

BOARD OF THE WEST ADAMS
NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
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West Adams Neighborhood Council
Meets Every Third Monday of the Month @
Vineyard Recreation Center, 2942 Vineyard Ave,
Los Angeles, CA, 90016

Steven Meeks - President
Yolanda Davis-Overstreet - Vice President
Brian Piatek – Treasurer
Kristyn Yancy – At Large Representative
Sean Curley - Parliamentarian
Dorsay Dujon - At Large Representative
Connye Thomas - At Large Representative
Clint Simmons - Homeowner Representative
Vacant - Youth Representative
Vacant - Community Interest Representative
Richard Williams - Business Representative
Vacant - Business Representative
Abel Sun - At Large Representative
John Ma – At Large Representative
Jace Dawson- At Large Representative



West Adams Neighborhood Council

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MINUTES – Adopted by the Board on May 17, 2021 General Board Monthly Meeting Zoom Meeting online or by telephone April 19, 2021, 2021, 6:30 PM

1. Call to order and Roll Call

A meeting of the West Adams Neighborhood Council (WANC) was held on April 19, 2021 over Zoom, Webinar 959 3661 2418.

The meeting was called to order at 6:36 p.m. by Steven Meeks (President), who made welcoming remarks. He noted that Ms. Yancy was an excused absence.

Sean Curley (Parliamentarian) called the roll. There were ten (10) board members present at roll call (Mr. Meeks, Yolanda Davis-Overstreet, Brian Piatek, Sean Curley, Dorsay Dujon, Clint Simmons, Richard Williams, Abel Sun, John Ma, and Jace Dawson). Quorum is eight (8) and was met. Kristyn Yancy was an excused absence.

2. Government Representatives

Kimani Black represented the Office of Councilmember Mark Ridley-Thomas, Tenth Council District (CD10). He provided a report. Rancho Cienega Sports Complex was scheduled to open in July 2021. Vineyard Recreation Center was expected to open by the second week in May.

He sought specific information regarding an attack which had occurred on Hillcrest on April 18th.

Stakeholder Tom Spriggs asked whether Mr. Black was referring to an incident from April 17th involving himself, his family, and some friends at the corner of Hillcrest and Jefferson. Mr. Black invited Mr. Spriggs to contact him at (323) 733-5584 so Mr. Spriggs could relay information to the [LAPD] Captain and to Senior Lead Officer (SLO) Garcia.

Mr. Black announced a “vaccination event” at 1819 S. Western every Tuesday. They had been active with local providers to ensure safe access to vaccinations.

Ms. Davis-Overstreet requested a consistent representative from the LAPD at WANC Public Safety Committee meetings. Mr. Black said he and SLO Garcia would engage her in a 3-way call to discuss. He said LADOT had partnered with organizations regarding upgrades to Adams Blvd. CD10 would partner with WANC to organize two meetings in the community, the first

focused on traffic safety a second where LADOT would have display boards on the sidewalk for stakeholders to learn about the planned improvements, target date July 1st. Ms. Dujon asked about a police raid, though Mr. Black did not have any details.

Mr. Ma requested advice on keeping WANC social media up-to-date with the latest vaccine sites and pop-ups. Mr. Black recommended he subscribe to the CD10 mailing list.

Stakeholder “Tracy” expressed concern about a homeless encampment at Jefferson and Hillcrest. Mr. Black emphasized the importance of developing a unique plan for each location and each individual and making a weekly attempt to get individuals to receive supportive services. Illegal activity and unwanted physical contact would not be tolerated.

3. General Public Comment: non agenda items

Giovanni Sacherez was the Director of Interim Housing at Adams and Hillcrest, which opened March 15th. He was available to the NC for any concerns or issues. Isabelle Huguet Lee was his supervisor.

Dallas Fowler (www.dallasfowler.com) was a candidate for the 54th Assembly District. She described her background, credentials, and positions. An election would be held Tuesday, May 18th.

Jennifer Perkins said she was the new Southwest LA Area Rep for the Mayor’s Office. She planned to participate in future meetings and offered herself as a resource.

Brian Piatek encouraged listening to the Mayor’s State of the City address.

4. Administrative items:

This was a section header.

5. Secretary’s report: Discussion and possible action approval of January, February and March minutes

Mr. Meeks explained that a minutes taker had written the January 25, 2021 minutes, which Mr. Piatek shared with the assembled group via screen share. Mr. Meeks invited the board to propose any prospective minutes takers from the [WANC] area.

Abel Sun moved to approve the January 25, 2021 minutes as presented. Sean Curley seconded. There was no discussion. The motion carried with 9 in favor (Curley, Davis, Dujon, Ma, Meeks, Piatek, Simmons, Sun and Williams). Dawson did not vote, and two (Thomas and Yancy) were absent.

