



Approved General Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 11, 2009, 7:00pm

Hamilton Senior High School Cafeteria
2955 S. Robertson Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90034

I. Call to Order & Roll Call

Doug Fitzsimmons called the meeting to order at 7:14 p.m.

Board Members Present: Christine Aghassi, Bette Billet, Robyn Braun, Paul Del Piero, Daniel Fink, Doug Fitzsimmons, Terrence Gomes, Anne Gross, Ann Hammond, Gina LeBeaud, Barry Levine, Jon Liberman, Marjan Safinia, Paula Waxman (new), Adam Wheeler, Sandra Willard

Board Members Absent: Brian Bergman, Harold Bock, Susan Burden, Gary Garcia, Nahed Guirguis, Jake Hakimi, Roy Nwaiser,

Guests present: Elizabeth Carlin, Mario Gonzalez, Brooke Powers, Raymond Yu, Dave Johnson, Simone Taylor, Jack Humphreville, Ken Siers, Rose Ibanez, David Berger, Rabbi Nachum Shifren

II. General Public Comment

Raymond Yu announced that Los Angeles Mayor Villaraigosa and District I Councilman Reyes are running for reelection in the City of Los Angeles on Tuesday, March 3, with polls open from 7am to 8pm, and the Los Angeles Fire Department is holding a Saint Patrick's Day Parade on March 17. Ken Siers of the County of Los Angeles, Department of Mental Health spoke about community resources available. David Berger, Candidate for City Attorney, and Rabbi Shifren, Candidate for State Senate, each spoke for two minutes.

III. Election of New Board Member

Paula Waxman, resident of Zone 9, introduced herself and responded to questions from Board members. Her prepared statement was provided to all present. Christine moved and Jon seconded the nomination. **Vote: Confirmed unanimously.** She was seated and participated in all subsequent discussions and votes.

IV. Old Business

Draft General Board Meeting Minutes of January 14, 2009 (Hammond/GB021109-1). Ann noted one name correction on the draft minutes. Jon moved to approve the corrected draft minutes of the January 11, 2009 SORO NC Board meeting; Christine seconded. **Vote: 12-Y; 0-N; 2-A. Minutes approved.**

Doug Fitzsimmons
President

Jon Liberman
Vice-President

Ann Hammond
Secretary

Terrence Gomes
Treasurer

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V. Community Reports

a. Office of Councilmember Wesson. Field Deputy Liz Carlin distributed handouts and reported on the billboard issue. She referred interested individuals to the city website link. She said that there is currently a moratorium on additional billboards, and the City is drafting an ordinance to protect itself from lawsuits. The Department of Safety now has a plan to survey all billboards during the next three years, including taking measurements and determining which are categorized on-site and off-site advertising. The focus was initially on five major corridors: Wilshire, Olympic, Pico, Ventura, plus one other. Councilmember Wesson has added La Cienega and Venice to the survey. Next they will survey billboards in CD 5 and CD 11, because this is where there has been greatest explosion of billboards. In other news, Liz noted that the Councilmember is actively involved in observing African-American Heritage Month, working on a law to spay and neuter dogs, and assisting in developing procedures on home foreclosures.

Liz conveyed heartfelt thanks for support and assistance at Councilmember's Winter Wonderland observance in December; about 650 children came, which is more than ever before. Liz also congratulated SORO NC on putting together the Candidate Forum for CD-5. She noted that it is very helpful to have a partner who wants to do things.

Anne asked if there is thought being given to making rules about the size and style of billboards. Liz said yes, and they are also considering leveraging larger fines for those out of compliance. Daniel said we should use as a model the ordinance and enforcement of Beverly Hills because there is no billboard problem there. Daniel added that whatever the laws are, they have to be enforced, or it undermines all laws. Paul asked when fines would be increased; Liz said there is a moratorium for six months. Marj asked about medical marijuana ordinances; Liz will email information to the NC Board. Jon suggested illegal billboards should be torn down immediately, and the City Council should require those posting illegal billboards to put up public service announcements instead. Barry asked if the City is collecting on fines; Liz said the Department of Building and Safety is responsible for collecting fines; she will find out how that happens and report back. Doug asked how the City plans to enforce the moratorium, noting that signs are still going up; Liz said there are not enough resources for enforcement, but the Building and Safety Department is working on it.

b. Office of Councilmember Weiss (Davis): There was no report, as Mark Davis was not present.

c. Office of the Mayor (Badger): There was no report, as Jennifer Badger was not present.

d. Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD): As Maria Gray was not present, Mario Gonzalez gave the LAPD report. He thanked the SORO community again for its support regarding the potential loss of officers



assigned to West LA. However, he said, they are now losing two Captains, Delatorre and Craig. He reported the West LA Division recently caught two burglars and, last week, there was a barricade situation on Melrose: Crazy for Life (CFL) gang members approached a man retrieving items from his car, then shot him. LAPD caught two suspects in the CFL case; however, Mario noted, sometimes they are back on the street after going through the court system. He said Hamilton High has been relatively quiet.

