

# West Van Nuys / Lake Balboa Neighborhood Council

## Minutes of the November 07, 2007 Meeting

### 1. Welcome

### 2. Roll call, Adoption of Agenda and Approval of Minutes

Call to order: 7:30 p.m.

This meeting was called to order by President Steven Leffert

In attendance were Teresa Pollock, Rosie Saenz, Sylvia Silva, Dylan McRae, Linda Prueff, Steve Leffert, Bill McRae, Shawn Moradian, Gwen Wright (left at 9:12 p.m.), Joyce MacKinnon, and Paul Fabre (arrived at 8:27 p.m.).

• **Steven Leffert** asks for a motion to adopt the agenda. **Linda Prueff** introduces the motion, and **Bill McRae** seconds.

• **Steven Leffert** asks for a motion to approve the minutes. **Joyce MacKinnon** introduces the motion, and **Linda Prueff** seconds. **Motion passed unanimously.**

### 3. Announcements and Reports City, State, and Federal Representatives, Board Members, and Others, Committee Reports

- a. **LAPD** – Officer Hamm gives his number – 818-731-2551. Anyone with questions or complaints about his or Officer Carter's area. People with complaints about abandoned vehicles or graffiti should contact 311 and Officer Hammond to keep him informed. More people are breaking into cars, and everyone should be careful to keep all valuable items out of their car when parked. Most car burglaries are not reported for fear of increasing insurance costs. The police will not inform the insurance company, and the officers will have better information to stop the burglaries.
- b. **Lynda Levitan (Councilman Tony Cardenas)** – She has signs promoting safe driving and looking out for children available. Those who want them should add their name to a list. The office has created books about neighborhood watch. There will be a candlelight vigil taking place on Veteran's Day. There will be a candle lighting holiday festival taking place on November 24 at the Government Center. The signs for "No Parking Overnight" will be going up, and they are working on putting "No Parking Anytime" signs on Woodley and Burbank.
- c. **Megan Cottier (Councilman Greig Smith)** – She is from CD12. 150 people showed up at the north end of the valley for a Neighborhood Cleanup. Councilman Smith introduced a motion for a citizens' oversight committee regarding the Department of Water and Power's rate increase.

- d. **Melvin Canas (D.O.N.E.)** – He has passed out a booklet of the commission report on the Neighborhood Council Review Commission. The booklet lists their recommendations developed through their comprehensive review of the neighborhood council system. The recommendations will go before the city council early next year, and they will make changes to the neighborhood council system. Mr. Canas encourages the members of the board to go over the recommendations and take a position on them before they are approved by the city council. D.O.N.E. might invite a representative from the city council to speak before the neighborhood councils.
- e. **Rosie Saenz – Marketing & Outreach – Movie Nights** – She asks for volunteers to help with outreach through the movie nights. They have put together a tentative calendar for 2008, and anyone interested in seeing it or volunteering can talk to Rosie. She will be introducing a motion next month requesting funds for a community movie night, a spay and neuter clinic, and a beautiful homes contest.
- f. **Steve Leffert – Lake Balboa Naming** – The city council accepted the renaming of the expanded area of Lake Balboa. The lake, the Japanese gardens, and the golf course are now part of Lake Balboa. He has provided unofficial maps of the new area, and he will put up the official map once it is completed.

**Bill McRae** -- Regarding last week's council meeting on 02 of November, **Bill McRae** read a statement about the conflict.

**Rosie Saenz:** Suggests that the board should move on from this issue.

- g. **Bill McRae – Election Committee Nominations:** Elections will be April 12, and the committee asks the public and the members of the board to volunteer to help with the election. **Steve Leffert, Dylan McRae,** and **Eric Price** volunteer to help.
- h. **Clay McFarland – NC Congress/Senate** – Not at the meeting, no financial report.
- i. **Linda Pruett** – The CERT3 classes consist of first aid, CPR, and AED. The classes are going on right now, and more classes will be offered in March. On Sunday, November 18, a class teaching combined CPR, first aid, and AED will be held from 9 am to 5 pm. The cost is \$25, and it provides Red Cross certification. It takes place at the Fire Station 88 on 5101 North Sepulveda Blvd.

I have provided information about fires and fire prevention on the back table. I have flashlights to give away, and I encourage everyone to keep a flashlight in their car and by their front door.

- j. **Steve Leffert** – The members of the election committee must be approved by the board. **Bill McRae** presents the nominees (Steve Leffert, Dylan McRae, and Eric Price) to the board. **Linda Pruett** introduces a motion to approve the members, and **Rosie Saenz** seconds.

Moved by **Linda Prueff**. Seconded by **Rosie Saenz**. Passed 9-1.