6. Monthly Expenditure Report: Discussion and possible action on March MER

Mr. Piatek reported that \$1,400 was spent “of our own money.” “Proxy payments” had ceased. He noted outstanding expenditures. Checks had been cut to the Shower of Hope and Dynasty. WANC was disputing a charge from Interpreters Unlimited. \$29,000 was showing as available. The City would allow a rollover of \$10,000 to the FY 21-22 budget. WANC would be able to spend approximately \$19,000 through June 15th, the “cutoff date.”

Mr. Piatek invited board members to welcome NPG applications from 501(c)3 organizations and LAUSD schools.

Roughly \$4,000 remained in the Election budget, some of which was committed.

After an approved reimbursement to Richard Williams, \$15,000 was left “to help our constituents.”

Mr. Simmons asked a question about the upcoming NC election, which Mr. Meeks requested he save for the elections report.

Mr. Simmons moved to accept the MER. Mr. Ma seconded.

Mr. Piatek made further clarifications.

Ms. Davis-Overstreet thanked Mr. Piatek for the “breakdown,” which was “educational.” She encouraged WANC to reach out to community-based organizations to address needs and inequities among the West Adams population of low income individuals who were “struggling severely.”

Ms. Thomas had arrived by 7:20 p.m. There were now 11 board members present.

The motion carried with all 11 present in favor (Curley, Davis, Dujon, Dawson, Ma, Meeks, Piatek, Simmons, Sun, Thomas, and Williams). Ms. Yancy was absent.

7. Department of Neighborhood Empowerment: Octaviano Rios

Mr. Rios thanked the board for their work and advocacy and for “coming together as Angelenos to communicate the needs of your community” to City Hall. He had worked with West Adams more than 5 years prior. He spoke to Mr. Meeks considerable experience.

He would be the Empowerment Advocate for WANC. He had worked 20 years for the city, including 6 years at DONE.

Rios encouraged board members to review the Mayor’s State of the City. Budgetary impacts to DONE were not yet known, however prior hiring freezes had led to movement of its staff.

Board members were encouraged to write to octaviano.rios@lacity.org if they were not already receiving Monthly Profiles. The board roster should be updated with any new board members.

NC Funding would host an Administrative Packet workshop on April 22nd at 6:00 p.m. and a training on the Funding System Portal on April 27th at 6:00 p.m., which was recommended for Financial Officers.

The deadline to request ballots was May 18th. The Election would be on May 25th.

WANC could follow the 2019 Board Seating Policy and seat new board members immediately after the certification of election results or they could take board action to adopt the new 2021 Board Seating Policy and seat the new board on July 1st.

Rios encouraged the board to share feedback on virtual meetings with commission@empowerla.org.

The Board of Neighborhood Commissioners (BONC) passed a resolution calling on board members to “promote peace and prosperity” and a “more inclusive neighborhood.” A new diversity, equity, anti-bias, and inclusion training was forthcoming.

Mr. Sun noted that the “Subscribe to Neighborhood Council Agendas” link on empowerla.org page was not working.

Mr. Rios declined to turn on his camera when it was requested by Mr. Simmons.

Ms. Davis-Overstreet reiterated Mr. Simmons’ position stakeholders and board members felt uncomfortable not seeing speakers’ faces on Zoom meetings. Mr. Rios encouraged reviewing Zoom and other virtual governance guidelines, which were developed in conjunction with the City Attorney, at empowerla.org/evg.

8. Presentation: Downtown Crenshaw Rising - Baldwin Hills/Crenshaw Plaza purchase as a collective community effort

Robin Cole said she was a stakeholder and former board member of the Park Mesa Heights Community Council. Cole was part of Downtown Crenshaw Rising, an “entity of members and business partners” in efforts to acquire the Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Plaza, which she described as “our legacy and our inheritance” and “40 acres and a mall.”

Cole said the group had the “financial means to get the job done” and was in talks with decision makers; however, Deutsche Bank offered unfair terms. She invited WANC to sign a letter of support.

Damian Goodman said he was an area stakeholder and a member of Downtown Crenshaw Rising, which was not developers but a nonprofit, community-based organization. He said an article in “Next City” said “this would be the biggest win for community wealth building in the nation. He described the effort as the “black and brown community coming together to determine the future of such an iconic asset.” Information was online, including at <https://www.downtowncrenshaw.com/> and on social media.

Responding to a question from Mr. Simmons, Goodman said the group had sent letters to or presented most NCs and to most homeowners’ associations and its 2,200 membership included representatives from most NCs and homeowners’ associations.

As requested by Ms. Davis-Overstreet, Goodman provided additional details of previous efforts by his group to acquire the property. In partnership with “social impact investors,” and a “primary equity partner to cover anything that we did not raise,” they had submitted a “fully-financed offer.” The owners did not select that team, but hadn’t yet executed a contract with anyone else. Goodman said advocating for his group’s offer to Deutsche Bank, DWS, and the public pension funds was the support which was needed.

