

South Robertson (SORO) Neighborhoods Council

SORO Neighborhoods Council
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A Certified City of Los Angeles Neighborhood Council

Doug Fitzsimmons
President
Jon Liberman
Vice President
Ann Hammond
Secretary
Terrence Gomes
Treasurer

APPROVED General Meeting Minutes November 12, 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 7:05 p.m. by Jon Liberman, Acting President.

Board members present: Christine Aghassi, Brian Bergman, Bette Billet, Harold Bock, Robyn Braun, Paul Del Piero (new), Doug Fitzsimmons, Gary Garcia, Anne Gross, Jake Hakimi (new), Ann Hammond, Barry E. Levine, Jon Liberman, Roy Nwaisser, Marjan Safinia, Adam Wheeler (new), Sandra Willard

Board members absent: Susan Burden, Daniel Fink, Terrence Gomes, Nahed Guirguis, Gina LaBeaud

Guests present: Jennifer Badger, Elizabeth Carlin, Brooke Powers, Paula Waxman, John Bowler, Kami Pancavan, Lawrence Hendricks, Jesus Jimenez, Suzuki Ingersen, Christian Ingersen

II. PRESENTATIONS OF APPLICANTS AND VOTE ON CONFIRMATION FOR VACANT SORO NC BOARD POSITIONS (GB111208-01)

- a. **Zone 6:** Paul Del Piero, resident of Zone 6, introduced himself and responded to questions from Board members. His prepared statement was provided to all present. **Vote: Confirmed unanimously.** He was seated and participated in all subsequent discussions and votes.
- b. **Business 3:** Adam Wheeler, owner of a business on South Robertson, introduced himself and responded to questions from Board members. His prepared statement was provided to all present. He clarified that, as an architect, he was not currently involved in any projects before the Board. **Vote: Confirmed unanimously.** He was seated and participated in all subsequent discussions and votes.

- c. **Business 4:** Jake Hakimi, owner of a business on South Robertson, introduced himself and responded to questions from Board members. **Vote: Confirmed unanimously.** He was seated and participated in all subsequent discussions and votes.

(Barry Levine arrived)

III. REPORTS

Office of Councilmember Herb Wesson (CD-10): Field Deputy Liz Carlin explained that, within SORO boundaries, CD-10 covers the east side of Robertson Blvd. up to 18th street. She voiced the office's support for motions for variance on the agenda. She distributed the Autumn 2008 issue of the CD-10 newsletter, which highlights the summer Movies in the Park program. She noted Terrence and Robyn had volunteered at all four summer movie events and thanked them. She reiterated her announcement of the CD-10's holiday party, mentioning how memorable the event is for children who participate, and also invited people to volunteer. Twenty families whose children attend Shenandoah Elementary participate, with invitations extended on advice of the school principal. Pico NC is being asked for \$2,500; total cost of the event each year is about \$15,000. Volunteers do things like wrap hot dos, get drinks ready, monitor children to ensure no fighting, assist with arts and crafts, and help distribute toys; all children under age 12 receive an age-appropriate toy. Liz will email information to Gary, including information for volunteers. (This agenda item was moved up to accommodate Liz's schedule.)

IV. ELECTION OF BOARD PRESIDENT (GB111208-02)

Two candidates for President, Doug Fitzsimmons and Jon Liberman, spoke in turn. In addition, each had prepared a written statement and copies were given to all present.

Doug said he thought Jon had done an outstanding job as Acting President and emphasized he was not a candidate in opposition to Jon but rather as an advocate for a particular approach. He said that he wants to build on the momentum that he believes the Board has established during the past year, maximize the time spent on substantive issues while minimizing time on procedural issues, and drawing better on the great talents of Board and community members.

Jon said he admired and appreciated greatly Doug's many accomplishments and contributions during the past year and emphasized he was not a candidate in opposition to Doug but rather as an advocate for a particular approach. He said that he wants to ensure that the Board adequately encompasses the great diversity of constituencies in the community it serves, invests its limited resources wisely, and functions well in the current environment where not all city leaders support fully the Neighborhood Council system.

