

# South Robertson (SORO) Neighborhoods Council

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A Certified City of Los Angeles Neighborhood Council

**Victoria Karan**  
President  
**Jon Liberman**  
Vice President  
**Ann Hammond**  
Secretary  
**Terrence Gomes**  
Treasurer

## Approved General Board Meeting Minutes August 13, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. Hamilton Senior High School 2955 S. Robertson Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90034

### I. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:12 p.m. by Jon Liberman.

**Board members present:** Brian Bergman, Bette Billet, Harold Bock, Susan Burden, Daniel Fink, Doug Fitzsimmons, Gary Garcia, Anne Gross, Nahed Guirguis, Ann Hammond, Barry E. Levine, Jon Liberman, Roy Nwaiser, Linda Rosen, Sandra Willard

**Board members absent:** Christine Aghassi, Robyn Braun, Terrence Gomes, Diane Hirsch-Garcia, Victoria Karan, Gina LaBeaud, Marjan Safinia

**Guests present:** Jeff Appel, Jennifer Badger, Adeena Bleich, Har Simarn Khalsa, Brooke Powers, Aliza Rich, Barry Stone, Dave Wall

### II. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Gary Garcia asked that agendas be posted in Spanish as well as in English. He also mentioned that, in Hacienda Heights, banners honor service people; he suggested that we, in the South Robertson neighborhoods, similarly show public support for our servicemen, especially as we have young adults living within our boundaries who are serving in the armed forces. Jon referred these issues to the Outreach Committee.

Linda Rosen asked when business cards would be available for the SORO NC Board members. Doug reported that he is designing them.

David Wall identified himself as a longtime SORO resident concerned about parking, the effects of no parking districts on adjoining areas, narrow streets, street and alley maintenance, and the proposal to make Pico and Olympic one-way streets. Jon suggested he consider attending meetings of the Land Use and Public Safety Committees to voice his concerns and suggested solutions.

Brooke Powers reported on progress of the Recreation Activities League (RAL) program at the Robertson Recreation Center. The LA Police Department (LAPD) approved additional funds, and the Rec Center has added another field trip. Daily RAL attendance is usually 20 to 22; the highest has been 27. Summer basketball is going well, and a girl's league will begin in the Fall. Future activities include a Peace Picnic in September and a Halloween Carnival in October. Brooke invited interested individuals to attend Park Advisory Board meetings, which deals with issues affecting the park, obtaining grants, and other relevant issues. Brian asked if there might be a dodgeball league for adults; Brooke said there could be if there is sufficient interest. Brian added that anyone interested in a dog walk park should see him.

Adeena Bleich said she is running for City Council. She has lived in the SoRo area for six years and has experience in both non-profit and public sectors. She said she would welcome the opportunity to be invited to any block gatherings and to discuss how she could work with the community.

### III. READING OF THE MINUTES AND APPROVAL

Ann noted a correction from Barry Levine to the draft minutes under the Education Committee report, noting free summer programs not after school programs. Nahed moved to approve the corrected draft minutes of the General Meeting of July 9, 2008 with Barry Levine seconding. **Minutes approved unanimously.**

### IV. ADVISORY REPORTS

**a. Office of Speaker of the House Karen Bass:** No report was made as no representative was present.

**b. Office of Councilmember Jack Weiss (CD-5):** Field Deputy Jennifer Badger noted recent media attention to Special Order 40, "Jamil's Law," which restricts the LAPD from dealing with immigration issues when questioning gang members. She said that, in coordination with the Public Safety Committee, Councilmember Weiss has been looking into this law. She distributed the July 2008 edition of the Weiss Wire. And, noting a billboard posted on Pico and Robertson, she explained that the City cannot enforce a sign ordinance at this site.

**c. Office of Councilmember Herb Wesson (CD-10):** No report was made as no representative was present.

**d. DONE:** Barry Stone announced funds were available for beautification grants. He said that two events were going to be held on October 11<sup>th</sup>: he asked SORONC to put on next month's agenda the need to appoint representatives to the Mayor's Budget day, and he noted that Terrence is working with the Planning Committee to plan a Congress for NC Board members citywide that same day. He also distributed a flyer for an orientation/training session for all new and veteran NC Board members, to be held August 21<sup>st</sup> at the Westside Pavilion, and asked interested individuals to RSVP.

## V. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

**a. President's Report:** On behalf of the Executive Committee, Ann reported that the Committee, joined by Bette Billet, met August 7. The SORONC Board President, Vikki Karan, is taking a leave of absence from the Board for family reasons and will be back as soon as possible; in her absence, Jon Liberman will assume the duties of President. Within the context of setting the agenda for tonight's Board meeting and communicating it, the Executive Committee agreed that: (a) a second Executive Committee member would have the password to the bethechange account so could serve as back-up for Terrence; (b) Ann would take the lead on updating the list of Board members that needs to be maintained for DONE; (c) Ann would prepare a list of standing committees and meeting times; and (d) Ann would ask Doug to add to the SORO NC website links to Committees and the email addresses of their Chairmen.

