

**North Westwood Neighborhood Council
Special Board Meeting
August 6th, 2019 from 7:00 to 10:00pm
Weyburn Commons Village View Room
4th Floor, 11020 Weyburn Dr. Los Angeles CA 90024**

MINUTES

1. Call-to-order and roll call (2 minutes)

- Call to order at 7:26 pm. Helmi, Arciniega, Rodriguez, Skiles, Peters, Lewis, Crummy, Reynolds, Ranadive, May, Russel, Beshay, Tarighat present. Quorum met.

2. Announcements (10 minutes)

- Skiles
 - Previously, the council was not able to book meetings in advance. Starting in October, the board will meet the first Wednesday of every month until June 2020.
- Rodriguez
 - Over the weekend, over 30 people in El Paso, Texas and Dayton, Ohio were killed by gun violence. Asks for a moment of silence, recognition that it is a public health and social issue.

3. Review and approval of minutes from May and July meetings (5 minutes)

- Skiles moves to approve the May 8th board minutes, Tarighat seconds.
 - Public Comment
 - Sann requests that approval of the minutes be tabled because he was just made aware of them.
 - Reynolds says that the minutes were made available on the website since May.
 - Motion carries unanimously (Beshay, Rodriguez, Russel abstain).
- Skiles moves to approve the July meeting minutes, Tarighat seconds.
 - Motion carries unanimously.
- Mara Braciszewski arrived.

4. Comments by Public Officials or their representatives including but not limited to: (15 minutes)

- a. Councilmember Paul Koretz
 - Jasmine from Koretz's office
 - Planning department has finally released their report on amendments to the Westwood Village Specific Plan
 - Koretz asked Planning to redefine food uses, remove food and dining use quotas, and remove parking requirements.
 - PLUM meeting at 2:30 pm on August 13th in Council chambers, attendance is recommended.
 - Public comment

- Steve Sann
 - Report begins a one-year process, change will be slow.
- Phil Gabriel
 - The report should have been given to property owners and Village merchants before moving to a PLUM meeting. Small property owners should have been given more notice.
- Koretz has been looking for a new location for bridge housing in Westwood. Now looking at a sorority house on Hilgard and the property owner has expressed interest. Building layout is perfect. Other location recommendations are welcome.

b. Assembly Member Sydney Kamlager-Dove

- Jamie Kennerk
 - New field representative for Kamlager-Dove. Oversees everything north of the 10 and west of La Cienega, higher education, LGBT, veteran's and arts and museums issues.
 - Assemblymember wants to attend a future neighborhood council meeting.

c. Department of Neighborhood Empowerment

- Jasmine
 - DONE has sent out a demographic survey for board members. Congress of Neighborhood Councils is upcoming.

5. Discussion and possible action with respect to a boundary adjustment petition to include Westwood Gardens Park (at Glendon and Wellworth) and Westwood Park, Westwood Recreation Center and Bad News Bears field (located at Sepulveda and Veteran) as a shared resource of both the North Westwood and Westwood Neighborhood Councils. (25 minutes)

- Skiles
 - Small committees, especially ad-hoc committees, can hold meetings in public parks. Would be good for the NWWC to be able to hold meetings, have events, and support organizations in Westwood Gardens Park, Westwood Park, Westwood Recreation Center, and Bad News Bears field.
- Skiles moves that the NWWNC formally announce its wish to consider including Westwood Gardens Park, Westwood Park, Westwood Recreation Park, and Bad News Bears Field as shared resources within its boundaries and invites public comment, intending to bring forth proposed bylaw and boundary amendments.
 - Tarighat seconds.
- Public Comment
 - Phil Gabriel

- NWWNC annexed the Village against the wishes of property owners. Seems like the board is doing this so as to be able to weigh in on the proposed soccer field in Westwood Park. WWNC can handle the parks. NWWNC has plenty of existing challenges within its current boundaries.
- Steve Sann
 - This should be done through a bylaw amendment at a future meeting, was not sufficiently agendaized. When the NWWNC was being formed, Skiles described the WWNC's use of the Westwood Recreation center as voter suppression because it's too far from students. The only thing that has changed is the NWWNC's desire to exert influence over the proposed soccer field.
- Skiles
 - Procedurally, the application is sent to DONE, BONC makes a recommendation, only then does the council take up a bylaw amendment in accordance with BONC's action.
- Tarighat
 - Last year, the council voted to donate money at the Homeless Connect Day but was unable to issue funds because it took place outside of NWWNC boundaries. An exception from the City Clerk was necessary.
- Motion carries unanimously.

