

South Robertson (SORO) Neighborhoods Council

SORO Neighborhoods
Council
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A Certified City of Los Angeles Neighborhood Council

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General Meeting Minutes January 9, 2008 at 7:00p.m. Hamilton Senior High School - 2955 S. Robertson Blvd.

I. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:00p.m. by Victoria Karan.

Board members present: Brian Bergman (tardy), Bette Billet (tardy), Harold Boch, Robyn Braun, Doug Fitzsimmons, Gary Garcia, Terrence Gomes, Nahed Guirguis (tardy), Ann Hammond (tardy), Victoria Karan, Barry E. Levine, Jon Liberman, Roy Nwaiser, Marjan Safinia, Sandra Willard

Board members absent: Christine Aghassi, Daniel Fink

Guests present: Beth Ryan, Shelly Iltis, Anne Gross, Katherine Hennigan, Liz Carlin, Barry Stone, and Jenny Wood (tardy)

II. READING OF THE MINUTES AND APPROVAL

Draft minutes of the December 12, 2007, General Board Meeting were reviewed and agreed-upon corrections incorporated. **Vote to approve: Unanimous.**

III. ELECTION OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS

- a. Diane Hirsch-Garcia—Applicant for Board Seat (Zone 6). Diane absent; no action taken.
- b. Anne Gross – Applicant for Board seat (At-Large) Victoria moves to have Anne join the Board for tonight's meeting. Harold seconds. **Vote to approve: Unanimous.** Anne joins the Board.

IV. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment. Victoria puts forward that the Board move to the next aspect. Harold seconds. **Vote: Y-10; N-2; A-0.**

V. ADVISORY REPORTS

Council District 5/Councilmember Jack Weiss : Katherine Hennigan reviews the situation regarding the opening of the strip club “Skin” on Robertson and community efforts to block it. A police permit hearing will be held January 28th. Regarding the revamped Pico/Olympic proposal, several meetings are planned for the next month, one with businesses and one with homeowners. Signs will be put up. Once community input is received, the issue is going back to the city transportation committee. At present there are three (3) phases, and phase one (1) will be implemented in April at the earliest. The “Weiss Wire,” CD5’s newsletter, goes out the first week of each month. Any matters the Board wants addressed need to reach Katherine by the third Wednesday of the month to be included.

Council District 10/Councilmember Herb Wesson Liz Carlin notes the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks will meet February 12 to get input from the community about the future of parks in Los Angeles. A survey is available regarding how the parks are being utilized. She thanks the Board for co-operating with the Christmas tree recycling program. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Day festivities include helping senior citizens with their yards and painting over graffiti. Councilmember Wesson will be participating in the parade. They are also in talks about the strip club issue. DWP is doing major road work on Fairfax for the next six (6) months, between just north of the 10 Freeway and San Vicente. Liz distributes certificates to Board members who previously did not receive them-- Victoria, Sandra, Robyn and Terrence—for their participation in the 2007 SoRo Festival.

LAPD: Officer Sharif is not present, and no report is available.

DONE: Barry Stone has two (2) announcements. First, the City clerk is going to take over administration of Neighborhood Council elections, starting in 2010. Second, there will be an orientation session for new Neighborhood Council Board members at Councilmember Wesson’s office on January 24th, and all new SoRo NC Board members are encouraged to attend.

VI. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

a. President’s Report: Victoria thanks everyone for coming back in 2008 and encourages the Board to put their efforts into activities and projects that will make a difference in the South Robertson community and let the stakeholders realize the positive impact a Neighborhood Council can make. She also encourages all new Board members to attend the January 24th orientation session.

b. Treasurer’s Report: Terrence announces SoRo NC started the fiscal year with \$80,567.36 in the account: \$26,056.62 has been allocated, \$63,000 currently available.

Jenny Wood (from Karen Bass’s office) speaks. The legislative session started up last week. It is very hectic in Sacramento. The Governor gave the State address last night. The State is deep in debt. She announces her support for the Martin

Luther King, Jr. Day parade.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Prior to the discussion of new business, Victoria presents a matter to be discussed and decided regarding the evening's motions. While the meeting agenda, listing all motions, was sent out and posted prior to the required 5:00 p.m. Friday time, the motions themselves were not distributed to the full Board on Friday. Brown Act does not require us to have written motions, nor are these motions distributed to the *public* prior to the meeting, so the only issue is whether the Board feels they can adequately discuss each motion without the opportunity of reading it prior to the meeting. Victoria wishes to present a motion for the Board to hear the full set of motions at this meeting in order to move forward with necessary business. Barry Levine says that, in his view, the Board should stick to the 5:00 p.m. rule. Roy wants to know what wasn't submitted to the full Board. There are three (3) overall—items EX01092008, EX01092008, and PS01092008. **Vote to hear motions: Y-12; N-3; A-1. Motion carries.**