Ann said that, with respect to the Grievance Panel Report that was received by the Board at its June meeting, the EC noted two pending actions respond to the Panel's two recommendations: (a) the motion before the Board tonight from the Bylaws Committee addresses the Panel's recommendation to amend the Bylaws to address distribution and posting requirements for agenda items; and (b) with respect to the Panel's recommendation on training, the Board training being developed by the Ad Hoc Board Development Committee, which will be held before the end of this calendar year, will include full discussion of Bylaws and can incorporate a provision for Board members to acknowledge their receipt and understanding. Ann also said that, because Harold was unable to attend the Executive Committee meeting, further discussion of Action Committees and tying goals to action plans and funding was deferred to the next meeting.

Barry Stone clarified that the list of Board members and their contact information has both public and private segments; personal contact information is kept private. Bette added that the Board should discuss the grievance panel report at its September meeting.

**b. Treasurer's Report:** The Treasurer's report, dated August 11, 2008, was circulated. It was noted that, in future, Treasurer's reports would be sent in writing before the meeting.

## VI. OLD BUSINESS

None

## VII. NEW BUSINESS

**a. Motion to clarify Bylaw 12..2 re. the process for acting upon recommendations of a Grievance Panel (Fitzsimmons) (Motion GB081308-2).** Doug reported that the proposed amendment to the bylaws is intended to clarify the process. The Bylaws do not require us to accept the recommendations of a Grievance Panel. Once a Grievance Panel Report is submitted to the Board, it should be referred to Committee(s) for action. The Committee(s) should then report back to the full Board. Doug moved to approve; Brian seconded. **Vote: 15-Y; 0-N; 0-A. Motion passed unanimously.** Discussion clarified that, as there are 22 Board members, the affirmative vote of at least 15 Board members meets the 2/3 majority required as a vote to amend the Bylaws. Therefore this amendment to can be forwarded to DONE for its approval.

**b. Motion to amend Bylaw 11.7 removing the requirement for a Board approval process prior to distributing information (Fitzsimmons) (GB081308-3).** Doug presented the motion. Ann moved to approve it; Nahed seconded it. **Vote: 15-Y; 0-N; 0-A. Motion passed unanimously.** This affirmative vote meets the 2/3 majority required as a vote to amend the Bylaws. Therefore this amendment can be forwarded to DONE for its approval.

**c. Motion to combine Parliamentarian and Sergeant-at-Arms into one position. (Fitzsimmons) (GB081308-4).** Doug explained this would create a new position on the Executive Committee. Discussion centered around whether or not it was necessary to have one individual responsible for this function or whether everyone shared responsibility. **Vote: 13-Y; 2-N; 0-A. Motion passed.** This affirmative vote does not meet the 2/3 majority required as a vote to amend the Bylaws. Therefore this proposed amendment cannot be forwarded to DONE for its approval.

**d. Motion to allow procedural interpretations at meetings (Parliamentarian/Sergeant-at-Arms be given the power to provide in-meeting legal and by-law interpretations) (Fitzsimmons) (GB081308-5).** In light of the vote on the previous Parliamentarian and Sergeant-at-Arms motion, Doug withdrew the motion. **Motion withdrawn.**

**e. Motion to establish Officer responsibilities for all N.C. Officer Positions (Fitzsimmons) (GB081308-6).** In light of the vote on the previous Parliamentarian and Sergeant-at-Arms motion, Doug proposed the motion on Officer responsibilities be amended to delete reference to the Sergeant-at-Arms position. Ann moved to approve the amendment; Brian seconded. **Amendment passed unanimously.** Ann moved to approve the motion as amended; Brian seconded. **Vote: 15-Y; 0-N; 0-A. Amended motion passed unanimously.** This affirmative vote meets the 2/3 majority required as a vote to amend the Bylaws. Therefore this amendment can be forwarded to DONE for its approval.

**f. Motion to require roll call votes (Fitzsimmons) (GB081308-7).** Doug explained that if someone votes for or against a motion, they can later ask for their vote to be rescinded. However, if there is not a record of how someone voted, it is not possible to later change their vote. Brian moved to approve; Roy seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

**g. Motion to modify Bylaw 7.7 to permit removal of Officers for "Just Cause" (Fitzsimmons) (GB081308-8).** Doug explained that there was no method currently included in the bylaws to remove officers for just cause. Brian moved to approve the motion; Bette seconded. **Vote: 15-Y; 0-N; 0-A. Motion passed unanimously.** This affirmative vote meets the 2/3 majority required as a vote to amend the Bylaws. Therefore this amendment can be forwarded to DONE for its approval.

Jon committed to send all previously approved bylaw revisions and those approved at this meeting to Barry Stone for DONE approval.

