



**Sycamore Square Neighborhood Association
Session Meeting Minutes
February 22, 2021**

The meeting was called to order by President Conrad Starr at 7:02 pm

Board members present included Conrad Starr, Joshua Kirchmer, Veronica Matos, Jonah Bliss, and Lane M. Apologies from Jason Donnelly.

Guests present: CD 4 staff Su In Lee, Andrea Conant and Council Member Nithya Raman; Bryan Curran, at large candidate GWNC; Kari Garcia, Miracle Mile resident

1. **Call to Order** (President)
2. **Roll Call** (Secretary)
3. **Special Guests:** Councilmember Nithya Raman (CD4) and Field Deputy Su In Lee
Summary of meet & greet with CM Raman and her staff:
 - *Special presentation and virtual tour of Sycamore Square by Conrad Starr.*
 - *Introductions*
 - *Immediate focus of staff is attending “meet & greets” in order to continue her campaign’s focus on community outreach and commitment to engagement with constituents.*
 - *Continued focus on addressing the homeless and affordable housing situation. Has already presented several motions to the Council, while also reaching out to community partners. Challenged by drastic fiscal downfall of the City, leading to gaps in services, resources and to overburdened departments and long waits for services due to hiring freeze.*
 - *Trying to figure out an effective way of using existing resources and community partners to fill gaps and address concerns around City services.*
 - *Robust volunteer corps already in place to help with phone outreach to CD4 residents to share community resources, including vaccine access.*
 - *Introduction of key staff contacts for Sycamore Sq:*
 - *Andrea Conant: Deputy Chief of Staff & District Director*
 - *Su In Lee: Field Manager for the Greater Wilshire Area, which includes Sycamore Sq.; suin.lee@lacity.org, 213-473-7004*
 - *Board members shared some of the issues of concern for Sycamore Sq. residents including:*
 - *Homeless encampments around CD4*
 - *Illegal Airbnb’s*
 - *Zoning change request from 5100 Wilshire Blvd*
 - *Metro Extension of the “D” line and issues around the duration of closures on Wilshire Blvd and Sycamore, north and south of Wilshire.*
 - *Issues of concern shared by Sycamore Sq. neighbors present:*
 - *Traffic issues: CD 4 staff already flagged some traffic issues in our area and are already partnering with DoT*
 - *Issues around homeless/unhoused encampments: CM Raman acknowledged the challenges in coordinating and providing services to this population. Challenges*

faced in getting information from providers regarding their outreach efforts and how the limited resources are being shared. Currently starting to work with LAHSA to coordinate a dedicated outreach in CD 4 to help guarantee that systems and relationships are developed to ensure long term success. Will be able to report in a few months.

- *Ensuring continued diversity in the make-up of Sycamore Sq stakeholders, especially in light of developers who are interested in plans that would be detrimental to and alter the make-up of Sycamore Sq.: CM Raman shared her experience in the ad hoc nature of community planning process and dealing with development issues. Staff are working on trying to build a structure and process to help lay out a plan of action on development and planning issues. CD4 staff to make available information for residents on steps and procedures.*
- *Encouraging alternative modes of transportation to alleviate traffic issues (e.g., bike lanes)*
- *Closing of Olympia Medical Center: Difficult to get involved, as this was a private sale. CD4 staff have been in touch with UCLA and Alecto Healthcare Service supporting the nurses' group that is trying to keep the medical facility from closing. The Council is also working on this issue and approved a resolution opposing the planned closure of Olympia Medical Center at the end of March.*
- *CM Raman was asked about her long term strategy, legislative or otherwise, to increase affordable housing: Andrea Conant outlined the following steps of CM Raman's plan: (i) CD4 staff working on a project mapping properties in the district that are unused or abandoned, looking at options to identify and address nuisances with the goal of working with owners to identify properties that can be bought in order to be developed into affordable housing; (ii) also working with tenant advocates to ensure and safeguard renters rights issues; (iii) working on maximizing number of units of affordable housing on new developments; and (iv) CD4 hired a Tenant Protections Specialist to work on development and planning issues.*

4. **Approval of Minutes:** December 2, 2020. Moved by Joshua K, seconded by Lane M, seconded by Lane M. Approved with no objections or changes.