**4. Public Comment – Comments from the Public on Non-Agenda Items, Issues, Announcements and Complaints within the jurisdiction of WVN/LB NC.**

- a. Announcements from Raymond Yu – He apologizes for missing the Congress of Neighborhoods. On November 25 at 6 pm, the Hollywood Christmas Parade will be held on Hollywood Blvd between Orange and Highland Avenue. On January 21, 2008, the Kingdom Day Parade will take place on Martin Luther King Blvd. and Crenshaw Blvd.
- b. **Steven Brackett** – Thanks the councils for its efforts renaming Lake Balboa. He hopes that the members of the board remember their purpose serving the majority of the population and avoid conflict between the board members.
- c. **Jeff Witherill** – On the east side of White Oak just south of Sherman Way, homeless people park all night. They also stay in the Wendy's parking lot. He would like to place "No Parking" signs on the area to discourage this behavior.
- d. **Linda Newman** – She wants to find a way to stop neighbors with fire hazards on their houses from endangering the rest of the neighborhood.

**Lynda Levitan** informs her that she or Megan Cottier could help her start the process of delivering a citation from Department of Building and Safety to the neighbor.

- e. **Steve Leffert** -- He reads out the proposed changes to bylaws before the public as the current bylaws dictate. The proposed bylaw changes are all required by D.O.N.E.
  - 1. One hundred eighty days prior to election, the board must nominate a new election committee. (change from 90 days to 180 days)
  - 2. Removal of the language on "initial elections."

The bylaws will be on the December agenda for an official vote on accepting these changes. This announcement is official notice about the proposed changes. The elections will take place on April 12, 2008.

**Bill McRae** – Suggests archiving the original language on the "initial elections" in order to retain the neighborhood council's historical record.

**Melvin Canas** – He assures the board that they can keep the language about the initial elections if they so choose. Amendments 2 and 3 are the essential changes.

**5. Brief Responses from Board to statements made or questions posed by persons exercising their general public comment rights**

No comments.

**6. Motion – Support: LA City Rec & Park’s Winter Solstice Event at Lake Balboa Park – Saenz**

**a. Board Comment**

**Rosie Saenz** introduces **Brook Powers**.

**Brook Powers** (Balboa Sports Center) – Last week’s Halloween Carnival was a success. WVN/LB NC donated \$500 towards that event. She introduces **Jasmine Dowlatshah**, chairperson of the Winter Solstice event.

**Jasmine Dowlatshah** – WVN/LB NC was a top sponsor of last year’s Winter Solstice event. The event celebrates all major winter holidays, and they bring in tons of snow for the kids to play in. Visits from Santa, activities, and vendor and food booths will be there. Contact Jasmine at 349-7341 with any questions. Any sponsor will have its name on the banners and have its name announced over the loudspeaker. The projected cost of the snow will be \$3000. The event will be on December 15 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**b. Public Comment**

No public comment.

**c. Board Discussion**

No comment.

**d. Motion**

**Rosie Saenz** moves that the WVN/LB NC approve the donation for snow in the amount of \$3000 for the Winter Solstice event at Lake Balboa in order to continue outreach efforts. In addition to the \$3000, she asks for \$150 for banners, decorations, and give-aways for the neighborhood council’s information booth, and she agrees to work in the booth.

Moved by **Rosie Saenz**. Seconded by **Teresa Pollock**. Passed 8 -0.

[**Paul Fabre** comes in at 8:27 p.m.]

**7. Possible Motion on NC funding matching portion of Beautification Grant – Birmingham Student Pick Up/Drop Off Area – Silva**

**a. Sylvia Silva – Motion** – She moves that \$10750 of the budget be reserved for the improvement of the Birmingham High School Student Pick Up/Drop Off Area. The total cost of the project is \$23,400, and the match was \$13,400. **Rosie Saenz** seconds.

•**Linda Prueff** – She wants to know what the money will go towards.

• **Sylvia Silva** describes the project's goal of improving the student pick up/drop off area with seating, trash receptacles, and clearly designated sections for pick up and drop off. The money would go towards labor, benches, and asphalt removal and preparation.

We have support from the principal.

• **Steve Leffert** reminds the board that some of the costs might be offset by donations and volunteer work.

• **Rosie Saenz** suggests allotting the whole amount in case there are no donations.

• **Paul Fabre** wants to know what money is left in the budget, but the board cannot determine the exact amount because **Clay McFarland** is absent. **Paul** would like to see the board rigorously monitor its expenses and donations, and he has concerns that the board would approve of funding without knowing what is available to spend.

