



## Approved General Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 8, 2009, 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 meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

**Board Members Present:** Bette Billet, Harold Bock, Robyn Braun, Susan Burden, Paul Del Piero, Doug Fitzsimmons, Gary Garcia, Terrence Gomes, Anne Gross, Ann Hammond, Barry Levine, Jon Liberman, Roy Nwaiser, Marj Safinia, Paula Waxman

**Board Members Absent:** Christine Aghassi, Brian Bergman, Daniel Fink, Nahed Guirguis, Adam Wheeler, Sandra Willard

**Guests Present:** Jennifer Badger, Rose Ibanez, Darvinia Jessamy, Marco Menaghin, Brooke Powers, Simone Taylor, Sat Purkha Khalsa

### II. General Public Comment

Raymond Yu announced: the Young Professionals of Youth Democrats for Governor of Minnesota will meet July 10, 6pm-9pm in downtown Los Angeles; the Lotus Festival will be held July 11-12 at Echo Park Regional Lake; and there will be a parade August 16 in CD-9.

Resident Darvinia Jessamy reported problems on the 1800 block of Shenandoah with water main breaks. On Sunday July 5, the water main broke and was repaired. On Monday, July 6, the same water main broke in almost the same place, with a high-pressure geyser spewing gravel that had been used to fill the hole in the street from the first break. She said she was concerned about the apparently high water pressure and the hour-long wait for DWP after each break, understanding there are only two DWP emergency crews working on holiday/weekends. Resident Ann Hammond added there was also a water main break on Tuesday, July 7, exactly two blocks to the east of them; these events also raise concerns about the age of the pipes in the SORO neighborhoods, timely DWP response in time of budget cuts, and the impact of such breaks on water conservation efforts.

Terry commented there was a break in the 1900 block of Corning three years ago that took DWP five hours to respond and three days to fix. Paula asked Ms. Taylor, the DWP representative present, if DWP sends an investigator out if it sees a pattern of breaks; Ms. Taylor, DWP Government & Neighborhood Relations Liaison, said DWP has a list of mains to fix. Jon asked, if DWP is repairing piecemeal, could that put more pressure on other parts of system that causes another break; Ms. Taylor said no, and DWP does monitor pressure. Harold said life expectancy of pipes is 100 to 150 years, and most pipes in this area were laid in the 1920s, so the infrastructure is coming to the end of its

**Doug Fitzsimmons**  
President

**Jon Liberman**  
Vice-President

**Ann Hammond**  
Secretary

**Terrence Gomes**  
Treasurer

**South Robertson  
Neighborhoods Council**

PO Box 35836  
Los Angeles, CA 90035

P: (310) 295-9920  
F: (310) 295-9906  
E: info@soronc.org

**soronc.org**



useful life. He added that there is not enough money available to replace it, and it cannot be done without more money and more taxes. Ms. Jessamy asked DWP what money is being allocated to Los Angeles for infrastructure products under current Federal allocations for economic recovery. Bette said this was a good question, that it would be helpful to know DWP's strategy and timeline. Jon said DWP has an MOU, so it is a little different. Bette said the specific set of problems might metastasize. Bette suggested the NC ask the City for information about breaks in the SORO neighborhoods to see if there is a pattern. Doug concurred and said the NC should also ask how the Federal money is being spent. He asked Public Safety Committee to follow up.

Paula asked Ms. Taylor about DWP's rate structure. Ms. Taylor said DWP is restructuring rates. There will be five tiers, and DWP is in phase 3 of the conversion. As of June 1, the City has mandatory water conservation; lawn watering by sprinklers is allowed only on Mondays and Thursdays, before 9 a.m. and after 4 p.m. Lawn watering by hand is allowed any day. Other restrictions also apply, but some people have higher allowances, for example, if they have a horse and meet certain additional requirements. Water bills are based on two tiers. Cost for Tier 1 has not changed, but the amount of water allowed is 15% less. Allowances are based on lot size (under 7500 square feet is allowed 24 billing units, 30 during high season), temperature zone (zip code 90034 is "medium temperature"), and number of people in the household (up to 6 is one rate, with more allowed for those over six). Summer rates, June 1 to October 31, differ from winter rates. Doug asked if there is a possibility for use of "gray water;" she said not for residences. She said DWP has used some gray water at golf courses, Playa Vista, Lake Balboa, and Studio City; the problem with using gray water for residences is that you cannot mix potable and nonpotable water, so it would require a separate plumbing system in houses and other adaptations. Ms. Taylor urged residents to visit the DWP website and learn about the good rebates available. She strongly advised that, before purchasing anything, residents visit the website to review requirements and make a reservation. She distributed materials on DWP programs and said there will be another DWP meeting July 18<sup>th</sup>.