Both candidates then responded to specific questions from Board members, including their views on the role of the President and time availability to carry out the responsibilities. Brian moved to defer further discussion and a vote until later in the meeting, to accommodate schedules of guests. **Vote: Y-5, N-5, A-6. Motion defeated.** After additional discussion, the order of vote for President was determined by a coin toss. **Doug Fitzsimmons was elected by plurality of 8 votes to 6, with 3 abstentions.**

Sandra moved to change the order of agenda items, to consider motions next for which members of the public were in attendance. Christine seconded. **Motion approved unanimously.**

V. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Motion to support applicant request for variance at 2001 La Cienega Blvd. Business is an auto repair facility. (Bergman) (GB111208-5).** Brian introduced the motion. The applicant, Kami Pancavan, and John Bowler, representing the applicant, both spoke. They briefly described the variances requested and rationales. Board members asked them for clarifications on the ordinances and need for specific variances. Robyn noted that it had been difficult to obtain compliance from the owner in the past; Mr. Pancavan said it was not in his interest to have problems with his neighbors. Brian requested the Board vote on each variance/recommendation separately. Marj moved to proceed with the vote; Harold seconded. **(i) Windows: Y-15, N-1; A-1. Motion passed. (ii) Bay doors: Y-16, N-0; A-1. Motion passed. (iii) Fence: Y-16; N-1; A-0. Motion passed. (iv) Pole sign (Mr. Pancavan said this was not needed, and the vote proceeded): Y-15; N-2; A-0. Motion passed. (v) Landscaping setback: Y-15; N-1; A-1. Motion passed. (vi) Spray painting: Y-15; N-0; A-2. Motion passed. (vii) Off-street parking: Y-16; N-1; A-0. Motion passed. (viii) Door: Y-0; N-13; A-4. Motion defeated.**

Christine noted the City Council had voted in favor of businesses being required to install solar panels. She suggested they be invited to talk about the issue at a future SORO NC meeting.

- b. **Motion to support efforts to save a street tree on the 1700 block of Canfield (Bergman) (GB111208-6).** Brian introduced the motion. Members of the community, Jennifer Badger and Board members spoke to the issues. There was widespread agreement that trees should be saved wherever and whenever possible, based on environmental concerns, ambiance of the neighborhood, and overall quality of life. Questions arose about the property rights with respect to the tree. Jennifer Badger clarified that, while trees between the sidewalk and street are on City property, and it is City policy to save trees whenever possible, in practice, homeowners generally make decisions about the trees. Members of the community voiced the view that the sidewalk could be fixed without removing the tree, and they circulated a picture of the tree and sidewalk for Board information. On the basis of the discussion, Christine formulated stronger language for the Board's consideration. Marj proposed the motion be amended to incorporate the stronger language; Roy seconded. **Vote: Y-15; N-2; A-0. Amendment passed.** Christine moved to approve the amended motion; Sandra seconded. **Vote: Y-14; N-3; A-0. Amended motion passed.**

VI. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

None in addition to comment already given on specific motions.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

None.

VIII. REPORTS (resumed)

- a. **Office of Speaker of the House Karen Bass:** No report was made, as no representative was present.
- g. **Robertson Public Library:** Carol Duan, Senior Librarian, reported the library is being re-carpeted and receiving a new roof. She said that people have missed the library while it has been closed and that it is nice to know the library is meeting a community need. She had hoped to have many new books, but that is now uncertain due to City budget challenges. There is also a firing freeze. The strength of their current book selection is fiction. She cited library safety issues, including moveable tables and the stairway railing, which some children treat like a jungle gym. The library plans a series of classes for children and adults, and is resuming story times. She plans to attend a SORO NC Board meeting again in about three months and can be reached by email at cduan@lapl.org. (This agenda item was moved up to accommodate Carol's schedule.)