**h. Motion to require all Executive Reports and Motions be submitted to Board at least 72 hours prior to a General Board Meeting and 24 hours prior to a Special Board meeting (Fitzsimmons) (GB081308-9).** Doug explained that this was a proposed

procedure, not part of the bylaws. Discussion centered around the question of the method of submission, and Roy proposed the motion wording of "This can be done by e-mail" be amended to "At a minimum, this should be done by e-mail" Sandra moved to approve the amendment; Nahed seconded. **Vote: 12-Y; 2-N; 1-A. Amendment passed.** Roy moved to approve the motion, as amended; Bette seconded. **Vote: 12-Y; 1-N; 2-A. Amended motion passed.**

**i. Motion to support United Oil's request for a variance at its Castle Heights/National Blvd. facility (Bergman) (GB081308-10).** Jeff Appel, representing National Oil Corporation, explained that he had come before the NC twice before and was trying to design a project that the community would welcome. His passion is gas stations. He has a very busy gas station with three pumps that do not work. First he had proposed to build an apartment, but that was turned down. Now he is trying to adapt his proposal to the concerns expressed by the NC for something that is "green." His intention is to make it 100% solar and offer biodiesel. He also wants to promote healthy living, so proposes a 900 square foot area above the gas station be used for yoga. He plans more parking area and more bike spaces. The facility is currently licensed to sell liquor and that would continue.

Brian explained the Land Use Committee could not recommend this proposal. The main concern is parking. Several Board members expressed concern about the combination of mixing automobiles, yoga and liquor. It was clarified that, if there is any leak connected with the gas station that adversely affects air quality, there is an automatic shut-down of the station. Roy moved to approve the motion; Daniel seconded. **Vote: 11-Y; 3-N; 1-A. Motion passed.** Brian committed to send a letter of support immediately for the hearing, scheduled for the next day.

**j. Motion to request SORO, Inc. fund \$1000 for Movies in the Park (Aghassi) (GB081308-11).** Bette explained that more than double the number of people attended the Movies in the Park event in July than expected and, therefore, there were far more expenses than expected. Because the request from Councilmember Wesson's office has come after the fact, SORO NC cannot help with the cost. Concern was expressed that the Councilmember came up with the idea, then after the decision was asking for financial assistance. Bette said that they had promised to handle it differently in the future. It was clarified that the whole event cost \$3-4,000, and \$1,000 was spent just on food at Reynier Park. Bette moved to approve the motion, Ann seconded. **Vote: 12-Y; 4-N; 0-A; Motion passed.**

**k. Motion to co-sponsor a Community World Peace Day Picnic (Guirguis)(GB081308-12).** Jon introduced Har Simarn Khalsa, a picnic organizer, and said this proposal was considered by the Public Safety Committee. Last year, 250 people attended; 500 are expected this year. Brian moved to approve the motion; Harold seconded. **Vote: 15-Y; 1-N. Motion approved.**

**l. Priority Goals 2008-2009 (Hammond) (GB081308-13).** Ann reported that she and Harold had developed the table that was distributed specifying the areas that had been identified as goals and suggesting which committees should be responsible for follow-up. Jon moved to approve the motion; Nahed seconded. **Vote: 15-Y; 0-N; 1-A. Motion passed.**

**m. Discussion on whether we wish to have an ad hoc committee formed to work on applying for grants to improve SORO (Fitzsimmons).** Doug said he thought there was a need for an ad hoc group to work on applying for grants. Sandra said we need to have projects before we can apply for grants. It was suggested this issue should be within the purview of the Land Use Committee for now.

## VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

**a. By-Laws:** Brian and Doug reported that the motions presented at this meeting represented the past two months of work of the Bylaws Committee.

**b. Education:** Barry reported that the Committee did not meet last month. School is out of session. The Committee is calling potential mentors. He will meet with the Shenandoah Street Elementary School principal on August 16<sup>th</sup>. There will be a picnic kick-off for mentors in early September.

**c. Green Team:** Ann reported that she again emailed the possible Green Team Chair candidate but has had no reply.

**d. Land Use:** Brian reported that the Chabad Community Center in the 9000 block of West Pico is proposing to build a girls' high school with condos on top. Neighbors are concerned, and this will be the principal topic of the Committee's next meeting. There is a Chabad working group of six people that will meet at the High School.

**e. Outreach:** Doug reported that there have been issues with AAA Banner that have delayed getting banners posted, but the permit to post has been approved and the posters are being printed. Seventy will go up now - half with the SORO NC logo and half with SORO WALKS AT 7. The other 30 will be posted in January, and all will have just the SORO NC logo. The dates of September 14 and September 28 are under consideration for a Board retreat. The SORO NC website will be up and running this year; a partial payment has been made to the website designer.

A show of hands indicated that two Board members would be unable to attend a retreat on September 14 and one Board member would be unable to attend on September 28.

**f. Public Safety:** Jon reported a meeting had been set up with the La Cienega Heights Neighborhood representatives to discuss graffiti, but the representatives did not attend. Council offices and the City office dealing with graffiti abatement were represented, and they are making reasonable efforts, hampered by community representatives not being at the table.

**g. Ad hoc Board Development Committee:** Harold said the Committee would next meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of September.

**h. Ad hoc Inter-NC Committee:** Doug invited others to participate on this Committee, and Ann volunteered.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

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