Marko Menaghin, from Speaker Bass' office, reported on the California budget situation. He said that, currently, there is a \$27 billion shortfall. Last week, both houses passed a budget, that would address the shortfall without raising taxes, but the Governor did not sign it. He said this is the second time in state history that the California government has started issuing IOUs. He announced there would be a "Green Jobs" symposium on August 23<sup>rd</sup>. Barry asked how the budget shortfall could be closed without raising taxes; Marko said by moving money around, some borrowing, and lots of cuts. Jon asked if the approved budget is no longer valid; Marko said negotiations were continuing. Bette asked about the Speaker's views on a proposed constitutional convention to change rules that would avoid a recurrence of the current budget problem. Marko said she has taken no official view. Anne asked if the proposed smoking tax had been dropped; Marko said yes.



### III. Old Business

**Draft General Board Meeting Minutes of June 17, 2009 (Hammond/GB070809-1).** Paula, Marj and Terry asked for corrections to the minutes. Jon moved to approve the draft minutes, as corrected; Harold seconded. **Vote: 11-Y, 0-N, 3-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.** No report was made as no representative was present. Jen said Mark is staying on for a while.

**c. Office of the Mayor (Badger).** Jennifer thanked everyone for their support of and participation in the Mayor's Day of service, with special thanks to Paula. Jennifer said a lot of great work had been done. She announced that the Mayor had been sworn in last week for his second term, along with City Councilmembers and the City Attorney. She reported that about \$17,000 had been collected to help offset costs to the City of Michael Jackson's funeral, noting that the City had asked fans to go online to contribute, but City servers had gone down for about 12 hours due to the overwhelming response, so then people could not get through to make a contribution. Bette commented that Paula's work on the Mayor's Day of Service was extraordinary, and she did a superb job. All present applauded in agreement. Paula said evaluations from students were excellent and suggested the event be held again, perhaps in the Spring so people could qualify for summer jobs.

**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.

**f. Robertson Recreation Center Report (Powers)** Brooke said the Center is going 100 miles per hour now, with classes, the RAL (Robertson Activity League) program, and planting the garden with the SORO NC Green Team and watering it every day. She said last week was the first field trip under the Summer RAL program; 28 children qualified to participate under the new stipulation that they must first complete at least three hours of community service. She said that earlier on this day, RAL participants picked up trash on S. Robertson between Pico and 18th. RAL participants also wrote letters to soldiers.

**g. DONE Report (Ibanez).** Rose reported there is another mandatory training on sexual harassment for NC members. She also announced that she is co-chair of the next Congress; the next Planning Committee meeting is July 15<sup>th</sup>. She reported that Sunday, April 11, 2010, is the scheduled date of the SORO NC election, and it is posted on the City Clerk's webpage. Bette said Sunday is objectionable. Discussion ensued, centering around the non-negotiability of the date, clarification that the NC had been notified of the date the scheduling would take place and given an opportunity to be present to influence the decision



but had sent no representative. Terry confirmed that this was the case; several NC Board members indicated they had not been aware of this notification. Paul asked when the DONE website listing NC Board members and their contact information would be updated; Ann clarified that she had not yet sent the updates to Rose for posting. Terry asked about the sexual harassment video; Rose said she would make it available.

**h. LADWP Report (Taylor).** This report was made within the Public Comment portion of the meeting.

## V. Committee Reports

**a. Executive (Fitzsimmons).** Doug reported that discussion at the Executive Committee meeting was reflected in motions at this meeting.

**b. Treasurer Report (Gomes/GB070809-2).** Terry said there are still outstanding demand warrants; DONE will start processing them next week.

**c. Bylaws (Nwaiser).** Roy said the Committee did not meet this past month.

**d. Land Use & Economic Development (Bergman & Swanson).** In Brian's absence, Marj reported: the Committee had discussed medical marijuana and historic preservation overlays zones; Sandra is looking at the HPOZ possibilities on the west side of Robertson between Hargis and 24<sup>th</sup> and also Reynier Village; and a working group has been created out of Land Use to investigate HPOZ possibilities. Sue had given the Committee an update on the proposed Museum of Tolerance expansion project and will provide a formal update to the board in the September meeting. Jon asked if there are any ethical issues about the composition of the Land Use working group; Marj said perhaps, adding that in any event an HPOZ would require 75% of neighbors on board on the proposal. Jon said he just wanted to make sure there is no ethics violation. Terry asked how many medical marijuana dispensaries there are, noting there are new ones on La Cienega, Sherbourne, and Robertson, where David Alan Flooring had been. Marj noted there are difference between hardship exemptions and enforcement, i.e. shutting down.

**e. Education (Levine & Braun) –** Barry said the Committee did not meet this past month, and nothing will be on the agenda until September.

**f. Green Team (Waxman & Hess) –** Paula said June was busy. The Team gave away 180 trees at the SORO Festival. They met with Hamilton High staff and the school's environmental club, and they are helping get Hamilton's recycling program up and running for September. They established a Community Garden at Robertson Recreation Center. They organized the youth job training program in coordination with the Mayor's office. Paula suggested that the Green Team and Education Committee might coordinate on a similar event in Spring 2010. Paula noted that, if youth are certified, they are notified of available jobs.