Motion PS 01092008-1: Proposal to fund the RAL program for \$5,000. Jon Liberman proposes the Board approve funding for an evaluation of the RAL program and invites Beth Ryan to brief the Board about the RAL program. Beth explains the program was created in the aftermath of three young people being shot and killed in the summer of 2006. The LA Police Department contacted community leaders as to what to do with the students affected by the killings. The first RAL summer program had many in attendance, including police officers and 80 volunteers. Kids were fed and taken on field trips and participated in crafts. The program encourages them to get involved in activities other than gang ones. The motion before the Board is to fund \$5,000 for an outside evaluation that has been completed and that is essential for getting city, state and corporate money to fund the RAL program(s). Beth submits a copy of the evaluation to the Board. Barry asks whether the evaluation was positive or negative. Beth replies it is very positive, and it includes some recommendations on improvements to the program. Sandra confirms that the evaluation has already been completed. It is clarified that the Board had previously approved \$2,500 for an outside evaluation, with the expectation that funds for the remaining cost would be requested from other sources. Robyn questions where the money was to come from if the Board didn't pick up the costs. Beth states probably herself. Bette says the money was promised. There is some discrepancy between Jon and Terrence over costs funded for the program last year, whether \$2,500 or 60% of their overall budget has gone to the program. Victoria says they should agree to disagree, as this is not an essential point related to the decision now needing to be taken. Beth states that this evaluation will help obtain long-term funding for the RAL program from sources other than SoRo NC, so this is the last time the RAL program will be requesting money from the Board. Jon concurs it is a one-time expenditure to give the program long-term funding. There is some questioning of whether the Board is allowed to fund events retroactively. There is no retroactive rule in place. Ann Hammond asks that, in future, proposals to the Board for funding include mention of relevant actions and decisions as to

previous financial commitments so that all Board members can have a common reference and make informed decisions. The motion is seconded as read. **Vote: Y-12; N-0; A-4. Motion carries. Cost: \$5,000.**

(Bette Billet leaves.)

Motion EX 01092008-2: Proposal for creation of Board Development Committee.

Harold Bock proposes a committee be established to take on the task of finding and recruiting new Board members. Victoria announces that Harold wanted to make a difference on this board before he left and that she is one hundred percent behind this idea. Sandra asks whether this could be a committee that interacts electronically so there is no need to worry about additional committee meetings to attend. Harold replies yes. He says he would like to bring as many stakeholders as possible to the meetings, and meetings don't have to be once a month or regularly scheduled. Roy asks if this Committee is only about outreach for elections. Victoria says this is also about "in-reach" issues the Board needs to work on, and implementation of a support system for Board members to develop the Board. Roy wants all members to consider the time commitment involved in this before voting. Terrence clarified that Board Development Committee meetings would be held as needed: that is the rule, and Committee meetings would not have to be once a month. Nahed seconds. **Vote: Y-12; N-1; A-2. Motion carries.**

Motion EX 01092008-3: Proposal for creation of Mission Development Committee.

Harold says that he strongly believes a mutually agreed upon mission that can be presented to the community can help minimize conflict in the Board. If you look at profit and non-profit organizations' mission statements, they not only describe what the organization wants to do, but how it will do it. Against that standard, the SoRo NC mission statement is incomplete. Developing such a statement would mean listing activities the NC wants to take on, determining what is most important and how resources should be allocated. For the first years of the NC, allocation of resources was not critical, as the NC had more funds than programs. However, now, with a nearly full Board, there are many programs and projects to consider funding, and the NC needs a logical way to prioritize them. In his opinion, Harold feels it is a dereliction of duty to end the year with unspent funds, and so he is asking for the establishment of a planning committee. Victoria shares that Harold has extensive professional experience at running organizations and implementing strategic goals. Brian asserts that this issue should be part of the Executive Committee and not another new committee. Harold says he does not have a strong position on that; he says that what is important is that it be done. Harold also states that making funding choices may mean some tough decisions in terms of what programs/projects are selected, but that is the NC's responsibility. Roy agrees, but doesn't think there should be a new committee every time a new idea appears on the horizon. He wonders if there is not another way of going about this than creating a new committee. Gary asks how this works with the old vision. Victoria says she and Harold have talked about having a loose structure to talk about issues and at the end assert what the priorities will be. If this motion passes, any future motions this Board discusses would be considered within the framework of the mission statement,

which would be a vision for the Board as a whole. The Board would have to prioritize and rank its goals, with each committee weighing in and providing input as to what should be done over the next 12 months as well as the next 24.