5. **Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items**

- Neighbors reported the issues of inconsiderate BMW test drives in SS. Shared that there are “pockets” of test drives at certain times of the day. Conrad and Lane will work with neighbors in collecting documented instances of test drives and will work with Sean, the manager of the BMW dealership. The issue of test drives is hard to regulate as not all test drivers have a salesperson with them to enforce the rules spelled out in the agreement with SSNA.
- Electric Scooter rider: additional reports from neighbors regarding the man driving his electric scooter on the sidewalk, with an unleashed dog. His actions are dangerous on two accounts - riding a scooter on the sidewalk with no regards for people walking on the sidewalk, and the fact that his unleashed dog has already bitten a neighbor. Due to the man's aggressive behavior, neighbors had the police pay several visits in the hopes of stopping the dangerous behaviors – these visits have had no effect. The next step is for a neighbor to file another police report next time there is another aggressive and violent interaction.
- Kudos to Sycamore Square resident, Jasmine, who was part of a research team that worked on the COVID 19 vaccine locally.
- Brian Curran, Windsor Square resident and at Large Alternate for the Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council, shared information about the upcoming GWNC elections,

including information on how to register to get your ballot. Bryan encouraged all of us to share the information with SS neighbors. Sycamore Square residents get two votes in the GWNC election: one ballot to vote for the area representative (Area 11), and one ballot to vote for an At-Large representative. There is an GWNC Election Open House scheduled for Sat, February 27, 2021; and two candidate forums on March 6 & 7, 2021

- Kari Garcia wanted to share information on the closing of the Olympia Medical Center. The sale by Olympia owners Alecto Healthcare Service to UCLA has garnered a lot of public concern, even though it is a private sale. UCLA has plans to convert the site into a Mental Health Center, but has been asked to keep a medical clinic at the site. Things have been quiet lately since the hearings and discussion in early January, when there was a lot of community input on the issue. The CA Nurses Association is against the change and was working with the Mayor on the issue, who deferred it to the County Supervisors. There is a car caravan planned on March 6 to raise awareness of the issue.

6. **Unfinished Business (Discussion and Possible Action)**

- a. Board Vacancies for 2019-2021 Seat - Call for Nominations. No action
- b. Traffic Mitigation Funds: ongoing discussion. Issues presented on Sycamore Square stakeholders' survey, which was sent via E-mail and Nextdoor.

7. **Officer and Committee Reports**

President: Conrad S shared the fact that while Jason D has moved out of SS, he will remain as Treasurer of the SSNA. Jason's work site is based on SS, which makes him a qualified stakeholder.

8. **Community Meeting Reports**

- a. GWNC Elections: Board held a discussion regarding the role of the SSNA in the upcoming GWNC elections, given the possible conflict of interest posed by the fact that Conrad S and another Sycamore Square resident are running for the same post. It was agreed that the Board's role should focus on getting out the vote activities to increase voter engagement.
 - i. Get out the vote effort: Agreed that SSNA will assist in the promotion of GWNC events organized with the goal of stakeholders getting to know their candidates.
 - ii. SSNA + Special Interest Seat Candidate forum? /GWNC forum? Again, given the conflict of interest, Joshua K will take on the task of promoting the GWNC election by sharing information on candidate events, registration to vote and the election day itself. Lane M suggested that any promotion of the election and events leading up to the election should include a blurb on what the GWNC is, what it does and the fact the Sycamore Square residents have two votes.

9. **New Business (Discussion and Possible Action)**

- a. Crime at Wilshire/La Brea: Domestic shooting at Wilshire /LA Brea building. Conrad would like to invite the area's LAPD SLO to the next Board meeting as a way of connecting to the residents of the building.
- b. Hospital Letter to CD4/5 and County 2 and 3: Discussion on whether it was appropriate for SSNA Board to send a letter to our elected officials. At this time, it was decided not to send a communication regarding the Olympia closure
- c. SSNA Delegation of Duties; President, VP, Treasurer, Secretary, Webmaster, etc.: Given the recent shuffle of Board positions and elections, Josh K introduced the idea of developing clear delineation of Board roles and duties. Board discussed the idea of developing "job descriptions" for Board officers, clearly stating tasks and responsibilities

for each. Josh K will work on developing drafts of each position for Board input and review, making sure that they reflect what is outlined in the by-laws.

10. Board Comments & Announcements

- a. Update from Jason: As previously discussed, Jason moved to Redondo Beach. He will still serve on the SSNA Board, as his work site is located on Sycamore Square
- b. San Vicente Protected Bike Lane: Conrad shared he sent a letter on SSNA's behalf supporting a bike lane on San Vicente Blvd (between LA Brea/Fairfax) as part of the City's Mobility plan. Jonah will be attending an upcoming workshop scheduled to continue gathering community input on the plan. He will report back at the next Board meeting.
- c. TNP / Wilshire Community Plan: City Planning will not be pursuing the Transit Neighborhood Plan.
- d. First/Last Mile - Wilshire/La Brea Metro Station: Next month there will be a comment period for first/last mile issues around the La Brea/ Wilshire Station.

11. Scheduling of March 2021 Meeting: SSNA March meeting is scheduled for March 23, 2021, at 7:00pm.

12. Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 9:25 pm