

Sycamore Square Neighborhood Association
January Meeting Minutes
January 8, 2017

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by President Conrad Starr at 9:05am. Board members present included Mr. Starr, Charla Gardner, Joshua Kirchmer, Sue Horwitz and Elizabeth Fuller. Steve Senigram joined the meeting approximately 5 minutes later. Eight neighbors were also present, including Myrna Dwyer, Robert Vetica, Elaine Smitham, Rich Erickson, Marcia Henning, Liz Nankin, Joanna DeJarnett and James Clelland.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Gardner requested that the word “neighbors” be changed to “board members” at the top of page 3 of the December 4, 2016 minutes. Ms. Fuller moved that the minutes be approved as corrected. Ms. Gardner seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously.

Officer Reports

GWNC Report - Mr. Senigram reported that the lot subdivision at 953 S. Citrus was denied. He also reported that new owners at 821 S Orange have begun building an additional unit behind the main house without permits, and that the Dept of Building and Safety is investigating the legality of the build.

[note: this was skipped; Steve didn't do a Treasury report]

Bylaws Point of Order

Mr. Starr noted that the amendments to the minutes made in September, to clarify when officer terms end, was done without proper notice, so it should be re-agendized for another vote at next month's meeting. He also noted that the “two-year” terms for officers should be “one year,” and that that change can be agendized and voted on next month as well.

Old Business

Speed Humps/Tables - Ms. Gardner informed the neighbors in attendance about the traffic mitigations promised to the neighborhood in the ordinance passed with the approvals for the Wilshire-La Brea development, which Essex (new owners of 5200 Wilshire) is now required to supply. The mitigations include speed humps and stop sign installations. Ms. Gardner informed the meeting that though the board (Mr. Starr specifically) has been in constant contact with CD4 regarding these measures since the summer, no firm timeline has been given for their implementation.

Neighborhood members requested we get an estimate on the cost of the study and mitigations.

Lassen's Loading Dock

Mr. Starr reported on the loading dock at 5200 Wilshire. Lassen's met with him and explained their drivers' difficulties with the loading dock, including inadequate clearances and their inability

to use it. Board consensus is that these issues with the loading dock should not be addressed by the neighborhood, but by Essex (owner of the building). Mr. Starr has continued to be in discussion about repairs to the loading dock and tenants in the building's issues with it.

Ms. Gardner suggested to have the Board meet with Essex and tenants regarding best delivery routes for loading and unloading so as to alleviate the neighborhood's problems with trucks blocking streets and taking up parking.

Metro Center Opening

Mr. Starr and other board members provided reports and updates on the meeting that was held on January 6 with Metro, Skansa, CD4 and LADOT, wherein a verbal offer was made by Skansa to pay for the traffic study and any resulting traffic mitigations found necessary by it, pending a conversation with Metro. Mr. Starr noted that no written offer has been presented yet, so board members agreed to postpone a board action until a formal proposal is received. It was acknowledged that a special meeting would likely be needed to act on the matter before Metro's deadline.

Mr. Clelland left the meeting at this time, but expressed gratitude to the board and neighbors for their efforts to keep the neighborhood's ideals in place.

HPOZ Update

Ms. Fuller and Ms. Gardner noted that HPOZ updates should appear on the agenda for each meeting. Mr. Starr appointed Ms. Fuller chairperson of the HPOZ committee. Ms. Fuller explained to the attendees what HPOZs are, why one could be beneficial to our neighborhood, and the educational efforts the board has conducted so far (including guest speakers at our annual meeting in November, and a series of neighborhood tours to highlight its historical significance).

[Mr. Senigram left the meeting at 10:42am] due to familial obligations.

Ms. Fuller said she would like to set dates for another Sycamore Square tour...and a tour of her current neighborhood, West Adams Heights, to show what happened to that neighborhood before and since its HPOZ was implemented, and what living in an HPOZ is like. She suggested dates of February 12th and 19th for the two tours and promised to send out notices via e-mail and social media.

New Business

BevMo- Mr. Starr announced that BevMo! will be moving into the 5200 Wilshire building, and he and Ms. Gardner recounted several conditions, including hours of operations and sales of certain kinds of items, that the store has volunteered. She and Ms. Fuller explained, however, that because the store may need no entitlements, there may be little or no opportunity or leverage for the community to negotiate any further restrictions. For the record, however, board members noted that they would like to request the following::

- Hours of 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. (as originally suggested by BevMo, but different from the 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. on their written offer)...though Ms. Fuller noted that the 8-10 may be their legal hours, per their Type 21 ABC license Single serve bottles accessible only by employees (beer and spirits)
- If miniature bottles will be sold, price them high enough to discourage purchase by homeless people
- Parking spots for both employees and customers (currently the store is requesting on-site parking for only its manager, no other employees)
- Security in the store/Exterior security while store is in operation
- A 90-day status meeting after the store opens, and then regular meetings with the SSNA board with store senior management in order to establish relationship and get contact info in order to voice concerns that may arise, and updates to information if changes in management occur.

Ms. Gardner stated she is opposed to big box liquor store opening because of compounded traffic issues.

It was suggested that a list of contacts who have had issues with BevMo! Be gathered in order to gauge their interest in addressing neighborhood concerns

Ms. Fuller pointed out that though we do not have legal leverage we should still make our concerns known. She shared CG's concerns listed above.

Mr. Starr expressed want of such meetings with store management to extend not only to BevMo! But all incoming tenants of the Essex building at 5200

Neighborhood feedback included aversion to liquor stores opening in the area. Ms. Horwitz noted that our neighborhood is actually underserved regarding liquor stores. Ms Fuller noted that a license is already in place for a tenant of 5200 Wilshire, so if not BevMo! It is likely that another business would move in and use the license.

Mr. Starr proposed that we share concerns listed and invite neighbors and stakeholder for input ahead of a vote at the next board meeting.

At this point, Ms. Horwitz moved to advance the meeting to board and public comments and table the remaining agenda items. The motion was approved by the board.

Board Comments

Ms. Horwitz moved that the SSNA meet with Essex management to discuss the dispensation of parking spots to residents of the 700/800/ blocks of Sycamore Avenue in order to alleviate the issue of Essex tenants and their guests taking up neighborhood parking spots. Ms. Gardner seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously. Mr. Starr appointed Ms. Horwitz to contact Essex about this issue.

Mr. Starr reported that the annual Homeless Census will take place later in January, and that the GWNC is coordinating local efforts; more information is available at their website. The volunteer gathering place for the event will be at the building at SE corner of 6th and La Brea.

Mr. Starr also reported that a number of streetlights are out in the neighborhood. He reported (or attempted to report) 12 of them through MyLA311. Ms. Horwitz reported another one on Sycamore.

Public Comments

Ms. Henning complained about Essex tenants and guests parking in the driveway of her building on Sycamore. Ms. Dwyer suggested increasing signage in the neighborhood regarding parking enforcement.

Ms. Gardner commented that neighbors concerned about traffic could call the Traffic Division of the LAPD at 213-473-0222.

Ms. Dwyer inquired about the resurfacing of 8th Street. Ms Horwitz said that she would bring this to the attention of CD4 in her correspondence with them.

The board's next meeting was scheduled for Sunday Feb 5th at 9am. Mr. Kirchmer will let all members of the board know the schedule of the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:31am.