(Jake Hakimi left)

- b. **Offices of Councilmember Jack Weiss (CD-5):** Field Deputy Jennifer Badger reported on three issues. First, no parking signs for purposes of street sweeping were posted on South Robertson to help deal with parking problems, and the aim is to post these signs regularly on a rotating basis. Second, new billboards have appeared on South Robertson, and the Councilmembers' office continues to address these concerns. Third, Councilmember Weiss' office was approached recently by a neighborhood group proposing a community clean-up of Pico, and Jennifer asked if SORO NC would like to be involved in this effort. Marj asked about the possibility of speed bumps on Olin and Canfield. Marj also reported she had received an email from a community member whose home was being repossessed; she said people are feeling unsafe, and noted one person is now living in a car. Jennifer clarified that it is illegal for someone to live in a car. Paul expressed concerns about graffiti abatement.
- c. **LAPD:** No report was made, as no representative was present.
- d. **DONE:** No report was made, as no representative was present.
- e. **Robertson Recreation Center Report:** Brooke Powers, Recreation Facility Director at Robertson Rec Center, reported the Halloween Carnival was a wonderful event, Robert has left as the Center's program coordinator and that position is now filled by Tammy, and she hopes that the Robertson Activity League (RAL) program will be offered during the winter. She clarified that groups wanting to use the Child Care room for meetings must arrive by 6:30 p.m. when the staff leave, or the door will be locked.

IX. NEW BUSINESS (resumed)

- i. **Motion to continue RAL program for Winter Break (\$4100, of which \$2100 was allocated for the Summer 2008 program but not used)(Lieberman) (GB111208-12).** Jon presented the motion. He said lessons from the summer program have been applied as the program has moved forward. It is proposed that SORO NC fund part of winter break program costs and others fund the remainder. The winter program would run for 3 days the week of Christmas, 4 days between Christmas and New Year's, and five days the week after New Year's. There would be lunches, and five field trips compared to seven during summer. The LA Parks Foundation is now being established so that, in future, the City's Parks and Recreation Centers can seek grants and will no longer have to rely on SORO NC and LAPD to fund RAL. Beth Ryan is currently preparing a proposal for JP Morgan and Chase to provide \$25,000 in funding. Marj commended Brooke for her hard work and thoroughness. (Christine Aghassi left). Doug moved to approve the motion; Harold seconded. **Vote: Y-14; N-0; A-1 Motion approved.**

(Harold Bock left.)

X. READING OF THE MINUTES AND APPROVAL

Bette moved to approve draft minutes of the General Meeting of October 15, 2008 with Sandra seconding. **Vote: Y-12; N-0; A-2. Minutes approved.**

XI. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

- a. **President's Report and Board Training on Financial Statement and on Ethics Training:** Jon reported the Executive Committee had discussed the need for better training of Board members and this included required training in ethics every two years. Ann said participation in the on-line course takes about two hours, and successful completion is posted on the LA City website, by Neighborhood Council member name. Jon and Ann encouraged all Board members to complete this training as soon as possible. Financial forms relevant to the scheduled financial training were distributed to all, but there was no discussion as Terrence was not present.
- b. **Treasurer's Report:** The Treasurer's Report was distributed to all, but there was no discussion, as Terrence was not present.

XII. NEW BUSINESS (resumed)

- e. **Motion on sending a letter to the City Council taking a position on Neighborhood Council Board members' needs for financial disclosure (Gomes) (GB111208-8).** Jon provided background to this motion and moved to approve it; Doug seconded. **Motion approved unanimously.**
- f. **Motion to provide up to \$1000 to co-sponsor a CD-10 Winter Wonderland event for needy families (Aghassi) (GB111208-9).** Marj provided background on this motion and

explained that \$500 would come from Outreach budget, \$250 from Public Safety budget and \$250 from Operations budget. Jon moved to approve; Roy seconded. **Vote: Y-13; N-0; A-1. Motion approved.**

- g. Motion to co-sponsor an anti-car theft awareness program with other NC and the LAPD (\$500) (Lieberman) (GB111208-10).** Jon provided background to this program. Roy asked about the source of the stickers and Robyn asked about boundaries of the program. Jon moved to approve the motion; there was no second. **Motion not approved.**
- h. Motion to support LAFD station #58 effort to provide better security at the station (\$1100) (Lieberman) (GB111208-11).** Jon provided background to the motion. He explained that LAFD firemen had experienced theft from their cars while they were responding to fire alarms, and that the firemen themselves had identified this security gate as their highest priority improvement for the fire station at this time. Bette added that it had been agreed at the Public Safety Committee meeting that, in future, the local station would submit in March a proposal for funding priorities for the following fiscal year so there could be a planned approach to helping to meet their needs. Jon moved to approve the motion; Roy seconded. **Vote: Y-12; N-2; A-0. Motion approved.**
- c. Motion to contribute \$1000 to a beautification project at Canfield Elementary School (Bergman) (GB111208-7).** Motion withdrawn prior to the meeting; to be considered at a future meeting.
- d. Discussion about Street Signs in City of Los Angeles and the need to conduct a survey (Lieberman).** Discussion postponed to future meeting due to late hour.

XIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. By-Laws:** No report given, due to late hour.
- b. Education:** No report given, due to late hour.
- c. Land Use/Green Team:** No report given, due to late hour.
- e. Outreach:** Marj reported that another hearing on the Strip Club will be held on November 19th, and the November 10th Town Hall meeting on Energy and Savings was a great success
- f. Public Safety:** No report given, due to late hour.
- g. Ad-hoc Board Development Committee.** No report made.
- h. Ad hoc Inter-NC Committee:** No report made.

X. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Last printed 12/11/08 6:31 PM

Voting record, by agenda item
(Record by GB111208-)

Representing	Name	1a	1b	1c	Defer vote	2	3	6 to amend	6	8	9	11	12
Zone 1	Daniel Fink												
Zone 2													
Zone 3	Harold Bock	Y	Y	Y	Y	J	np	Y	Y	np	np	np	Y
Zone 4	Robyn Braun	Y	Y	Y	Y	J	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A
Zone 5	Bette Billet	Y	Y	Y	N	D	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Zone 6	Paul Del Piero	na	A	A	A	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Zone 7	Jon Liberman	Y	Y	Y	A	J	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Zone 8	Sandra Willard	Y	Y	Y	N	D	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Zone 9													
Zone 10													
At-large 1	Brian Bergman	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
At-large 2	Christine Aghassi	Y	Y	Y	N	D	np	Y	Y	np	np	np	np
At-large 3	Terrence Gomes												
At-large 4	Anne Gross	Y	Y	Y	N	J	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Business 1	Marj Safinia	Y	Y	Y	N	D	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Business 2	Barry Levine	np	np	np	Y	D	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Business 3	Adam Wheeler	na	na	Y	A	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Business 4	Jake Hakimi	na	na	na	A	D	np	Y	Y	np	np	np	np
Business 5	Roy Nwaiser	Y	Y	Y	A	J	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Org. 1	Doug Fitzsimmons	Y	Y	Y	A	D	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Org. 2	Ann Hammond	Y	Y	Y	N	D	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Org. 3	Nahed Guirguis												
Org. 4	Susan Burden												
School 1	Gina LaBeaud												
School 2	Gary Garcia	Y	Y	Y	Y	J	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y

Key: Y=Yes; N=No; A=Abstain
D=Doug Fitzsimmons; J=Jon Liberman
na=not applicable
np=not present

Voting record, agenda item GB111208-5
Items I through viii

Representing	Name	i	li	lii	lv	v	vi	vii	viii
Zone 1	Daniel Fink								
Zone 2									
Zone 3	Harold Bock	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Zone 4	Robyn Braun	N	Y	Y	N	A	A	Y	A
Zone 5	Bette Billet	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Zone 6	Paul Del Piero	Y	A	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N
Zone 7	Jon Liberman	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N
Zone 8	Sandra Willard	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Zone 9									
Zone 10									
At-large 1	Brian Bergman	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
At-large 2	Christine Aghassi	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
At-large 3	Terrence Gomes								
At-large 4	Anne Gross	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A
Business 1	Marj Safinia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Business 2	Barry Levine	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Business 3	Adam Wheeler	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Business 4	Jake Hakimi	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Business 5	Roy Nwaiser	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Org. 1	Doug Fitzsimmons	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Org. 2	Ann Hammond	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	A
Org. 3	Nahed Guirguis								
Org. 4	Susan Burden								
School 1	Gina LaBeaud								
School 2	Gary Garcia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A

Key: Y=Yes; N=No; A=Abstain