Goodman explained to Mr. Piatek that their plans for the mall, if successfully acquired, were available on the website. The decision would consider input from 200-300 surveys and the advice of some of the “best real estate professionals... in the world.” “Step one” was to stabilize the mall’s existing businesses.

Ms. Cole agreed to send the letter of support and their contact information to Mr. Meeks by email.

9. Standing Committee and City Liaison Reports

Ms. Davis-Overstreet reported on the Public Safety Committee. They were waiting for direction from CD10 in order to move forward with the Adams Blvd. Safety Project, which was the “configuration... from Fairfax... to Crenshaw Blvd.” Outreach to the nearly 29,000 residents of the community would start in “another week or two.”

She said Dr. Karen Lincoln of the USC Hartford Center of Excellence and Geriatric Area of Social Work had presented in February on COVID-19 vaccine and other information regarding reaching African-American seniors and other healthcare and accessibility issues. Safety of street vendors’ carts and food were a subject of their upcoming efforts. They were renewing relationships with LASAN, StreetsLA, and CD10 regarding social inequities around trash pickup and clean-up. A survey on shade trees along the Adams corridor was forthcoming, in partnership with LASAN. Trees would be planted and maintained at no cost to the community. Standing meetings were on the first Thursday monthly starting at 5:30 p.m.

Mr. Ma said the “emergency preparedness component” had held its third class, which was on search and rescue. In mid-June, a Zoom meeting would focus on neighborhood scoping exercises. The CERT team was providing support on radio training and mapping exercises. He described an upcoming session on “in-home improvements” and hazard mitigation.

Mr. Simmons provided the Land Use Committee update. The development at on Jefferson Ave. between Chesapeake and Potomac was being discussed. The city PLUM Committee was not requiring CEQA, so developers did not make an effort to come to NCs like they did before. A proposal to increase project appeals fees from \$89 to \$16,000 was on the table. He hoped to obtain more information regarding the development on Jefferson Ave. at Wellington Rd.

Mr. Dawson left the meeting at 8:07 p.m. 10 Board members were still present.

Ms. Curley gave the Education and Youth Committee report. Its April 17th meeting would be rescheduled due to a technical difficulty.

Mr. Sun gave the Outreach Committee update. On April 14th, it held an “info session” for candidates for election to WANC. On April 28th from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., a virtual candidate forum would be held. Lawn signs, flyers, and banners were now available. Vote-by-mail paper applications would likely be printed by April 26th. The deadline to request a ballot was May 18th. Election was May 25th. Mr. Meeks requested to schedule an Outreach/Board joint meeting to discuss ways to spend the remaining election allocation. Mr. Sun said he would be unable to commit to a special meeting but other committee members could take the lead.

Mr. Simmons said education was needed to explain why vote-by-mail required certain documentation. He had spoken with stakeholders who were unwilling to provide their birthdate or other personal information in order to qualify to vote.

Ms. Davis-Overstreet said effective outreach required going to churches, senior centers, and youth spaces to make direct contact to those who were not going to social media for updates from WANC. She encouraged a strategic review of the Constant Contact newsletter to ask what information was included, what were the “asks” of the newsletters, and how that information tied into the work underway.

Ms. Thomas said the Rules Committee meeting would be scheduled in May. Mr. Meeks encouraged an update to WANC’s Standing Rules. Ms. Curley offered Ms. Thomas her assistance.

Ms. Dujon provided the ad hoc Arts and Culture Committee report. She had not scheduled a meeting or engaged in member recruitment, but had performed research about “real needs.” She was in talks with LADWP about needed fencing at Jefferson Blvd. and Hauser Ave. She was supportive of WANC having collateral materials like postcards, flyers, and giveaways, as well as a tent and signage. Beautification of the area would require streets to be cleared of discarded furniture. Dujon was reviewing possible locations for summer concerts to help the neighborhood heal. She did not have an update on the “1% for public art” moneys. She would contact DCS the next day.

Mr. Ma gave the Homeless Ad Hoc Committee update. The 11-member committee had met twice and had success in reaching its goal to “buff up” the Wednesday (10 a.m. to 2 p.m.) Shower of Hope with volunteers to help with those activities and to augment the effort with a clothing drive, menstrual supplies, personal protective equipment, and sack lunches. A vaccine clinic would provide the Moderna vaccine for unhoused residents on April 28th.

Additionally, the committee was working to provide haircuts at the weekly event, and were working with Street Watch LA to “do rounds” and provide hot meals in West Adams.