6. Presentation on proposed soccer/multipurpose field at Westwood Park, discussion, and possible board resolution taking a position on the matter. (50 minutes)

- Joey Russel recuses himself from discussion and action this item.
- Nikki Mark
 - Vision and benefits of Tommy's Field
 - We always knew Westwood needed a field. April 6th, 2018, community suggested they build 'Tommy's Field.' \$1.2 million raised through thousands of community raised donations. Tommy's Field is a gift of love, with no strings attached.
 - First full size multi-sport synthetic turf field with lights
 - Meaningful free-play hours for unstructured play
 - Our Support
 - Thousands of donations, hundreds of support letters from Westwood community, 9,000 Change.org signatures, Department of Recreation & Parks.
 - Classified as a community park, serves a 5 mile radius
 - Why Westwood Rec Center
 - Current open field has been hard dirt, unsafe, and abandoned
 - No current park programming for youth field sports

- Tennis courts are highly underutilized (average 1.5 matches per day)
- Existing small soccer field is fully permitted and can't accommodate older age groups
- Field Design #1
 - 4 foot fence, no lock, free play hours, bleachers, outdoor restrooms
 - Surprised by opposition at first public meeting
- Opposition rallied around 'save our green open space'
- Current field is in poor condition, unused
- Field Design #2
 - No bleachers, no fences, high nets behind goals, defined free play, offered to add grass to east-end concrete
 - More open green space surrounding proposed field than would be taken away
- Field Design #3
 - Open space to remain as-is, soccer field moved to the east side of the park
 - Four upgraded tennis courts
 - Upgraded outdoor basketball court
 - The open space has been saved, why are some neighbors still arguing?
- Extensive community review process
 - Attended 8 public meetings, 3 redesigns, extensive personal outreach
- We need more public athletic fields
 - LA84 Foundation Survey conducted in LA 2016
 - Outdoor soccer has the highest participation rate among youth ages 6-17 in LA County
 - Tommy's Field is for all field sports, not just soccer
 - Most parks have multiple facilities of the same kind based on trends and demand
 - Why are there still so many unused tennis courts and baseball diamonds?
- If the gift is rejected
 - Westwood Rec Center will stay the same
 - Tennis courts sit empty 75% of the day
 - Homeless sleep on field and in tents on the east end of park
 - No park programming for youth field sports
 - No new energy coming to Westwood
- Efforts to build consensus
 - Opportunity to set an example of a successful public-private partnership
 - LA parks are severely underfunded, rank 65th/100 for parks out of the nation's top 100 cities
- Support Tommy's field

- Improve neglected park space at zero cost to the city
- Activate empty areas of the park, bring new energy to Westwood
- Provide outlet for UCLA students and community youth to interact and inspire each other
- Board Q+A
 - Peters
 - What would the field now be replacing?
 - Tennis courts and the field would displace the basketball court
 - Braciszewski
 - Is it still fenced?
 - Four-foot fence to keep out dogs.
 - What times would it be open for free play?
 - City has not yet finalized time recommendations and the design has changed many times. Now, the undisturbed open space on the western half of the park would always be open.
 - Skiles
 - Why did Parks and Rec put locks on the existing youth field, baseball, and tennis courts?
 - Don't know, but the proposal has always been for an unlocked field per donor requirements.
 - If the park happens, please consider using donor influence to open up the rest of the park.
 - A new concept for the park, might inspire change. Tommy's Field would lower the existing fences for the tennis courts.
 - Tarighat
 - Is there anything else you can do to accommodate opposition?
 - No. It's unlocked, has free play hours, and won't take away from the green open space. Permit space would move to the new field, meaning that the green space would then be unpermitted. We've proved that we're willing to listen to the neighbors and change the proposal based on their concerns.
 - Braciszewski
 - Is all of the \$1.2 million going into the field?
 - Yes, even though the current proposal is cheaper, any remainder goes toward field maintenance. We made the only six figure donation.
 - Skiles
 - Have you evaluated whether \$1.2 million could successfully keep a grass field instead of synthetic?

