon asked what programs proceeds would support, and how much would come to the SORO community; Capt. Durrell said proceeds support all youth programs targeting at-risk children, students at Shenandoah, and prevention of gang activity. Further discussion centered on alternative sites, time and vendor for such an event, emphasizing support in principle for helping to raise funds for LAPD programs alongside concern with potential adverse impact of such a Carnival on the community and on the SoRo Festival if too close in time and location. Ann moved to table the motion, Robyn seconded. **Vote: Y-10, N-3, A-0. Motion tabled.**

Jon said that all motions related to funding, that replaced motions approved at the February 18, 2010 Special Board meeting subsequently returned by DONE, would be considered next.

d. Motion to approve \$10,000 for SoRo Festival (Safinia/GB031810-6). Marj introduced the motion, noting this would be against the \$11,250 Outreach budget currently unallocated. Bette moved to approve the motion, Marj seconded. **Motion approved unanimously.**

e. Motion to approve \$6,000 for Emergency Preparedness plan and supplies (Hammond/GB031810-7). There was a great deal of discussion about how the NC might approach the rest of the motions to be able to meet the intent of the NC's approvals at the March 18, 2010 Special Meeting within the reduced amount of funds now available. The relative merits of the five remaining motions were discussed. Ann moved to amend this motion to stipulate \$5,000 instead of \$6,000, to keep within available remaining funds; Bette seconded. **Vote: 12-Y, 0-N, 2-A. Amendment approved.** Ann moved to approve the motion, as amended; Bette seconded. **Vote: 12-Y, 1-N, 1-A. Motion approved as amended.**

f. Motion to approve \$5,000 for the school Fresh Fruit program (Levine/GB031810-8). Barry withdrew the motion on the basis of insufficient funds.

g. Motion to approve \$9,000 for a brochure to promote community development and attract businesses (Bergman/GB031810-9). Ann moved to approve the motion; Kimber seconded. Jon moved to amend the wording of the motion to stipulate a study would be part of brochure



development; there was no second. **Vote: 9-Y, 4-N, 1-A. Motion approved.**

h. Motion to approve \$3,000 for two community clean-up projects (Bergman/GB031810-10). Ann moved to approve the motion; Joe seconded. **Motion approved unanimously.**

i. Motion to approve \$12,000 for tree planting, educational events on “green” issues, and Hamilton High garden maintenance (Waxman/GB031810-11). Marj proposed an amendment to the motion to reallocate \$2,350 from the Operations budget to have adequate funds in the Green Team budget for this motion; Ann seconded. **Proposed amendment approved unanimously.** Ann moved to approve the motion, as amended; Barry seconded. **Motion as amended approved unanimously.**

b. Motion to send letter to West LAPD Traffic Division requesting ordinance enforcement (Romm/GB031810-4). Baila introduced the motion, emphasizing that the aim is to ask City officials to enforce existing laws. Terry moved to approve the motion; Robyn seconded. **Motion approved unanimously.**

c. Motion to elect an Assistant Treasurer (Hammond/GB031810-5). No one has volunteered for this position, so no action was possible.

Jon said the Board would need a special meeting to approve draft minutes from this meeting so paperwork on motions entailing funding could be submitted before DONE’s April 15th deadline. Jon proposed the NC Board meet at the Hamilton High School Cafeteria on April 1, 6:00 p.m., before the 6:30 p.m. Candidate’s Forum.

VII. Adjournment

Jon adjourned the meeting at 9:55 p.m.