Ma said the second committee goal was to create a system of liaisons to depend on to be the first line of contact in difficult or uncomfortable situations with unhoused neighbors. He referred to a potential fire hazard at the Redondo underpass of the 10 Freeway, which was communicated to the Homelessness Committee and to Street Watch allies in the Mid-City area who added the stop to their hot meal distribution rounds. CERT members Freddie and Lise Ha-Pham and two Street Watch members visited the site and alerted service providers about the site. The next meeting would be April 26th. Mr. Meeks had reached out to Hopics (<https://hopics.org>) to encourage them to apply for an NPG to service the WANC area. He said flyers about Showers of Hope were needed. He advised that the NC could not directly hand out food. Ma said the Homelessness Committee had been discussing NPGs and was working to move the effort further.

Ms. Davis-Overstreet said Renee Shackelford at LASAN had been a responsive partner with the West Adams community, and she noted a reduction in department staffing. The Bureau of Street Services (StreetsLA) had not been responsive to her inquiries about street sanitation. Mr. Ma agreed that Ms. Shackelford had been “great.” Mr. Ma said StreetsLA did not appear to be clearing the streets on a bimonthly basis as they had promised. He asked for documentation and testimony to be forwarded to him to take action.

10. Old Business

A. Discussion and possible action on possibly partnering with an adjacent NC on an outreach event/film screening series and discussion on homelessness for expenses such as but not limited to, film license, technical assistance, PR not to exceed \$700

Mr. Meeks read the above. He said Mid-City Neighborhood Council and United Neighborhoods Neighborhood Council were interested. The costs would consist largely of film licensing fees.

Responding to Ms. Davis-Overstreet, Meeks highlighted that the “second part” of the series would be to invite “key people” to find out “what’s being done” and to have an action item to result beyond information and education.

Ms. Davis-Overstreet moved as above. Mr. Ma seconded.

The motion carried with seven (7) in favor (Curley, Davis-Overstreet, Dujon, Ma, Meeks, Sun, and Thomas); and **three (3) opposed** (Piatek, Simmons, and Williams); **two (2) were absent** (Yancy and Dawson).

B. Discussion and possible action on storage unit and PO Box key distribution

Mr. Sun moved for Clint Simmons and Steven Meeks to hold the keys to the storage unit and for Brian Piatek and Steven Meeks to hold keys to the P.O. Box. Ms. Davis-Overstreet seconded.

The motion carried with all nine (9) present voting in favor (Curley, Davis-Overstreet, Dujon, Ma, Meeks, Piatek, Simmons, Thomas, and Williams); **two (2) were absent** (Yancy and Dawson).

C. Discussion and possible action on reconsideration on writing a CIS on DONE’s Digital Media Policy

Mr. Meeks asked for unanimous consent to skip this item. There was no objection.

D. Discussion and possible action on possible action on writing a CIS on Council File-19-0604 vehicle idling

Mr. Meeks asked for unanimous consent to skip this item. There was no objection.

11. New business:

A. Discussion and possible action possible action on budget amendment increase for website maintenance not to exceed \$2500

Ms. Davis-Overstreet asked to allow Denise to do a special presentation on the work she had done. Mr. Meeks agreed to postpone the item to a special meeting within the next two weeks. There was no objection.

B. Discussion and possible action reimbursement of Brian Piatek for P.O. Box fee in the amount of \$88

Mr. Ma moved as above. Ms. Curley seconded.

The motion carried with all nine (9) present voting in favor (Curley, Davis-Overstreet, Dujon, Ma, Meeks, Piatek, Simmons, Thomas, and Williams); **two (2) were absent** (Yancy and Dawson).

C. Discussion and possible action on filing a CIS on Council File 09-0969-S3 on the Planning Departments comprehensive fee increase

Mr. Simmons said the City wanted to make it difficult for individuals to appeal PLUM decisions by increasing the appeals fee from \$89 to \$16,000.

Mr. Piatek moved to file a CIS on CF-09-0969-S3 on the Planning Department's comprehensive fee increase. Mr. Ma and Mr. Sun both seconded.

There was board discussion. Ms. Thomas said Councilmembers on the Planning Committee including Harris-Dawson and Price made the motion and had a good reason from their perspective. As an NC, WANC had a responsibility to its stakeholders and should therefore file a CIS. Mr. Meeks highlighted that the motion did not take a position. Mr. Piatek advocated for taking a position in opposition.

Mr. Piatek **withdrew** the motion. Mr. Meeks encouraged the Land Use Committee to address the Council File.

12. Discussion and possible action on selection of Community Interest, Youth and Business Representative vacancies

The meeting was adjourned prior to Item 12.

13. Discussion on agenda setting future Monthly and Special Meetings

The meeting was adjourned prior to Item 13.

14. Adjourn

Ms. Curley **moved to adjourn**. Mr. Sun seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m. without objection.

Respectfully Submitted by Conrad Starr. Minutes were written from the Zoom recording.