• **Rosie Saenz** and **Sylvia Silva** contend that they know the money is available within the Neighborhood Council budget; they only lack the exact number because the treasurer is absent. The donation to the school was cleared by **Clay McFarland** at the previous meeting.

• **Steve Leffert** looks over the budget papers and estimates that the money is available. He calls to question.

Moved by **Sylvia Silva**. Seconded by **Rosie Saenz**. Passed 7-1.

#### **8. Possible Motion on NC funding match portion of Beautification Grant – Balboa Median Beautification Project – Silva**

a. **Sylvia Silva – Motion** – She moves that \$6800 of the neighborhood council's budget be reserved for the beautification of the median on the east side of Balboa Blvd. south of Saticoy Street.

• **Steve Leffert** calls to question.

Moved by **Sylvia Silva**. Passed 5-2.

#### **9. Presentation by Lissette Maccarone (PTA member) and Patricia Brandon (principal) possible motion on NC funding matching portion of Beautification Grant – Stagg St. School – Pruet**

• **Lissette Maccarone** asks for the board's financial help with their project adding benches, tables, landscaping, and a literacy garden. The school has applied for a \$10000 beautification grant to the city of L.A. The grant procedure is long and competitive, so the school is seeking financial help from the board. They request \$5000, and they will accept any amount above and beyond.

•**Patricia Brandon** explains the details of the project. They will replace old and uncomfortable benches with new ones, and they will overhaul the landscaping.

#### BOARD COMMENT

•**Linda Prueff** asks if the WVN/LB NC is in competition for the City of LA's grant money, and **Linda Leverton** explains that the neighborhood council is not in direct competition because every council district gets funding.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

•**Glenn Bailey** says that the agendas must include the dollar amount of any funding request, and he believes the board is not compliant with Brown Act when it encumbers the funding. **Steve Leffert** responds that the neighborhood council has spoken with the city attorney on the matter and learned that they do not need to put the dollar amounts on the agendas.

•**Bahman Mojallal (Moe)** – His son has a case of mild autism. He attends Stag Street School. His son has improved greatly, and the staff and faculty are accommodating and helpful. He is in full support of the beautification project. He offers to help raise funds for future Stag Street projects here.

#### BOARD COMMENT

•**Bill McRae** – He asks the speakers if the project is receiving funding from the L.A. Unified School District.

•**Patricia Brandon** explains that the district funds only essential repairs, and the beautification project cannot be financed with district money. The school uses volunteers, donations, and fundraising to pay for the beautification projects.

•**Lynda Levitan** – The district money goes towards deferred maintenance, and the repairs are limited to long-neglected essential repairs like retrofitting and making buildings ADA compliant.

#### MOTION

•**Linda Prueff** moves that WVN/LB NC encumber \$5000, provided that there are sufficient funds within the budget, towards the beautification project of Stag Street School. **Rosie Saenz** seconds.

#### BOARD COMMENT

•**Paul Fabre** asks what the board will do if the budget for beautification does not meet the cost of all 3 beautification projects discussed and approved at this meeting. **Linda Prueff** reminds him of the condition she placed within her motion that the approval is only good if the money is available in the budget. **Paul Fabre** stresses the importance of commitment and follow-through when allocating funds to groups coming before the

neighborhood council, and he worries that the school district would see the neighborhood council's funding of a district school's project as an excuse to offer less funding for their own projects. He does, however, applaud the Stag Street's project.

Moved by **Linda Prueff**. Seconded by **Rosie Saenz**. \_Passed 8-0.

#### **10. Motion on Elections Committee – Bill McRae**

ALREADY COVERED

#### **11. Motion on Las Lomas Development – Prueff**

**Linda Prueff** reads the motion:

Whereas the Las Lomas "mini-city" project is not an infill development, does not include any redevelopment, does not use existing infrastructure, does not reduce traffic and is not by any measurable standard "smart growth" as claimed by the developer,

And whereas this massive project is opposed by Congress Members Brad Sherman and Howard P. "Buck" McKeon,

And whereas the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning said the proposed project appears to request a density of almost 500 times greater than the low-density threshold recommended by the County's standards for the hillside land which the project site occupies,

And whereas the developer is seeking annexation into the City of Los Angeles in an attempt to gain approval for a project that has already generated opposition from the City of Santa Clarita, the West Ranch Town Council, and the County of Los Angeles,

And whereas this annexation is further desired by the developer because it would allow the project to tie into the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power for its need utilities that are not available from other sources,

And whereas the impact of such a development on the major traffic corridors that would be the evacuation routes from Los Angeles in the event of a disaster,

And whereas this development, while not within the boundaries of the West Van Nuys/Lake Balboa Neighborhood Council,

I move that the West Van Nuys/Lake Balboa Neighborhood Council go on record as being opposed to this project as currently configured without the usual presentation to the Neighborhood Council by the developer because of the wide-ranging opposition to the Las Lomas project on many governmental levels.