- It's impossible to keep a highly used grass sports field in the city. Requires a two to three month use/reseed and recover cycle. FIFA uses synthetic turf.
- Questions from the public
 - Karen
 - Are donor soccer organizations getting preferential treatment with permitting or otherwise?
 - No, they've asked for nothing and are getting nothing. Haven't asked for permits or to hold camps, etc.
 - Tarighat
 - Both soccer clubs donated \$60,000
 - Members of the public
 - Why does the city insist on putting the park in Westwood?
 - It was Tommy's neighborhood, would not displace any existing programming.
 - Since tennis and basketball would be displaced, have those communities been given an opportunity to give input?
 - Basketball courts were going to be upgraded before the field's finalization anyway, new tennis courts would sufficiently accommodate demand.
- Jamie Rook and Linda Fader (opposition)
 - Should evaluate each version of the proposal on its own merits, new proposal raises new concerns.
 - Community members remain concerned about the location because it requires significant demolition and reconstruction.
 - The park already has a synthetic field and other athletic facilities.
 - Community has asked that other fields be assessed for viability. Purported RAP study has not been made public. Other parks can accommodate the same field dimension.
 - Not confident that RAP's statistics properly account for tennis court use.
 - Concerned that RAP isn't being transparent, has changed the project's descriptions over time.
 - Promises made now might not be kept. Public restrooms were promised at the other facilities like the dog park, never built. Parks department refuses to commit that other facilities will be built before demolition, ensuring continuous use.
 - RAP has provided no commitments
 - Marks shouldn't have to answer these questions, RAP has failed the community and should have a representative present.
 - Demolition of tennis and basketball courts, removal of lights, grading hilly area, concrete pouring, construction of new tennis courts, etc. not covered by the \$1.2 gift.

- RAP has refused to further consult with the public on the project, neighborhood councils, etc. Stakeholders must be invited to the table.
- The basketball courts are heavily used and will no longer have lighting, about a parking lot on Veteran. Fencing would be needed.
- Plan doesn't provide additional parking, park visitors already take up street parking.
- Public was caught off guard by the new design at the June 27th meeting. Public was asked to submit written questions but had asked irrelevant questions given the changes to the proposal.
- RAP hasn't addressed park equity issues, won't definitively say when and to whom the field will be permitted, selection process.
- City can always renege on the deal and put in fencing, locks, etc like what happened with the smaller field.
- Would prefer that the existing field be enlarged and improved.
- Want unanswered questions addressed by RAP.

- Questions from the board
 - Tarighat
 - Are you opposed to the soccer field altogether, or is there a scenario in which you would accept the new field?
 - Suggested enlarging the existing synthetic field or using open space and reverting small field back to open space.
 - Skiles
 - Why couldn't the basketball courts still have lighting? RAP told me it would be possible.
 - RAP told us the courts couldn't be lit given proximity to neighboring houses.

- Questions from the Public
 - Nikki Mark
 - I've seen you at eight public meetings, the main issue has always been open space. Now that public space is preserved, what's the concern?
 - The new plan still has issues, would dramatically affect basketball players. RAP has failed to notify basketball community.

- Public Comment
 - Jim Lamb
 - Parent of 4 kids, professor at UCLA, resident for 9 years, regular park user. Primary concern was open space, appreciate that an effort has been made to address that. RAP has been uncommunicative about details, has postponed giving details. The plan has changed but specifics still missing. There should be a written plan for the project that is subject to public comment so all community members can be part of the process.
 - Lasan Duval

- Teacher and coach at Marymount High School, uses Cheviot Hills with his club team. During the summer, UCLA students use Marymount facilities and Marymount students use UCLA's track and field. The field is messed up, full of holes, vulnerable to rain.
- Member of the public
 - 16 year resident. Legitimate concerns about noise, congestion, parking, and lighting in a residential neighborhood. Small park that doesn't need a second synthetic field. Already very developed, serves athletic community. Important to preserve nature, not just cater to sports teams. Bad News Bears was originally intended for the public, now has no green space and is only for sports teams.
- Jamie
 - Marks and public are victims of RAP's process. Basketball and tennis players will be harmed, haven't had a chance to be heard.
- Zach
 - Goes to Geffen Academy, supports Tommy's Field. Fence is only 4 feet tall, there won't be lock, the existing field is useless for safe sports play. Multipurpose, available for other sports.
- Johnathan Firner
 - In favor of Tommy's Field. Local resident, UCLA professor for 21 years, longtime green open space user. Tripped in a pothole and received a gash in the leg several years ago. This morning, nobody else was on the field while he was there with his children. Field would provide much-needed space way for kids to play safely.
- Michelle Kramer
 - LA area USTA adult league coordinator, which runs the adult tennis league program throughout LA area. Responsible for scheduling thousands of matches for adult tennis players. Is at Westwood Park 5 or 6 days a week. Tennis community knew nothing about the proposal. USTA turns away teams that want to play at Westwood because there are insufficient courts, time is limited, tennis pros favored. Other West LA parks are either booked or not geographically desirable to people living in West LA. Two courts unusable because of unmaintained porta potty smell. Courts are underutilized because the city has forced them to be.
- Member of the public
 - 50 year resident of Westwood in favor of Tommy's Park. Park serves small children, dog owners, tennis players. Fails teenagers and others wanting to play team sports. We need a second field because we're in a field desert. Important to improve health outcomes of young Angelenos.
- Fishmans
 - Live a block away from UCLA, have known Tommy since they were very young, lifelong Westwood residents. Support the field. Important to provide space for people to play.

- Jordan Fishman
 - Resident since 2004, supports the project. Fully funded. Primary concern has been green space, this revised project fulfills that.
- Jenny Pascal
 - Psychotherapist and resident, training director of a teen suicide hotline. Supports the field. Important to address teenage loneliness and isolation.
- Jared Crossman
 - Supports the park, this is the eighth meeting. Marks's have been willing to compromise at every turn.
- Nicole Fieldman
 - Resident for over 20 years. Supports Tommy's Field, it would provide the greatest good to the greatest number.
- Stacey Kravitz
 - Resident, has two sons who are athletes who regularly use the field. Supports the field. We live in a densely populated area, this provides a net improvement and a value-add to the community. Synthetic field doesn't need to be watered, is more sustainable, better use of the space.
- Christina
 - Lives two blocks away from the park. Recommends that everyone visit the park to see it for themselves. Large base of opposition, important to preserve nature. Rec Center should not be developed to benefit a few, is heavily developed for athletic needs already.
- Stella
 - Resident for 20 years, raised four children who regularly played in the park. Due to the condition of the field, soccer was never feasible. Doesn't understand why people would oppose something that would provide children with fun.
- Doug Mark
 - Urges support for the field.
- Johannes Fishman
 - Been playing basketball at Westwood Rec for 7 years, serious players sign up for the rec league. Concrete courts are in poor condition. In favor of the upgrade.
- Steve Sann
 - Nobody wants the field to not be built, just varying opinions on where and how it should be built. Coach from Marymount said that Cheviot Park is in poor condition. Cheviot has soccer, as do other parks, and they don't have a good place to play. Real decision makers aren't promised. Why not Cheviot, why not Stoner? Still waiting on that report. Believes a vote is premature with incomplete information.
- Angela Phelps

- Supports one soccer field. Attended the June meeting, was told that the field would be locked and off-limits to the public. Concerned what the city will do once the money is given.
- Board Discussion
 - Peters
 - In favor of the park, but insufficient outreach and transparency on the part of RAP. Neighborhood council is volunteers doing the work that paid city employees should be doing. RAP representative should be present. More transparency needed going forward.
 - Tarighat
 - Difficult decision to make, important choice for the community. The NWWNC is a recent creation because stakeholders were unhappy with how the WWNC obstructed development and growth. Played basketball in the park going up, all board members care about the community. No matter what, it's going to feel like the process was bad. Two revisions in eight meetings is a lot of feedback, more than usually happens in city processes. In favor of the park, believes it would help revitalize Westwood.
 - Ranadive
 - NWWNC's job isn't to decide the optimal location for the park, but whether or not the field is a good idea specifically for Westwood. Main concern was that the field would inhibit childrens' field play. New design addresses those concerns and preserves green space. Concerns about the field seem to be changing. Concerns about removing space for organized tennis should be equally applied to concerns about providing space for organized soccer. Believes that the field will benefit the community.
 - Braciszewski
 - Uses the park frequently, thinks it's more of a sports complex than a park. Is an urban planner, references Frederick Ohm's 'pleasure spaces.' Opposes fences, barriers, fluidity of interaction. Basketball players are most active and diverse group of park users. They shouldn't be taken from the center to the east side alongside Veteran, a highly trafficked area. Opposes the park.
 - Crummy
 - Soccer can also serve a diverse community per his experience in AYSO. This discussion began in a contentious manner, has evolved. Not sure how to improve RAP's outreach. RAP has solved the open space issue by following Phil Gabriel's suggestion.
 - Ranadive
 - On a weekday evening, saw many families in Aidan's playground and the current synthetic field was full. Basketball and tennis courts were empty. Good that the newest design preserves open space. Concerning that

RAP hasn't confirmed allocation of money for necessary improvements.
Suggests that the NWWNC provide conditional support.

- Tarighat moves to send a letter to all involved parties, including the Parks Department and RAP, stating that the NWWNC encourages the construction of Tommy's Field in Westwood Park according to plans conditional on continued outreach and the provision of bathrooms, basketball court lighting, and replacement tennis courts.
 - Skiles seconds.
 - Beshay calls the question, Lewis seconds.
 - Motion carries 9 yeas, 3 nays, 0 abstentions, the question is called.
 - Motion to send the letter carries 9 yeas, 1 nays, 2 abstentions.

7. General Public Comment. (10 minutes)

8. Discussion and possible resolution respecting the need for LA Metro's Business Interruption Fund to compensate businesses beyond Wilshire that are impacted by Purple Line Construction.

- Skiles
 - Wilshire will be completely shut down or have lanes closed during the Purple Line construction. That will make it difficult to get to businesses on Wilshire, as well as on neighboring streets in the Village and Persian Square. Businesses are interrupted beyond Wilshire and ought be compensated if they can prove negative impacts and are closer to Wilshire Blvd than to Sunset or Santa Monica Blvds.
- Crummy
 - Metro has a rigid set of rules for reimbursement requiring direct impact. Westwood is geographically unique, bounded to the north by UCLA, the cemetery on the west, and residential neighborhoods to the west. Metro should recognize that if you cut off the entrance to a boxed canyon, it will affect the entire canyon.
- Skiles moves that the NWWNC recognizes that far more business stand to be adversely impacted by the Purple Line construction than are currently eligible for relief under Metro's business interruption fund and recommend that eligibility be expanded to any qualifying business in Westwood that can demonstrate it has been harmed by the Purple Line construction.
 - Peters seconds.
 - Motion carries unanimously.

9. Presentation/Review of July Westside Regional Alliance of Councils Meetings (Andrew, 5 Minutes)

10. Designation of Westside Regional Alliance of Councils alternate. (10 minutes)

11. Approval of 2019-2020 Fiscal Year budget, including rollover. (15 minutes)

- Tarighat
 - Administrative packet has been submitted and approved. We need to formally approve the \$10,000 roll-over.
- Tarighat moves to incorporate the \$10,000 roll-over into the fiscal year budget, Skiles seconds.
 - Motion unanimously carries.

12. Update on general finances, and review and approval of monthly expense reports (Amir, 10 minutes)

- Amir moves the July 2019 monthly expenditure report, Peters seconds.
 - Motion unanimously carries.

13. Approval of \$150 room rental for August council meeting at Weyburn Commons. (10 minutes)

- Skiles moves to approve the \$150 room rental expense, Tarighat seconds.
 - Motion unanimously carries.

14. Adjournment at 10:37 pm.