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MCWCC Board Meeting of 12/09/08

MINUTES

Submitted by Sonia Rubin, Administrative Manager
Subject to approval by the Board on 1/13/09

- 1. Call to Order:** Chair Andrew Lachman called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm. Sonia Rubin did a roll call and of the 45 members, 29 were present (attendance sheet on file).
- 2. Opening Remarks from Chair:** Andrew Lachman spoke a bit about MCW and its role in the community. He mentioned some events sponsored by MCW, including the Miracle Mile Art Walk, which occurs monthly, except for this month.
 - Andrew stated that as Chair he has the right to appoint ad hoc committees, which don't fall under the Brown Act. He has formed 3 committees: Green/Environmental Issues Committee, headed by Chris Denson; Clean Money Committee, headed by Teresa Magula; and City Grant Funding, for which he solicited volunteers who have some experience in grant writing. These committees will work as needed.
 - Andrew mentioned that he has reached out to some local non-profits, such as SOVA and Gramercy Shelter, who were unable to be here and encouraged the board to get involved. SOVA, which is our only local food bank, had to turn people away for the first time, due to lack of food.
 - Rebecca Ver Straten-McSparran has offered her home for a holiday get together this Sunday, 12/14/08. This event will be pot luck and Andrew will send out an evite with all the details.
 - The Executive Committee is also planning a Board Retreat sometime in February or March to discuss planning.
- 3. Approval of Minutes:** There was a motion to approve the November 11, 2008 minutes, which passed unanimously. There were a few technical errors (typos) noted.
- 4. Public Comment Period:** -Mike Stryer, a teacher at Fairfax High School spoke about his candidacy for school board, replacing Marlene Canter. If elected, he will focus on reducing bureaucracy, reducing class size, attracting and retaining good teachers, and campus safety. He looks forward to active communication with the MCW board.
 - Yuval Kramer, a previous board member, will be running again for the homeowner's spot left vacant by Tamar Andrews, who recently resigned. He came to ask for a re-vote of the Caruso development that was voted on at the last LUC meeting. He stated that there was no outreach with the immediate neighbors and that Caruso was acting in bad faith.
- 5. Announcements from City Representatives:** -Maya Zutler introduced herself as field deputy for Jack Weiss' office.
 - Andrew Lachman mentioned that he ran into David Nahai, of DWP, who would like to come speak to the Board. He will set a date.
- 6. Financial Report from Treasurer:** David Strouse presented the budget (on file) and it was accepted with no opposition.

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7. **Chair's Motion to do a District 5 City Council Candidate Forum:** Andrew Lachman mentioned that the 5th District covers 50% of the population in the MCW district and 65% of the land in the district, and that it would be good to educate the public on the candidates. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously with 29 in favor. Teresa Feldman mentioned that there will already be a forum at Pan Pacific Park in February. She will find out who is putting this together, so that we might coordinate efforts.

8. **Presentation by Local Charities:** As Andrew mentioned neither SOVA nor Gramercy Shelter were able to make it to the meeting.

Committee Reports and Motions

9. **Arts and Recreation Committee:** Jane Burrell reported that there would be no Art Walk in the month of December. It will resume January. She also informed everyone that the LA Art Show, a citywide art festival beginning on 1/24/09, will mention MMAW on its website. Teresa Feldman requested that the Arts and Recreation Committee not only focus on Art, but take up some recreation projects, using Quimby fees, which are required fees paid by developers to be used for recreation in the area. She suggested that Poinsettia Park is in desperate need of some sprucing up. Paul Lerner mentioned that they are working with Maya Zutler on Poinsettia Park.

10. **Land Use Committee:**

a. **The Ita Cho Motion:** Brad Seiling, chair of the Land Use Committee stated that this motion passed 7 to 2 in the last Land Use meeting. The applicant is not asking for anything more than to continue to operate as the restaurant has been since 1999. A project representative spoke and asked for support. The issue was opened for discussion. Charles Lindenblatt opposed the motion, stating that the use was too large for the allowed space and that there was concern expressed by a neighboring school, on the original application. The motion passed with a vote of 26 in favor, 1 opposed and 2 abstaining.

b. **Fio Motion:** This motion passed 6 to 3 in Land Use. The applicant made 3 appearances at Land Use Committee meetings. They secured offsite valet parking spaces for the entire time of operation. A representative for the applicant stated that they also reached out to the neighbors and got no major opposition. The floor was opened to public comment, and Yuval Kramer commented on the parking crises in the area and that the restaurant would be on Spaulding, which is a residential street. Brad Seiling mentioned that the statements made by Mr. Kramer previously regarding parking were incorrect. He also mentioned that this location is already approved as a restaurant, and that the question is whether they will be granted a beer and wine license which would require additional parking. There were numerous comments made both opposing and supporting the motion. Many board members welcome new businesses which help to boost the economy and make the neighborhood vibrant, but some are very concerned about parking, traffic and alcohol issues in the area. Arturo Nava thought it would be a good idea to have some consistent criteria to evaluate these motions, to take some of the subjectivity out of the equation. The motion passed with a vote of 24 in favor, 4 opposed and 2 abstaining.