(Gina arrived)

Mario reported that LAPD has had good communication with neighborhood groups. Christine asked Mario to thank the departing Captains for their service to our community. Marj asked about the recent situation on Cattaraugus; Mario said it was unfortunate, and he will get emergency contact information for the local schools so that, in future, they can lock down schools until nearby police action is over. Marj asked if the new LAPD Captain could attend the next neighborhood meeting. Paul expressed appreciation on behalf of his neighborhood residents for all LAPD does. Ann thanked Maria for coming to meet with neighbors on her block and for a very effective response to a recent attempted burglary in progress on her block. A member of the public asked about LAPD response time, noting that, in his case, he waited 45 minutes for police response; Mario explained response time depends on priority of the call in light of other calls and traffic. Mario added that a large percentage of burglar alarm calls are false alarms, so that makes them lower priority. A member of the public, who lives in the Pickford and Sherbourne area, asked if SORO NC had thought about hiring a firm to patrol all of SORO NC. Brooke asked LAPD for continuing support for the Robertson Activities League (RAL) program; Mario said it is a great program.

e. Robertson Activities League (Powers). Brooke Powers, Facility Director, announced the Spring Break will be April 6-10, 2009, and she will run the RAL program. Liz Carlin has promised a bus, and Brooke will ask Mark Davis for a bus as well. A Spring egg hunt will be held at Reynier Park 3 to 7 pm on April 9th. Also, a Junior Olympic skills event will be held, at a site to be determined, to encourage more people to be involved. Brooke said winter basketball is going well.

f. DONE. Rose Ibanez introduced herself as the new DONE coordinator. She reported that the previous coordinator, Barry Stone, has moved to the Valley as Project Coordinator. Rose is responsible for seven Neighborhood Councils (NCs). She said that she has been with DONE for two years, and she has worked for the City for 20 years. She announced there will be a regional meeting on February 14th, and the Department of Transportation wants to hear from NCs about how they can establish more of a relationship with NCs. The 2010 elections and grant proposals will also be on the agenda. On February 21st, all NC budget representatives should attend a meeting to hear results of the recent City budget survey. The City has collected more than 5000 surveys from citizens and 800 surveys from Board members. At the February 21st meeting, the representatives will meet with the Mayor. Rose presented a Certificate of Commendation to Terrence for being on the planning committee for the budget meeting. Rose also reported that she is working with Jon on the



proposed changes to the SORO NC bylaws. Jon asked Rose about the purposes grant; Rose replied that the City Council has approved it. Rose gave her contact information: Phone is 213-473-6464 and E-mail is Rose.ibanez@lacity.org.

Jon moved to change the order of items on the agenda, moving New Business before Committee reports, to accommodate guests; Paul seconded. **Motion approved unanimously.**

VI. New Business

a. **Motion to reallocate older, unspent funds (Gomes/GB021109-3).** Terrence summarized the results of the Budget Committee meeting, held February 4th. He moved to reallocate to the General Fund unspent funds previously allocated as follows: (a) \$300 for the SORONC Retreat, approved July 9, 2008; (b) \$100 for Certificates, approved March 12, 2008; (c) \$700 for lawn signs, approved April 11, 2007; (d) \$250 for Recreation Center improvements, approved February 21, 2007; and (e) \$2,240 for Green Team clean-ups, approved January 10, 2007. Gina seconded the motion. **Motion approved unanimously.** Jon asked Terrence to announce in future when funds are sunseted. Christine moved, Marj seconded. All agreed.

b. **Motion to formally and publicly oppose Measure B (Aghassi & Willard/GB021109-4).** Doug reported on a conversation he had had with the City Attorney. The City Attorney expressed concern about NCs taking positions on issues that are on the ballot. Most specifically, concern centers around the NC possibly spending money related to an issue, and that concern rises the closer it is to the ballot date.

Christine introduced the motion, noting that representatives on both sides of the issue were present, as well as the DWP, which would be responsible for implementing the program, if approved. She asked DWP to speak first, then the side supporting Measure B, followed by the side opposed. Christine also noted Westside Town hall meeting would be held on the issue on February 17th.

Dave Johnson, manager of renewable energy for LADWP, distributed a Power Point presentation dated January 21, 2009 (on file). He said the Measure B component is captured under the "LADWP-Owned" line item on page 8. He said most of these panels would go on roofs of publicly owned city facilities. The funding mechanism is part of the ballot measure; it would be a departure from funding mechanisms for other renewable resources. He said the main issue is that, for renewable energy, the fuel is essentially free, but you have to spend a lot of money to put the system in place. He said there is big debate about what the price will be in the future, and there are many unknowns as well as differences of opinion and estimates. He said LADWP would implement this program if it is approved, but is not advocating for or against approval.

Adam asked if Los Angeles is the first city that has tried to do this. Mr. Johnson said this is similar to two European countries. He said LADWP



owns its own power generation; this makes the LA situation a little unique. Christine said New Jersey has also been very aggressive in this area.

Sandra asked why this phase needs a charter amendment; Mr. Johnson said he was not sure. Terrence asked why costs aren't clear; Mr. Johnson said cost estimates are based on analysis of future costs and demands, and these depend on assumptions.

James Unger spoke on behalf of the Yes Campaign. He said that Measure B is designed to make LA solar and to create local jobs. He said that, if you are a business owner, you can negotiate with LADWP or go with private company. Some manufacturing may be done outside Los Angeles, but up to a 30-percent bid preference would be given for companies in Los Angeles. The Measure would establish a job training facility within LA for people to work on this. He said the question is how much would the program under Measure B cost. He said PA Consulting did a quick study and concluded it would be very expensive. However, Huron Consulting undertook an extensive study and estimated it would cost between \$800 million and \$1 billion. This would translate to \$1 per month per consumer. He said Measure B is supported by a coalition of environmental groups, health advocacy groups, and others. Ann asked about his background and who is behind the Yes Campaign. Sandra asked about the basis of City Comptroller Laura Chick's opposition. Jon asked if there are other reports; he said experience of other countries provides insight because no one in the US has done this on the scale of Los Angeles. Paula asked what the impact might be on smaller solar companies that cannot compete with LADWP; Mr. Unger said he thinks it would be good for everyone, as it would make LA the solar center for country.

(Gina left)

Jack Humphreyville spoke on behalf of the No Campaign. He said that the essential question is why Measure B is on the ballot. He said that the proposed measure only needs City Council approval, not voter approval. In his view, what Measure B does is: (a) allows city council to put its nose deeper into DWP business; (b) eliminates competitive bidding. He said it gives DWP a sole source contract, adding that he understands City Comptroller Laura Chick opposes the motion because it looks to her like back room deals. He pointed out that the proposal was introduced to the City Council on October 15th and, three weeks later, it was done. He said LADWP has no plans, and the Huron report has not been vetted by LADWP. He said that LADWP management and staff are inexperienced in this area and are, therefore, likely to go over budget. In his view, it is not fair for the City Council to put residents in this situation. He said the solution is not to have Charter changes. In response to a question about who funds his group, he said he is primary contributor. Doug asked if a shift on Charter issues would make it okay. Mr. Humphreyville replied that LADWP will probably already meet their renewable targets, and a Yes vote on Measure B might prevent them from doing so. He ended by saying that he believes in solar power, but not in the Measure B approach.

There was some discussion about the basis of the NC's involvement in this issue. Christine said she feels it is important to put this motion forward



because: (a) impact on constituents as taxpayers; (b) it is called “an initiative, but it is not as it did not come from the people; and (c) wording in the proposal suggests deals are being made behind closed doors. Jon moved to approve the motion; Dan seconded. **Vote: 9-Y, 2-N, 3-A. Motion approved.**

VII. Committee Reports

a. Executive. Doug commended the Outreach Committee on its CD-5 Candidate Forum.

(Dan left, Paula left)

Doug said more SORO NC Board members have completed ethics training than any other NC; however, still only 13 out of 22 members (now 23) have done it. Doug reported the Budget Committee met on February 4th, and the budget situation is now much clearer. He said the Budget Committee will meet again within the next three months.

b. Budget Committee & Treasurer Report. Terrence reported earlier in the meeting in connection with the reallocation motion.

c. Bylaws. No report.

d. Land Use & Economic Development. No report was made as neither Co-Chair was present.

e. Outreach. Marj said that more than 250 people attended the CD-5 Candidate forum. The next Outreach meeting will include representatives of the SORO area neighborhood groups, and LAPD will be invited.

f. Education. Barry said the Fresh Fruit program is up and running. The mentoring program is ongoing and now serves 17 children.

g. Public Safety. Doug said the Public Safety Committee had not met. No report was made as Harold was not present.

h. Ad hoc Committees. Doug reported that he and Dan attended a regional meeting on Land Use on Sunday. Westside groups will pool their resources. Doug reported that he and Barry attended the Mayor’s meeting on transit.

Robyn announced it was important to support the Booster Club for schools, as such support helps for additional security and other important expenses.

VIII. Adjournment

Ann moved to adjourn the meeting; Bette seconded. **Motion approved unanimously.** The meeting was adjourned at 9:47 p.m.