•**Megan Cottier**: She urges the board approve this letter. Councilman Greg Smith authored the motion, and it is available on his website, [www.cd12.org](http://www.cd12.org). The developer would like to build 5000 homes in an area that would further congest the traffic on interstate 405.

[**Steve Leffert** gives the chair to **Bill McRae**, and **Bill** invites **Steve** to speak on the motion.]

- **Steve Leffert** – The development is at the junction of the 14 and the 405 freeways, and it sits on top of a fault. The neighborhood council would normally invite the developers to the council to hear the pitch, but this development appears too dangerous and illogical to warrant the board's time and attention. The developer will be speaking at the Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council meeting on November 13 at 6 pm at the Shepherd of the Hills Church.

[**Bill McRae** hands the chair back to **Steve Leffert**]

- **Linda Prueff** voices her disapproval of the development.

Moved by **Linda Prueff**. Seconded by **Bill McRae**. Passed 8-0.

## 12. Motion on Land Use Policy – **Bill McRae**

- **Bill McRae** – The West Van Nuys/Lake Balboa Neighborhood Council Community Development Plan represents our choices for land developments in our neighborhoods, West Van Nuys and Lake Balboa. Its goals are that these choices are officially developed, publicly known, clear, and considered by developers and city officials. This community is committed to improving the quality of life and preserving our community's character. The purpose of the plan is to have the weight of the neighborhood council's official voice for every land use issue and so avoid projects being approved without our oversight. In this document, we proactively make a stand and create a standard for our home. Developers are asked to balance four core elements of housing, transportation, environment, and economic development in their plans. These four core elements are critical to improving quality of life and preserving the character of the community. Community preservation encourages policy makers to make decisions and take actions that preserve West Van Nuys' and Lake Balboa's special character in each of these 4 core elements.

The committee plans to design guidelines to enhance community appearance and protect natural resources. It has also drawn up building guidelines. This plan is the beginning, and he moves that the board approve the plan as the official beginning plan of the Community Development Plan.

- **Sylvia Silva** asks about billboards being in the plan, and **Bill McRae** says that the plan could likely offer guidelines on new billboards, but the old billboards are outside of the plan's scope.

- **Sylvia Silva** asks if these guidelines can be enforced, and **Steve Leffert** says that a community design overlay would preclude developers from violating the guidelines. The current plan establishes guidelines and standards that will be available to developers, and the board can exert the full weight of its advisory voice to all developers.

- **Linda Pruett** sees merit in the community design overlay, and she hopes that **Bill McRae** and the planning committee make great strides. The committee and the board could guide the community's growth.

- **Paul Fabre** would like to see further revisions be more specific in order to be clear and persuasive to developers. He is in full support of further work on the plan.

Moved by **Bill McRae**, **Seconded by Rosie Saenz**. Passed 9-0.

### **13. Motion on funding support for Neighborhood Council Congress Expense – McFarland**

- **Clay McFarland** is absent. **Steve Leffert** gives the chair to **Bill McRae**, and **Bill** asks **Steve Leffert** to speak on the motion.

- **Steve Leffert** – The Annual Congress of Neighborhoods was funded by a group of neighborhood councils; the city has decreased its funding significantly. He moves that the neighborhood council reserves \$500 towards expenses for the 2008 Congress of Neighborhoods.

- **Melvin Canas** – There will be two congresses coming up, one every 6 months. The next congress will be city-wide, and the following is likely to be regional-wide. The neighborhood councils are likely going to fund larger portions of the congresses. The Neighborhood Congress planning group will be asking the neighborhood councils for funding support of the congresses, so the WVN/LB NC is proactive in its attempt to set aside money for funding.

- **Paul Fabre** suggests waiting for approval of any funding until the city and the neighborhood councils have determined the standard funding procedures for the upcoming congresses.

- MOTION – **Linda Pruett** moves that the board table the issue until the December meeting when the treasurer will be present. **Joyce** seconds.

**Linda Pruett** introduces the motion. **Joyce MacKinnon** seconds. Passed 9-0.

[**Bill McRae** gives the chair to **Steve Leffert**.]

### **14. Other Reports – Possible Actions to be taken**

### **15. Unfinished Business**

### **16. Adjournment**

- **Steve Leffert** asks for a motion to adjourn. **Rosie Saenz** introduces a motion to adjourn. **Joyce MacKinnon** seconds. **Vote taken:** 8 in favor, 0 opposed. MOTION PASSES.

- Meeting adjourned at 9:42 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Edith Darling, associate of Apple One