At this point, it was moved to extend the time for discussing this motion. (**Vote: majority rule**)

Ann Hammond agrees with the substance of the motion but wonders whether this is not the function of an executive committee. Jon answers that this was discussed last year, and a survey was made available about the functioning of that committee. Whether this responsibility belongs to a separate committee or not, and what the function of the Executive Committee exactly is, is not clear. Victoria says she has never seen a definition of the Executive Committee. Ann Hammond asks why, rather than starting with a new structure, it wouldn't be better to give the existing Executive Committee structure greater clarity. Terrence says perhaps they should have an ad hoc committee to have a few members to guide the process. Nahed says measurements are needed for this process. Harold says he put this forward as a motion as there is no other way to have discussions on philosophical issues. What he wants the Board to consider, so they can move forward, is to open up how the Council operates.

At this point, it was moved to extend the time for discussing this motion. (**Vote: majority rule**)

Brian proposes an amendment to the motion, i.e. that the Executive Committee would work on developing a mission statement and strategic plan to be presented to the Board by its April meeting, with updates each month between now and then. The language amendment is to strike 1 of the proposal to read that reporting back is on a continual process, with incremental reporting every month.)) Terrence seconds. **Vote: Y-14; N-1; A-0. Motion carries to amend motion.**

Vote on amended motion (Terrence seconds): Y-14; N-1; A-0. Motion carries.

Motion OR 01092008-4: Proposal to fund SoRo Festival 2008 up to \$8,000. Jon Liberman proposes funding of up to \$8,000 for the 2008 SoRo Festival. Shelly Iltis, as part of her public comment, says she believes the Festival is a very important community event. A lot of the events held in the community only serve one section or part at a time, but the festival is all-inclusive. She believes the festival should be funded. Jon says this festival has continually been the most discussed event in the last few years. There is a lot of passion around this event, which is now in its eleventh year. They have greatly expanded the youth aspect of the festival. It is a great community event. Barry says it is a great idea. Sandra asks whether the Festival Committee has ever conducted surveys regarding the public's opinion about the various facets of the Festival, especially regarding the lack of food and crafts booths. She feels that the Festival is primarily geared towards families with children, and the appeal could be broadened. Ann responds that the Festival Planning Committee conducts an evaluation at the end of the Festival each year, including soliciting and compiling written evaluations from booth vendors and a full

debriefing amongst Planning Committee members within a week following the Festival. These evaluation results are used to improve future Festivals. Ann Hammond and Brian agree that local businesses need to be asked to fund the festival, expanding on resources.

At this point, it was moved to extend the time for discussing this motion. (**Vote: majority rule**)

Jon welcomes participation from this Board. Robyn wonders whether they can approach the Hamilton High music academy and other fine arts organizations in the South Robertson neighborhoods to participate and perform. Gary says the mariachi will play for a fee. Anne Gross says she goes to the library and doesn't see ads posted about the event. She wants to see better advertising for the festival. Terrence announces there is now \$58,000 left in the budget. Robyn seconds the motion. **Vote: Y-12; N-1; A-2. Motion carries. Cost: \$8,000.**

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. By-Laws

Roy announces they will have regular monthly meetings and resume where they left off from last year. Victoria feels that the Board should be governed by the bylaws solely, rather than a variety of guidelines and procedures that are not known to all Board members.

b. Education

Barry says there was a meeting held last night, no one attended. He will in future send out separate emails for the different meeting times. Next month he will put forward a proposal for \$500 for books.

c. Green Team

Victoria puts forward that the Green Team is looking for a chair.

d. Land Use

Brian says two (2) presentations were postponed and will be held next month, one by a development group for a condo who have come to us before, the other a discussion of implementing a Specific Plan or other type of overlay, as well as looking into a Historic Preservation Overlay Zone, a topic which interests Sandra. Meetings are now the first Tuesday of every month.

e. Outreach

Victoria says that the festival took up most of their discussion last meeting, in addition to the RAL motion. Outreach meetings are last Monday of every month. She asks for a co-chair for support.

f. Public Safety

Jon says there was no meeting since the transportation people didn't come. They

will reschedule. He could also use a co-chair for support. Victoria asks why the Pico/Olympic proposal is a public safety issue and Jon answers that all traffic issues go to public safety. Meetings are first Monday of each month.

IX. BOARD MEMBER COMMITTEE SELECTION

It was agreed that this was to be discussed at the February Board meeting and that a list of Committee meeting times would be circulated to help new Board members make their choices.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourns at 9:11p.m.

4/19/10 12:21 PM