**g. Public Safety (Bock & Hammond)** – Harold said the Committee met on Monday, July 6th. The Committee plans to invite LA Fire Department #58 to talk about their needs for the coming year. He said the Committee discussed medical marijuana and, in his view, nothing more could be done than what was already being done. He reported the La Cienega Heights march was held, but not too many people participated; CPAB was the major organizer. He said the oversized vehicle parking problem on the west side of South Robertson had been solved, but the vehicles had moved to other sites, under the 10 Freeway; he said he would find out more about it. He noted LAPD had not attended NC Board meetings for some time, and he will contact them to ensure representation at future meetings. Marj said CD-10 is doing due diligence to research medical marijuana facilities that are opening and suggested we contact Mark at CD-5 to make sure they do due diligence, too. Paul asked if we could have a form letter that we send to the CD offices when a new facility opens; he offered to draft such a letter and send it to Marj for comments. Once the NC approves a form letter, then it could be sent on individual cases without NC approval on each letter. Roy asked if there is any penalty for landlords when their tenants open a medical marijuana center; Marj said not really at present, but the clock is ticking and, when final guidelines come in on September 13<sup>th</sup>, there may be some penalty. Bette asked if the NC could have one person designated, who can let the CD office know when a new place is opening. Paul said he would be the point person. Roy asked if there were any threats and/or violence at the Peace March; Harold said none was reported.

**h. Outreach (Safinia & Aghassi).** Marj reported that the Committee met and generated two motions before the NC Board tonight. The Committee also discussed the SORO Festival experience and may discuss further in the near future how it can be more of an NC Festival. Bette said that, at next month's NC Board meeting, nominees for the Susan Bursk award will be honored and Herb Wesson present an acknowledgement of their nomination. Bette added that Susan Strick will also receive her award again, so the NC should invite her supervisors. Jon asked about progress on the SORO NC website; Marj reported that Sandra has been writing text for it and Doug is working on the technical side.

## **VI. New Business**

**a. Motion to fund \$1000 for Movies in the Park in conjunction with CD-10 (Safinia/GB070809-3)** – Marj presented the motion. She said Reynier Village Neighborhood Association is contributing \$200 to the event. Paul asked if the NC would be acknowledged in any way at or before the event; Marj said the NC would have a table there. Roy asked for clarification, as Liz Carlin had announced at a previous meeting that CD-10 would not need money this year for this event; Marj said yes, Liz had said that, but Liz had later found they needed financial support after all. Bette asked if all \$1,000 would be needed; perhaps we could help them find other funding sources. Marj proposed the amendment be revised to stipulate “up to” \$1,000; Harold seconded. **Amendment approved unanimously.** Marj asked if there could be water stations rather than water bottles. Paul moved to approve the



motion, as amended; Ann seconded. **Motion as amended approved unanimously.**

**b. Motion to fund \$1050 for the 2009 Peace Picnic (Safinia/GB070809-4)** Marj presented the motion. Roy asked about pros and cons of purchasing suitable speakers instead of rental. Brooke said it is about the mixing board system, so they can plug in everything, as there are eight mix channels. Last year, they had to find something at the last minute; she estimated cost of purchase would be several thousand dollars. Paula asked if the City might have equipment we could borrow. Brooke clarified that the investment would also pay for a person to operate the sound system for five hours; Sue said this was very cost-effective. Ann asked from where the rest of the money would be coming; , Sat Purkha Khalsa said they are soliciting businesses. **Marj clarified that the amount proposed for the motion is intended to be “up to” \$1050.** Harold said this is very cost-effective and he strongly supports it. Marj reported Nahed said she would be happy to help again this year. Jon asked if the sound system could also be used for the Recreation Center; Doug clarified why that was not logistically reasonable time-wise and it would still not cover the cost of a person to run it. It was agreed that the Peace Picnic organizers would look into the possibility of purchase before next year’s Peace Picnic. Marj asked Terry to work with the organizers and Terry agreed. Roy moved to approve the motion, Harold seconded. **Motion approved unanimously.**

(Anne left, Harold left.)

**c. Motion to increase SORO NC financial transparency (Fitzsimmons/GB070809-5).** Doug introduced the motion. Roy said SORO NC experience has been that a number of motions related to administrative actions are passed but are not carried out. He said he is not in favor of continuing to pass motions and then not observe them. Ann asked if “three days” referred to calendar or business days; Doug clarified it meant 72 hours. Terry said documents covered under the motion are already available on the DONE website. Rose suggested SORO NC could put a link to the DONE website on the SORO website. Roy expressed concern about putting individual payment information on the website. Doug proposed the motion be amended: (a) under item I, “72 hours” replace “three days” (b) item II say “That quarterly audits be reviewed (at a minimum) at the open Executive Committee meeting prior to submission”; and (c) item III include the addition of “...audits and include a link to request full financial records from DONE.” Roy seconded the proposed amendment. **Vote: 12-Y, 0-N, 1-A. Amendment approved.** Ann moved to approve the motion as amended; Jon seconded. **Vote: 12-Y, 0-N, 1-A. Motion approved as amended.**

**d. Motion to establish the position of Assistant Treasurer (Fitzsimmons/GB070809-6).** This motion was tabled because the necessary 2/3 of NC Board members were not present.

## VII. Adjournment

Ann moved to adjourn the meeting, Jon seconded, and none opposed. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.