- Brad Seiling mentioned some coming attractions: the Caruso project, which will be discussed at next Wednesday's Land Use Committee meeting
- A motion to rescind and refer back to the Land Use Committee the Palm Terrace decision. Lee Rabin, a land use consultant for Palm Terrace, requested that we revisit this decision due to some miscommunication which led to the applicant not being at the LUC meetings to present their case. Brad Seiling reluctantly made the motion to revisit the issue, due to the extenuating circumstances. The motion to rescind and refer back to LUC passed with a vote of 19 in favor, 1 against, and 8 abstaining.

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11. **Public Policy Committee:**

a. Ken Draper summarized the Resolution to Update the Annual Report, which he said has been before the Board before. He stated that there are two lawsuits that have been brought regarding this resolution by the LaBrea Coalition and Fix LA (Jim O'Sullivan). Since we cannot directly support a lawsuit against the City, as a quasi city agency, this resolution seeks only to request that the City comply with the law. The floor was opened to public comment. Ursula Ortiz, Hilda Goldsmith, Lucille Saunders, Val Kuklosky, Jeffrey Roth and Yuval Kramer all stood up in support of the resolution. Lucille Saunders mentioned that 6 NCs have already passed the resolution. There was comment by the Board that the 1 year time frame was too long to give the City to comply. There was also comment that the language regarding the proposed moratorium be more specific. The motion passed as written with a vote of 19 in favor, 3 against, and 7 abstaining.

b. NC Financial Disclosure: Ken Draper gave some background and summary of this motion, which supports the continuation of NC board member exemption from the filing of Financial Disclosure forms and recommends the adoption of a verbal declaration of conflicts of interest at all NC board and committee meetings. There was comment about the fact that this motion was submitted at the last minute, which does not allow for much time for review. There was also an issue brought up about whether this motion applies at all, as the language states that conflicts of interest must be disclosed only if they involve public funds. The floor was opened to public comment and Lucille Saunders was the only public speaker. She supports the motion. The motion, as amended (striking the words "and third party communications" in the second paragraph), passed with a vote of 22 in favor, 0 against, and 7 abstaining.

12. **Communications Committee:** Arturo Nava reported that the Communications Committee has received the 2 banners and the return address labels that were approved at the last Board Meeting. The new e-mail addresses are up and instructions have been sent to everyone via e-mail. Ryan is making progress on the website and Jennifer Levin is working on brochures. A local artist is working on a new brand identity and the Board will be kept informed of the progress on all of this.

13. **Bylaws and Grievance Committee:** Charles Lindenblatt mentioned the next meeting on Monday 12/15/08. He reported that he attended a DONE Bylaws Workshop and suggested that everyone go online to do the Ethics Training.

14. **Public Comment Period:**

-Lucille Saunders thanked the board for passing the resolution and stated that everyone can keep up on the lawsuits at www.labreacoalition.org .

15. **Board Member Comments/Announcements:**

- Nina Diamante-Vera stated that the 82 unit bldg where she lives would much prefer a market than the proposed Caruso apartment project on Burton Way.
- Stacy Bertuccelli mentioned that Melrose Avenue Elementary School has just been approved as a K-6 Math/Science Magnet, with one to one laptops in grades 3-5.
- Brad Seiling reminded committee members that they need to show up at meetings and that we need to start meetings on time. He also requested that motions be submitted in a timely manner so that board members have plenty of time to review them prior to the meetings.
- Anish Mahajan stated that he has been meeting with the City's Department of Aging to try to tackle some issues relating to seniors in the area. Anyone who had information on seniors groups in the area please contact him.
- Paul Lerner distributed an article regarding the effects of graffiti on crime rates.
- Jeffrey Jacobberger announced that the next two weekends there will be free universal valet services on 3rd street between Fairfax and LaCienega, and recommended that we all go out and do some shopping in the area to support the businesses.
- Stacy Bertuccelli asked about how committees are formed.
- Nina Diamante-Vera is still looking into solar and windmill options for our area.

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- Andrew Lachman stated that we will have some time at the beginning of January's meeting for socializing. He also requested that everyone go online to take the budget survey and distributed the flyer that Naheed Qureshi brought by.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm.